

For Immediate Release – County of Berks – Press Release

Berks County Celebrates the Berks Liberty Bell with Ceremony on July 8

Reading, PA— 05/22/2024 — The Berks County Commissioners would like to invite local legislators, the media, and the public to a patriotic ceremony on Monday, July 8, at Noon at the Berks County Liberty Bell on the first floor of the Berks County Services Center.

The Berks County Liberty Bell was first rung 248 years ago on July 8, 1776, to gather the people of Reading and the county together to hear the first reading of the newly fashioned and ratified Declaration of Independence.

The ceremony will include colonial reenactors, an explanation of the history involved, and a reading of sections of the Declaration of Independence in German. When the Declaration was first read in Berks County in 1776 by Berks County Sheriff Henry Vanderslice, the German immigrant population was so large that many residents didn't speak English. So, the Declaration of Independence was read for the first time in both English and German in Berks County. We honor that unique heritage with a partial reading in German. This year the English reading of the complete Declaration of Independence will be done by Sheriff Eric Weaknecht.

In conjunction with the Berks History Center and America250PA, the County of Berks is displaying the Berks County Liberty Bell with a reproduction of the Declaration of Independence until the end of 2026. The installation is part of a community effort to recognize Berks County's contribution to our nation's history as we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026.

Learn more: www.america250paberks.com

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For more information:

Jonathan Heintzman, Public Relations Officer

Office: 610-478-6136 x6112

Cell: 610-507-0063

Email: jheintzman@countyofberks.com