

THE PRACTITIONER

A monthly newsletter of the Energy Facility Contractors Group's
Project Delivery Working Group



EFCOG

Issue 34

May 2022

EFCOG and the PDWG: What are they?

Greetings, Energy Facility Contractors Group (EFCOG) Project Delivery Working Group (PDWG)! In this 34th issue of the *Practitioner* (it's hard to believe we have been publishing for almost three years now), we take a close-up look at EFCOG and the PDWG, to provide an orientation for our new members, and provide a refresher for the rest of us. NOTE: Watch for helpful links along the way!

The *Practitioner* was established to share useful and beneficial information to the PDWG members by providing a monthly newsletter dedicated to project delivery. The timing is good as we prepare for the [EFCOG 2022 Annual Meeting](#) taking place on 06/21/2022 - 06/22/2022 at 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

[EFCOG Home Page](#) - So, lets revisit what EFCOG does:

- “EFCOG promotes excellence in all aspects of the operation, management, and integration of Department of Energy (DOE) facilities in a safe, environmentally sound, efficient and cost-effective manner through the ongoing exchange of information on lessons learned.”
- “EFCOG’s objective is to maximize DOE and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) mission success by sharing best practice and information to support management and operational excellence. Ensuring safety, security and quality is the foundation for all of EFCOG’s work.”

How does EFCOG work? ([EFCOG Brochure](#))

EFCOG is a volunteer organization, directed by senior executives from DOE and NNSA contractors, sustained by working level personnel from member contractors, and supported by DOE officials who serve as sponsors from relevant program, staff and field offices. This creates a very powerful partnership, enabling EFCOG to effectively support DOE’s mission goals and address a broad range of operational challenges and issues across the DOE complex. EFCOG was formed in 1991 by a group of DOE contractors who decided to work together to improve the cost effectiveness of DOE operations by sharing lessons learned and best practices across corporate and program lines.

Key Initiatives:

- Ensuring human capital needs are met, both now and in the future
- Lessons learned from operations during COVID-19 pandemic, or similar events
- Addressing supply chain issues for nuclear projects
- Charting an effective path forward for telework
- Improving cybersecurity and sharing best practices across the complex

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Unparalleled Reach: EFCOG is a group of more than 100 Department of Energy operating contractors, representing more than two-thirds of DOE’s total funding. **Efficiency and Cost Savings:** The sharing of best practices among the contractor community and collaboration with DOE on key policies has saved hundreds of millions of dollars since EFCOG’s inception in 1991 and resulted in more efficient operations across the complex. **Rapid Response:** EFCOG provides a complex-wide network to rapidly address common issues, enable effective communication, and develop solutions. **A Commitment to Partnership:** EFCOG’s members work in partnership with the Department of Energy to save money, increase safety and security, and optimize project delivery across the DOE complex. **Industry Leaders:** EFCOG is managed by a group of dynamic, committed executives elected annually by members to serve on the Board of Directors

Working Groups

EFCOG accomplishes its mission through working groups that provide forums to address common challenges and exchange proven techniques and other management and technical information among member contractors. There are currently six working groups: Cybersecurity, Project Delivery, Safeguards & Security, Safety, Training and Waste Management. Details on each group can be found in the graphic below.

THE PRACTITIONER

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	Cybersecurity: This group, new in 2020, serves as a user group of Subject Matter Experts and a technical resource for the benefit of all projects within the Department of Energy complex. The purpose of this group is to promote excellence in all aspects of Cyber Security operations and management of DOE facilities through consistent exchange of information, best practices, and corresponding improvement activities.
	Project Delivery: This group is chartered to leverage the expertise and experience of DOE’s contractors to address challenges and achieve improvements in project delivery across the complex. The PDWG’s portfolio includes those broad-based, interrelated elements across the project lifecycle critical to successful delivery. Areas of focus include acquisition strategy and planning, earned value management, cost estimating and scheduling, management of complex projects, contract alignment and incentives and start-up and commissioning.
	Safeguards & Security: This group is focused on continuously improve safeguards and security performance across DOE by focusing on the protection of Special Nuclear Material, sensitive information, classified matter, assets, and personnel. The SSWG adds value by bringing together the best and brightest DOE and industry professionals to analyze issues and develop cost-effective solutions that bring clarity and continuous improvement to the DOE missions.
	Safety: This group assists member companies in attaining and maintaining the highest levels of safety and regulatory performance in the operation of DOE/NNSA facilities/projects. The SWG achieves this by seeking out, developing, and promoting best practices, providing DOE/NNSA and member companies with access to a network of subject matter experts and identifying opportunities to save and/or avoid costs in the implementation of their safety and regulatory programs.
	Training: The purpose of this working group is to ensure complex wide collaboration and integration to attain and maintain the highest levels of training, reduce redundant training and assist in improving performance in the operation of DOE facilities and projects.
	Waste Management: This group is focused on seeking out best practices, cost effective technologies and disposal options for all waste streams generated at DOE facilities whether destined for DOE or commercial facilities. The WMWG is focused on complex-wide integration and technology transfer while supporting cost effective and efficient waste options.

