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Chamber President Darren Richardson presented the 2025 Man of the Year award to Leon Word



2025 Woman of the Year - Brandy Flanagan

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the business community



2025 Youth of the Year - Suzy Perez

2025-26 Executive Board of Directors

President: Darren Richardson

1st Vice President: Harold Wells

Treasurer: Jim Bardwell

Immediate Past President: Jon Keller

Executive Director: Lois Reed

Board of Directors

Ferrell Alexander

Jim Bardwell

Marsha Byrd

Sam Cloud

Ruby Henry

Jon Keller

Lois Reed

Darren Richardson

Elaine Roddy

Judy Van Houten

Arron Watson

Harold Wells

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“On July 4, 2026, we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the greatest nation in the history of the world. ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.’ Long may these ideals live in the heart of every Texan and every American. May God bless all who have defended our freedoms that we enjoy each day. And God bless the United States of America.”

Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas

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2025 Business of the Year award went to: Large Business - City National Bank; and Small Business - Three Roots Boutique




2025 Educator of the Year - Leah Bickerdike, GMS

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Maxey Cerliano
Gregg County Sheriff

Pol. Ad Pd. for by Maxey Cerliano

The History Of Gladewater

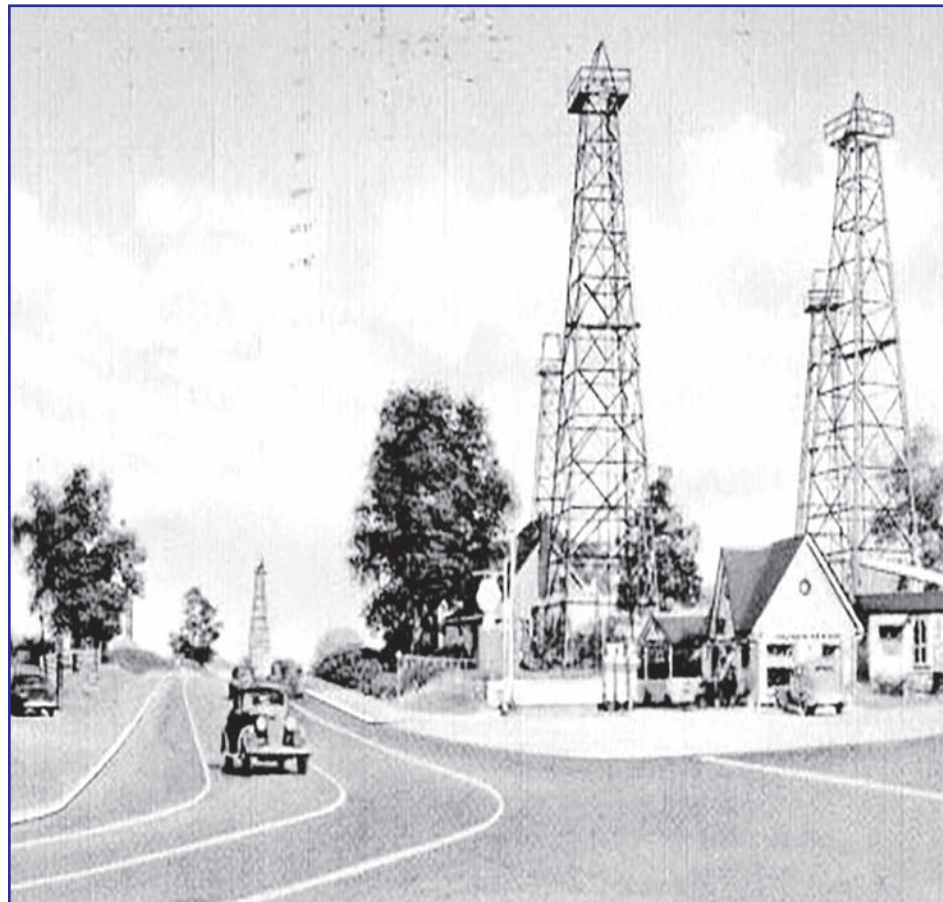
Gladewater was founded by the Texas and Pacific Railway Company in 1873 on land bought from Jarrett Dean and Anderson White. A community called St. Clair, two miles to the east, moved to Gladewater when the railroad announced that the only mail stop in the area would be there; residents from Point Pleasant, also bypassed by the railroad, moved to Gladewater. The first post office at Gladewater was established on August 22, 1873. The town's name probably originated from its proximity to Glade Creek, a stream that rose in a rather barren region called the Glades.

