

THE VOICE

A Trusted Voice From The Community's Perspective



JUNETEENTH 2024

A CALENDAR OF LOCAL AND STATE EVENTS PAGES 12-14



Who Would You Choose?
Prosecutor Politics
Page 3, 5 & 6

Wichita to March and Rally
Unity in the Community
Page 9



Volume 31, No. 11 · communityvoiceks.com · Friday, June 7, 2024

PRSRRT STD
US POSTAGE PAID
WICHITA KS
PERMIT NO. 560

Change Service Requested

The Community Voice
P.O. Box 20804
Wichita, KS 67208

THE VOICE

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 11
FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2024

LOOKING AHEAD

If You're Not Reading Us Online – YOU'RE MISSING A LOT

Here's some of our recent, exclusive online stories

Wichita

Wichita Police Department's Real Time Crime Center to be Discussed

National

Lock Him Up: What Trumps Conviction Means to the Black Community

Kansas City

Neighborhood Blocks a Low-Barrier Shelter Some See as Key to Solving Homelessness in KC

Sign Up for Our Weekly Newsletter: If you don't have time to stop by the website on a regular basis, sign up for our weekly newsletter. Once a week, we'll send you a newsletter summarizing our top five stories of the week.

Stop Looking for a Print Edition of The Community Voice: You can read editions of The Community Voice on our website. Not just current and recent issues. You can read issues dating back several years. Go to www.CommunityVoiceKS.com, click on "e-editions." Plus, our archive is searchable. If there's a particular story you're looking for, just enter a defining word for the story in the search box.

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A STORY?



Make an appointment to share your story idea with our reporting team.

- APPOINTMENTS:
Mondays 10 a.m. to Noon.
- 15 minute time slots
- Deadline for Space reservation
Thursday before the appt.
- COME PREPARED TO SHARE!!

**VOICE
YOUR
STORY**



Hallelujah, We're Celebrating Our Freedom

By **Bonita Gooch**
Voice Editor-in-Chief

As many Americans prepare to celebrate Independence day on July 4, and give less than a nod in recognition of Juneteenth and its meaning, I'm so glad that we finally have a national holiday to bring attention to this day that recognizes the freedom of African Americans in this county.

Four million slaves were set free at the end of American, with little more than the clothes on their back. Things weren't easy, but they were free and early on they began



celebrating their freedom with an annual recognition.

In Texas it was Juneteenth, because that was when they found out they were free. In other parts of the country, it

was Dec. 31st and the custom of Watch Night services or Emancipation Day program in recognition of the slaves waiting for Jan. 1, 1863, when the Proclamation was authorized

to become effective.

Although Juneteenth celebrates the end, we can not let the celebration of the end devalue the tragedy of 250 years of slavery in America and the 150 years since that haven't been easy or equal for Black people.

Juneteenth isn't a celebration that everything was, or is, all right, but it's a day that must be remembered and recognized. It's OUR Freedom Day in America and like July 4, we must never forget it or fail to recognize its importance – both good and bad – in American history.

Behind the Cartoon: Cult Wives Club

So if the judge presiding over the Trump hush money case should recuse himself because his daughter is politically active, then shouldn't Supreme Court justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito recuse themselves as well because their wives are also VERY politically active?

It's the same thing with Trump and all the MAGATs who repeat his howls that judges in Washington, DC, Fulton County, and New York City are corrupt, but the one he appointed in Florida is upstanding and ethical in every way, even though she's exposed her bias for Trump multiple times.

Even before a jury in Manhattan ruled that Trump is guilty on 34 counts of falsifying business records to pay hush money to a porn star he claims he never had sex with, Trump

and Trump goons were claiming that Judge Juan Merchan was biased and should recuse himself because his daughter worked for a company that contracts work for Democratic political campaigns.

Merchan's daughter working for Democratic campaigns isn't enough for MAGATs to scream about, they also have to tack on a few lies like she tweeted an image of Trump behind bars. She never did that, but I have.

What we haven't heard are Republicans calling for Thomas and Alito to recuse themselves from Trump cases that their wives are connected to. Martha Alito showed support for the January 6 White nationalist insurrection. She was so connected to it that she got into a feud with neighbors for their vile act of placing signs in their yard supportive



of democracy. Ginni Thomas didn't just wave a flag for MAGA terrorists, she was on the team trying to overturn the election Donald Trump lost, even sending texts back and forth to members of the Trump administration on strategy for stealing the election from then President-Elect Biden.

