



Dear America,

This year you turn 250 and that's a remarkable milestone! Not because 250 years is a long time, though it is. And not because the journey has been smooth, because it certainly hasn't been. What makes this birthday so special is that Americans have continued to do something unusual. When faced with a challenge, we come together. We form businesses, start nonprofits, create civic organizations, volunteer, and work hard. We continue to gather around shared goals and find ways to move forward together.

More than 190 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that Americans seemed uniquely inclined to form associations to solve problems and strengthen their communities. Nearly two centuries later, that observation still rings true. At the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, we see it every day.

Since 1912 we have watched business leaders, community members, educators, nonprofits, and public servants come together to improve the place they call home. We've seen businesses keep their doors open during difficult times. We've seen competitors work together for the betterment of their community. We've seen local leaders put aside differences to solve complex problems and invest in our collective future. Those moments rarely make national headlines, but they are an intrinsic part of the American story. America's 250th birthday arrives during a time when many people feel divided from one another. However, what gives us hope is that the spirit of collaboration remains alive in communities across the country just as it does in Frederick County.

The monumental task of building a stronger country has never belonged to one person or institution. It has always belonged to all of us. For generations, this is what chambers of commerce all over the country have represented. We don't just stand for business advocacy, but the belief that communities thrive when individuals and organizations come together around a shared purpose.

As we celebrate America's first 250 years, we do so with gratitude for all those who came before us and optimism for those who will follow. The American story is still being written. Its next chapter will be shaped by the same qualities that have carried us so far: hard work, civic engagement, entrepreneurship, service, and a willingness to build something larger than ourselves. May we continue that work together.

Happy Birthday, America!

Sincerely,

Rick Weldon
President & CEO, Frederick County Chamber of Commerce