In 1874 Gladewater was incorporated with a mayor-alderman government. The incorporation lapsed, and a new charter was not obtained until 1931, when an influx of population necessitated organized city government. In 1955 Gladewater adopted a council-mayor form of government. The population grew slowly during the nineteenth century; the town had only 163 people in 1880 and 259 in 1900. In the area around Gladewater lumbering was a major activity, although farming was also important; cotton was the major crop. In 1908 the town had ten stores, one bank, two blacksmith shops, two hotels, a gin, a sawmill, and a planing mill. It continued to grow slowly until 1931.

On April 7, 1931, the first Gladewater oil well blew in. It was located one mile outside town in the Sabine River bottom. Oil production led to a population increase during the 1930s from about 500 persons to around 8,000.

During the 1970s Gladewater moved from an oil-oriented to a more diversified economy, primarily because of depletion of oil resources in the area. The movement of salt water into the western edge of the large East Texas oilfield affected Gladewater first. By the 1980s the city gained the official title of "Antique Capital of East Texas," with the downtown streets full of shoppers rather than roughnecks.

(Information courtesy of The Gladewater Museum)



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The 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award went to Rocky Hawkins



The 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award also went to Rose Owens

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Chamber President Darren Richardson selected Judy Van Houten and Arron Watson (not present) for the 2025 Bradley Service Award



Ella Williams, Chamber Yamboree Representative, was presented a special service award by Chamber President Darren Richardson



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95 years of service*

Rae Ann Patty, GISD Superintendent
www.gladewaterisd.com



Past Winners

1961—Herman Williams
 1962—Charles McChesney
 1963—Ben McHenry
 1964—C. Q. Abernathy
 1965—Dr. Harold McDowell
 1966—Ken Bennett
 1967—Ellen Beauman
 1968—Earnest A. Martin, Jr.
 1969—Mack Wiley
 1970—Jim Holcomb
 1971—Billy D. Langford
 1972—C.O. "Bud" Weiser
 1973—Mrs. C.A. [Dale] Lee
 1974—Fredalene Clark
 1975—Milton R. Bolgiano
 1976—Johnn Paul Tallent
 1976—Nauty Byrd Mayer
 1976—Calvin Brannen (Senior Citizen)
 1977—Donis Earp
 1977—Marilyn Godfrey

1977—Vivian Dillard (Senior Citizen)
 1977—Benjamin Bright (outstanding youth)
 1978—Gordon J. Mayer
 1978—Faye Mackey
 1978—Mrs. L. C. Keoun (Senior Citizen)
 1978—John Ussery (outstanding youth)
 1979—Hurshel Baker
 1979—Jessie Mae Pynes
 1979—Dorothy Scroggins (Senior Citizen)
 1979—Bert Sharp (outstanding youth)
 1980—John McKain
 1980—Carolyn Linder
 1980—Jess Turner (Senior Citizen)
 1980—Patrick Money (outstanding youth)
 1981—Mike Ogg
 1981—Avyl Terrell
 1981—Angela Holcomb (outstanding youth)
 1982—H.L. McKaig
 1982—Lillie Mae McKaig
 1982—Philip Sanov (outstanding youth)

1983—Buddy Perryman
 1983—Shirley Summers
 1983—Terry Bircher (outstanding youth)
 1984—Hurshel Baker
 1984—Joyce Hanes
 1984—Kimberly Mackey (outstanding youth)
 1985—Charles Carpenter
 1985—Marilyn Godfrey
 1986—Harold Wells
 1986—Melba M. Thornton
 1987—Jack L. Phillips
 1987—Beth Bishop
 1988—Jackie Wood
 1988—Sue Anderson
 1989—LeRoy Adams (awarded posthumously)
 1989—Val Smith
 1990—George Meisenheimer
 1990—Sondra Daniel
 1991—E.E. "Red" Copeland
 1991—Joyce Hugman
 1992—Brenda Kaster
 1992—Homer Hanes
 1993—Jerry Kates
 1993—Paka Goodwin
 1994—Carol Heit
 1994—Bob Goodwin
 1995—Linda Patton

