

## Gratitude for Local Government on Independence Day

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Happy Fourth, y'all!

I had a ton of ideas saved for this next blog post. There's a cool story about how Brownsville , Brooklyn, [created a neighborhood plan through text messaging](#) with their local government. There's another cool series on ELGL, my favorite local gov nerd group, called "The Local Government Nerve Center," about the importance of the often-overlooked positions of clerks and recorders in local government, including [this great love letter to city recorders](#).

But it's the Fourth of July, and everything smells like grill smoke, and for the past four nights we've all been falling asleep listening to far-off fireworks. It's a strange holiday this year, with so much political division and screaming headlines, but that reminds me even more strongly how important it is. There's one group of people across the country who are, unlike you and I, working on this Tuesday, and they work for your local governments (and provide one of the services few can argue with or rail against): the folks who inspect all the fireworks shows you'll see towns and counties put on.

\*Photo Credit [visitnc.com](http://visitnc.com) | Fireworks over the downtown streets of my hometown of Sylva, NC.

My dad is the director of planning and inspections in a North Carolina county, and one of the few certified fireworks inspectors in his rural part of the state. He spends every holiday going from small town to small town, inspecting setups, making sure that shows are safe and legal.

It's thankless sometimes - who wants to be told they can't shoot off fireworks without fixing something to come into compliance?

It's tiring sometimes - he sometimes does five or six in a day, traveling miles and miles to reach every town.

It's frustrating sometimes, because I'm sure he'd rather have been at home with his kids, drinking beer and grilling out and listening to bluegrass music on the porch.

It's an unseen job, and it has its flaws, but this role is one that I know my dad fills proudly. It's a job performed by unseen men and women who work when everyone else is off, and all across the nation, they're pulling together to bring an entire country together on a single day in celebration of an idea we all call America.

Photo Credit: [wral.com](http://wral.com) | I won't be seeing fireworks in my hometown this year, but I'll be watching in the capital city of Raleigh and toasting my dad, who'll be out inspecting shows until the wee hours of the morning.

They may not actively engage their communities in the ways we discuss on this blog, but they provide one of the single most attended, most loved, and most remembered services that our local governments perform each year. It's a far greater service in many ways, being responsible for bringing people together in a shared celebration, every year, of the freedoms we enjoy and the gratitude we should all feel in doing so.

Whatever the idea of America means means to you, I think we can all agree that we are lucky to get to fight about what we think it stands for and what the best direction is for this country we call home. So please join me in raising a glass (or a slice of watermelon, or a sparkler, or a freshly grilled burger) to the often unseen folks in local governments across the country today who are making the fireworks happen.

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