

July 4, 2026

by Jack Balch, Mayor of Pleasanton, CA

The Fourth of July has always been one of my favorite days of the year. A day filled with family and friends, music and laughter, barbecues and probably a little too much eating.

But beyond the celebrations, it is a day that connects us all as Americans. Two hundred and fifty years ago, an extraordinary idea was set into motion, an idea that has inspired generations while reminding each generation that our work is never finished.

America has never been perfect. Our Constitution speaks of forming a more perfect Union, and that simple phrase hopefully reminds all of us that each generation has both the privilege and the responsibility to leave our nation a little stronger than we found it.

One of my favorite thoughts about birthdays is this that they don't simply celebrate another year gone by, but they also celebrate the hope, promise, and possibilities of the years still to come. When my family sings "Happy Birthday", we end with saying "and many more"!

Today, as America celebrates her 250th birthday, I hope we celebrate not only where we've been, but where we're going... 'and many more'.

I hope we continue choosing kindness over division, service over cynicism, and community over conflict. I hope we continue believing in one another.

Because the strength of America has never simply been found in Washington, D.C., or in our founding documents alone. It is found in the people, communities like Pleasanton... in neighbors helping neighbors, volunteers giving their time, families raising children with strong values, and people who simply care enough to serve something bigger than themselves.

If each of us leaves today a little more committed to serving our neighbor, strengthening our community, and participating in our democracy, America begins her next 250 years stronger than she began this day.

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, I ask you to protect her promise, our promise, not just on the Fourth of July, but every day.

Advance kindness.

Practice empathy.

Cultivate gratitude.

Show up — because participation is how promises endure.

Serve.

Listen.

And yes – please vote.

Because America's next chapter won't be written by history. It will be written.... by us.

Thank you for being part of Pleasanton's story.

Thank you for being part of America's story.

Happy 250th Birthday, America... and to many more.