



For immediate release
Monday, November 3, at 12 p.m.

Healey-Driscoll Administration Partners with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for July 4 Massachusetts 250 Signature Event

*Statewide celebration to unite communities, visitors, and partners
in honoring Massachusetts' revolutionary legacy*

BOSTON –The Healey-Driscoll administration today announced that the 2026 Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular, produced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO), will headline the Massachusetts celebration of America's 250th birthday. The free public performance on the Charles River Esplanade, officially designated as the state's MA250 Signature Event, will anchor a multi-year, statewide commemoration highlighting Massachusetts' leadership in shaping the nation's founding and future. The 2026 event will feature high-profile talent, expanded viewing opportunities, and an enhanced fireworks display that will illuminate the Charles River, celebrating Massachusetts' creativity, collaboration, and community spirit.

"Massachusetts is where the American story began, and in 2026, we will once again take center stage in celebrating the ideals that continue to define our nation – freedom, democracy and innovation," said **Governor Maura Healey**. "The Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular has been a proud and beloved Fourth of July tradition for decades, and this partnership with the Boston Symphony Orchestra

will make the 250th anniversary celebration bigger and more inspiring than ever. This milestone is about honoring our past while shaping a future where Massachusetts leads with creativity, courage and unity.”

“Massachusetts is a place for everyone, where people come together to make history, to innovate, and to celebrate community,” said **Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll**. “Through the MA250 initiative, we’re working with partners like the BSO, Eastern Bank, the MA250 Executive Committee, and the MA250 Commission to ensure that every region, every community, and every resident feels part of this once-in-a-generation celebration.”

“There’s no better place to celebrate America’s birthday than in the cradle of liberty, where it all started. For the last 250 years and counting, Boston’s spirit of revolution and innovation continues to shape our country’s history and make a difference for all Americans,” said **Mayor Michelle Wu**. “I am grateful for our ongoing partnership with the world-class Boston Symphony Orchestra, showcasing the very best as we continue an important tradition with the Boston Pops on the Esplanade and mark a pivotal milestone for our entire country.”

As part of this effort, the Healey-Driscoll Administration has invested more than \$6 million in statewide engagement initiatives to bring the 250th anniversary to life across Massachusetts. This includes \$2.5 million in support for the BSO’s production of the July 4th signature event and [\\$3.5 million in MA250 grants awarded](#) to 96 cultural organizations, municipalities, and nonprofits to create community-based programs and events that highlight Massachusetts’ revolutionary legacy.

Chad Smith, President and CEO of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and his team have been key partners in establishing the 2026 Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular as the centerpiece of the MA250 celebration. The event will feature top national and local talent, an expanded fireworks display, and storytelling that captures Massachusetts’ enduring spirit of revolution through the people, places, and ideas that shaped the nation.

“As an organization dedicated to serving the diverse communities across Massachusetts, the BSO has been presenting Boston’s free July 4th celebration for over five decades. We are honored to partner with the Commonwealth in making this year’s Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular an event that all Massachusetts residents can be proud of,” said **Chad Smith, President and CEO of the Boston Symphony Orchestra**. “The state’s generous funding, along

with broad support from corporate sponsors, our national media partner CNN, and our regional media partner WHDH, will ensure that this year's event is the biggest ever, shining a light on what continues to make Massachusetts one of the most dynamic and innovative places in the world."

The Administration also announced the formation of the MA250 Executive Committee, chaired by Bob Rivers, Executive Chair and Chair of the Board of Directors at Eastern Bank. Comprised of business, civic, and cultural leaders from across Massachusetts, the Executive Committee is working closely with the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) and the MA250 Commission to drive engagement among organizations, businesses, and communities.

With support from the Executive Committee, nearly \$5 million has been raised to date from leading Massachusetts companies who have stepped up to support the year-long celebration including Amazon, Bank of America, Biogen, Eastern Bank, Fidelity Investments, Liberty Mutual Insurance, M&T Bank, New Balance, Optum, Sanofi, Takeda Pharmaceuticals and Vertex Pharmaceuticals. These investments are helping to build momentum toward 2026 and ensure that celebrations and programs reflect the strength and creativity of the Massachusetts business community.