1995—Todd Clifton
 1996—JO Williams (Business of the Year)
 1996—Marsha Valdetero
 1996—Jerry Anderson
 1996—Vickie Rockett (Teacher of the Year)
 1997—Wanda Marlowe
 1997—Jack V. Murphy
 1997—Daniels (Business of the Year)
 1997—Debbie Reyna (Teacher of the Year)
 1998—Mary E. Williams
 1998—C. Hugh Bowden
 1998—Hugman/Kent Clinic (Business)
 1998—Carolyn Ricks and
 Delores Lawson (Teachers of Year)
 1999—Sharon Johnson
 1999—Walter Derrick
 1999—Tallent Construction (Business)
 1999—Vickie Jones (Teacher)
 2000—Richard Parrish
 2000—Margaret Larkins
 2000—Cox Communications (Business)
 2000—Ann Matherne (Teacher)
 2001—Maxine Stein
 2001—Dr. G. Robert Hugman
 2001—JDW Services (Business)
 2001—Nancy Ward (Teacher)
 2002—Mildred Bowden Jones

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**Gladewater
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Meets noon Thursdays at Chamber of Commerce

2002— Jimmy Davis
 2002—Melinda Domain (Teacher)
 2002—U.S. Filter (Business)
 2003—Lon Welton
 2003—Margaret Bell
 2003—McKaig Chevrolet (Business)
 2004—Cisco Frierson
 2004—Eulalia Hill-Allen
 2004—Vital Earth Resources (Business)
 2005— Joe Derouen
 2005— Beverly Tallent
 2005— Brookshire's (Business)
 2005— Connie Turner (Teacher)
 2006— Roy Johnson
 2006— Gerry Rivers
 2006— Jobe Drug (Business)
 2006— Donna Patterson (Teacher)
 2007— Ray Peden
 2007— Elaine Roddy
 2007— Jamie Cook (Teacher)
 2007— Texas Bank & Trust (Business)
 2008— Bennie Cornutt
 2008— Barbara Mackey
 2008— Harold Wells (Business)
 2008— Margaret White (Teacher)
 2009— Dr. Kenneth Skipper
 2009— Judy Burlison

2009— Jeff LaRoux (Teacher)
 2009— Rocket Realty (Business)
 2010— Wayne "Snuffy" Smith
 2010— Ruby Henry
 2010— Carolyn Ricks (Teacher)
 2010— Croley Funeral Home (Business)
 2011— Jimmy Williams
 2011— Stephani Chance
 2011— Betty Wilson (Teacher)
 2011— Antique RV Park (Business)
 2012— Mark May
 2012— Paige Linder
 2012— Vickey Bright (Teacher)
 2012— Joe Fife Feed (Business)
 2013— Dr. Michael Ellis
 2013— Lana Niemann
 2013— Candy Keller (Teacher)
 2013— Decorate Ornate (Business)
 2014— J.D. Shipp
 2014— Lois Reed
 2014— Dee Lawson (Teacher)
 2014— Classic Stitch (Business)
 2014— Christian Allen (Volunteer)
 2015— Christian Allen
 2015— Melba Haralson
 2015— Stephaney Wallace (Teacher)
 2015— Austin Bank (Business)

2015— Linda Dougan (Volunteer)
 2016— Elijah "Sonny" Anderson
 2016— Suzanne Bardwell
 2016— Robert Chadwick (Teacher)
 2016— Gladewater National Bank (Business)
 2016— John Paul Tallent & Sonny Anderson (Volunteers)
 2017— Robert Johnson
 2017— Marsha Byrd
 2017— Christy McQueen & Laura Hawkins (Teachers of the Year)
 2017— Bailey's Ace Hardware (Business)
 2017—Walter Crain Landscaping (Volunteer)
 2018— John Ussery
 2018— Charla Nash
 2018— Kevin Clark (Teacher)
 2018— TICO (Business)
 2018— Jamie Ballard (Volunteer)
 2019— Darren Richardson
 2019— Sheila Faggans
 2019— Sakkinah Bal Corta (Teacher)
 2019— Gladewater Mirror (Business)
 2019— Clayton Burroughs (Volunteer)
 2020— Matt Byrd
 2020— Karla Byrd
 2020— Emily Brown (Teacher)
 2020— Scubby Love (Business)

2020—Brandy Flanagan (Volunteer)
 2021— Jim Bardwell
 2021— Cathy Shipp
 2021— Megan Morris (Educator)
 2021— Sasquatch Trading Post (Business)
 2021— Darla Ferguson (Volunteer)
 2022— Jon Keller
 2022— Judy Van Houten
 2022— Michael Jackson (Teacher)
 2022— Equipment Share (Business)
 2022— Lois Reed (Volunteer)
 2023— Al Harrison
 2023— Sandra Ayres-Smith
 2023— Amanda Carnet (Educator)
 2023— Michael Gunn (Business)
 2023— Harold Wells (Volunteer)
 2023— Johnnay Hawley (Youth)
 2024— Brian Smith (Man of the Year)
 2024— Tammy Jeter Kessler (Woman of Year)
 2024— Christy Carter (Educator)
 2024— Jackson's Cozy Theater (Business)
 2024— Todd Clifton (Special Service)
 2024— Astrith Alvarez (Youth)

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A Nation's Story

How America Reached Its 250th Anniversary

The story of the United States spans 250 years of change, growth and adjustment.