The defense against Thomas

and Alito recusing themselves is that they didn't directly engage in Trump treason, their wives did. They can't be biased for Trump because their wives are their own individual persons with freedom of speech and it's no way in connection to their husbands' jobs.

Republicans lack more than facts...they lack consistency.

THE COMMUNITY VOICE

PO Box 20804 | Wichita, KS 67214
316.681.1155 | ISSN 1090-3852
www.communityvoiceks.com

The contents of each issue of The Community Voice are copyrighted. Articles appearing in The Community Voice may not be reproduced without written permission of the Editor. All rights reserved.

ADVERTISING RATES:

Email: Oswald@tcvpub.com

EDITORIAL: Readers with story or photo ideas, tips, criticisms or suggestions on coverage are urged to contact the Editor. All submissions to the paper, letters and columns are subject to editing for length, style, taste and legal considerations.

CORRECTIONS:

The Community Voice strives for accuracy and fairness. Readers who believe a story or headline is inaccurate or misleading should contact the Editor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Published BiWeekly
\$27.95/yr. Sedgwick County
\$35.95/yr. Outside Sedgwick County
\$73.99/yr. Outside Kansas

CONTACTS:

Editor-in-Chief/Press Releases
Bonita Gooch
Wichita | press@tcvpub.com
KC | cvoicekc@tcvpub.com

Publisher:
Kurt Oswald | oswald@tcvpub.com
Press Releases: press@tcvpub.com
Advertising: adcopy@tcvpub.com

Contributing Writers:

Thomas White | Kansas City
twhite@tcvpub.com
P.J. Griekspoor | Wichita
griekspoor@tcvpub.com

Advertising Sales:

Cornell Hill | hill@tcvpub.com

Office Administration:

Elaine Guillory | guillory@tcvpub.com

Historic Black Prosecutor Candidacies Spark Unity Debate

Opportunity for Jackson County's first Black prosecutor faces threat of split vote.

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

Jackson County could elect its first Black prosecutor this fall, but fears have arisen that a split Black vote in the Democratic primary race could squander the historic opportunity.

In an editorial published in the Kansas City Call, Urban League of Kansas City President and CEO Gwen Grant issued a plea urging one of the two Black female candidates to withdraw to consolidate support behind the stronger contender.

"If they both remain in

the race, it is likely that neither will win," Grant wrote of Melesa Johnson and Stephanie Burton.

Grant argued the presence of a third White candidate, John Gromowsky, means the two Black women risk dividing the Black vote and progressive vote, allowing Gromowsky — who is more conservative — to claim the nomination.

"A coalition of stakeholders comprised of civic, neighborhood, political, civil rights, and faith-based leaders and activists should convene a joint meeting with the two candidates to formulate a



Burton



Gromowsky



Johnson

pathway forward that would result in the weaker candidate altruistically withdrawing from the race and magnanimously supporting the stronger candidate," wrote Grant.

Grant pointed to current fundraising totals and community visibility as metrics favoring Johnson, Kansas

City's director of public safety, over Burton, a criminal defense attorney. "From my perspective, Melesa Johnson appears to be the stronger candidate as of now," said Grant.

But Burton forcefully rejected any suggestion she should end her candidacy.

"I'm not going to be bullied out of my race by anyone," Burton said. "Gwen Grant's entitled to her opinion, but my record and experience stand on its own."

A criminal trial attorney, Burton contended that the prosecutor's race should be about qualifications and vision, not identity politics.

"It's not about who's got the most money or who's the Blackest candidate," Burton said. "It's about who's qualified to do the job."

Burton contends that her extensive trial experience, canvassing efforts, and Freedom Inc. endorsement make her a viable candidate and highly qualified for the position.

"Let's match up qualification for qualification," says Burton. "While [Grant] can have her opinion, if she has to rely on the prosecutor to effectively try a case and pick a jury if something happened to someone in her family, that's not the person that she's gonna pick."

Melesa Johnson says she



It's not about who's got the most money or who's the Blackest candidate, it's about who's qualified to do the job."

