



HAPPY 250TH, AMERICA FROM GREATER OMAHA

Dear United States of America,

In 250 years, what began as the greatest idea in history became a nation unlike anything the world had ever seen. A nation built on hope. A nation built on opportunity. A nation built on the belief that people should have the right to shape their own future, build a better life, and leave something stronger for the generations who follow.

That idea did not stay confined to Philadelphia in 1776. It moved west. It crossed rivers, valleys, mountains, and prairies. It called people to take risks, start businesses, raise families, build communities, and create new centers of American possibility. Seventy-eight years after the Declaration of Independence, Omaha was founded on July 4, 1854. That shared date has always felt fitting.

Because Omaha's story is, in many ways, America's story. What started as a frontier town along the Missouri River, has now grown into the hub of a one-million-person metropolitan region. More than 170 years after its founding, Greater Omaha is home to people from every background, every faith, every walk of life, and every corner of the world, all contributing in their own way to the strength of our region and the success of our nation.

Omaha was built by people who believed tomorrow could be better than today. They came here to work hard, to make their way, to raise their children, and to belong to something larger than themselves. That is not just Omaha's story. That is America's story.

Across this country, in cities large and small, generations of Americans have built communities like ours because they lived in a nation that made such growth possible. Great leaders, courageous citizens, entrepreneurs, workers, service members, and families all played a role in building a country where places like Omaha could rise, compete, prosper, and contribute to something far greater.

America has fought to secure its rights, expand its promise, and defend the freedoms that allow people to pursue their own path. It has taken free enterprise, innovation, and capitalism to heights the world had never seen before. We are creating prosperity on a scale that has allowed our nation to feed, educate, employ, heal, and care for its people in ways the great empires of the past could have only dreamed of.

That is the enduring strength of America: the belief that freedom, opportunity, responsibility, and community, can together build a better future. We see that spirit every day in the small business owner opening their doors before sunrise, the teacher preparing the next generation, the manufacturer investing in new technology, the health care worker caring for a neighbor, the young professional choosing to grow a career here, the volunteer giving time to a cause they believe in, and the civic leader working to make their home stronger.

America's 250th birthday is a moment to look back with gratitude, but it is also a moment to look forward with purpose. The promise of America has always depended on communities willing to do the work. Communities willing to compete, welcome, innovate, serve, and lead. Communities willing to create opportunity not only for those here today, but for those who will arrive tomorrow.

That is the work before Greater Omaha, and it is the work before every community that believes America's best days are still ahead. Two hundred and fifty years ago, America began with an idea. One hundred and seventy-two years ago, Omaha became one expression of that idea. Today, more than one million people across Greater Omaha are carrying it forward, just as communities across this country are carrying it forward in their own way.

May we continue to build a region worthy of that inheritance. May we continue to strengthen a nation worthy of its promise. May the next generation look back on this moment and say that we did our part.

Happy 250th birthday, America.

With gratitude and optimism,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heath Mello".

Heath Mello, President & CEO
GREATER OMAHA CHAMBER