From a small group of colonies along the Atlantic coast to a nation that stretches across a continent, America developed through choices made over generations.

Its history reflects continuity shaped by adaptation rather than a single defining moment.

The nation's origins lie in the late 18th century, when colonists sought independence from British rule. The Declaration of Independence articulated shared principles, while the Constitution established a framework for self-government. Together, these documents balanced ideals with practical governance, creating a system designed to endure while allowing future revision.

Early national life required experimentation. Leaders tested approaches to finance, law and diplomacy, while citizens adjusted to a new civic identity. Establishing courts, regulating trade and organizing federal departments helped stabilize the young republic. The admission of new states expanded both geography and political responsibility, drawing diverse communities into a shared national project.



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GROWTH AND CHANGE

The 19th century brought rapid transformation. Transportation improvements such as canals and railroads connected regions and supported commerce. Immigration increased population and cultural diversity, while industrialization altered work, cities and daily routines. These forces pushed

institutions to evolve and required ongoing adjustment at local and national levels.

The Civil War tested the durability of the union and reshaped national priorities. Its aftermath required reconstruction, reconciliation and rebuilding across large portions of the country. Despite deep disruption, the nation continued to grow economically and territorially, reinforcing a commitment to

shared governance and continuity.

The 20th century introduced global engagement and internal change. World wars expanded America's role on the world stage and accelerated technological development. Economic growth following World War II supported rising living standards, expanded access to education and increased homeownership, reshaping

everyday life in communities across the country.

SHARED EXPERIENCE

In the latter half of the century, advances in technology, transportation and communication further changed how Americans lived and worked. Interstate highways connected regions, air travel reduced distance and new media reshaped information sharing. These developments influenced commerce, culture and daily routines in lasting ways.

Entering the 21st century, Americans continued adjusting to rapid innovation, demographic change and evolving expectations. New technologies reshaped communication and work, while communities adapted to economic shifts and population movement. These changes reflected continuity with the nation's long tradition of adjustment rather than departure from it.

As the nation reaches its 250th anniversary, its story reflects resilience built through adaptation. America's history is not a single narrative but a collection of shared experiences linked by common principles. That balance of continuity and change remains central to understanding how the nation arrived at this milestone and how it continues forward.

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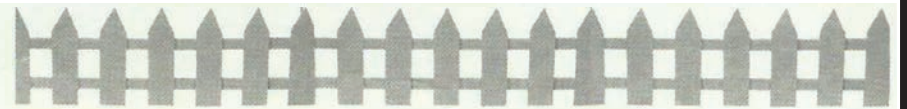
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Elijah Anderson

PLACE 7 - COUNCILMEMBER
Kevin Clark

PLACE 2 - COUNCILMEMBER
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 Flanagan, Brandy

G

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 Gladewater Family Dental
 Gladewater Flower Shop
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 Gladewater ISD
 Gladewater Mirror
 Gladewater Museum
 Gladewater National Bank
 Gladewater Round Up Rodeo Association
 Gladewater Thrive & Connect
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 Goodwill Industries of East Texas
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 Helen Lee Foundation
 Henry, Ruby
 Hess, Brad & Kristi
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 Holly Dental-Gladewater
 Hometown Antiques & Auction
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V

Van Houten, Judy

Vital Earth Resources

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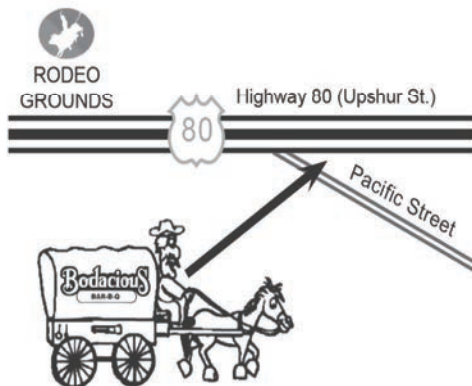
Wade, Ternisha
Webber, Michael
Weigant Fiberglass Collision Repair
Weldon Alumni Association
Wells, Harold
Wheeler Family Homemade Ice Cream
Wild West Hair Salon
White, Karen
Wild's Creek & Company
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Famous Words On America

A Quick Tour of Lines That Still Ring True

Few things travel as well as a good line. In the United States, memorable quotes have helped describe the country's ambitions, its civic habits and its everyday hopes.

