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Troubling Questions Abound for Kansas Police in Wake of Jan. 6 Commission Hearings

By MARK McCORMICK, GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

A chief of police candidate in Wichita a few years back said during the public interview process that an officer's racism wasn't necessarily a dealbreaker for employment. That response alarmed the Black community at the time — particularly because biased traffic stops around the country had recently escalated into shooting deaths — but nothing much came of it.

The question of what is or should be a disqualifying factor for police employment has taken on new urgency as the Jan. 6 commission uncovers more levels of criminality leading up to and taking place on that day. What are we to make of police officers who were among the White supremacists and secessionists storming the Capitol?

Should they be held to account just for their actions — which has been proved beyond doubt to be criminal — without regard for racist speech? Were they merely swept up in the moment, mimicking the language and actions of the president who summoned them there?

Or should they also be held to account for their words? Law enforcement officer salaries are paid through taxpayer funding. Does such speech demonstrate clear bias, a violation of their oath to serve and protect all members of the public equally?

Brandon Johnson, Wichita City Council member and chairman of the Kansas Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training, says actions of those storming the Capitol create a cut-and-dried case for firing. The words they used, he argues, also create such a case.

"Officers who traveled to the Capitol and took part in a direct attack on our democracy have broken their oath and, because of the criminality of the insurrection, should not be working in law enforcement," he said.

"Officers who have stronger feelings of support for the disgusting rhetoric that the former president spewed regularly may have some biases that would potentially lead to biased negative treatment of members of those groups," he added. "In my opinion, both racism and sexism should be deal breakers in law enforcement due to the nature of their job of serving all of the public."

Johnson's commission has authority to investigate officers accused of wrongdoing — as long as an individual submits a request focused on a specific officer. A Kansas Open Records Act request for vacation days taken on or around Jan. 6, 2021, might mark a great starting point for

such an investigation.

But we shouldn't stop there. All complaints against officers and any disciplinary action reports should be made public.

The Jan. 6 hearings have implicated Trump more deeply in the horrid events of that day that left one woman dead, numerous officers injured and offices looted.

Trump reportedly asked rioters to show up armed and then wanted metal detectors removed. This may have led to the death and injury of officers who fought valiantly defending the Capitol, while Trump watched from the White House for hours as staffers and his daughter begged him to intervene.

The former president earned wide support from militant, White nationalist groups for his racially incendiary rhetoric. It was here that Johnson expressed concern about officers perhaps compromising their ability to mete out justice fairly in non-White communities.

Trump famously said there were good people on both sides of the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Virginia where a Neo-Nazi sympathizer killed Heather Heyer when he drove his car into a crowd of counter protesters.

Trump's rallies have continued to draw throngs of Confederate battle flag wavers, fatigue-wearing militiamen and survivalists and others seemingly obsessed with the rapidly changing racial demographics of our nation.

The fact that many White officers identify with a man with these kinds of views is chilling to people from communities who already disproportionately bear the brunt of stops, searches and police use of force. There's not a ton of difference between racist language and racist actions where officers are concerned.

Johnson said if any officer was found to have committed one of the specific statutory offenses, they could be disciplined by the commission with a suspended or revoked law enforcement certification, depending on the infraction and the severity of it.

Johnson is right. This needs scrutiny.

Ideally, police protect communities. But if we're sealing police files and remain unwilling to weed out officers with histories of discrimination and violence, it's Black and Brown communities that will need protection from police.

Mark McCormick is deputy director of strategic initiatives for ACLU of Kansas. This commentary was first printed in the Kansas Reflector.

TOP HEADLINES

Top Stories @communityvoiceks.com

- Remembering MEFSEC's basketball legacy on its 50th anniversary
- Response to customer needs proves game changer for this family business
- Meet Candice Alcaez, candidate for Wyco District Court Judge
- WeDevelopment: East Kansas City credit union finally approved for charter
- New culinary school opening soon in renovated downtown facility

Top Facebook posts @Wichita

- You may remember MEFSEC, but do you know the story of its origins?
- Congratulations to the Cottners for being the third-quarter recipients of the Koch/Community Voice Shift, Pivot, Thrive Award
- This year USD 259 will have one school supply list
- New culinary school opening soon in Wichita
- Those of you who have been to our office or at least the back of our office...

Top Facebook posts @Kansas City

- Uzazi Village was created to eliminate perinatal health disparities in Black and Brown communities
- We are RAP kicks off a summer Hip-Hop education series
- A quick recap of the GYRL "Women N Wheelz" Motorcycle and car show
- Kansas City Public Library now offers portable laptops with wi-fi for checkout
- Can jazz become a real economic stimulator for Kansas City? Think country music to Nashville

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BRIEFS

Abbott Elementary at Head of Emmy Class

Quinta Brunson, the creator, writer and star of "Abbott Elementary" has made Emmy Award history, piling up seven nominations, including outstanding comedy series, lead actress in a comedy, and outstanding writing for a comedy series as the announcements were made July 20.



BRUNSON Brunson is the first Black woman to earn three nominations in the comedy category. At 32, she is the youngest Black woman ever nominated for a comedy. If Brunson were to win for acting or writing, she would become only the second Black woman to win in either category. Three other members of the show's cast also received outstanding supporting nominations: Sheryl Lee Ralph, Tyler James Williams and Janelle James.

Sanders to Donate Half of Salary

In an Instagram post, Deion Sanders, NFL Hall of Famer and head coach of the Jackson State University football team, committed to donating half of his salary to assist with the renovations being done at the team's football operations facility. When Sanders came on as head coach, he signed a deal worth \$1.2 million over four years, giving him an average salary of \$300,000. The facility will include a new state-of-the-art players lounge, meeting areas, coaches' offices and locker rooms, according to the Mississippi Clarion-Ledger.



SANDERS



WEST

Kanye Out, Kid Cudi In for Fest

Kid Cudi will have the limelight at the upcoming Rolling Loud Miami fest July 22-24 as Rolling Loud has tweeted that scheduled headliner Kanye withdrew from the festival

due to "circumstances outside of" his control just a week before the show. West and Cudi had beef this year after West called out Cudi's friendship with comedian Pete Davidson, who's taken up with West's ex-wife Kim Kardashian. Rolling Loud is an international hip-hop music festival with performances given by influential artists. However, this is not the first festival Kanye has dropped out of this year. He recently withdrew from Coachella 2022. The Weeknd filled his slot that time. West is a 24-time Grammy winner, fashion designer of Yeezy's and record producer.



KNIGHT

Comedian Jak Knight Death Ruled Suicide

Jak Knight, stand-up comedian, writer and actor, died from an apparent suicide on July 14. Coroners have reported to People magazine that Knight suffered from a gunshot wound. Knight, 28, was known for his animated role as Devon in "Big Mouth" and as co-creator of "Bust

Down." He also wrote for TV show "Black-ish," and has toured with Dave Chapelle, Eric Andre and Aziz Ansari.

Byron Allen Buying Bankrupt Black News Channel

Byron Allen's Allen Media Group is buying the Black News Channel, with plans to revive the bankrupt cable news outlet and significantly grow its distribution footprint. Allen's company is acquiring "substantially all" of BNC's assets for \$11 million, with a bankruptcy court in Tallahassee, Florida, formally signing off on the sale. BNC is available in about 45 million homes through companies like Comcast, Charter and DirecTV, and Allen says his company can grow that distribution to about 80 million homes in the next six months. Allen, a comedian, has turned into a media mogul. AMG owns The Weather Channel, 27 local TV stations in 21 markets, and digital brands like The Griot and Comedy.TV.



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Detroit's Cash Bail Reform Could Serve as a Model Across the Country

Michigan's largest district court and bail reform advocates have settled a class-action lawsuit against bail practices in Detroit, where hundreds of defendants are jailed for no other reason than their inability to afford court-imposed bail.

By AARONS MORRISON,
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michigan's largest district court and bail reform advocates have agreed to settle a federal class-action lawsuit over cash bail practices, which activists say routinely and unconstitutionally jail poor and working class defendants despite evidence of their inability to pay.

Both sides say the reforms strike at racial inequality in the criminal legal system. On any given day in Wayne County, which includes Detroit, the nation's Blackest city, nearly 75% of those jailed are Black, a proportion much higher than their share of the population.

The agreement, struck July 12, requires the court to reform bail practices, including limiting its ability to impose unaffordable bail on defendants. Advocates say it could be a model for court systems nationwide, where race and wealth are significant factors in the administration of justice.

Detroit's 36th District Court, the American Civil Liberties Union and The Bail Project, a nonprofit that pays bail for people in need, said the status quo wreaks unnecessary havoc on defendants' jobs, homes and families.

"This is a historic agreement that we believe can and should be a template for how courts around the country can adapt their bail practices to what is lawful, constitutional and sensible," said Phil Mayor, senior staff

attorney for the Michigan ACLU.

