

Declaration of Independence to be read aloud in front of Dover, Del.'s Old State House on July 4, 2020

(DOVER, Del.—June 26, 2020)—In celebration of the nation's birthday, historical interpreters, dressed in replica period-clothing, will recite the Declaration of Independence aloud from near the spot where the document was first read to the citizens of Dover on July 29, 1776.



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The readings will take place on Saturday, July 4, 2020, at 2 and 4 p.m., outdoors in front of [The Old State House](#), located at 25 The Green in Dover, Del. Programs will commence with the ringing of The Old State House bell 13 times in honor of the original 13 states, followed directly by a recitation of the declaration adopted by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. The declaration announced that the American colonies then at war with Great Britain were now independent states and thus, no longer part of the British

Empire. The program is free and open to the public. Additional information is available by calling 302-744-5054.

Visitors will listen to the recitation from the Dover Green, located directly in front of The Old State House. In keeping with Gov. Carney's [Phase II guidance](#) regarding the coronavirus pandemic, visitors must maintain at least six feet of physical distance from any individual who is not a member of their household. A cloth face covering must also be worn if maintaining six feet of physical distance between individuals of different households is impracticable.



The Dover Green with The
Old State House in the
background

In addition to the Declaration of Independence readings, The Old State House and the nearby [Johnson Victrola Museum](#), located at 375 S. New St., will be open on July 4 for 30-minute, self-guided tours by reservation only. Old State House self-guided tours are currently available at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Johnson Victrola Museum self-guided tours are currently available at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Call 302-744-5054 for reservations at either venue.

Completed in 1791, The Old State House is one of the earliest capitol buildings in the nation, serving as the home of Delaware's legislature until 1933 when the General Assembly moved to larger quarters in Legislative Hall. The venerable structure now appears as it would have in the late 1700s during the United States' critical early years as an independent country. It features a courtroom, governor's and county offices and chambers for the state's Senate and House of Representatives. The building is situated on Dover's historic Green, a public area designated by William Penn in 1683. The Green is a partner site of the [First State National](#)

Historical Park.

The Old State House is administered by the [Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), an agency of the State of Delaware. The division enhances Delaware's quality of life by preserving the state's unique historical heritage, fostering community stability and economic vitality and providing educational programs and assistance to the general public on Delaware history. The division's diverse array of services includes operation of five museums which are [accredited by the American Alliance of Museums](#), administration of the State Historic Preservation Office, conservation of the state's archaeological and historic-objects collections, operation of a conference center and management of historic properties across the state. Primary funding for division programs and services is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, a federal agency. However, the contents and opinions expressed in the division's programs and services do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior.



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