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EFCOG and PDWG: What are they?

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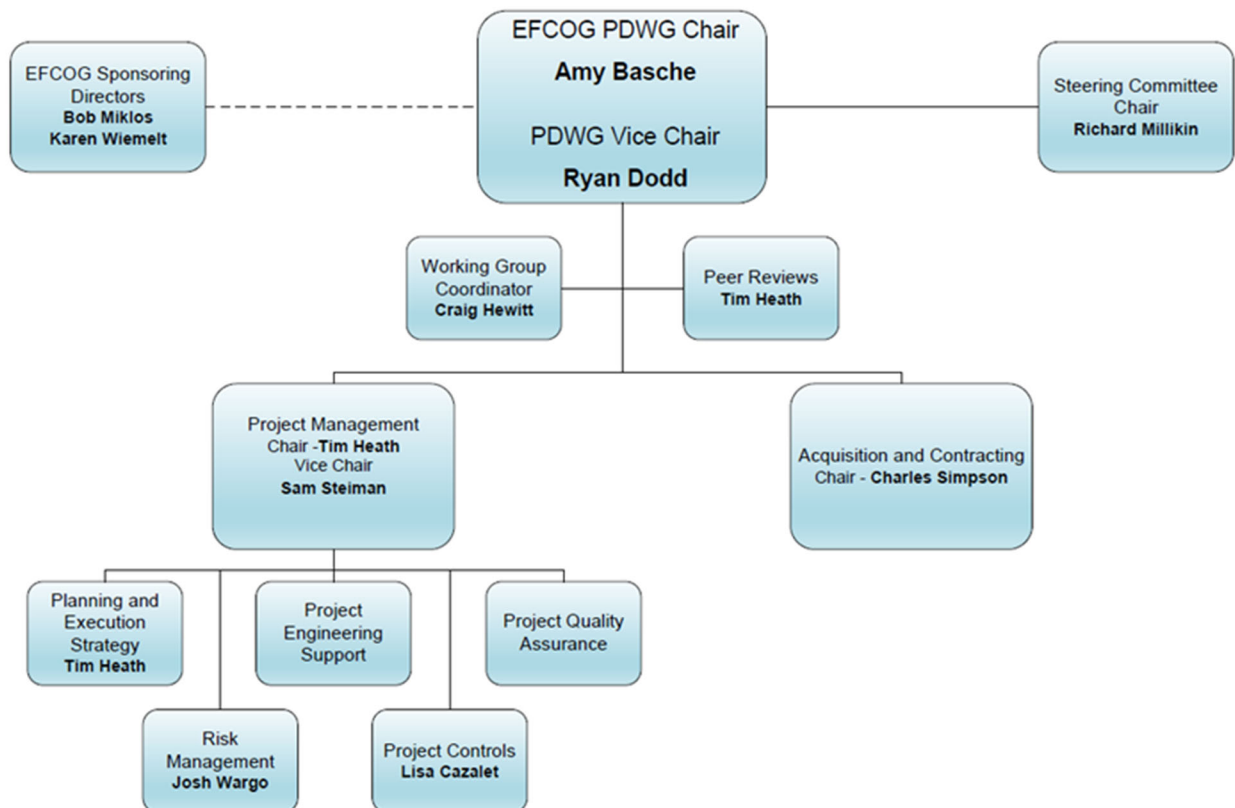
Your PDWG Charter

