2024

A rocket booster is caught by the tower that launched it.

The year of the catch: SpaceX brought a Super Heavy booster back to its launch tower. America finished its first new reactors in a generation, and a brain implant let a paralyzed man use a computer by thought.

What rose

January. Neuralink implants its first human patient, Noland Arbaugh, who goes on to control a computer by thought. Source: Neuralink

April. Vogtle Unit 4 enters service: with Unit 3, the first U.S. reactors built from scratch in over 30 years. Source: Vogtle Electric Generating Plant

October. SpaceX catches a Super Heavy booster with the arms of its launch tower on Starship's fifth flight. Source: Starship flight test 5

October. The Nobel Prize in Chemistry honors AlphaFold's prediction of protein structures, and computational protein design. Source: AlphaFold

December. Google's Willow chip shows quantum error correction improving as the chip scales up. Source: Google: Meet Willow

What fell or stalled

U.S. births fell to about 3.6 million, near the lowest in four decades. Source: CDC NCHS

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