STEPHANIE BURTON

wagrees with Grant's premise.

"If either Stephanie or I do not win, it's probably going to be another eight years before we have another shot [at electing a Black prosecutor]," says Johnson.

Johnson says that her agreement isn't entirely self-serving. While she believes she's the best candidate, she also says it's important to have a person of color elected to lead the prosecutor's office, given "80% of victims, witnesses, and offenders are people of color." "At a time when we understand that those most impacted by an issue need to have the most substantial seat at the table, we really do need to capitalize on this opportunity," says Johnson.

Johnson says she respects Burton, but when it comes to candidate metrics like endorsements, visibility,

fundraising, and leadership experience, Johnson herself has the edge. She says she has plenty of trial experience herself but adds experience in coordinating programs and services. "I would love to see the community rally around me," says Johnson. "I'm just going to keep working hard and putting myself out there to make sure that if I'm not successful in this race, it will not be because I was outworked."

Gromowsky, the third candidate, did not respond to multiple interview requests or participate in a recent candidate forum hosted by Black Excellence KC and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. At the candidate forum, members of the audience voiced concerns about Gromowsky's absence and his anti-abortion views, given that the prosecutor could choose to criminally charge women who opt for abortion. Gromowsky has also raised more money to date than either Burton or Johnson.

Historically, whoever wins the Democratic primary in this race wins the general election, which adds importance to the primary. The Jackson County Prosecutor's primary is Aug. 6, and early absentee voting begins June 25. The last day to register to vote is July 10. Register at jcebmo.org.





HOME^{at}LAST

A Home-At-Last loan from Capitol Federal offers qualified buyers:

No minimum loan amounts

Low down payments & competitive rates

No up-front mortgage insurance premium

Local service for the life of the loan

Homebuyer education by recognized community organizations



View CapFed's loan options and apply today.

Or find the right loan for your needs with a Purchase + Improvement loan or Home Equity Line of Credit from CapFed.



888.8CAPFED | capfed.com



Kansas Candidates of Color Vying Beyond Traditional Districts

The Kansas primary filing deadline just passed and revealed many races with candidates of color will be decided in the primary.

By Bonita Gooch
Voice Editor-in-Chief

The deadline to file to run for office in the 2024 Kansas election cycle passed on June 3, and there were a lot of surprises.

In Kansas during even years, elections are for members of the state Legislature – both the House and, this year, the entire Senate, as well as for U.S. Congress. A portion of the state's county commission seats are also up for election, as well as sheriffs, district attorneys and some district court judges.

Not up this “even” year are statewide offices, i.e., governor, secretary of state, etc. or U.S. senators. Those positions will be up for election in 2026.

The primaries are Tue., Aug. 6. The last day to register to vote in the primary is July 16.

Here are some candidates and races we're watching across the state.

U.S. Congress

Kansas has four congressional districts. Three of the four are held by Republicans. The only Democrat is **Sharice Davids**, who represents District 3, which covers Johnson County, three adjacent counties (Miami, Franklin and Anderson) and the southern part of Wyandotte County (south of I-70).

During redistricting, following the 2020 Census, the northern part of Wyandotte County was moved into District 2, which covers Eastern Kansas, from the northern to the southern border, including Topeka, but excluding Lawrence. The Republican-led Legislature moved Lawrence to District 1, which covers the mostly rural western two-thirds of the state.

Current District 2 Congressman Jake LaTurner, who is only in his second term, decided not to seek reelection. A crowded field of individuals are hoping to

secure his seat, including former Kansas Attorney General **Derek Schmidt**. In total, five Republicans are vying to advance out of the primary.

Two Democrats have filed for the seat. **Matt Kleinmann**, a former University of Kansas basketball player who was a developer turned nonprofit administrator, was the first Democrat to file. However, just before the filing deadline, **Nancy Boyda** also filed as a Democrat. Boyda was the District 2 congresswoman in 2006, before being ousted after one term.

Ron Estes, congressman for District 4, which covers Wichita, has no opposition in his Republican race. Union leader **Esau Freeman** has filed as a Democrat; he also ran for the seat in 2012.