"It's an honor to chair the MA250 Executive Committee, working alongside business, nonprofit, and community leaders from across the state. Since our nation's founding, Massachusetts has been a place of innovation, and that continues today in how we lead across many sectors and industries, from higher education, life sciences, and manufacturing to financial services, technology, professional sports, the arts, and more," said **Bob Rivers, Executive Chair and Chair of the Board at Eastern Bank**. "We're excited to collaborate and showcase Massachusetts as a center of new ideas, creativity and progress as we celebrate America's 250th birthday."

"Our investment in the MA250 Celebration reflects not just our deep roots in the Commonwealth, but our belief in the power of partnership to create lasting impact for patients, people and the planet," said **Rhonda Pacheco, President of Takeda's U.S. Business Unit and U.S. Country Head**. "From our anchor in Cambridge to communities across the state, we're proud to help fuel a celebration that carries forward Massachusetts' legacy of revolutionary innovation."

Together, the Executive Committee and MOTT are developing the MA250 Toolkit, a comprehensive resource designed to help communities and organizations plan

and promote programs under a unified statewide brand. The toolkit will include visual assets, templates, and engagement guidance to support events, storytelling, and local tourism campaigns that connect directly to the MA250 theme.

“The 250th anniversary gives us a chance to translate our history into real economic opportunity, driving travel, supporting small businesses, and investing in the places that make Massachusetts special,” said **Secretary of Economic Development Eric Paley**. “Each visit generates revenue that strengthens our communities, and through MA250, we’re ensuring those dollars stay local and create lasting impact well beyond 2026.”

This announcement is not only about the 2026 celebration but about bringing together the partners and communities who are shaping the entire commemorative period. The signature event will unite members of the MA250 Special Commission, grant awardees, Regional Tourism Councils, and community stakeholders who have been working well before the 2024 MA250 launch to make Massachusetts the place to celebrate America’s 250th birthday. Together, they are fostering local pride in the state’s revolutionary history and its culture of innovation and “firsts.”

As the commemoration continues, the Administration and MA250 partners are highlighting key milestones that honor Massachusetts’ Revolutionary history, from the 2025 observances of Patriots’ Day, the Battles of Bunker Hill, Menotomy, and Chelsea Creek, to upcoming anniversaries such as Knox 250, Evacuation Day 250, and the culminating July 4, 2026 Signature Event with the BSO.

Revolutionary stories from across Massachusetts, its people, places, and moments of firsts, will continue to be celebrated throughout 2025 and 2026 as part of an expanded statewide marketing and storytelling campaign.

“From Boston to the Berkshires, every region has a story to tell,” said **Kate Fox, Executive Director of MOTT**. “Through the MA250 toolkit, we’re helping communities showcase their local pride and connect their celebrations under one united banner. This is for visitors, for residents, and for everyone who wants to experience the spirit of Massachusetts, past, present, and future. Our marketing and storytelling campaign, and these celebratory events, will continue to lift up the voices and places that make our state revolutionary in every sense.”

For more information about MA250 events and partnerships, visit massachusetts250.org.

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About Massachusetts 250

The Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) commemorates Massachusetts' role in the American Revolution with the Massachusetts 250 campaign, celebrating 250 years of the country's independence and the state's revolutionary spirit. The statewide campaign highlights often-told stories like Paul Revere's ride while uplifting underrepresented voices and unveiling untold stories with hundreds of events presented across the Bay State. For more information, please visit massachusetts250.org and follow the campaign on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Threads](#).

About the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism

Massachusetts is made for nights on the town, days on the trails, and everything in between. The mission of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) is to promote Massachusetts as a four-season leisure and business travel destination for domestic and international travelers and contribute to the state's economic growth. MOTT offers assistance with itinerary planning, familiarization trips, images, and photographs and offers support in providing information to the travel trade, press, and media. To plan your trip to Massachusetts, please go to visitma.com.

About the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular

Since 1929, the Boston Pops has performed its free Independence Day concert on the Esplanade, a beloved Boston tradition first conceived by Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler and carried on by John Williams and, since 1995, Keith Lockhart. A fireworks display became part of the tradition in 1974 when the late David Mugar became the event's producer, which he remained until 2016. In 2017, the Pops opened a new page in the BSO's history, presenting its first self-produced Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular. [Read more about the event's history.](#)

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