



# **City of Waco** **Fourth on the Brazos & America 250**

6.16.2026

Jonathan Cook, Director of Parks & Recreation

# Presentation Overview



---

## Purpose

---

- Kickoff to America 250
- History of July 4 in Waco
- Preview of the 2026 Fourth on the Brazos
- Overview of Community Events and Support

# America 250 - A Nationwide Celebration

- America 250 celebrates the nation's 250th anniversary by honoring our shared history, diverse stories, and the communities that shaped America.
- America's Block Party will unite communities nationwide on July 3 and 4 through local celebrations, music, service, and civic pride.
- Locally, this is a chance to highlight our community's history, bring residents together, and connect our story to America's past, present, and future.

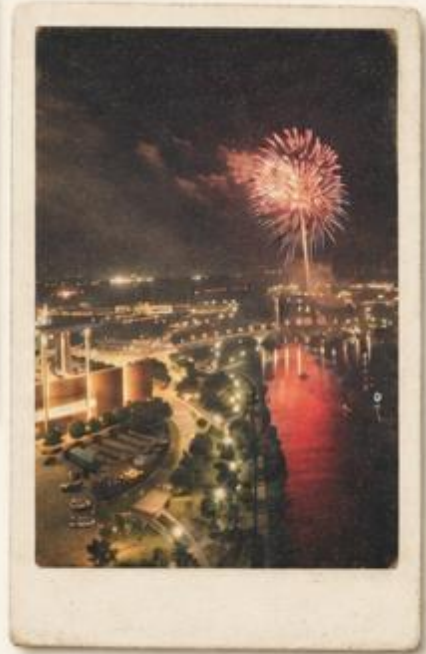


# Waco's July 4th Celebration History



- Local celebrations have been part of Waco's history for generations, including park gatherings, riverfront events, parades, and neighborhood parties.
- Keep Waco Beautiful's Freedom Frolic began in 1980 in downtown with fireworks and community celebrations at Indian Spring Park and surrounding areas.
- The event evolved into Brazos Nights / Fourth on the Brazos in the late 1990s and expanded into a multi-day festival in the early 2000s.
- Since 2015, the celebration has continued at Touchdown Alley next to McLane Stadium.
- In 2023, Waco and Baylor renewed a 10-year agreement to continue hosting July 4 celebrations at Touchdown Alley.

# Giving Waco Fireworks, Live Music and Family Fun!



# Together Through the Challenges



# Preparing for a Safe, Community Festival



- Citywide effort with many departments collaborating for a safe event
- Waco Police Department
- Waco Fire
- Waco-McLennan County Office of Emergency Management
- Baylor University, Baylor PD and Risk Management, Rhino Security
- McLennan County Sheriff's Office
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- American Medical Response
- Texas Parks and Wildlife



# 4<sup>TH</sup> - ON THE - BRAZOS

JULY  
4 | WACO | TX

TOUCHDOWN ALLEY AT MCLANE STADIUM

*A celebration of live music, food trucks, and patriotic festivities for our community, while showcasing the city and creating a holiday destination*

- 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Touchdown Alley
- Expected attendance more than 15,000
- Community Support from partners such as Baylor University, H-E-B, TFNB, Dr Pepper





## A Celebration for the Whole Family

- Live music by THE JACKSONS
- H-E-B Fireworks Extravaganza
- The TFNB Liberty Lights Laser Show
  - LED Lights Giveaways
- Patriotic music from Waco Community Band
- More than 20 local food and drink merchants
  - Cooling zone to beat the heat
  - Outdoor family games by the river

# Celebrating America 250 Around Waco



- ★ Keep Waco Beautiful's Clean Up Challenge
- ★ The Texas America 250 traveling exhibit at Texas Ranger Museum
- ★ Baylor University and Mayborn Museum present the Smithsonian Channel Screening Series and Community 250th Quilt
- ★ National Square Dance Convention at Waco Convention Center
- ★ Celebration of 250 Years of Independence at Art Center Waco
- ★ Annual Castle Heights Neighborhood Parade

# Thank You

Questions: [jonathanc@wacotx.gov](mailto:jonathanc@wacotx.gov)