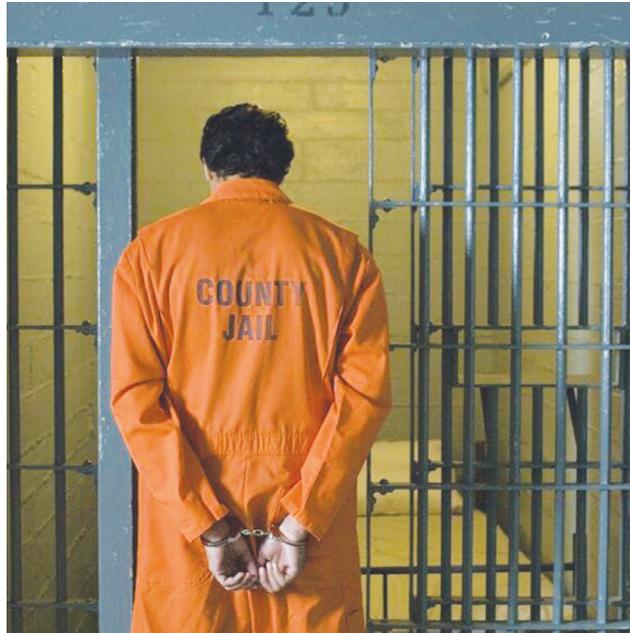
Chief Judge William McConico of the 36th District Court said settling the class-action lawsuit, filed in 2019 just before he took office, presented an opportunity to show that law enforcement and activists can work together to change the criminal legal system.

"Other African-American cities will be able to point to what one of the largest district courts in the country is doing to address this issue," said McConico, who is Black. "That's why it is so important that this is starting in a major Black city, that it is not being rolled out in a suburban city or a small court."

The reforms do not bar judges from imposing cash bail, especially if defendants are deemed a flight risk or a danger to the public. However, all Detroit judges and magistrates must say on the record how imposing bail would protect the community or prevent a failure to appear. Judges must also make an on-the-record determination as to how much a defendant can afford to pay.

The parties also agreed that any defendant who is at 200% of the federal poverty level or less is to be assumed unable to post cash bond. According to the 2022 federal guidelines, 200% of the poverty level is annual earnings of roughly \$27,000 for an individual and \$55,000 for a family of four.

"This should largely eliminate the practice of imposing what



"This should largely eliminate the practice of imposing what may seem to some like small amounts of cash bail, which effectively serve as a jail sentence for somebody who hasn't yet been convicted of a crime."

Atty. Phil Mayor, Michigan ACLU

may seem to some like small amounts of cash bail, which effectively serve as a jail sentence for somebody who hasn't yet been convicted of a crime," Mayor said.

The sides also agreed to new rules stipulating when and what triggers a bail redetermination hearing, if a defendant's bail has been set but goes unpaid. The hearing would allow for a bail amount to be reduced or withdrawn altogether if it is later deemed unaffordable.

The reforms in Detroit come as some states and local jurisdictions across the U.S. have either rolled back or are considering rollbacks of bail reforms in response to a pandemic-era increase in crime. From San Francisco to New York City and cities in between, rhetoric around the uptick in violence and nuisance crimes has slowed political

momentum despite bipartisan agreement that mass incarceration is expensive and has no proven positive effect on public safety.

"We are still moving forward in a very thoughtful way, to say that the presumption of innocence matters, that mass incarceration of pretrial people needs to be reversed, and that racial disparities at the pretrial stage need to be addressed in a very real way," said Twyla Carter, The Bail Project's outgoing national legal and policy director.

The ACLU, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, The Bail Project and the law firm Covington & Burling LLP sued the chief judge, court magistrates and the Wayne County sheriff in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan in 2019, on behalf of seven Black plaintiffs. The plaintiffs

alleged the only reason they remained in jail was because they couldn't afford bail. At the time of her incarceration in April 2019, one plaintiff, Starmanie Jackson, an impoverished single mother of 2- and 4-year-old children, had her bail set at \$700 over outstanding traffic tickets and a charge alleging domestic violence. Because she could not afford to pay, Jackson, who had never been arrested before, was separated from her children for the first time in their lives.

"I was devastated," said Jackson, 27. "It was nerve wracking, scary and disappointing, because we depend on our justice system to keep us safe and on track."

She said her family couldn't locate her for two days, as jail officials struggled to confirm where she was being held. As a result of her incarceration, Jackson, a certified nurse's assistant, said she lost a new nursing home job when she didn't show up for her first shift and was evicted from her apartment after she used her rent money to help pay her bond. The domestic violence charge was ultimately dropped and Jackson never served another day in jail.

The settlement makes for a happy ending to what ended up being a nightmare, said Jackson, now a mother of four children. "I'm ecstatic because I'm able to help people to overcome some of the difficulties in our justice system, which is already jacked up," she said. As part of the settlement, Jackson and the other plaintiffs will split a payment of \$14,000. Lawyers for the plaintiffs said the amount was agreed to with the knowledge that the court would

also spend money to track bail and pretrial detention. The court did not admit wrongdoing as part of the settlement.

According to a 2020 report of the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration, between 2016 and 2018, Black men made up 29% of the jail admissions in the counties the task force sampled, even though they were just 6% of the resident population in those counties. Between 2018 and 2019 in Wayne County, Black people represented 70% of those detained in the local jail on any given day, even though they were only 39% of the resident population.

Nationwide, recent studies show Black defendants make up a majority of people in pretrial detention. However, the jail incarceration rate for Black people had been on the decline between 2008 and 2019, according to the latest federal data.

Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, who is senior counsel at Covington & Burling, commended the Detroit district court for reaching the agreement on reforms. "This is how our criminal justice system should work," he said. "It can, and should be, a model for other jurisdictions across the country."

Ezekiel Edwards, vice president of pretrial criminal justice at Arnold Ventures, a philanthropic organization supporting research and policy work on justice issues, said bail systems in the U.S. have become more reform-minded over the last decade. But the policy landscape is still a patchwork, he said.

"Cash bail is still used in most jurisdictions around the country and without the necessary regulations or limitations," Edwards said.

Former Nurses at Historic St. Louis Hospital Sue Developer Trying to Use Name

Black elected officials and community leaders say by using the name 'Homer G. Phillips,' Paul McKee's health clinic tarnishes the legacy of the historic training hospital.

By REBECCA RIVAS, MISSOURI INDEPENDENT

The name "Homer G. Phillips Hospital" is still spoken with reverence, not only in St. Louis' Black community, but across the country.

Opened in 1937, it was the only public hospital for Black St. Louisans until 1955.

It was also a training facility, where Black doctors and nurses from around the world came to complete their medical residencies."

Despite years of community protests, the city defunded and closed the hospital in 1979.

Now, more than 40 years later, the name Homer G. Phillips Hospital is at the heart of protests again.

On July 11, the Homer G. Phillips Nurses Alumni Inc. filed a federal lawsuit against St. Louis developer Paul McKee Jr. for trademark infringement.

It's the latest in a series of attempts since 2020 to stop McKee from naming his proposed three-bed health facility the "Homer G. Phillips Hospital." In contrast, the original hospital stood five stories tall and had 700-plus beds, supporters said.

"We are 1,000% opposed to Paul McKee stealing the name of this legacy," said Zenobia Thompson, who served as a head nurse at Homer G. Phillips and who helped lead the unsuccessful fight in the 1970s to keep city leaders from closing the iconic Black teaching hospital.

The lawsuit states that the alumni group's name is trademarked, and the new health center's name will infringe on that trademark.

"Under our interpretation of the law, if the name of the health center is confusingly similar to or implies association with my client, then we believe our claim is valid," said Richard Voytas Jr., who is representing the group.

In December, the St. Louis Board of Aldermen passed a resolution deeming the health center's name "inappropriate cultural appropriation."

Congresswoman Cori Bush and Mayor Tishaura Jones issued a joint statement shortly after.

"Profiting off of Homer G. Phillips' name on a small three-bed facility that will fail to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities is an insult to Homer G. Phillips' legacy and the Black community," they said.

They urged McKee, who is White, to listen to for-



Former Homer G. Phillips nurse Zenobia Thompson speaks to a group gathered at the Southside Senior Center in St. Louis last year about trying to stop a three-bed health facility from being named "Homer G. Phillips Hospital." Wiley Price/The St. Louis American

mer Homer G. Phillips nurses, advocates, health care workers and residents who are demanding he change the name.

"There is not a major current political leader in the city that has not called on Mr. McKee to change the name," said ac-

tivist Walle Amusa, who is part of a coalition fighting against the name. "Only the arrogance of privilege or outright racism will put somebody like that in a position of going ahead and essentially trademarking the legacy of a community."

Former congressman Lacy Clay, who had a working relationship with McKee, came under fire during the last congressional election when he was silent on the issue. Amusa said he didn't help to orchestrate a meeting between McKee and the coalition opposing the name.

Bush, who is a nurse herself and was challenging Clay, stood and fought beside the former nurses.

"I stand in solidarity with the doctors and nurses and community members to say, 'No,'" Bush said during a 2020 interview. "I would love our congressman to stand with the people and not with his buddies."

It was a blow to Clay's campaign.

McKee's proposed hospital will be located within his North-

Side Regeneration development footprint, which covers much of North St. Louis and was originally awarded a \$390 million TIF in 2009.

In June 2018, city officials attempted to end the development agreement for the North-Side Regeneration project. The default notice that the city issued to McKee stated, "After a decade, the promised redevelopment has not come, nor is there any indication that it will."

