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January 15, 2025

Dear City Council Members and Mayor Bleichner,

We are writing to share exciting plans are in the works for the 2026 Fourth of July celebration here in Independence—a town whose very name makes this milestone year even more special! As we commemorate the 250th birthday of the United States, we have a unique opportunity to make this celebration one that highlights not only our nation's incredible history but also the pride and sense of community that makes Independence such a remarkable place to call home.

To honor this historic occasion, the Independence Chamber of Commerce and Celebrate Indee working together to plan a Fourth of July event that will be bigger and better than ever. We are committed to a multi-day event filled with better-than-ever live entertainment, a super-sized Iowa's oldest 4th of July parade, an over-the-top fireworks display, enhanced family-friendly activities, and much more—all designed to bring our community together to Celebrate Our Spirit!

But our plans don't stop there. In recognition of this monumental year, we're committing to hosting at least one event every quarter throughout 2026, each celebrating our nation's history. These events will not only provide opportunities for education and reflection but also foster a yearlong sense of unity and pride in our town.

To help make all of this possible, we're requesting funding support from the hotel-motel tax in the amount of \$50,000. The Fourth of July celebration alone, as always is expected to attract visitors from near and far, bringing increased tourism and revenue to our local businesses. With Independence being a town that holds such symbolic significance, this yearlong celebration will further establish our city as a destination worth visiting during this historic anniversary.

In addition to your support in allocating funds from the hotel-motel tax fund, we are committed to additional fundraising to help make these events bigger and better to celebrate our nation. Together, we can make Independence shine as a centerpiece of America's 250th birthday celebrations.

Thank you so much for considering this request. We'd love the opportunity to discuss these plans further and answer any questions you might have.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope you'll join us in making 2026 a year to remember for our town, our community, and our nation.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nikki K. Barth".

Nikki Barth, Independence Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Rodriguez".

Juan Rodriguez, Celebrate Indee