As America reaches its 250th birthday in 2026, these words offer a readable timeline, from the founding era to modern speeches, that many readers still recognize.

Some quotes are formal and public, delivered to Congress or to crowds. Others are shorter, meant to be repeated at kitchen tables, in classrooms and in ceremonies.

Together they show how Americans have explained the idea of the nation in moments of uncertainty and in times of shared pride.

FOUNDING ERA VOICES

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence set a tone that still anchors American public life, asserting that “all men are created equal” and are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.” The document, adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, also names those rights: “Life, Liberty and the pursuit



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of Happiness.”

A little more than a decade later, the Constitution opened with a statement that is both simple and durable: “We the People of the United States.” The Preamble’s opening words, drafted in 1787 and ratified in 1788, continue to appear in courthouses, textbooks and civic programs as a reminder that self-government rests on citizens.

LIBERTY AND LEADERSHIP

Abraham Lincoln, speaking at Gettysburg on Nov. 19, 1863, offered one of the country’s

best-known summaries of democratic purpose. He described “government of the people, by the people, for the people” as something that “shall not perish from the earth.” The address, delivered during the Civil War, linked national sacrifice to a practical idea: keeping representative government alive.

In 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt used his State of the Union address to outline “Four Freedoms,” including “freedom of speech and expression” and “freedom of worship.” The speech came as war spread across Europe and

Asia. The phrasing helped many Americans talk about civic values in clear terms that could be taught and remembered.

EVERYDAY ASPIRATIONS

Not all well-known American lines come from presidents. In 1963, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. told the March on Washington crowd, “I have a dream,” a refrain that has remained familiar because it points to achievable civic work, including fairness in daily life.

In 1989, novelist and essayist James Baldwin captured

another lasting thought in “The Price of the Ticket”: “This is your home. Do not be driven from it.” The sentence is often quoted for its plain-spoken encouragement to claim a place in the national story.

Quotes do not replace history, but they can help people enter it. Read closely, these lines show Americans describing ideals, responsibilities and belonging in words meant to carry beyond a single day.

In an anniversary year, they offer a reminder that the country’s story is also told one sentence at a time.

From Main Street To Megacities

How Towns, Cities and Regions Grew Into Home

From village greens to downtown grids, American communities grew where people could gather, trade and build a future.

Geography set the first boundaries, while technology and migration kept redrawing the map. By the nation's 250th year, Main Streets, neighborhoods and suburbs tell a shared story of local pride and practical choices.

Early towns often took shape along rivers and harbors, where water powered mills and carried goods. Boston, New York and Charleston developed as colonial ports, tying regional economies to the Atlantic world. Inland, settlements followed the Appalachian valleys, the Ohio River and later the Great Lakes, linking farms to markets.

Geography also shaped identity. New England villages tended to cluster around meetinghouses and commons, while plantation regions in the South spread out along navigable waterways. In the arid West, access to water influenced where towns could grow, from river crossings to irrigation districts. Climate, soil and terrain helped determine what people raised, built and celebrated.



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RAILROADS AND ROADS

The 19th century railroad boom reorganized distance and time. The 1869 completion of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah connected the coasts by rail, helping new towns rise along depots and junctions. Chicago's growth into a rail hub made it a gateway between eastern factories and western farms, while smaller railroad towns often formed around a

station, a grain elevator and a few blocks of storefronts.

Rail lines also encouraged regional specialization. Timber, coal and cattle could reach distant buyers, supporting places that once felt remote. At the same time, communities learned to live with the rhythms of freight schedules and passenger service, with hotels, warehouses and residential streets laid out to meet the tracks.

In the 20th century, highways added a new layer. U.S.

Route 66, established in 1926, linked Chicago to Los Angeles and became a corridor of diners, motels and service stations. The Interstate Highway System, authorized by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, sped travel between metro areas and shifted retail and industry toward interchanges and beltways. Many downtowns adapted by emphasizing civic buildings, local shops and events that kept the center of town active.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND SUBURBS

As cities expanded, neighborhoods formed around workplaces, streetcar lines and shared culture. Immigration helped define districts in many cities, from Polish and Italian enclaves in the Midwest to Chinese communities on the West Coast. The Great Migration, which brought millions of Black Americans from the rural South to northern and western cities in the 20th century, reshaped music, labor and local politics while building strong institutions such as churches and newspapers.