"The community is saying, 'Change the name,'" Amusa said. "They're not saying, 'Don't have a clinic.' Don't trivialize the legacy, the struggles, the blood, sweat and tears of Black people in this community. It's a very simple demand."

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Panasonic Picks Kansas for Vehicle Battery Mega-Factory

By JOHN HANNA AND SEAN MURPHY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Japan's Panasonic Corp. has selected Kansas as the location for a multibillion-dollar mega-factory to produce electric vehicle batteries for Tesla and other carmakers, lured by the largest package of taxpayer-funded incentives that the state has offered a private business.

The company and Gov. Laura Kelly announced the new project July 13, just hours after Kelly and eight top leaders of the Kansas Legislature signed off on a package of incentives worth \$829 million over 10 years. The state had created a new program to offer incentives that could reach \$1 billion or more only five months be-



fore — because of Panasonic's project.

State officials expect the new plant to have about 4,000 workers, which would make Panasonic a "top 20, easily" private employer for

the state in terms of its size, Kansas Commerce Secretary David Toland said. He and other officials believe the Panasonic plant will create an additional 4,000 jobs for suppliers and other local

businesses, and 16,500 temporary construction jobs.

The company said it would invest about \$4 billion in the plant in DeSoto, Kansas, a town of about 6,000 people located about 30 miles south-

west of Kansas City, MO. The town has been trying to redevelop a long-abandoned army ammunition plant.

While some earlier state estimates said Panasonic's new plant would pay an average of \$50,000 a year, a Wichita State University study this month put the figure at \$62,000. Both would far exceed Kansas' median income of less than \$32,000 for individuals.

Kelly and the legislative leaders met July 13 in secret for 45 minutes to review the details of the incentives package before approving it in a brief public session. They didn't name the company at or after that meeting.

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, of Kansas, suggested the project

has national significance because it lessens U.S. dependence on China for manufactured products.

"It improves our job capabilities and increases our national security," Moran said during remarks to about 250 state officials and business leaders who gathered for Kelly's announcement and a reception afterward.

The White House characterized the project's announcement as part of an effort to give the U.S. a more secure supply chain. Brian Deese, its National Economic Council director, added in a statement, "The future of transportation is electric."

Kansas' landing the project

See **PANASONIC** Page 21 →

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COTTNER FAMILY

Featured Shift, Pivot, Thrive Entrepreneurs



Banks Trying to Bring Unbanked Back with Low-Fee, Easy-Entry Accounts

By Jake Martin,
The Community Voice

Imagine not being able to deposit your paycheck after a long week of work, use online payment for utility bills, check how much money you've saved before making a big purchase, or even withdrawing cash from an ATM — these are just a few things that people with established bank accounts take for granted, but that's the reality for more than 14 million unbanked people in the US.

Disproportionately, African Americans are among the unbanked, with nearly 18% of African-American households in the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's district without a banking account. The district covers Kansas, Western Missouri, Oklahoma, Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming.

Now, thanks to the availability of new "safe and secure" accounts aimed at the unbanked, the number of unbanked households is decreasing. However, there's still plenty of work to be done.

These new "safe and secure" accounts are being promoted through a national effort led by Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) and supported by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Federal Reserve Bank. The program, called Bank On, began slowly in 2015 but it's catching steam. Initially, banks seemed reluctant to offer these low-fee accounts with low barriers to entry, but more and more banks are joining the movement with more than 200 banks across the country now offering these "safe and secure" Bank On accounts.

These accounts aren't your typical high-fee accounts that have so often driven people away from financial institutions. To qualify as "safe and secure" the accounts must meet all of the required standards established by CFE.



The BankOn program began slowly in 2015 but its finally catching on with more than 200 banks now offering these low-fee accounts

Bank On Account Standards

To begin with, the fact that all Bank On accounts are insured by the FDIC is a given. Here are a few of the other basic standards all "Safe and Secure" Accounts must meet.

Core Features

- Offer a free debit card (e.g., Visa, Mastercard, Discover) for point-of-sale use and bill payment.
- Require a minimum deposit of \$25 or less to open an account.
- Have a monthly maintenance fee of \$5 or less if not waivable, or \$10 or less if it's waivable entirely with a single transaction (e.g. direct deposit with no minimum deposit, online bill pay, or debit card purchase).
- Not charge overdraft or non-sufficient fund fees.
- Not charge fees for account activation, closure, dormancy, inactivity, and low balances.

Customer Service

- Account users must have free and unrestricted access to bank branches, and for financial institutions



without branches, account holders must have access to a free ATM network and free remote deposits.

- Accounts must offer free and unrestricted telephone banking, including live support.
- ATM access must be free and unrestricted in the bank's network. Out-of-network transaction fees must be \$2.50 or less or up to \$3 if access is also provided free to a partner ATM network.

Functionality

- Free cash and checks in branch and at ATM when available, and free direct deposit
- Free bill pay if available, otherwise at least four free money orders and/or cashier checks per month.
- Free check cashing for checks issued by that institution
- Free online banking, mobile banking, and banking alerts
- Free electronic monthly statements

or mailed paper statements for \$2 or less.

Additional Recommended Bank On Features

While Bank On core standards offer an attractive list of features, some of the unbanked have additional personal issues that keep them out of the banking system. One of those is a bad banking history. If you left a previous bank with a negative balance, you may have been told by another financial institution that you had to clear that previous balance before you could open an account at their bank.

The fact that most of these negative balances are often due to bank fees and overdraft charges, sours many people on banking. Now, with limited trust in banks, it may be difficult and frustrating for the unbanked to come up with the money to cover their previous balances. In addition, with their trust in banks diminished, they're fearful the same thing will happen again; banks layering on charge after charge.

While not required, Bank On encourages banks to consider accept-

FINDING A BANK ON ACCOUNT

Today Bank On accounts are available in all 50 states, with more than 241 certified Bank On accounts offered at more than 39,500 bank locations. You can find a current list of the Bank On locations in your area by going to <https://joinbankon.org/accounts/>.

We suggest going online first to find the exact name of the Bank On account offered by a bank you might be interested in using. Each bank has a different name for their Bank On account. When you go to the bank, make sure to ask for their Bank On account by name.

Otherwise, bank employees may try to channel you to other high-fee products.

In addition, take the time to compare the Bank On offerings of each bank. While all accounts must meet minimum requirements, some accounts go above and beyond, with some accounts offering extra services.

ing individuals with less-than-perfect banking history, encouraging them to only deny customers who are guilty of actual fraud.

In addition, Bank On encourages banks to consider accepting alternative IDs for those who don't have current government-issued IDs. This can be beneficial to seniors whose IDs may have expired. They also encourage banks to make available free credit-building products like a secured credit card or a secured personal loan.

Jake Martin is a Report for America corps member based at The Community Voice covering Kansas City's African-American community.



Donna Pearson McClish, of Common Ground Producers and Growers Inc., has operated a mobile market for several years, bringing fresh produce to Wichita's food deserts. Photo courtesy of Sedgwick County Extension Office

City Council Authorizes \$1 Million to Help Get Fresh Produce in Wichita Food Deserts

By DEB GRUVER
THE COMMUNITY VOICE

The City of Wichita is using \$1 million from federal pandemic funds to seed a program aimed at closing the gap in food deserts across the city.

The Health Corner Store Initiative will put fresh produce and other food in convenience and dollar stores in parts of the city designated as “food deserts” — areas more than a mile from a supermarket.

A 2013 study identified 44 square miles of Wichita as food deserts. In heavily minority and lower-income communities in Northeast Wichita and Planeview, the problem was exacerbated by the clos-

ing of the Sav A Lot groceries. The opening of those stores had been heralded as a win for both communities.

Earlier this month, the Wichita City Council voted unanimously to use \$1 million from the American Rescue Plan Act to provide infrastructure — refrigerated cases — to be used for convenience and dollar-type stores to keep and stock fresh fruits and vegetables.

The cost of food itself is not covered by the \$1 million. Neither is staff.

The city is working with New Venture Advisors, a consultant, and The Food Trust, a nonprofit group.

Council member Brandon Johnson is concerned about the longevity of the corner store program. Convenience

and dollar stores could be providing produce now, he said.

“If they were going to do this work, they would be doing it. Will they continue to provide those services” after the program ends, he asked?

He also is concerned that the program won't benefit entrepreneurs such as Common Ground Growers and Producers Inc., which has been operating a mobile market in these communities for the past few years.

Donna Pearson McClish, CEO of Common Ground, expressed concern at a Wichita City Council meeting about the timing of the program, which city spokeswoman Megan Lovely said would be implemented by April 23, 2023.

“We're meeting, we're meeting, we're meeting, we're meet-

ing, we're meeting,” McClish told council members. “We're not feeding.”

People are having to make a decision between buying gas or buying food, continued McClish.

“I see the need every day,” she said. “How many studies, meetings and initiatives (will there be) before people in our communities are being fed properly?”

Council member Maggie Ballard also expressed concern about the timing.

“I want to get this going,” she said at the council meeting.

Johnson said he was interested in the program benefiting growers such as McClish instead of dollar stores. Common Ground already is doing the work, he said, through its mobile market.