[PDWG Home Page](#)

The PDWG is chartered to leverage the expertise and experience of DOE’s contractors to address challenges and achieve improvements in project delivery across the complex. The PDWG’s purpose is to seek out, promote, and share the best practices and processes for successful project delivery at DOE facilities. This will be achieved through contractor subject matter experts and professionals from across the complex, working together and in partnership with DOE to strengthen and advance the development, management, and delivery of projects (and project-like activities) in support of DOE missions. The PDWG’s portfolio includes those broad-based, interrelated elements across the project lifecycle critical to successful delivery. Areas of focus include:

- Acquisition strategy and planning
- Earned value management
- Cost estimating and scheduling
- Management of complex projects
- Integration of safety into the design process and other technical processes
- Contract alignment and incentives
- Start-up and commissioning
- Upcoming Events

Your PDWG Leadership



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DOE POCs: Norbert Doyle and Robert Raines

DOE Liaison: Paul Bosco

PROJECT DELIVERY DRAFT WORKING GROUP APPROVED FY22 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

The annual work plan is where the rubber meets the road in providing the product that add value to the DOE’s mission. Work plans are developed each year in a collaborative approach between DOE and EFCOG. Once the plan is approved, PDWG resources move out to execute the plan, providing status to the on the work plan deliverables through their subgroup chairs. Chairs work with their DOE counterparts to assure the work plan deliverables are effectively meeting the needs of the department. Task teams and subgroups meet when necessary to advance the deliverable and maintain delivery schedules. Report out is done with our DOE Liaison or his delegate in monthly conference calls, culminating in the June Annual Meeting.

Ctrl + Click on each Subgroup and Task Team (below) to reveal the leadership and activities:

- [Acquisitions and Contracts Subgroup](#)
- [Project Controls Subgroup](#)
- [Project Management Subgroup](#)
- [Start-up, Testing, and Commissioning Subgroup](#)

In addition to the leadership and activities found at each level (PDWG, Subgroup, and Task Team), users can also access a library of documents, at the EFCOG Level and the PDWG, Subgroup, and Task Team level.

EFCOG Level Library

TYPE	DRAWER/FILE	DATE
dir	ANNUAL REPORTS	
dir	CAS EFFECTIVENESS TASK TEAM	
dir	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND WORKING GROUP MANUAL	
dir	MEETING EXEMPTION MATERIALS	
dir	MEETING PROCEEDINGS	
dir	NEWSLETTERS	
dir	WORKING GROUP WHITE PAPERS	

PDWG Level Library

TYPE	DRAWER/FILE	DATE
dir	BEST PRACTICES	
dir	DOCUMENTS	
dir	MEETINGS	
dir	TOOLS BEST PRACTICES	
dir	TRAINING SNIPPETS	
dir	PROJECT CONTROLS SUBGROUP	
dir	PROJECT MANAGEMENT SUBGROUP	

Subgroup Level Library

TYPE	DRAWER/FILE	DATE
dir	EARNED VALUE MANAGEMENT TASK TEAM	
dir	MEETINGS	
pdf	2020 EM Prog Mgmt Memo FINALIGNEDDOC Distribution	
pdf	2020 EM Prog Mgmt Protocol Training Presentation	

Task Team Level Library

TYPE	DRAWER/FILE	DATE
dir	DOCUMENTS	
dir	MEETINGS	

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You can also access EFCOG Best Practices following the note/instruction below.

NOTE-Our Best Practices have moved! Please look for EFCOG BP's on each Working Group website. Each Working Group has a Documents section towards the bottom of the page that has a Best Practices folder. Example provided below.

For EFCOG Web Page Support or questions, please contact [Craig T Hewitt@RL.GOV](mailto:Craig_T_Hewitt@RL.GOV).

Optimistic Plans – But Why No Action?

— By Dr. Josh Ramirez

Maybe you've witnessed it. I'd like to think many of us in project management have. You're well into the execution of the project and have to explain schedule and cost variances left and right. And then we get stuck on what went wrong during delivery, as though none of these things were predictable.