After World War II, suburbs grew quickly as homebuilding expanded and car ownership became common. Levittown on Long Island, begun in 1947, is often cited as an early large-scale suburban development. Suburbs developed their own Main Streets, schools and parks, and many regions evolved into connected networks of downtowns, town centers and job hubs.

Across 250 years, the pattern repeats: people choose places that help them work, worship, learn and belong. Whether a county seat on a river, a rail town on the plains or a neighborhood built around a corner store, communities took shape through movement and local decisions, turning maps into home.

American Firsts

Milestones That Changed Life at Home and Beyond

Throughout its history, the United States marked progress through a series of notable firsts.

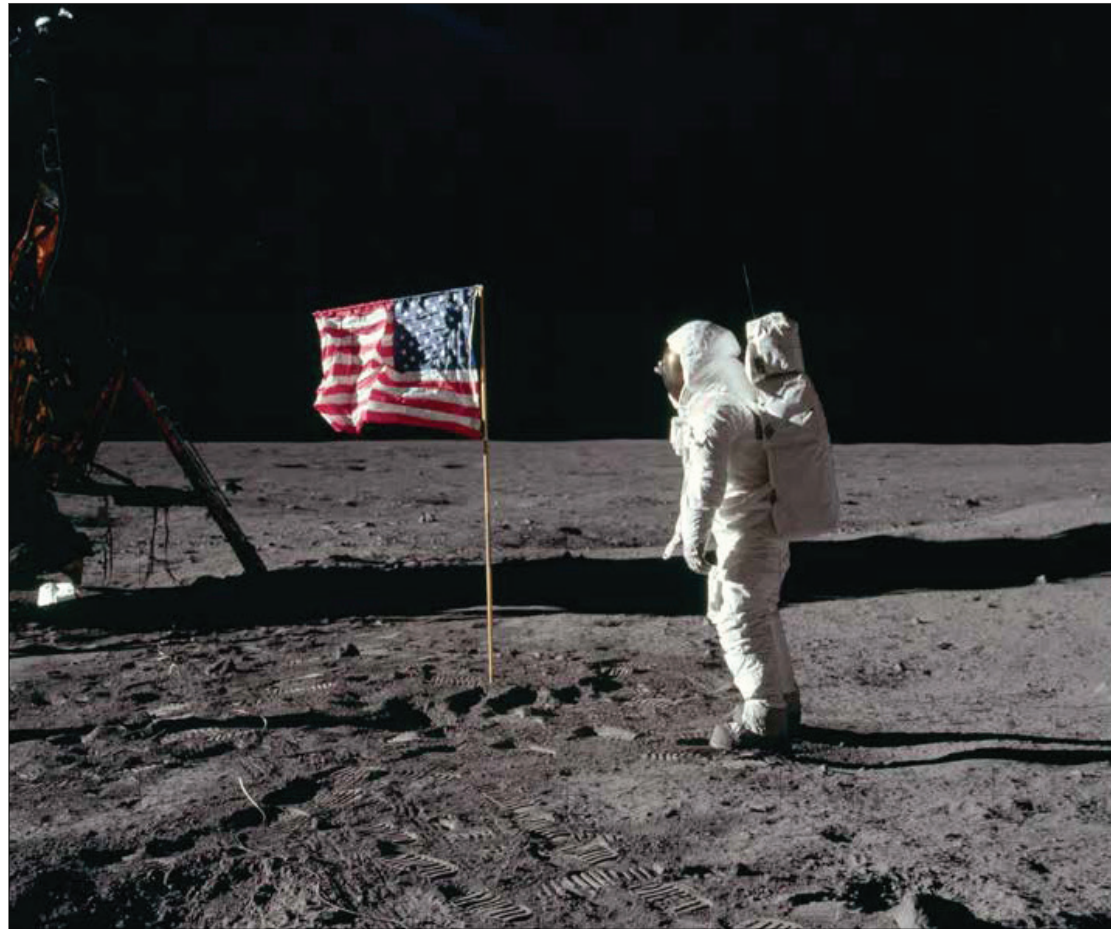
These moments reflected curiosity, persistence and a willingness to try what had not been done before. Over 250 years, American firsts often began as practical efforts to solve problems, then grew into developments that influenced daily life far beyond their origins.

One early example came in transportation. In 1807, Robert Fulton's successful steamboat demonstrated that powered vessels could travel upstream reliably. This advance transformed river travel, supporting trade and settlement along major waterways and helping connect inland communities to coastal markets.