KANSANS SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER.



We will stand together to vote against the cruel constitutional amendment that could ban abortion even in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother.

On August 2, VOTE NO

KANSANS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOM

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RACES TO WATCH

Lots of Contested Races in Missouri Primary Election

The Missouri party primaries are set for Aug. 2 to whittle the candidate lists down to the one contender from each party for the Nov. general election. In some races, there's a lot of whittling that needs to be done, while a number of candidates are already basically elected since nobody from any party filed to run against them.

With a number of incumbents not running this year, there are a lot of hotly contested races from the top to the bottom of the Missouri ballots. U. S. Sen. Roy Blount, choosing not to seek reelection, set up a free-for-all for his seat, while the other state-level races aren't as packed. Both African-American Congresspersons in Missouri, Emanuel Cleaver and first-term Cori Bush, have primaries.

All members of the Missouri House of Representatives are up for reelection this year. Of the seven African-American representatives from the Kansas City area, three are unopposed: Ashley Bland Manlove (26th), Michael Johnson (23rd), and Richard Brown (27th).

Michael Sharp is also running unopposed, but due to redistricting, he's not running as an incumbent in his previous 36th District; instead, he's running unopposed in the 37th District. Redistricting pushes current 37th District Rep. Annette Turnbaugh, a Republican, into the 36th District, so the two of them just flipped district numbers.

Jerome Barnes (28th District) doesn't have a primary, but he'll face-off against a Republican candidate in November.

There is one competitive race with a primary in the 22nd District in Kansas City.

The most explosive competition is in the Jackson County government races, with all nine seats up for election and two contested Democratic primaries where there isn't a Republican contender, so the primary should pretty much decide the winner. So, individuals in those districts need to definitely show up like it's the general, because it really is.

We'll break down some of these competitive races further in our Races to Watch section below.

JACKSON COUNTY RACES GO PRIME TIME

For years, the Jackson County Legislature and executive races flew under the radar, the dowdy step-child to the more glamorous and popular KCMO City Council and mayor. However, this year the Jackson County races have gone glam with all nine legislature seats up for election along with the county executive spot.

Most of the races are full of well qualified candidates and thanks to redistricting and expanded housing patterns, it appears there should be at least two African Americans in the legislature.

Two of the seats have Democratic primaries, but since there isn't a Republican candidate, the winner of the primary is almost certainly guaranteed the seat. So, again, this isn't the primary, this is the general election, so if you don't vote in the primary, you won't have much of a say.

RACE TO WATCH

Jackson County 4th District



MCGEE



BROWN

The 4th District makes a horseshoe around the southern end of the 2nd District, which covers Kansas City's core African-American community. From about Meyers on the north, the state line on the West and Troost, the district goes south to pick up Grandview, all the way to 155th as its southern boundary. On the south end, the district goes east almost to Lee's Summit with Bannister as its northern edge. The district turns north at about Cleveland and follows the 2nd District's east boundary to about 87th Street.

The incumbent, Dan Tarwater III, who has held this seat since 1994, is not running for reelection - opening up this seat for a brand-new legislator. Two Democrats are vying for the position, and since no one else has filed for the seat from another party, the winner of the Aug. 2 primary is the likely winner of the November election.

Vying for the seat are two experienced elected officials.

Daron McGee currently serves as president of the school board for the Hickman Mills School District. McGee was elected to two terms in the Missouri House of Representatives. He

has a master's degree in public administration from the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs - University of Missouri and serves as a consultant in the area of community and government relations at Community Builders of Kansas City.

Michael Ricardo Brown earned his bachelor's degree from UMKC. He was elected to the Missouri Legislature in 2009 and 2012. Earlier this year, he ran for a seat on the Metropolitan Community College Board of Trustees District 6 and lost by just 38 votes.

Both of these candidates are very active members of the community.



SUDDUTH



HUSKY

RACE TO WATCH

Jackson County 2nd District

The 2nd District covers Kansas City's historic African-American community with either Troost, Paseo or Holmes as the western border. The southern boundary is primarily Bannister Road, on the east the district goes as far as Raytown Road and on the north to Independent.

This seat is currently held by Ronald Finley, who is choosing to retire after his third non-consecutive term in the Jackson County Legislature. Finley also served a term on the Kansas City Council. There are three Democrats vying for his seat. Since there is not a Republican candidate, this is one of those races where the winner of the Aug. 2 primary is pretty much guaranteed the seat.

This is a race among three candidates without any prior political service. **Mitchell W. Sudduth** is a digital consultant for small and medium sized businesses. He is also the owner of Show Me Down Entertainment Group. He mounted an unsuccessful bid for the 5th District City Council seat in 2019.

Venessa Husky is a senior administrative assistant in the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department of the City of Kansas City, MO. She's an elected precinct committee woman for the 23rd Ward.

Lorenzo Johnson is the final candidate. We were unable to find any additional information about him.



HENDERSON

RACE TO WATCH

Northeast KC to Get New Rep in Topeka

Broderick Henderson represents Kansas House District 35, which covers most of northeast Kansas City. The district is bounded on the north and east by the Missouri River, goes as far west as 67th and 72nd streets, with a south boundary that jigsaws back and forth but remains predominantly north of Georgia Avenue.

In this heavily Democratic district, the race to watch is between Nelson Gabriel or Marvin Robinson II, who will face off in the Democratic primary.

Both Robinson and Gabriel are well known in the Kansas City community. Gabriel, who is director of the nonprofit Made Men, ran against Henderson in 2020, losing in a close primary race. Robinson, a veteran,

has been active throughout Wyandotte County, but is well known for his efforts to preserve the historic Quindaro Ruins.

The race has been relatively lowkey and may likely come down to personalities, especially with a reasonable turnout expected, driven by the abortion amendment question on the ballot.

Henderson has endorsed Robinson.

We incorrectly reported that there weren't any Republicans vying for the seat. There are two Republicans facing off in the Republican primary. We couldn't find out much about either of them: John Koerner and Sam Stillwell. Stillwell previously ran against Sen. David Haley and received 21% of the vote.



LAKE

RACE TO WATCH

Lake Taking on White for Jackson County Executive

The Jackson County executive is comparable to the mayor, but just like the legislators, the county executive position does have as much pizzazz as the mayor. However, with former baseball standout Frank White in the position, the celeb status for the county executive has risen. However, his opponents are quick to say, being a great baseball player does not make you a great executive.

The county executive position has a lot of responsibility. That individual leads the legislature and appoints an administrator who oversees the county departments. Jackson County has about two dozen departments, including the sheriff's office, parks and recreation, public works and corrections.

However, a key department is assessments, which sets property valuations in the county and determines what owners will be

billed in annual property taxes. His opponent in the Democratic primary, Atty. Stacey Lake says she stepped up to run, because like so many Jackson County residents, she was frustrated by her large increase in assessments and frustrated by White's solution, which she felt was less than adequate.

Lake is an attorney in private. White was first appointed to the position in January 2016 to fill a vacant position. He successfully ran for the seat during the November 2016 election. The winner of the Democratic primary may have some tough competition. In the list of three Republicans competing for this position in the August primary includes Theresa Cass Galvin, the current 6th District legislator. Elected to the County Legislature in 2014, and is currently vice-chair.



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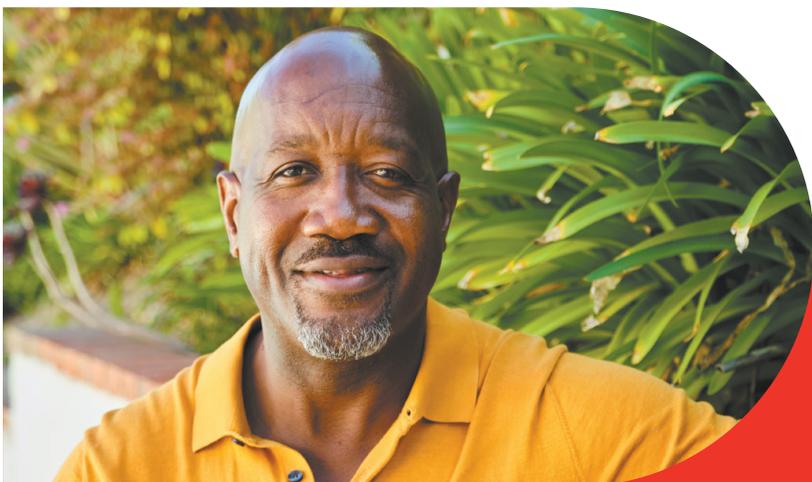
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Paid for by AARP

SIMPLE EXPLAINER

Kansas' Aug. 2 Amendment Issue

By BONITA GOOCH
THE COMMUNITY VOICE

By now, you probably know Kansans will vote on a constitutional amendment on Tues., Aug 2, that will have an impact on the availability of abortions, but do you really understand the vote and what it's all about?

While the advertisements make it seem as though approval of the amendment – a YES Vote – will automatically make abortions illegal in Kansas – it won't.

However, approval of the amendment – a YES Vote – will open the door for the Kansas Legislature to pass a number of laws that could make abortions illegal in Kansas.