Kansas Senate

This year, the 40 members of the Kansas Senate are up for reelection. The Senate has historically had only two African-American members, representing the same two districts. One is District 29 in Wichita, currently held by **Oletha Faust-Goudeau**. She does not have a competitor in the primary or the general election.

David Haley, the other Black senator, has represented District 4 for 23 years and is currently the longest serving member in the Senate. He usually runs unopposed, but this year he has a primary opponent. **Ephren Taylor III** is a community organizer at Loud Light, a political awareness organization. There is not a Republican candidate, so the individual who advances from the primary is the likely winner in the general election.

Two African-American females have also filed to run for seats in the Kansas Senate. **Stacey Knoell**, who currently serves as CEO of the Kansas African American Affairs



Kendrick Barnett



DeWitt



Hill



Kelly



King Simms



Knoell



New



Brownlee Paige



Porter



Smith



Taylor III



Watley

Commission, is running for the District 23 seat in Southern Johnson County. The seat has been held by Robert Olson since 2011 and he is not seeking reelection. Knoell ran for Senate District 9 in 2020 and lost by less than 2,000 votes. This time, she doesn't have a primary and will face off against **Adam Thomas** in the general election.

ShaMecha King Simms is running for Senate District 19, a newly drawn seat that stretches from Topeka to Lawrence. This is a district that's seen as one that Democrats could win. There are three Democrats in the race and two Republicans.

King Simms is an educator who has served as president of her neighborhood association and as chair of the Topeka Citizen Advisory Council. Her Democratic opposition includes **Vic Miller**, who gave up his position as Kansas House Minority Leader to run for the Senate. The third candidate is **Patrick Schmidt**, who made an unsuccessful bid for Congressional District 2 in 2022.

Mary Ware, the incumbent Democrat representing Senate District 25 in Central Wichita, has competition in the general election from Black Republican **Keenen Smith**, who has been

active in the Wichita community for several years.

Kansas House

In Wichita's House District 84, incumbent **Ford Carr** does not have a competitor in the primary or the general election. Also in Wichita, District 89 Rep. **KC Ohaebosim** is also seeking reelection and does not have a competitor in the primary or the general election.

Valdenia Winn, who represents District 34 in Kansas City, has no competition in the primary or general.

Marvin Robinson, the first-term representative for District 35 in Kansas City, who

has drawn a lot of criticism for supporting Republican issues, has drawn lots of competition in his bid for reelection. His competitors include **Wanda Brownlee Paige**, who currently serves on the USD 500 school board; **Kimberly DeWitt**, an IT consultant; and **Michele Watley**, a public affairs and political advocacy consultant.

Like the Haley Senate race, there is not a Republican candidate for this seat, so the individual advancing from the primary is the likely general election winner. For that reason, Wyandotte County voters

See **CANDIDATES**, Page 6 →

Who Would You Choose?

Ask almost any judge and they'll tell you, the most important elected official in the county is the prosecutor. The prosecutor is the highest law enforcement official in a county and their decisions shape the trajectory of cases, influence the lives of individuals

and impact the broader community.

As a citizen, you have a say in who is given this level of responsibility and hopefully, you'll select a person whose philosophy about the pursuit of justice reflects your values.

That's the decision Jackson County residents will make in the August 6 Democratic Primary, when they cast their vote for one of three candidates to advance to the General election.

Learn more about how two of the three

candidates would pursue justice in Jackson County: We interviewed both Melesa Johnson and Stephanie Burton and you can read more about their vision for Jackson County below. Candidate John Gromowsky, did not respond to our request for an interview.

Meet the Candidate: Stephanie Burton

Burton's campaign for Jackson County prosecutor prioritizes violent crime reduction and conviction integrity.

By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

Stephanie Burton is running for Jackson County prosecutor after spending years as a criminal trial attorney, with a focus on curbing violent crime, repairing relationships with the Kansas City Police Dept., and putting a stronger focus on a conviction integrity unit.

Burton moved to KC 21 years ago. She attended law school at the University of Missouri-Kansas City while living in public housing and served as president of the Wayne Miner Tenant Association. There, she started working to address the crime she saw in the area.

"Hearing gunshots or witnessing things that me and my kids should not have seen gave me a unique perspective of being able to advocate for people who can't advocate for themselves," says Burton. "It takes an extreme amount of courage to be able to speak up to the police and let them know what's going on. Talking to police didn't make me popular, but, a lot of times, it was choosing to do what was right, even when it didn't feel good to do it."

