



AUGUST 2026

Happy 250th Birthday, America!

Everyone knows July 4th as America's birthday, but some of the holiday's most interesting stories aren't nearly as well known.

For example, the vote for independence actually took place on July 2, 1776. John Adams was so convinced that July 2nd would become the nation's annual celebration that he predicted future generations would commemorate it with "pomp and parade." Instead, history celebrated the day the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

There are other remarkable coincidences, too. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson — once rivals, later friends—both passed away on July 4, 1826, exactly 50 years after the Declaration was adopted. And if your Independence Day included hot dogs, you were in good company. Americans are estimated to eat around 150 million hot dogs every July 4.

Whether you celebrated with fireworks, family, or simply a quiet day off, we hope you enjoyed a safe and happy Independence Day!



This Month's Market Perspective

The Federal Reserve, at its July FOMC meeting, held the benchmark short-term interest rate steady, in the range of 3.50% to 3.75%. Under the new leadership of Chairman Kevin Warsh, the central bank has provided minimal clues about when a change in the fed rate may occur. The bias, however, based on recent inflation data, is that the next meeting in September might be when the lead bank may hike its benchmark rate. Inflation remains the elephant in the room for Fed policymakers. June inflation data showed a notable drop in the pace of price growth, but those reports do not reflect the recent increases in oil prices due to the renewed fighting in the Middle East, nor the additional round of trade tariffs announced by the Trump administration.

On the positive side, second-quarter earnings have not disappointed. Per FACTSET dated 7/31/2026, with about 61% of the S&P companies reporting, 86% of the S&P 500 companies have reported a positive EPS surprise, and 77% have reported a positive revenue surprise. In our view, these factors may provide supportive tailwinds for equity valuations, notwithstanding risks associated with geopolitical instability, uncertainty surrounding AI-related spending and rising debt levels, and the possibility of higher Federal Reserve interest rate later in 2026.

Have questions, concerns or just want to talk, please feel free to contact your Essex advisor to discuss your portfolio strategy.

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Headlines Change. Plans Endure.

Markets continue to navigate a mix of economic data, inflation trends, interest rate expectations, and ongoing geopolitical developments. While uncertainty remains part of the investment landscape, the broader economy has continued to show resilience.

Periods like these often generate headlines that can make investors feel pressure to react. However, we believe successful investing is rarely about responding to every market development. More often, it's about maintaining discipline and staying focused on the long-term strategy designed around your goals.

A well-constructed financial plan can provide context during uncertain times and may help separate short-term noise from long-term priorities.

As always, if you have questions about recent market developments or your portfolio, please don't hesitate to contact your Essex advisor.

Summer Spending Without Summer Regret

Summer is a time to relax, travel, and spend time with family and friends, but it's also when seasonal expenses can add up quickly. A little planning can help you enjoy the season while staying aligned with your long-term financial goals.

Here are a few simple ways to make the most of summer without overspending:

Explore closer to home.

A road trip or local getaway can be just as memorable as a more expensive vacation

Take advantage of free community events.

Outdoor concerts, festivals, parks, and local attractions often provide affordable family fun.

Pack a picnic or grill at home.

Swapping a few restaurant meals for outdoor dining can leave more room in your budget for experiences.

Check in on your spending.

A quick mid-summer review can help ensure seasonal expenses aren't pulling you away from your savings goals.

Financial planning isn't about limiting the experiences that matter. It's about making intentional choices that can help you enjoy today while continuing to build toward tomorrow.



Travel Smart, Stay Secure

Summer travel season is here, making it a good time to revisit basic cybersecurity habits.

When accessing financial accounts while traveling, avoid unsecured public Wi-Fi whenever possible. Enable multi-factor authentication, keep devices updated, and be cautious of unexpected emails or text messages requesting personal information.

These simple precautions can help reduce the risk of fraud, identity theft, and unauthorized account access while you're away from home.

Important Schwab
Account Notice

Beginning in June and continuing through August, Schwab will send annual Standing Letter of Authorization (SLOA) reminders to clients who have an active SLOA on file.

If your email address is on file, the notice will be delivered electronically. Otherwise, you will receive it by mail.

This is a standard annual notification and does not require any action unless your information has changed or you have questions regarding your authorization. If you receive the notice and would like to discuss it, please contact your Essex advisor.



Let's Keep the Conversation Going

Whether you have questions about your financial plan, recent market developments, a life change or an opportunity you'd like to discuss, we're here to help. Your financial plan should evolve as your goals and circumstances change, and we're always happy to have that conversation.

If you know someone who could benefit from thoughtful, planning-based financial guidance, we'd be grateful for the introduction.

[CONTACT THE ESSEX TEAM](#)



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