A 2019 Kansas Supreme Court decision ruled the Kansas Constitution protects a woman's right to decide whether to carry a pregnancy to term. If passed, the amendment would reverse that decision and declare that a woman does not have the right in Kansas to decide if she wants to have an abortion.

It's that Kansas Supreme Court ruling that's keeping abortion legal in Kansas, despite the U.S. Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion nationwide in America in 1973.

Called "Value Them Both," the amendment specifically says a woman in Kansas

does not have a right to an abortion, even in the case of rape or incest or when necessary to save the life of the mother.

The amendment only speaks to a woman's rights. If the "Value Them Both" amendment passes, the Kansas Legislature – which is dominated by Republicans – could be expected to pass a law banning abortions in Kansas. Whether that ban would allow for any exceptions isn't as clear cut.

A simple majority of people participating in that statewide vote determine fate of the constitutional amendment and the future of abortions in Kansas. Just one vote could end up deciding the future of reproductive rights of women in Kansas.

Republicans, hoping the newly conservative U.S. Supreme Court would overturn Roe, approved bringing the amendment vote to Kansans and purposely placed the issue on the primary ballot – versus the general election ballot, when fewer people show up to vote. That's particularly true for Democrats in Kansas, who rarely have competitive primary contests, and typically have few if any races to vote on in the primary.

What Republicans weren't expecting was a ruling on Roe v. Wade ahead of the election. That ruling has helped increase interest in voting on the amendment, on both sides, with individuals understanding more clearly what they stand to lose or gain.



The Kansas constitutional amendment question on rights to an abortion should drive one of the state's largest ever voter participation rates in a primary primary.

Kansas Abortion Amendment: All Registered Voters Can Cast Ballots in Aug. 2 Primary Election

By DYLAN LYSEN, KANSAS NEWS NETWORK

The August Kansas primary election this year includes a constitutional amendment on abortion rights, and that's attracting attention from people who normally don't vote in primaries.

Kansas has closed primary elections, which means only voters registered with a political party can vote.

That leaves about 30% of Kansans, who are independents not registered with any political party affiliation, out of the state's primary voting system.

That may have caused confusion for voters who aren't used to casting a primary ballot or are not affi-

ated with a political party and are unsure whether they are eligible to vote. The fact is ALL Kansans who are registered to vote are eligible to vote on the constitutional amendment question.

Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab says the amendment on the ballot means all registered Kansans can vote during the primary, regardless of political affiliation.

He encourages all Kansas voters to cast a ballot: "Even if you're an unaffiliated voter, please go vote, because it's your constitution."

The amendment vote will determine whether the state constitution should include a provision that says women do not have the right to end their pregnancy.

Kansas Constitutional Amendment's Confusing Wording: Yes Means No

Yes, the wording of Kansas' constitutional amendment is confusing and purposely so.

A vote "yes" typically means you support something, and the Kansas Republicans want you to support their amendment ending a woman's right to have an abortion in Kansas, even if they have to trick you to get your vote.

In this election, if you vote yes, it means you don't want something, i.e. you don't want abortions in Kansas.

If you vote no, you're voting yes, I want to keep abortions legal in Kansas.

Confusing. Yep, it was planned that way.



Protect
OUR choice & OUR voice

VOTE NO!

August 2, 2022

*Paid for by Sedgwick County Democratic Party, Joseph Shepard, Chair; Beckie Jenek, Treasurer

Boost Now or Wait? Many Wonder How Best to Ride Out COVID's Next Wave

By KAISER HEALTH NEWS

Gwyneth Paige, who is 56 and lives in Detroit, has received three doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. That leaves her one booster short of federal health recommendations.

Like Paige, who said she doesn't currently plan to get another booster, some Americans seem comfortable with the protection of three shots. But others may wonder what to do: Boost again now with one of the original vaccines, or wait months for promised new formulations tailored to the latest, highly contagious omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5?

The rapidly mutating virus has created a conundrum for

the public and a communications challenge for health officials.

"What we're seeing now is a little bit of an information void that is not helping people make the right decision," said Dr. Carlos del Rio, a professor of infectious diseases at the Emory University School of Medicine.

Del Rio said the public isn't hearing enough about the vaccines' value in preventing severe disease, even if they don't stop all infections. Each new COVID variant also forces health officials to tweak their messaging, del Rio said, which can add to public mistrust.

About 70% of Americans age 50 and older who got a first



Pres. Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 this week despite having both boosters furthering the discussion about whether individuals should wait to get the newer booster expected out this fall.

booster shot — and nearly as many of those 65 and older — haven't received their second COVID booster dose, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The agency currently recommends two booster shots after a primary vaccine series for adults 50 and older and for younger people with compromised immune systems.

Officials are worried about the surge of BA.4 and BA.5, which spread easily and can escape immune protection from vaccination or prior infection. A recent study published in Nature found BA.5 was four times as resistant to the currently available mRNA vaccines as earlier omicron subvariants.

Consistent messaging has been complicated by the different views of leading vaccine scientists. Although physicians like del Rio and Dr. Peter Hotez of Baylor College of Medicine see the value in getting a second booster, Dr. Paul Offit, a member of the FDA's vaccine advisory committee, is skeptical it's needed by anyone but seniors

and people who are immunocompromised.

On July 12, the Biden administration released its plan to manage the BA.5 subvariant. The message from top federal health officials was clear: Don't wait for an omicron-tailored shot. "There are many people who are at high risk right now, and waiting until October, November for their boost — when in fact their risk is in the moment — is not a good plan," said Dr. Rochelle Walensky, head of the CDC.

With worries about the BA.5 subvariant growing, the FDA on June 30 recommended that

See **BOOST** Page 21 →

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- Have a gradual change in memory for six months or more
- Have a family member or loved one who can be available as a study partner during the entire study
- Be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or have had a previous COVID-19 infection

Other criteria will apply. There is no cost to the patient to participate in the RethinkALZ trial or for any of the study-related procedures. No hospitalization will be required. You may be compensated for your time and travel for each clinical study appointment.

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Print Ad PTI-125-07_V1.0_04 Feb 2022

Try NoW: A Feature-Rich and Black-Owned Conferencing Service

By BONITA GOOCH AND SIMONE GARZA, THE COMMUNITY VOICE

Did you master the art of Zooming during the pandemic? In a world where COVID still exists and gas is \$4-plus per gallon, do you plan to retain Zoom as an integral part of your business and community outreach?

Then you sound like a customer who's ready for NoW, a feature-rich and Black-owned conferencing service that provides small businesses and personal users many of the features available to Zoom users, but at a lower price.

NoW, launched in August 2021, was developed by Kansas City resident Kenneth Yancy. With nearly 40 years of experience in digital marketing, custom software development and as a serial entrepreneur, Yancy says he looks at technology and marketing with common sense.

"To really have an impact on the community, you've got to understand the issues that are hurting or limiting people. And if you can write software to address that – and I think you should – that's what I do, and have done for 38 years," said Yancy. Using his commonsense approach to solving what's hurting people, Yancy, 57, set out to make Zoom better, addressing what he saw as some of the platform's limitations.

NoW Features

NoW has all of the basics of Zoom, but even more bells and whistles. What's really great is all of the features are available to NoW's basic users and at an affordable price.

If you're using the free version of Zoom, with its limit to 40 minute calls and no option for recording, and it's meeting your needs, then you're probably OK



Kenneth Yancy is the developer of NoW an affordable streaming product he's promoting as a better alternative to Zoom.

where you are. However, if you always find yourself rushing to finish your call within Zoom's 40-minute window, then you need to take a closer look at NoW.

Anyone currently using Zoom's basic plan for \$14.99 per month, look at this head-to-head comparison.

Here's what you get for \$14.97 per month from NoW:

NoW: 250 users

Zoom: 100

NoW: Custom branding

Zoom: Available in upgraded plans

NoW: Waiting-room music of your choice

Zoom: Not available on Zoom.

NoW: Text message notifica-

tions sent to invited attendees 15 minutes before the meeting

Zoom: Not available at any level

NoW: Enhanced Security with advanced encryption to help keep your meetings private

Zoom: Continues to have problems with hacking

NoW: Searchable transcription – this one of our favorites. Not only do you get a recording, you get a transcript of the meeting that's searchable. So, you can find that reference made to XYZ. Plus with a timestamp, if needed, you can easily find the reference in your recording.

Zoom: Doesn't have this at any level.

NoW: Service also includes conference calling

Zoom: Available on upgraded plans.

NoW: Live video streaming on Youtube

Zoom: Available with upgraded plans

NoW: Breakout rooms

Zoom: Available with upgraded plans

Many of those upgraded features on Zoom require the purchase of a minimum of 10 licenses for an annual investment of \$1,999.

Missouri state Rep. Michael Johnson is a NoW subscriber and fan and appreciates that NoW is Black-owned.

"I also appreciate it because Zoom is a little prehistoric now. It's been a little over a decade and NoW is more formidable,"

says Johnson.

Johnson says he likes that he can select the genre of music to play in the waiting room that fits the atmosphere. He also likes the search feature that helps you find exactly what you're looking for.

Marketing NoW

Yancy has identified his targeted audience as underserved communities, small businesses with 100-or-less employees and non-profits.