After law school, Burton worked as a public defender, probation & parole officer, and did 240 hours of pro bono work for the Midwest Innocence Project and other groups. Burton started her own law firm more than a decade ago, focused on criminal defense, and says her firsthand experience navigating the region's criminal justice landscape uniquely qualifies her for the office of prosecutor.

"I witnessed the shortcomings of the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office," says



Stephanie Burton is a criminal trial attorney running for Jackson County Prosecutor.

Burton. "And I can identify with people who have been accused of crimes and are facing their most important day in court."

Burton says a balanced approach is needed in the role and that she'd make wholesale changes to the prosecutor's office.

She cites Jackson County's high wrongful incarceration rate — the highest in the state — and says fully resourcing the county's conviction integrity unit, which investigates previous convictions for accuracy, is a top priority. She says there isn't justice in a wrongful conviction and that the county should do more to ensure that innocent people aren't behind bars. "On the one hand, you've got to seek justice for every victim," says Burton. "In that process, you have to make sure that you are prosecuting the right person; too many times we have prosecutors

See **BURTON** Page 6 →

Meet the Candidate: Melesa Johnson

KC Director of Public Safety Melesa Johnson seeks county-wide prosecutor role.

By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

Melesa Johnson is running for Jackson County prosecutor after serving as Kansas City's director of public safety since 2022. Johnson believes her unique background and balanced approach of aggressive prosecution coupled with diversionary programs, make her an ideal candidate for prosecutor.

"The amalgamation of my personal experiences — I've run away from 12 shootings in my lifetime — and my professional experiences made this call to service something I couldn't ignore," says Johnson.

Born and raised in KC's Oak Park neighborhood — an area with some of the city's highest rates of crime — Johnson studied political science and African-American studies at New York's Ivy League Columbia University. She returned home and graduated law school from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Johnson worked in Emmanuel Cleaver's congressional office, clerked for a federal judge, and served for three years as a prosecuting attorney for Jackson County before transitioning to a private law firm. But she says the killing of George Floyd in 2020 reignited her passion for driving systematic change.

"I realized I had to get back into this work," Johnson says. "Not just prosecuting cases, but building programs from the ground up that could intervene before situations escalated to violence."

As KC's director of public safety, Johnson has done just that — launching initiatives like Partners for Peace that direct outreach



KC's Director of Public Safety Melesa Johnson, is running for Jackson County Prosecutor.

to both crime victims and drivers to connect them with services and opportunities.

"We have to fight crime through more than just incarceration," says Johnson. "Where there is opportunity, there is less crime. My office will aggressively prosecute while also meeting people where they're at with meaningful resources and support."

Johnson's two-pronged approach would offer more support services, programming, and specialty courts but would also be more aggressive in bringing charges against drug distributors, illegal gun sales, property crimes, and even juvenile offenders. "I know, being where I'm from, if you don't get charged, things get worse. One day, you're a Kia boy [stealing cars], and the next day, you're charged

See **JOHNSON** Page 6 →

CANDIDATES, from Page 4 ↓

need to engage early and make sure to vote in the primary election if they want to have a say.

Brooklynne Mosley, a 10-year Air Force veteran and vice president of mobilization and a political organizer and campaign operative, is a candidate for House District 46 in Lawrence. The long-time incumbent, Dennis “Boo” Highberger, is not seeking reelection. Two other Democrats have filed for the seat. **Brittany Kathleen Hall** is president of the Haskell Indian Nation University Board of Regents and a technical assistance research coordinator at KU. **Logan Ginavan** is a life-long Lawrence resident and recent KU graduate. There is no Republican candidate, so the winner of the primary is the likely new representative.

District 50 covers the northern edge of Topeka and a few rural communities. Fred Patton, who had

represented the district since 2014, stepped down in late 2023 and **Kyle McNorton** was appointed to serve out the final year of Patton’s term. McNorton, a Republican, has filed to keep the seat. **Jessica “JP” Porter**, a social media and web coordinator for the Kansas Dept. of Labor, doesn’t have a competitor in the Democratic primary, so will face off against McNorton in the fall.