Other early firsts followed a similar pattern. New tools and methods were tested locally, then adopted more widely as their usefulness became clear.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

In 1869, the completion of the first transcontinental railroad linked the eastern and western United States by rail. This connection reduced travel time dramatically and strengthened the national



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economy. Goods, people and ideas moved more freely across the continent, reshaping commerce and migration.

Innovation continued into the skies. In 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright achieved the first successful powered airplane flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Though brief, the flight demonstrated controlled, sustained air travel. Within decades, aviation became essential to transportation, commerce and

national defense.

American firsts also appeared in communication. Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, patented in 1876, allowed voices to travel across distance. This changed business, personal relationships and emergency response, bringing immediacy to everyday interaction.

SCIENCE AND SERVICE

The 20th century

introduced firsts that reshaped health and science. The widespread use of antibiotics beginning in the 1940s improved survival rates and transformed medical treatment. These advances extended life expectancy and changed how communities approached public health.

In 1969, the Apollo 11 mission placed the first humans on the moon. This achievement required coordination across government, industry

and education. While its setting was distant, the effort produced technologies and skills that later found practical uses on Earth.

American firsts were not limited to exploration. They also included organizational achievements, such as large-scale manufacturing systems and coordinated emergency response, which improved safety and efficiency.

EVERYDAY IMPACT

What unites these milestones is their effect on ordinary life. Firsts often moved from experiment to expectation, becoming part of daily routines. Steamboats, railroads, telephones and air travel all followed this path.

Many American firsts emerged through collaboration rather than individual effort alone. Engineers, workers, educators and communities contributed to their success, sharing knowledge and adapting ideas over time.

As the nation approaches its 250th anniversary, American firsts offer more than a list of accomplishments. They illustrate a pattern of testing ideas, learning from results and building on what works. That approach continues to shape innovation, reminding Americans that progress often begins with a willingness to try something new.

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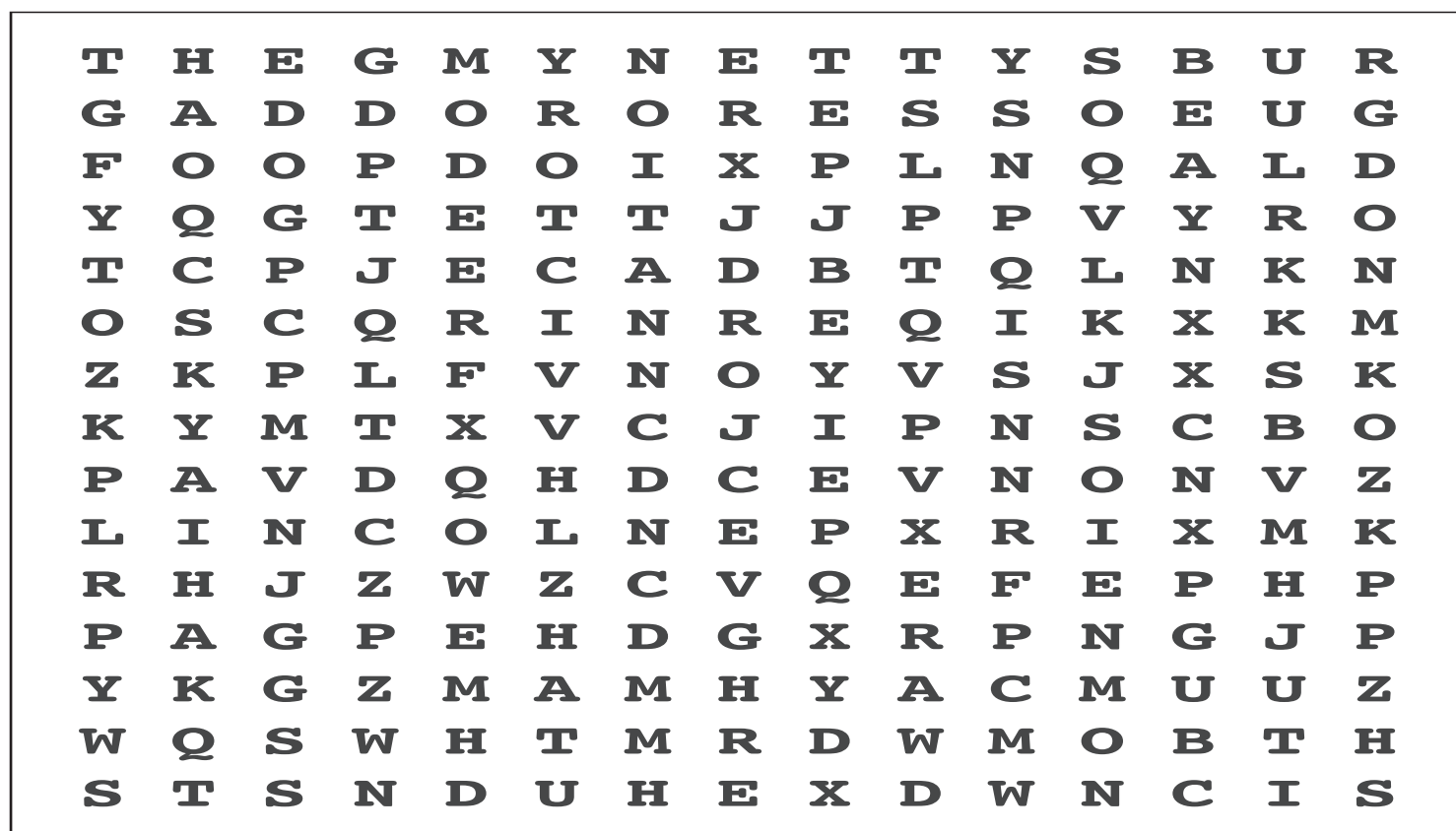
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This word search puzzle has a hidden message in it.

