

☆☆☆ THE GREAT ☆☆☆ SUMMER FUN GUIDE



CELEBRATING AMERICA'S AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S 250TH

2026 marks the Semiquincentennial — the 250th anniversary of both the United States of America and Montgomery County, Maryland.

BY CARYN R. SAGAL

The Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 — renouncing British rule over the 13 colonies and paving the way for a new nation where “all men are created equal” and possess unalienable rights, including “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

On Sept. 6, 1776, the Maryland Constitutional Convention passed a bill creating Montgomery County from the lower portion of Frederick County. Named after Revolutionary War hero Richard Montgomery, the new county was one of the first in the nation established by elected representatives, and among the first in Maryland named for popular Americans.

To commemorate these major milestones, Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. will offer everything from exhibits and talks to fireworks and fun. Here are our favorites among the festivities.

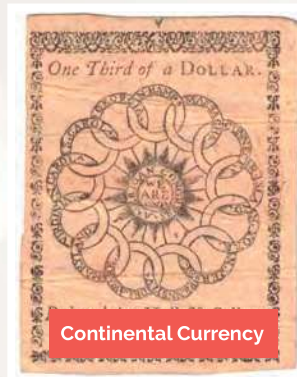
MONTGOMERY

ROCKVILLE 250: OUR AMERICAN STORY

Red Brick Courthouse

Through Fall 2026

Peerless Rockville's pictorial exhibit traces American history as it happened in Rockville. Learn how Rockville grew with the nation, from its revolutionary days, through the antebellum era of slavery and fight for emancipation, into the mid-century baby boom with suburbanization, to become today's modern and diverse 21st-century city.



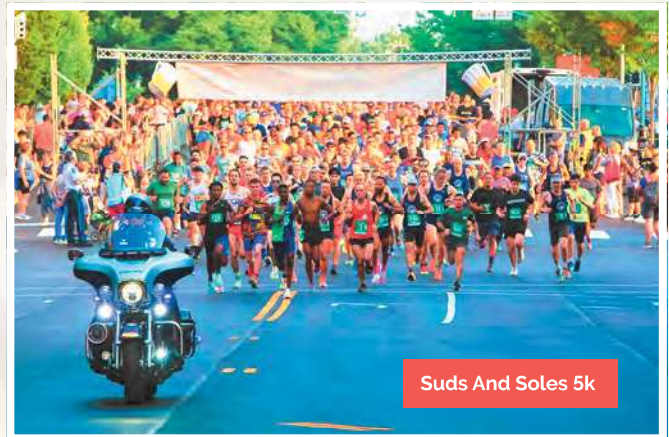
Continental Currency

MONEY OF THE 13 COLONIES EXHIBIT Gaithersburg Community Museum

June 3-Aug. 26

Follow America's path from royal rule to independence through rare paper money from all 13 colonies and the Continental Congress. This currency (on loan from the Maryland State Numismatic

Association) reveals shifting loyalties, colonial identities and the chaotic evolution of systems during the birth of a nation.



Suds And Soles 5k

SUDS & SOLES 5K

Rockville Town Center

June 13

As part of the America250 commemoration, this year's 5K will include patriotic giveaways and décor, in addition to kids' activities, live music and refreshments, including beverages from local breweries.

ROCKVILLE'S INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park

July 4

A Rockville tradition, don't miss this year's extravaganza featuring an enhanced fireworks display honoring America's 250th birthday, plus patriotic décor and special giveaways to mark the occasion.

BACKGROUND: VELIMYZAYATS/ADOBE STOCK;
SUDS & SOLES: COURTESY OF DAN REICHMANN



STARS, STRIPES & PUTTS

Miniature Golf Course

July 4

Join the City of Gaithersburg on Independence Day for a patriotic-themed mini golf experience with red, white and blue décor. Guests will receive a limited edition “USA 250th” mini golf ball.

MUSEUM ON TAP — BECOMING AMERICANS 1774

Dogfish Alehouse

July 8

Retaliating against the Boston Tea Party, 10 patriots met at Hungerford’s Tavern in Rockville to sign historic resolves boycotting trade with Britain. Sandra Heiler (Montgomery Preservation, Inc. treasurer, and DAR and Daughters of 1812 chapter historian) explores their actions in the larger Revolutionary War context during this talk, presented by Gaithersburg Community Museum.

MHC OPENING

Montgomery History Center

Sept. 6

The historic Farmer’s Banking and Trust building, located in the heart of Rockville, is being transformed to store and conserve a 10,000-piece artifact collection – the largest assemblage of objects related to the county’s history. Expected to open on the county’s official 250th birthday, the facility will serve as Montgomery History’s new headquarters and house exhibits, lectures, receptions and a research and special collections library.

AMERICA250 TIME CAPSULE

Taft Center

Sept. 26

Along with beer, bands and bratwurst celebrating German culture, this year’s Rocktoberfest will honor America’s 250th anniversary. A special time capsule will be buried, preserving memories, Rockville’s history and messages for future generations.

WASHINGTON D.C.

REVOLUTION IN THEIR WORDS BRINGS AMERICA’S FOUNDING VOICES INTO FOCUS

DAR Museum

Through March 27, 2027

Explore our nation’s founding through the firsthand accounts of those who lived it. This exhibition presents a wide range of perspectives from the decades before, during and after the War for Independence.