Here's an interesting tidbit: in a small informal study I did of hundreds of activities being performed over a 2-month period, 42% of them were forecasted optimistically, and 65% of delays came from predictable and avoidable issues. In other words, the delays could have been prevented because the issue that caused the delay was known by someone, somewhere in the organization. Yet the forecast was still optimistic, and many times it got blamed on what occurred during delivery, not on the ability (or inability) to predict more reliably in the forecast.

Optimistic plans are rooted in behavior. To fix it, to avoid variances, avoid waste, and deliver on time, we must start with the biological computational system that feeds all of our project management systems: the brain!

Why do we do this to ourselves in projects?

As a result of optimistic predictions, we then have to explain what went wrong, reroute resources, and the efficiency of delivery is compromised. In short, a whole lot of energy goes into fixing the issues in delivery that were a result of the optimistic plan or forecast. And because our energy is in fixing it, we don't spend time fixing WHY we predicted optimistically to begin with.

And the cycle continues. Optimistic planning, which leads to delivery performed in 'freak-out mode,' which leads to avoidable energy expenditure, which leads to not fixing why we're predicting optimistically, which leads back to planning the next project optimistically.

But then it gets better (once again, I'm sure you've seen it). We have a little downtime or an opportunity for some training. But instead of fixing the deep-rooted issues, we go for the low-hanging fruit; easy training, Band-Aid solutions, and technical solutions to a behavioral problem.

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Optimistic Planning

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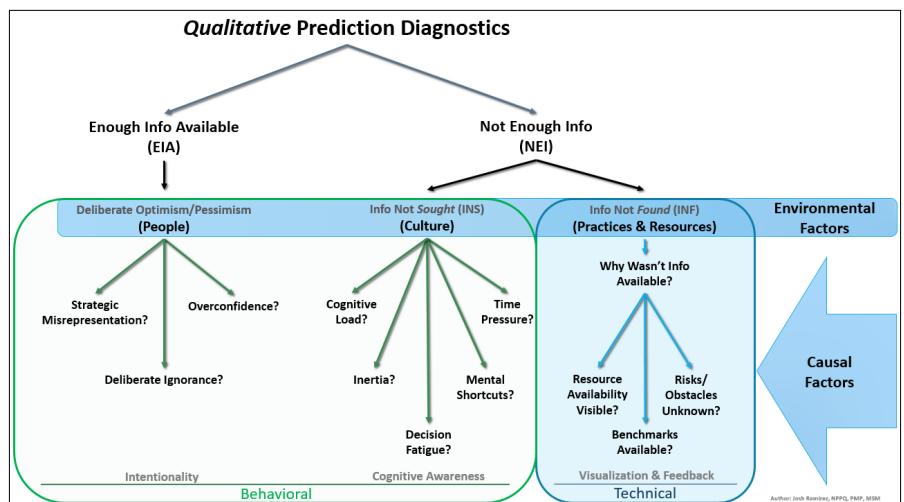
Optimistic planning is rooted in human behavior, isn't it? I mean, when was the last time you knew of a computer that was optimistic? I ran a small survey of project management professionals asking the question what solves optimistic planning more? 82% answered cognitive solutions over technical solutions. So, it does beg the question: why do we go for more technical solutions to that human cognition problem? If we buy better scheduling software, will that solve the optimistic plan? If we build a better WBS, will that solve our optimism problem?

Optimistic planning and forecasting come from a lack of information, either from information that wasn't available or information that wasn't sought. And not seeking information is also a human behavioral and cognitive issue. There's also one more cause of optimistic prediction: when we do have the information, but still choose to avoid it and continue with optimism in our plan.

And this information that can bring realism into the plan is not just technical. You have to think of your brain like a computer. It has inputs, memory, processing, and outputs. And just like a computer, processing is the most important part. As information and data come into the brain, it is processed for output. But what if the information never makes it into the processing component of your brain? What if the information is avoided before processing, is bypassed, missed, or feared? All of these issues, just like a computer, would prevent the processing machine from making the calculation. Now let's put that processing into perspective. During project planning or forecasting, the brain:

- Misses information (time pressure)
- Avoids information (cognitive dissonance)
- Bypasses information (inertia)
- Defaults to wrong information (heuristics)
- Fears certain information (psychological safety)
- Under-processes information (cognitive load)
- Changes information (social pressure)
- Sees the wrong information (framing)
- Loses energy to find information (decision fatigue)
- Looking at all the ways the brain processes (or doesn't process) information is quite eye-opening.