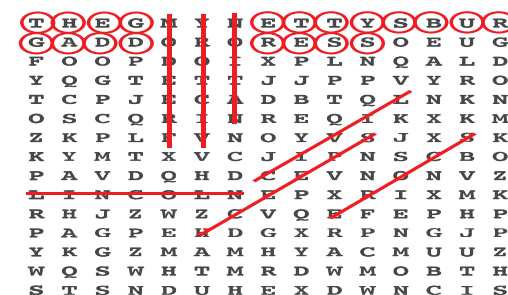
- Find all of the words in the list.
- Words can go in any direction and share letters as well as cross over each other.
- Once you find all of the words, copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner into the blanks to reveal the hidden message.



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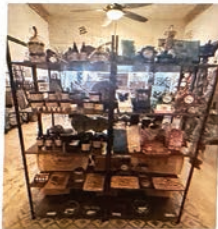
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Looking Ahead

How Recent History Offers Clues About What Comes Next

Looking ahead has always involved uncertainty. Throughout American history, change arrived unevenly, shaped by innovation, migration and shifting expectations.

Rather than following a single plan, the nation has repeatedly adjusted course in response to new conditions. Recent decades provide useful context for understanding how that process continues.

After World War II, the United States experienced rapid growth that reshaped daily life. Suburban development expanded housing and changed transportation patterns, while expanded access to education opened new opportunities for millions of families. The GI Bill helped veterans attend college and enter new professions, influencing long-term economic mobility. These changes unfolded gradually, influenced by economic conditions, public policy and personal choice rather than a single defining moment.

The second half of the 20th century brought additional transitions. Manufacturing remained important, but



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service industries grew as offices, retail and professional services expanded.

Global trade increased, connecting American businesses and consumers more closely to international markets. These shifts altered how and where people worked, especially in urban and industrial regions.

SHIFTS IN SOCIETY

Social change also influenced the national direction. The civil rights movement reshaped laws, institutions

and expectations, expanding participation and opportunity in public life. Education systems, workplaces and communities adjusted over time, reflecting broader changes in who had access to economic and civic life.

Technology added another layer of change. The widespread use of personal computers and later the internet transformed communication, commerce and information access. Businesses adopted digital tools, while households adjusted to

faster communication and new forms of connection that reduced distance and time.

These developments did not affect every community in the same way. Geography, industry and local resources shaped how change was experienced across the country.

RECENT ADJUSTMENTS

In the early 21st century, new patterns emerged. Advances in digital technology supported remote work and flexible schedules, changing

how Americans balance work, home and community. Shifts in retail, logistics and media reflected new consumer habits and expectations.

At the same time, supply chain disruptions and economic uncertainty renewed attention to domestic production and trade policy.

In recent years, the United States moved toward a more protectionist approach in some areas of trade and manufacturing. This shift reflected concerns about resilience, security and economic stability rather than ideology alone.

CONTINUITY AND CHOICE

History suggests that the future forms through response rather than prediction. Americans have repeatedly adjusted to changing circumstances without knowing their eventual outcomes.

Progress has often come through experimentation, revision and local adaptation rather than certainty.

As the nation approaches its 250th anniversary, looking ahead means recognizing patterns already in motion. The next chapter will continue to emerge from choices shaped by experience, opportunity and changing conditions, carrying forward a long tradition of adjustment in an uncertain world.



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