If you want to check out NoW, Yancy offers a free 14-day trial. While he thinks the product's ease of use and enhanced features will help sell the product, he knows there's more work to be done to grow his subscriber list.

So, he's added a marketing ap-



proach that's worked for many multi-million dollar companies: affinity marketing. It's an approach that works with groups and organizations to market the product to their members. In return, the organizations earn a fee from each of their members who subscribe to NoW.

So far, Yancy is developing an affinity program with the Heartland Black Chamber of Commerce, but he's looking for other groups who have members with a regular need for streaming.

"We're gonna pay them \$3 per month for each one of their members that switch over, and that means that the Heartland Black Chamber of Commerce will now have some revenue to create scholarships and to create funds for small businesses to start," he said.

What's Ahead

Yancy is already working on additional enhancements to NoW. He's looking to raise capital to help cover the cost of developing the first bilingual video conferencing platform. This feature, called "real-time translation," will translate one language to another.

Yancy anticipates launching a NoW app that is iPhone and Android accessible in late August.

Rep. Johnson said these are features that will take NoW to yet another level.

Simone Garza is a Report for America corps member based at The Community voice covering Kansas City's African-American community.

Kansas City People's Choice Weekend Approaching

Again this year, it's more than just a night, it's a weekend. Join the celebration of Black Excellence Aug. 5-7. Here's some of what you need to know.

By SIMONE GARZA
THE COMMUNITY VOICE

Kansas City should expect another exciting and breathtaking People's Choice Awards show this year with founder Terrell Ray back again to host the fourth annual event.

KC People's Choice Awards is a great opportunity to network, gain name recognition, uplift, and recognize individuals and organizations for excellence in the Kansas City metro.

This year, awards will be presented in 75 categories, up from 66 last year. A few of the new categories are Best Barber and Cosmetology School and Best Clinical Healthcare Provider.

Again this year, the KCPCA Awards is an all-star weekend event. From Aug. 5-7, be ready to mix, mingle and partay. The festivities kick off on Friday with the KCPCA Network and Social. Saturday is the day party.

"The day party is just something to come and relax and introduce yourself to other nominees and hang out," Ray said.

Save some energy. Sunday will be a long day. The awards show begins at 2 p.m. at the Arvest Bank Theatre at The Midland and goes straight into and through the celebratory after-party.

The Vision

Ray says the idea for KCPCA came to him when he was



City World Gospel group was among performers at the 2021 KCPCA. This year's lineup of onstage performers is equally impressive.

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT TERRELL RAY

In Ray's younger years, he definitely did not expect to do the work he's doing now.

"The young Terrell was aggressive and angry. It is not the common person [that] people see now on social media," says Ray.

His father passed away when he was 12 years old. In addition, the neighborhood he was living in played a huge factor in making him the person he was then.

But that's not the person he is today, proving you can rise up and out of the

circumstances in your life.

Now, Ray describes himself as a person of integrity, community-oriented, and humorous.

He gives credit to social media for helping him create a brand that's allowed him to be able to uplift, encourage, inspire and recognize Kansas City's practitioners of excellence, whatever their field.



watching the BET Awards. He'd attended Steve Harvey's Hoodie Awards and had observed Pitch Magazine's annual recognition closer to home.

"I just felt like Kansas City was ready for their own award shows," says Ray.

Kansas City responded with a resounding yes! It's become evident that Black Kansas City residents, who were almost totally absent in other award programs, were glad to be recognized, especially by their own.

So each year the number of categories, as well as the number of nominees in each category, has grown. Peo-

ple's Choice fans love to see new faces, says Ray. It keeps the show fresh.

"It's something that Kansas City will continue to support because they're seeing new nominees," he said.

Want To Get Nominated?

If you want to be one of those fresh new nominees next year, Ray has some advice: "Campaigning is important."

According to Ray, "Your friends and family should be there to support you. It does not take much for them to go online and vote and get you on the ballot."

Looking Ahead

Ray's goal for the fifth annual

awards show is for the event to take place at the T-Mobile Center.

"I just want to continue to improve on the awards and continue that integrity, where people trust and believe in it"

Want More Details?

Want to see the complete list of nominees, get the details on the full weekend of events or purchase tickets, go online to KCPCAAwards.com

Simone Garza is a Report for America corps member based at The Community Voice covering Kansas City's African-American community.

KC Library Has 900 New Connected Portable Computers to Check Out

By JAKE MARTIN
THE COMMUNITY VOICE

Kansas City Public Library has 900 Google Chromebook portable computers available for checkout free of charge. All you need is a library card. The portable computers are fully equipped with built-in wifi internet and 4G LTE mobile data for internet access anywhere.

The program is being provided as a way to bridge the digital divide in the Kansas City community.

In a study from the tech company mySidewalk, nearly 11% of Kansas City households do not have access to the internet and 8% of households do not have a computer. Of the city's six council districts, the 3rd District – with a majority African-American population – ranks first in the city with 21% of homes without access to the internet and 17% without a computer at home.

The computers will be beneficial to anyone in the community who might need reliable access to the internet to apply for jobs, pay bills, or for students who need the internet for class work, said Joel Jones, a spokesperson for KCPL. "It's a tremendous service for anyone who might need broadband access," Jones said. "Imagine how your life would change if you didn't have reliable internet access. Just like electricity or running water, reliable broadband needs to be accessible."

The Chromebooks, part of the library's Tech-to-Go program, can be checked out for a 21-day period with no renewals. Patrons are encouraged to place holds on laptops since demand is expected to be high.

Also part of the Tech-to-Go program, the library also offers checkout of 300 wifi hotspots for anyone only in need of internet access.

Information on library resources and digital services that are accessible to library patrons will be loaded onto each computer. Funding for the laptops came from \$850,000 dollars in Federal Emergency Connectivity funding included in the American Rescue Plan.

For more info, call 816-701-3400 or visit KCLibrary.org.



Top winners of the GYRL car show were: (Left to clockwise) Tish J's metallic Wrangler won 2nd Place, Best Overall Award, Melinda Wesley's chrome-and-silver Jeep won Best Accent Award and uiyana Jerome's white Jeep won Best Overall and Best Sound Award.

G.Y.R.L. Presents First-Ever Bike and Car Show

BY SIMONE GARZA
THE COMMUNITY VOICE

G.Y.R.L., a nonprofit dedicated to bringing awareness to and mentoring survivors of domestic violence, partnered with One Love Ladies of Empowerment to host an all-woman bike and car show at Harris Park earlier this month.

By working with women and girls to build self-esteem, character, integrity and faith, G.Y.R.L.'s goal is to create self-confident leaders in their work

The bike and car show also included a community vendor fair, with many of the vendors joining in because of a personal commitment to the issue of domestic violence.

Being a vendor was important to Dee Coleman, owner of 3D's Lavish Fashions and a domestic violence survivor. Coleman said she's noticed there's not much advocacy or conversation about domestic abuse locally.

"My view on domestic violence is

that we can be the voice of our community in different ways on how to get out of that situation, how to handle it in any way necessary, or help build a facility for people in these situations," she said.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, more than 40% of Black women have experienced intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes. And more than half of Black adult

female homicides are related to intimate partner violence.

When the car show competition began, the audience gazed at each vehicle, uniquely ranging from rubber-duck decorated Jeeps to bass-boosted trunks and a bright purple Nissan.

Attendees at the event voted for the best cars. The top three winners:

Quiyana Jerome's white Jeep won "Best Overall and Best Sound Award"

Tish J's metallic Wrangler won "2nd Place For Best Overall Award" Melinda Wesley's chrome-and-silver Jeep won "Best Accent Award"

G.Y.R.L. will use a share of its donations from the event to rehabilitate and continue providing immediate services. G.Y.R.L. also provides a community food bank that accepts donations from local businesses.

For more info on donating, visit <https://bit.ly/3uXLxKq>

MEFSEC MEMORIES

50th Anniversary Planned for Lynette Woodard Center

By BONITA GOOCH
THE COMMUNITY VOICE

If you're an old school Wichitan, you know the tan concrete building located at 18th and Volutsia in Northeast Wichita as the MEFSEC. That stands for Moving Effectively for Social and Economic Change.

No, you don't say it as initials, it's just a word that brings fond memories to those for whom the center made a positive difference in their lives.

Now, the center is better known as the Lynette Woodard Recreation Center, and this year the center turns 50 years old, with a celebration scheduled for Sat., July 30.

It's a great time to look back at the center's beginning and the role it's played in a community that struggled with segregation, bore the brunt of busing, dealt with poverty and drug abuse, but still managed to turn out an unusual number of professional athletes, all who polished their game at MEFSEC.

The Center's Origins

MEFSEC opened in 1972, but the history of the center dates back to the late '60s Civil



Rights Movement in Wichita. A major turning point was the August 1968 riot brought on when three White men shot two young Black men walking along 17th Street and a fight broke out between Blacks and Whites at a nearby tavern. A night of street fighting followed.

According to Gretchen Eick, in her book "Dissent in Wichita," Black leaders had heard a militia group from Wellington, KS, was coming to town and asked that all major roads entering Northeast Wichita be blocked to non-residents.

