



PRESIDENTIAL VISIT



MADISON WILLIS, JOURNAL STAFF

President Donald Trump speaks at Mount Rushmore on Friday, July 3.

Pomp, circumstance and anti-communism punctuate Trump's South Dakota visit

SHALOM BAER GEE
Journal staff

For the first time since 2020, President Donald Trump appeared in the Black Hills at Mount Rushmore. This time, Friday, July 3, it was the eve of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. A severe weather advisory and hail preceded his arrival and pageantry enveloped his approach. As he stepped onto the stage, the crowd of nearly 5,000 chanted "USA! USA! USA!"

He centered his speech on the country's birthday, while emphasizing American excellence and the "resurgence of the communist menace," with a nod to fears about immigration as well. He also took the opportunity to push for the passage of the SAVE America Act and highlight the importance of the midterms.

"On this anniversary, we must remember, we have to remember, we can never forget that American liberty has not endured for 250 years merely because of words on paper. Liberty has prevailed here because of the culture and character of the people who declared it, defended it and preserved it," Trump said.

Prior to Trump's speech, Mount

Rushmore National Memorial Superintendent Jennifer Carpenter welcomed the crowd, after the weather advisory lifted at 6:35 p.m. Country music artist Chancey Williams performed live music, as did the U.S. Air Force Academy Band. Williams is set to play a concert at Main Street Square in Rapid City on the evening of July 4, and the Air Force band played at the Memorial Park Bandshell on July 1. Gov. Larry Rhoden delivered a speech and introduced former North Dakota governor and current Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum, who spoke before ultimately introducing the president.

Air Force One flew over the memorial twice before landing at Ellsworth Air Force Base around 7:50 p.m. President Trump took off for Mount Rushmore in Marine One around 8:15 p.m. He was greeted at the base by Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Ellsworth Commander Col. Jonathan A. Keller and Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Podgorski.

All said, the Rushmore festivities began at about 7 p.m. and concluded at about 10 p.m. after a barrage of fireworks surrounded the granite presidents' faces. The crowd filed to their vehicles and traveled through dense traffic seldom seen in the Black Hills.

Trump touts the virtues of South Dakota pols, Americans, scolds use of term 'stolen land'

The president called Senate Majority Leader John Thune, "a good friend of mine," Sen. Mike Rounds a "great guy," and thanked Rhoden.

"You live in a very special place. Congratulations, everybody," Trump said. "From the snow-capped peaks of the Rockies to the white sand shores of the Gulf of America, right here in the Black Hills of the Dakotas, after 250 years of America, American freedom still rings."

Trump did not mention outgoing Rep. Dusty Johnson, who recently was beaten in the primary race for South Dakota governor by Rhoden and Toby Doeden. The two are competing in a run-off election on July 28. One will advance to the November general election.

Trump also did not mention former South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, who hosted Trump at Mount Rushmore in 2020 and gifted him a bust showing his face carved on the mountain.

Please see TRUMP, Page A3

US celebrates July 4

ANDY SULLIVAN AND MIKE SNIDER
Reuters / USA Today

WASHINGTON — After a storm-related delay, U.S. President Donald Trump took the stage on the National Mall on Saturday to deliver a campaign-style speech to mark the country's 250th anniversary.

Trump said he would have been willing to wait longer if necessary. "There's no way we can be deterred," he said, shortly after taking the stage at 11:15 p.m. ET.

Authorities allowed the crowd to return to an open field near the Washington Monument where Trump was due to speak, after ordering a weather-related evacuation that forced spectators to shelter in nearby museums and government buildings for a few hours.

Visitors had waited hours to get into the event, contending with stepped-up

security and temperatures that reached 102 degrees Fahrenheit. The record-breaking heat wave forced the cancellation of several parades and other events in the area.

"It's just part of the deal I signed up for," said Glen Solander, 60, a software engineer visiting from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as he waited at a security checkpoint on Saturday afternoon.

White nationalists

Other visitors included the white nationalist organization Patriot Front. The group posted on social media that it arrived in the capital, and hundreds of people wearing the group's outfits traveled to the city on D.C. Metro trains. Local police said early Saturday evening they

Please see CELEBRATION, Page A3



JONATHAN ERNST, REUTERS

National Guard members hand out water Saturday to people waiting in line for the Great American State Fair on the National Mall in Washington.