



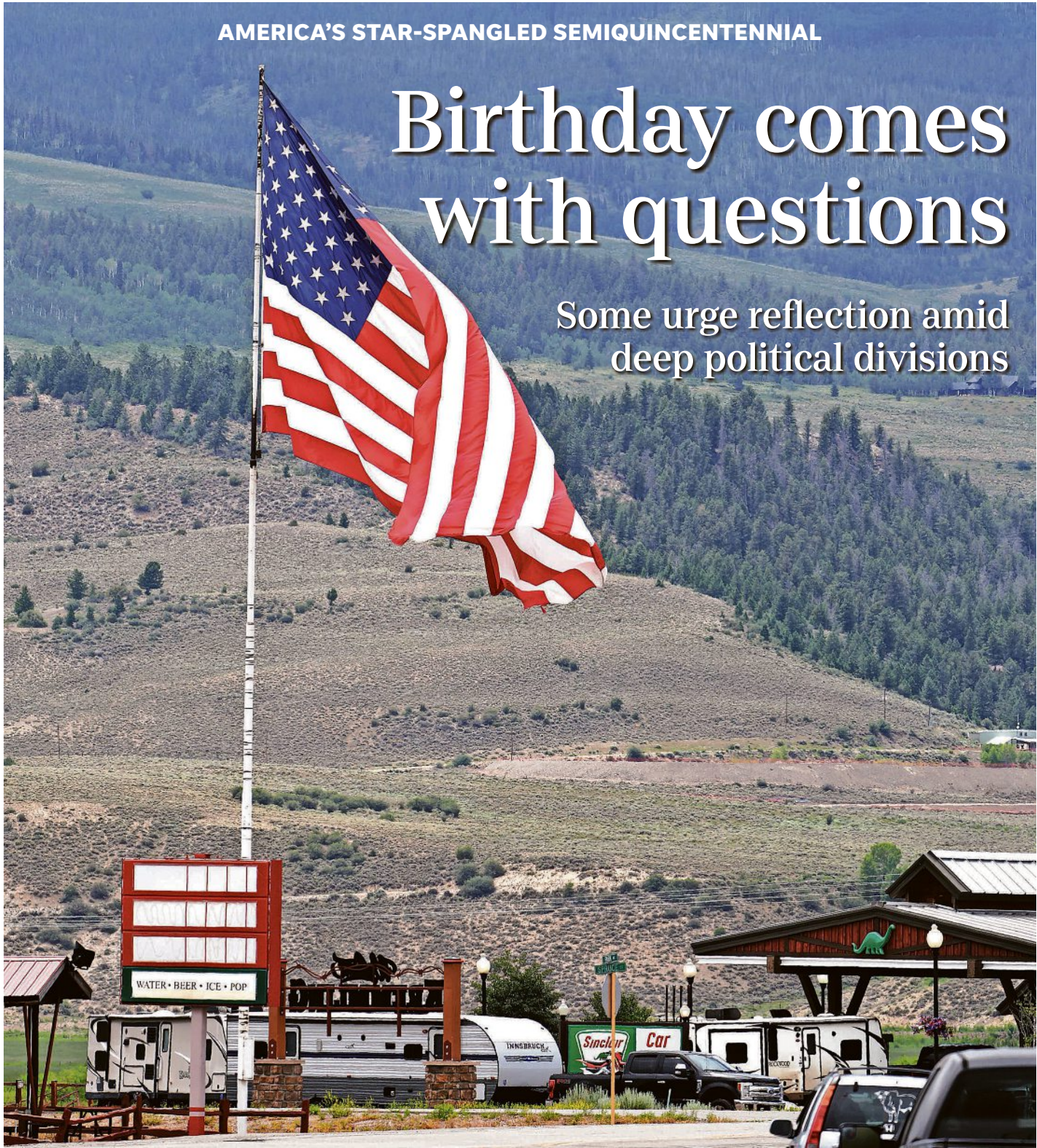
Canada assisting U.S. in deportation process

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A giant American flag waves over the mountain town of Kremmling, Colorado, on Independence Day weekend. Some scholars are urging Americans to spend time thinking deeply about the country's past and future ahead of its 250th anniversary. TREVOR HUGHES/USA TODAY

Trevor Hughes
USA TODAY

We who call the United States home are preparing to celebrate the country's star-spangled semiquincentennial next year – not just with flags and fireworks but also some serious conversations about history and what it means to be an American.

Among the celebrations: a massive fireworks display at Mount Rushmore on July 3, 2026, and what organizers

hope will be the single-largest flag-waving celebration in history. And President Donald Trump on July 3 announced he's also planning to host an Ultimate Fighting Championship event at the White House as part of the festivities.

Trump formally kicked off the year-long celebration on July 3 with a boisterous rally at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Trump campaigned on an "America first" platform, and he's long invoked symbols of patriotism during his rallies, including having Lee Green-

wood sing his hit "God Bless the USA," and literally embracing Old Glory.

"This Fourth of July, our magnificent destiny is closer than ever before. We are one people, one family and one united American nation," he said to cheers. "We will fight, fight, fight. We will win, win, win, because we are Americans and our hearts bleed red, white and blue."

Trump also reaffirmed his plans to hold a "Great American State Fair" with

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Human Rights Campaign starts LGBTQ+ rights national tour in Ohio

Jordan Laird
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

COLUMBUS, OH – The Human Rights Campaign began its national tour advocating for LGBTQ+ rights with a stop in Columbus and a call for Ohio to reverse course in reducing that community's rights.

The city has deep LGBTQ+ roots and an urgent present-day fight, according to the Human Rights Campaign, one of the largest national advocacy organizations for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. The American Dreams Tour: Equality Across America kicked off on July 30.

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Kelley Robinson, the Human Rights Campaign president, addresses Columbus, Ohio, LGBTQ+ leaders on July 31. JORDAN LAIRD/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Key sign of hurricane activity detected

Region where cyclones often form is warming up

Doyle Rice
USA TODAY

Hurricanes need warm ocean water to form, and water temperatures in a key section of the Atlantic are really starting to warm up.

"One of the biggest changes I've observed in recent weeks is a considerable warming of the so-called Main Development Region (MDR) of the Atlantic above its seasonal averages," WPLG-TV hurricane expert Michael Lowry said in late July in a Substack post.

That's a big change from earlier this season.

"To open the hurricane season in June, waters across this bellwether part of the Atlantic where most of our strongest hurricanes get their start were running average to even below average," he said.

The Main Development Region, located between the Caribbean and Africa, is a region in the Atlantic where many tropical cyclones – tropical storms and hurricanes – form. This area is key because it's where many tropical waves, which can develop into hurricanes, originally form.

The warm water in that key region is just one of the reasons hurricane forecasters are warning that hurricane season could soon heat up.

Warm water everywhere

It's not only the Main Development Region that's warm: Water across the Gulf of America (also known as Gulf of Mexico) and the Caribbean Sea are also above average, scientists said.

In fact, closer to home, persistent high pressure has led to some notable warming of the shelf waters around Florida, as well as the nearby southwest Atlantic, Andy Hazelton, a hurricane scientist at the University of Miami, said Aug. 1 on X. This included a 90-degree reading at a buoy near Virginia Key, Florida, near Miami.

"Water temperatures are pretty much warm enough everywhere in the tropical Atlantic to support hurricane formation," Colorado State University meteorologist Phil Klotzbach told USA TODAY on July 31. "The general

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