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Check out the latest DOE Project Management newsletter!

(Click on the banner below)



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(An unsubscribe link is provided in each newsletter email.)

Optimistic Planning

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It is curious, then, why our project management discipline continues to focus on technical solutions to something that's clearly a cognitive problem. Software won't fix it, unless it's designed around cognition. Metrics won't fix it, unless it's designed around the human operating system. And project management processes won't fix it, unless they're designed around the computer between your ears.

Optimistic plans are rooted in behavior. To fix it, to avoid variances, avoid waste, and deliver on time, we must start with the biological computational system that feeds all of our project management systems: the brain!

— Dr. Josh Ramirez, PhD, PMP, is a project manager in the Washington River Protection Solutions' Earned Value Management System Compliance and Reporting organization

Assessment: What's Your Personal Productivity Style?

by Carson Tate, Harvard Business Review

When it comes to personal productivity advice for knowledge workers, one size doesn't fit all. In fact, an individual's cognitive style — that is, the way he or she prefers to perceive and process information — can have a dramatic impact on the success or failure of time management techniques and performance enhancement strategies. This assessment is designed to help you understand your own style — how you think, learn, and communicate best — and to guide you toward productivity tips that like-minded people have found most effective.

Indicate how often each statement applies to you, using a scale of Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often or Always. You can [take the assessment online](#) to see what are your actual results.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1) I use a prioritized list to complete my work. | 12) I honor deadlines. | 22) I complete project tasks in sequence. |
| 2) I'm late to meetings and appointments. | 13) I do my best work under pressure. | 23) I accurately complete significant amounts of work. |
| 3) When I plan a project, I first think about who needs to be involved. | 14) I block off time on my calendar to complete work. | 24) I tend to underestimate how long it will take to complete tasks and projects. |
| 4) When I brainstorm, I sketch or draw my ideas. | 15) I analyze a project before I start it. | 25) When I plan a project, I first think about the required project deliverables. |
| 5) I complete work quickly. | 16) I use established routines and systems to complete tasks. | 26) I'm selective about the tools—pens, paper, folders, and so on—that I use. |
| 6) I have trouble telling my colleagues no. | 17) When I brainstorm, I list my ideas. | 27) When I brainstorm, I talk to others about my ideas. |
| 7) I plan for the next day. | 18) I eliminate physical clutter in my office. | 28) When I plan a project, I first think about the goal to be achieved. |
| 8) Daydreaming helps me solve important problems. | 19) When I plan a project, I first think about how it supports the strategic vision of my team or organization. | |
| 9) In project meetings, I'm able to synthesize disparate ideas. | 20) It's hard for me to take time for leisure when there's still work to do. | |
| 10) I prefer to work on a team. | 21) I designate specific times of the day for certain tasks. | |
| 11) I use step-by-step project plans. | | |

Just for Fun: May's Notable Events and Famous Birthdays

1 — Cheerios were first sold (1941), and Mr. Potato Head was introduced (1952), and singer Tim McGraw was born (1967).

2 — Pediatrician Dr. Spock (1903) and singer Bing Crosby (1904) were born, and **the legendary Loch Ness Monster was first photographed—or was it?** (1934).



3 — Boxing champ Sugar Ray Robinson (1921), and singers Frankie Valli (1937) and Jewel (1974) were born.

4 — Native Americans sold Manhattan Island for goods worth \$24 (1626), the record player was first demonstrated (1878), actress Audrey Hepburn (1929) and singer Randy Travis (1959) were born, the Kent State massacre took place (1970), and Margaret Thatcher became Great Britain's first female prime minister (1979).

5 — Socialist Karl Marx was born (1818), Mexico won the Battle of Puebla (1862), the first train robbery occurred (1865), singer Tammy Wynette was born (1942), and Alan Shepard became the first American in space (1961).

6 — Psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856) was born, the Eiffel Tower was completed (1889), baseball star Willie Mays was born (1931), the Hindenburg exploded (1937), actor George Clooney was born (1961), and the English Channel tunnel opened (1994).

