



A Letter to America

From the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia, a Birthday Message to America,

*"Almost Heaven, West Virginia
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River
Life is old there, older than the trees
Younger than the mountains, growin' like a breeze"*

Take Me Home, Country Roads (John Denver, 1971)

On this most joyous occasion, when the experiment of democracy turns 250 years old, we celebrate with a patriotic spirit across the mountains of West Virginia.

In West Virginia, you are either a Veteran or related to a Veteran.

In the cause of freedom and democracy, our little state has sacrificed more of our men and women than nearly any other state, per capita, in our nation's wars. The Mountain State was formed during the Civil War, with the hope of a brighter, more prosperous future for all Americans, no matter their background. We are the only state formed by seceding, showing our courage, resilience, and audacity that is as great as the mountains, wild rivers, and rugged valleys that shape us.

It is this fiery, courageous beginning that has guided us during our 163 years of statehood. The nature of a West Virginian is to stand up for what we believe, no matter the cost. That is why on our nation's 250th birthday, we celebrate our entrance into this union of states, and the sacrifices of all the patriots who have stepped forward to keep our nation free.

From the many businesses that are proud to call the Kanawha Valley home, we help fuel the nation with our abundant natural resources, products born from patents developed here, goods that keep you safe in your car and comfortable in your homes, and salt from an ancient ocean buried deep beneath the Appalachian Mountains, still harvested and packaged here in our valley. We are the birthplace of ingenuity and it is this spirit that will help keep our nation the strongest in the world for the next 250 years and beyond.

West Virginia consistently ranks in the top five for percentage of Veteran owned businesses, which is more than a statistic, it is a way of life. We've mined the coal that forged the steel that built the guns and ships that turned the United States of America into the world's superpower. That would not have been possible without the people of West Virginia.

As our nation turns 250, let us all remember the principles that guided us to create a more perfect union. And, from the hills of West Virginia, let us all remember our courageous beginnings during the Civil War, when we stood in the face of fire for the ideals that guided us. No matter our background or beliefs, we all agree on more than we disagree; that we are a democracy worth fighting for.

- Mara Boggs, President & CEO