SPIRIT OF '76 — CONGRESS CELEBRATES THE NATION

U.S. Capitol Visitor Center

Ongoing

Tour the U.S. Capitol and see this exhibit featuring original artifacts, images and videos illustrating how Congress and Americans have commemorated the declaration on its milestone anniversaries. After, visit the Capitol Restaurant for menu items inspired by the exhibit.

DEAR AMERICA: ARTISTS EXPLORE THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

National Gallery of Art

Through Sept. 20

See how artists have explored the American experience over the last 250 years through depictions of the country’s landscape, people and concepts of freedom. This exhibit includes photographs by Carleton Watkins, Dorothea Lange and Carrie Mae Weems; prints by Thomas Hart Benton, Roy Lichtenstein and Rupert García, and drawings by Thomas Moran, John Wilson and Tonita Peña.

AMERICAN ASPIRATIONS

Smithsonian Castle

June 2-July 26

For the first time together, witness some of the Smithsonian’s most treasured objects to commemorate the Declaration of Independence, inviting visitors to consider how the founding ideals have been interpreted and how each generation has reached towards new understandings of freedom, opportunity and a shared future.



SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE FESTIVAL FOR THE 250TH

National Archives

June 4-6

The one-month countdown to the 250th anniversary starts with a three-day festival featuring live music, lively receptions, pet-friendly events, historical reenactors and hands-on and digital activities for the whole family that are connected to the Declaration of Independence and historic sites across the country.



AMERICAN ICON: THE U.S. FLAG IN ART National Gallery of Art

June 6-Dec. 6

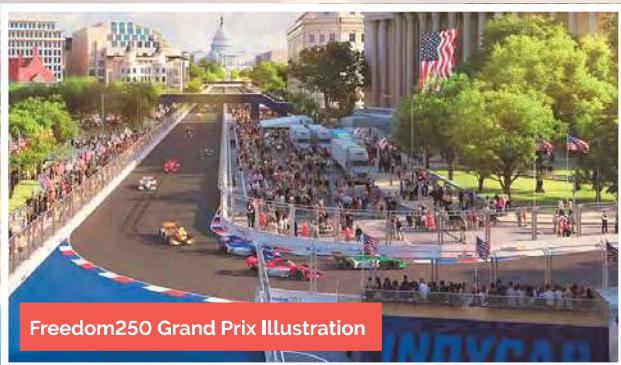
With 30 artworks tracing how the meaning of the U.S. flag has evolved over time, this exhibit explores what the flag represents and how people connect with it. Discover paintings, prints and photographs by Gordon Parks, Child Hassam, Dorothea Lange, Jasper Johns and Faith Ringgold.



SALUTE TO AMERICA: THE NATION'S 250TH BIRTHDAY FIREWORKS CELEBRATION National Mall

July 4

The capstone celebration of America's 250th anniversary will unite the nation in honoring our storied past while looking boldly toward the future. Enjoy spectacular flyovers, headline performances, major speeches and a breathtaking fireworks finale.



FREEDOM 250 GRAND PRIX OF WASHINGTON, D.C. National Mall

Aug. 21-23

Don't miss the first-ever INDYCAR race held in the nation's capital. Set on a street circuit weaving through the National Mall and around iconic national monuments, this historic weekend celebration will play up American motorsports through speed, innovation and other events.

Caryn R. Sagal is a Baltimore-based freelance writer.

RED, WHITE AND A GREAT VIEW

4th of July and America's 250th events
light up Montgomery County.

BY ZAKKARY PARKER

This 4th of July, Montgomery County isn't just celebrating Independence Day. It's marking a historic milestone: the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the nation's founding! From Rockville to Germantown, communities across the county are celebrating with fireworks displays, live entertainment and family-friendly festivities. Here's your guide to celebrating the 4th of July and 250 years of America.

SUMMERFEST

June 27

Located at the expansive Bohrer Park, Gaithersburg's SummerFest will kick off at 6 p.m. and run until 11 p.m. The celebration will feature family-friendly activities in addition to live music performances. There will also be a variety of food trucks and local breweries highlighted, providing options for both children and adults. The spectacular fireworks display will start at around 9:20 p.m. and will feature a multitude of vibrant, colorful fireworks reaching up to 500 feet. For those looking to wait out the traffic after the display, the SummerGlo after party offers glow-in-the-dark fun for all ages, paired with live entertainment like jugglers, LED hoopers and stilt walkers.

ADDRESS: 506 South Frederick Ave., Gaithersburg, MD

WHO IT WORKS FOR: This event is great for families and adults alike. Family-friendly activities will be available, and the playground is expected to remain lit throughout the night. Although alcohol is prohibited outside, it can be purchased on-site.

COST EXPECTATION: The event is free.

VISITING TIPS: Outside food and coolers are allowed, but glass containers, personal grills and fireworks of any kind, including sparklers, are prohibited.

MV INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE AND CELEBRATION

July 3

Montgomery Village's Annual Independence Day Celebration returns with a host of activities that the whole family will enjoy. Start the morning off by attending a parade featuring a variety of floats, vehicles, live music and community groups.