7 — Composers Johannes Brahms (1833) and Peter Tchaikovsky (1840), actor Gary Cooper (1901) and **football star Johnny Unitas** (1933) were born, and the Beatles released their final album (1970).



8 — The U.S. Post Office was established (1794), President Harry Truman was born (1884), Germany surrendered to the Allies (1945), and Mad Magazine debuted (1952).

9 — The first transcontinental railroad was completed (1869), Coca-Cola was invented (1886), the lawnmower was patented (1899), and singer Billy Joel was born (1949).

10 — The transcontinental railroad was completed (1869), and dancer Fred Astaire (1899) and singer Bono (1960) were born.

11 — Einstein presented his Theory of Relativity (1916), Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan was born (1933), and the first tubeless tires were manufactured (1947).



12 — The flush toilet was patented (1792), and actress Katherine Hepburn (1907), baseball star Yogi Berra (1925), and **comedian George Carlin** (1937) were born.

13 — The Mexican-American War began (1846), and boxing champ Joe Louis (1914), singer Stevie Wonder (1950), and basketball star Dennis Rodman (1961) were born.

14 — The first permanent English settlement in the New World was established at Jamestown, Virginia (1607), the Lewis and Clark expedition began (1804), Vaseline was first sold (1878), filmmaker George Lucas was born (1944), the State of Israel was established (1948), and Seinfeld aired for the last time (1998).

15 — The U.S. Department of Ag was established (1862), nylons were first sold (1940), and baseball star George Brett (1953) and football star Emmitt Smith (1969) were born.

16 — Root beer was invented (1866), **the first Academy Awards ceremony was held** (1929), and singer Janet Jackson was born (1966).

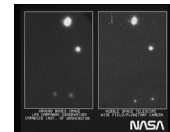


17 — The first Kentucky Derby was held (1875), and boxing champ Sugar Ray Leonard was born (1956).

18 — Baseball stars Brooks Robinson (1937) and Reggie Jackson (1946), singer George Strait (1952), and actress Tina Fey (1970) were born, and Mount St. Helens erupted (1980).

19 — The first Ringling Brothers circus was held (1884), and civil rights activist Malcolm X was born (1925).

20 — Actor Jimmy Stewart (1908) and singer Cher (1946) were born, and **the Hubble Space Telescope transmitted its first photos** (1990).

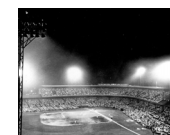


21 — The American Red Cross was formed (1881), Charles Lindbergh completed the first solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean (1927), and pro wrestler/actor Mr. T was born (1952).

22 — The Great Train Robbery occurred (1868), baseball star Tommy John was born (1943), Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood debuted (1967), and a suicide bombe killed 22 people at an Ariana Grande concert in London (2017).

23 — Outlaws Bonnie and Clyde met their demise (1934), and actor Drew Carey was born (1958).

24 — Queen Victoria was born (1819), Samuel Morse first demonstrated the telegraph (1844), **Major League Baseball's first night game was played in Cincinnati** (1935), and singer Bob Dylan was born (1941).



25 — The first *Star Wars* movie was released (1978), and George Floyd was killed by a police officer, sparking nationwide protests (2020).

26 — The first copies of *Dracula* went on sale (1897), actor John Wayne was born (1907), the last Ford Model T was built (1927), and sportscaster Brent Musburger (1939), and singers Stevie Nicks (1948) and Hank Williams Jr. (1949) were born.

27 — The first Salem "witch trial" execution was held (1647), and the pop-up toaster was patented (1919).

28 — Athlete Jim Thorpe was born (1888), the Golden Gate Bridge opened (1937), and Barry Bonds broke the Major League Baseball career home run record with his 715th (2006).

29 — Wisconsin became a state (1848), President John F. Kennedy was born (1917), and Sir Edmund Hillary became the first person to reach the top of Mount Everest (1953).

30 — The bra was invented (1889), bandleader Benny Goodman was born (1909), **the first Indianapolis 500 was held** (1911), and football star Gale Sayers (1943) and singer Wynonna Judd (1964) were born.



31 — The Tulsa Race Massacre began (1921), actor Clint Eastwood (1930), football star Joe Namath (1943) and model Brooke Shields (1965) were born, and the trans-Alaska oil pipeline was completed (1977).

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