"Instead, that night the mayor called in 400 members of the National Guard," wrote Eick.

For three days, the press reported fire bombings, some

sniper activity and a series of robberies with National Guardsmen in full combat gear patrolling the streets of Northeast Wichita in tanks.

Saying they understood why people acted out their frustrations in the streets, the council of Model Cities, a concept pushed by Wichita Civil Rights Attorney Chester Lewis, proposed using funds from the federal antipoverty program for a series of efforts they believed could address the primary causes of poverty.

Included in that list of recommendations was building a recreation center and health clinic in Northeast Wichita.

To bring attention to the request, the NAACP sponsored

a rally with nearly 500 young people pouring into the Wichita City Council chambers to make their voices heard.

With their spokesman, Robert L. Mitchell, stating, "We are Americans and proud of it, but we must enjoy all the rights of Whites," the group asked for a recreational center in Northeast Wichita.

Basketball Legacy

The center became so famous for turning out basketball standouts that it was featured on numerous national platforms, including Sports Illustrated, as one of the top places to play high-quality basketball in America.

A number of hoopers who went on to play in the NBA fine-tuned their game at MEFSEC.

"You would get there early so you could play with Xavier McDaniel (a 1985 Round 1 NBA draft pick) and Cliff Levingston (a 1982 Round 1 pick).

Other standouts included Antoine Carr and Korleone Young. While he eventually gained national attention as an NFL rushing back, Barry Sanders was a regular on the MEF-

SEC courts.

"He's a football player, but his first love was basketball," said Cliff Fanning, one of the center's earliest directors, in a 2020 interview.

Wichita native DJ Fisher credits the center for introducing him to the game of basketball. At 12, Fisher received his first job at MEFSEC as part of the city's summer youth job program. In addition, he played in the infamous "Hoop It Up" Summer Basketball League, which was credited with keeping youth off the streets during the summer and with stemming violence.

Fisher says the center was

more than a basketball court, it became a safe haven for many.

"It was very competitive back then. No violence or fights," said James Harding, who succeeded Fanning as the center's director, in a 2020 interview. "We had pushing and shoving like in a game, but overall, it was strictly basketball."

Nothing Stays the Same

MEFSEC's name was changed to the Lynette Woodard Center in 1984 in honor of the Wichita native and Basketball Hall of Fame member. Woodard, who played for the University of Kan-

See ANNIVERSARY Page 19 →



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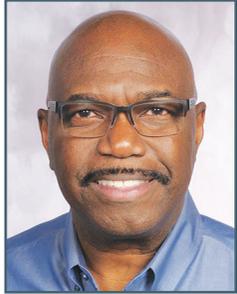
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Sylvester Thompson

Lynette Woodard Center Today Has More Diverse Programming

Renamed the Lynette Woodard Recreation Center in 1984, today the center's focus is much broader than basketball. Under the direction of Angela Buckner, a Wichita State University women's basketball standout, the center is the only Wichita Park and Recreation Center offering programming for children as young as 1 and 2 years old.

The center has a full range of programming for Wichita's youngest children, including Kickstart sports for 1- and 2-year-olds and Sports of all Sorts for 3-to-5-year-olds. Those classes include an introduction to a variety of sports, but there's also a Ninja Warriors program that includes an obstacle course, balance beam and a pint-sized climbing wall.

Buckner says both Woodard and Atwater (located next door) offer "a diverse range of program-



WOODARD



BUCKNER

ming for all kinds of kids."

For children not interested in sports the center also offers music lessons, including piano, guitar and drums. Classes are \$15 for 30 minutes,

"It's the cheapest you can get anywhere," Buckner says.

Unlike earlier days when all of the center's services were free, Buckner says almost all of the programs have a small but reasonable fee. The only free program is their after-school program.

Kids can come in and play for free at basketball, board games or sit down and get their homework done.

It's a great program to keep youth safe and off the street between the time they get out of school and an adult arrives home.

During the summer, the center offers a summer activity camp from noon to 5 p.m. There is a cost for the camp, but scholarships are available.

ANNIVERSARY,
from Page 18↓

sas, was an Olympic gold medalist in basketball and the first female member of the Harlem Globetrotters.

Prior to the center being renamed, the center's basketball legacy had begun to fade. Fanning says the city's change to a "Pay-to-Play" policy curtailed a lot of traffic at the center.

"In these low-income areas, that didn't generate a lot of revenue," Fanning said.

According to Fanning, a lot of the center's old basketball traffic has gone to the YMCAs at Highway K-96/Woodlawn and downtown.

"If you don't have a car to get to the Y, then you're missing out," said Fanning, "but that doesn't help individuals without trans-

portation."

"What I would like to see is more tournaments come back," said Harding. "To see more three-on-three competitions. They can create an atmosphere of folks wanting to go back and play basketball there."

Anniversary Celebration

The City of Wichita Park and Recreation Dept. has scheduled a 50th Anniversary Celebration on Sat., July 30, beginning with a free basketball clinic for boys and girls ages 6 to 14 with Hall of Fame legend Lynette Woodard from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Register at <https://bit.ly/WoodardBball>.

The day continues with an open house from 1 - 2 p.m.

- Contributing: Former Community Voice reporter Malcolm Carter and freelancer John Paul



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Annual TARP Reunion, Stopped by COVID, Returning

By DEB GRUVER
THE COMMUNITY VOICE

They know they can't bring back the '60s and '70s, but organizers of the upcoming TARP Reunion hope to bring back some of their friends from that era.

The Teen Age Recreation Program (TARP) started in 1955 at McAdams Park to give youth something to do on Friday nights.

"It was really the only place for Black youth to go back then," Parlene Warren, a reunion organizer, said.

Students would flock to McAdams after football games for music and dancing. The weekly event had a great run, impacting a couple of generations of area teens until it ended in 1974.

"My older brother and sister would walk up to McAdams every Friday," Warren remembered.

Fans of the Friday-night fest began putting on TARP reunions in 2013, in part to show the City of Wichita that the park still was vital to the community. The last reunion was in 2019. COVID-19 paused the annual get-together until this summer.

The next reunion is scheduled for 6 to 10 p.m. July 30. That's a Saturday — not the regular Friday from the original days.

Colleen Edwards, another organizer, said the reunion will feature entertainment and food. She demurred when asked about what the entertainment would be.

"That's a secret," she said.

The reunions are fun, she said, "because you get to see a lot of people you haven't seen for a while."

TARP nights were always well-attended, and attendees were well-behaved, Warren and Edwards said.

Park supervisor Emerson "Mac" McAdams made sure of that.

"He knew everyone's parents, and he'd call your parents and you wouldn't get to come back," Edwards said.

TARP dances drew youth from all over Wichita, she said.

"It didn't matter what school you were from," Edwards said. "Everybody just

came to have a good time."

Tickets for the reunion are \$5 and will be available for purchase at the park.

Warren and Edwards think the reunion will be well-attended given the COVID-19 pause.

"We've had a lot of people calling from out of town wanting to know about it," Edwards said.



Old school fun with old friends is what you can expect at the TARP Reunion.

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Visit bit.ly/wpsenroll2022 to begin the process online.

Nutrition Services

Updates for 2022-23

School districts are no longer able to offer free lunches to all students. Wichita Public Schools will continue to provide free breakfast to all students.

All families are encouraged to complete the Online Free and Reduced Application prior to August 15 to avoid full-price meal charges if you qualify for the free or reduced prices.

Go to <https://family.titank12.com> to apply. For questions, please call 316-973-2160.

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Exhibit to Honor TKAAM Benefactor & Famous Black Artist Samella Lewis

The Kansas African American Museum (TKAAM) has championed African-American culture and art through one of its most prominent benefactors, Dr. Samella Lewis. Lewis, an accomplished painter, printmaker, author and one of the foremost historians of African-American art passed away in Torrance, CA, on May 27. She was 99 and left behind a legacy that fills the hearts of many across the nation.

"[Lewis] donated a large part of her collection to The Kansas African American Museum, said Carol Branda, the museum's volunteer curator. "[Lewis] was an inspiring and generous person and will be sorely missed."

As she built up her extensive collection of African and Black American art, Lewis founded the Museum of African American Art in Los Angeles in 1976. After that, from 1998 to 2006, Lewis donated more than 100 pieces from her private collec-

tion of different Black artists and a portion of her private art collection to TKAAM. Her contributions became the foundation of the museum's "Africa to Kansas" exhibit.

To pay tribute to Lewis, a pioneer, innovator, and visionary of the arts, TKAAM has compiled an exhibit dedicated to her personal art collection, "A Tribute to Samella Lewis," which will be on display in the museum's main exhibition hall from July 16 to Sept. 3.

Born Feb. 27, 1924, Lewis grew up in segregated New Orleans and was weary of her lack of knowledge of different cultures. She craved to know more about how foreign societies created their art. As an art historian, Lewis traveled throughout Brazil and China, but mainly Africa, finding ceremonial pieces, masks, and sculptures in which she found inspiration.

According to an interview in Pigment Magazine, a source



"Art is not a luxury as many people think," she said, according to the website Black Art in America. "It is a necessity. It documents history — it helps educate people and stores knowledge for generations to come."

Samella Lewis

focused on delivering the arts through a multicultural lens, Lewis believed Black artists would grow from experiencing foreign cultures. However, Africa is the root of all, so it is the best place to start.

Lewis, a creative force, found success as an author, art historian, and filmmaker. However, her passion for art catalyzed her life of service and ignited culture in museums throughout the United States.

"As a summer intern, I had the chance to learn more about Sa-

mella Lewis," said Lovette Mba, TKAAM summer intern. "I was inspired by her energy, which taught me to find true success by serving others. I encourage our community to visit the museum and embrace Lewis's art."

The Kansas African American Museum is located at 601 North Water St, Wichita. To learn more about the museum, including its hours visit www.TKAAMuseum.org or call 316-262-7651.

- Submitted by Lovette Mba, summer intern, The Kansas African American Museum

Samella Lewis, an artist, printmaker and one of the foremost historians of African-American art was also a great benefactor of The Kansas African American Museum. Many of the works she contributed to the museum are part of a new exhibit.

PANASONIC, from Page 6 ↓

represented a big success for Kelly, a Democrat who faces a tough reelection race this year. The announcement also comes as Kansas finds itself flush with cash and able to absorb the financial hit that the incentive packages could otherwise have on schools and state programs.

The announcement ended more than five months of secrecy in which Kansas officials were required to sign non-disclosure agreements to learn the details of Panasonic's plans. Legislators approved the new incentives program in February with-

out state officials ever disclosing who would receive the benefits.

Kansas was competing with Oklahoma. Tesla is building an electric vehicle plant in Texas, and it and Panasonic jointly operate a battery plant in Nevada.

Meanwhile, the same law setting up the new Kansas incentives program also requires the state to cut its corporate tax rates by half a percentage point for every big deal closed, so that all businesses benefit. If two deals close, companies would save roughly \$100

million a year and the state's top rate would drop to 6% from 7%.

Backers of the new program argued that Kansas has lost out on other large projects because it couldn't offer generous enough incentives.

Ohio early this year offered Intel Corp. incentives worth roughly \$2 billion to secure a new \$20 billion chip-making factory. Michigan lawmakers in December approved \$1 billion in incentives, two-thirds of it for General Motors for plants to assemble batteries for electric vehicles.

BOOST, from Page 14 ↓

drugmakers Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna get to work producing a new, bivalent vaccine that combines the current version with a formulation that targets the new strains.

The companies both say they can make available for the U.S. millions of doses of the reformulated shots in October. Experts think that deadline could slip by a few months given the unexpected hitches that plague vaccine manufacturing.

"I think that we have all been asking that same question," said Dr. Kathryn Edwards, scientific director of the Vanderbilt Vaccine Research Program. "What's the benefit

of getting another booster now when what will be coming out in the fall is a bivalent vaccine and you will be getting BA.4/5, which is currently circulating? Although whether it will be circulating in the fall is another question."

People at very high risk for covid complications might want to go ahead and get a fourth dose, Edwards said, with the hope that it will temporarily prevent severe disease "while you wait for BA.4/5."

The omicron vaccines will contain components that target the original strain of the virus because the first vaccine formulations are known to prevent serious illness and death

even in people infected with omicron.

Those components will also help keep the earlier strains of the virus in check, said Dr. David Brett-Major, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. That's important, he said, because too much tailoring of vaccines to fight emerging variants could allow older strains of the coronavirus to resurface.

Although some Americans are pondering when, or whether, to get their second boosters, many people tuned out the pandemic long ago, putting them at risk during the current wave, experts said.

Five Leonard Pryor Paintings Gifted to Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

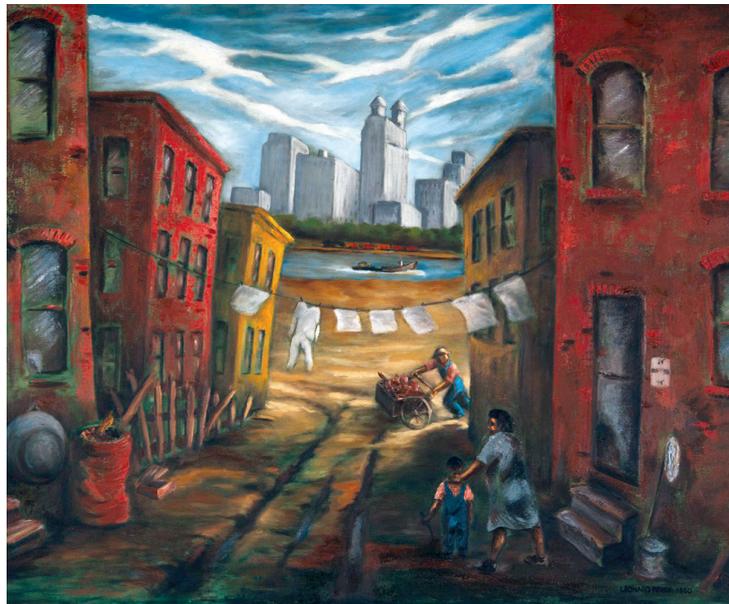
“North End” and “Lonesome” are currently on view in Nelson-Atkins Gallery 219, with plans to highlight the other gifts in the future.

The two heirs of Kansas City artist and educator Leonard Pryor (1924-2015) have given five of their father’s paintings to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Pryor dedicated his career to advocating for the arts and worked tirelessly to enrich Kansas City’s creative community.

“Leonard Pryor was a pivotal figure in Kansas City arts, not only because of his enormous talent, but because he was a trailblazer in multiple arenas,” said Julián Zugazagoitia, the Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell CEO and director of the Nelson-Atkins. “He was the

first Black student enrolled at the Kansas City Art Institute, he organized exhibitions of Black artists, and he was also the first Black to be named dean of students at KCAI. His contributions were truly groundbreaking, and we are deeply grateful to his children for reaching out to the museum regarding their desire to preserve their father’s legacy.”

The five paintings given by René Pryor Newton and Craig Pryor in memory of their parents, Leonard and Maxine Pryor, are “North End” (1950), “Lonesome” (1950), “After the



Kansas City artist and educator Leonard Pryor’s “North End” (1950, oil on canvas) captures a contrasting view from a North KC neighborhood to the skyscrapers across the river. He spent years teaching in the community’s Lincoln High School.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America’s finest art museums. The museum opens its doors free of charge to people of all backgrounds. For more information about the museum visit nelson-atkins.org.

in the U.S. Navy during World War II. For many in the community, Pryor may be best known as the art and photography teacher at Lincoln High School, where he spent 17 years before eventually becoming chairman of the art department. From 1972 until his retirement in 1986, Pryor served as district coordinator of art, music, and physical education in the Kansas City Public Schools.

Pryor’s artistic practice flourished during the last decades of his life, and he had his first solo exhibition in 1999, at age 75. KCAI created the Leonard Pryor Endowment in 2007, a scholarship to help minority students pay tuition and supply costs.

In a joint statement, Pryor’s children said, “We are honored to share our dad’s paintings in such a prestigious venue. It is our hope that these gifts will further his legacy of inspiring young artists for many years to come.”

Bath” (1949), “Elsie Mountain” (1950), and “Still Life with Pear” (1958).

“This important acquisition aligns with the museum’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion while also furthering the goal of provid-

ing opportunities for visitors to both see themselves reflected in the collection and build empathy through direct experiences with art,” said Stephanie Fox Knappe, the Samuel Sosland senior curator of American art. “This gift of five paintings

that represent different facets of Pryor’s oeuvre also provides a significant historic parallel to the on-going ‘KC Art Now’ initiative that celebrates the talents of local artists.”

Pryor enrolled at KCAI after serving as a pharmacist’s mate

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Flavors of Central Eating Tour in KCK Aug. 13

The Central Avenue Betterment Association, a community organization and creative generator of community pride, is holding a food tour highlighting the various cultural cuisines of the district on Sat., Aug. 13.

“The Flavors of Central Tour” offers up tastes ranging from Hispanic food to Caribbean dishes, Chinese desserts, and local outdoor markets. With more than 25 eateries and drinking lounges on the tour, opportunities to satisfy your taste buds are endless.

The event starts at 10 a.m. at Bethany Park, 1120 Central Avenue, KCK. When ticketed guests arrive, they’ll receive security bracelets and information maps to each of the partici-



“The flavors from several latitudes, including the locals, are going strong, but unless you know where to look, many of them are invisible.”

ating businesses, then get started on a self-directed tour.

Mobility options include walking,

driving, biking, and renting scooters.

At each stop, guests can taste a food sample specifically prepared for the tour.

This is a popular event, and with tickets limited to a capacity of 200, they sell fast. Tickets are \$45 per person and can be purchased online at www.TheFlavorsOfCentralTour.com.

“So much of our local Mexican cuisine is inspired by what’s happening in the old country, but in the little eateries tucked into this and that corner of our community, amazing flavors sprout majestically” said Edgar Galicia, CABA’s executive director.

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Malcolm Carter
Malcolm proudly serves Wichita's African American community as a Community Facilitator.

“I took the vaccine to protect my mother and father. Both are high-risk so I felt it was the responsible thing to do. As community members we should be looking out for one another.**”**

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