Patrick Penn, a conservative Black Republican, is seeking reelection to his House District 85 seat in east Wichita. The district is east of Woodlawn and north of 21st Street and includes Kechi and Bel Aire. **Aonya Kendrick Barnett**, a community organizer and program director for Safe Streets Wichita, has filed as a Democrat to oppose him.

Kansas Board of Education

Beryl New, a retired Topeka BOE administrator, has filed to run as a Democrat for a seat on the

Kansas Board of Education. Incumbent Deena Horst, a Republican, is not seeking reelection. New will face off against Republican **Bruce Schulz**.

Current Board of Education member **Betty Arnold**, a Democrat, has held the Wichita-area seat since 2021. She has a Republican competitor in the general election, **Jason Carmichael**, who ran for and lost an election to the Wichita School Board in November 2023.

District Attorneys

Popular Wyandotte County District Attorney **Mark Dupree**, a Democrat, is running for reelection unopposed. Wichita District Attorney **Marc Bennett** is seeking reelection and is unopposed.

Tonda Hill, a Lawrence resident who is currently serving as an assistant district attorney in Wyandotte County, is running as a Democrat for Douglas County district attorney. Two other Democrats are

running for Douglas County prosecutor, **Dakota Loomis** and **Suzanne Valdez**. Loomis served as Baldwin City municipal judge for two years before recently becoming Baldwin city attorney. Valdez, who has held the DA position since 2021, underwent a disciplinary hearing late last year, resulting in a one-year censure.

District Court Judges

Jacqueline Kelly is running as a Republican for a judgeship in Judicial District 18 in Sedgwick County. She’s vying for the Division 14 seat along with three other Republicans: **Jarrod Kieffer**, **Clark Owens** and **Joshua Wright**. They’re all running for the position of retiring Judge **Patrick Walters**. There is not a Democratic candidate for the seat, which isn’t surprising since 100% of Sedgwick County judges are Republicans and running as a Democrat for a Sedgwick County judicial seat is a formula for a loss.

BURTON, from Page 5 ↓

more interested in convictions than truth and justice.”

Burton advocates swiftly prosecuting violent offenders and says the current prosecutor’s office lets cases sit for too long, which aids the defense and allows the accused to remain at large.

“We have to be able to curb this rate of violence; we’re seeing that a small percentage of the population is responsible for a vast majority of the violence, and it’s because we’re not prosecuting them quickly and efficiently,” says Burton. Burton believes a “heavy hand” and incarceration are needed for violent offenders but would advocate for reentry

programs and services to reduce recidivism once they are released.

She would prosecute property crime and drug distribution at a higher clip than the current prosecutor but says she’d direct non-violent offenders to specialty courts like the mental health or drug courts to get rehabilitative services. She says these courts are underutilized and valuable resources, but they have their limitations when dealing with violent offenders.

“Programming and specialty courts have a place for non-violent offenders, but you can’t sell a program to someone who had to throw dirt on someone who they love the most,” says Burton.

Addressing strained police relations is also a key

focus for Burton. She says the police are the first witnesses that prosecutors call in a trial, and that relationship is important to mend after what she describes as a schism that has developed between the office and police.

“Right now, we have this distrust where the citizens of Jackson County have been like kids in a bad custody battle between the prosecutor’s office and the police department,” says Burton.

Burton says distrust has grown due to anti-police politics and the prosecutor deprioritizing certain nonviolent crimes like property crime and drugs, which has frustrated police. Burton is quick to say that while mending this relationship is important, she wouldn’t “cover for dirty cops.” She says that

she’d advocate for more training, body cameras, and accountability within police departments.

“We are living in a very dangerous time, and this election is critical,” says Burton. “It’s going to be extremely important that we do something now — we can’t just accept that nothing can be done — we have a lot of people running, but experience is important.”

Burton, who previously ran for Jackson County Legislature as a Republican, hopes to defeat Melesa Johnson and John Gromowsky in the Democratic primary election Aug. 8. She says her experience picking juries, creating a conviction integrity unit, and appearing in 40 jury trials, and 100+ bench trials sets her apart from the other candidates in the race. For more info, visit BurtonForJCP.com.

JOHNSON, from Page 5 ↓

with second-degree murder,” says Johnson. “Take the Chiefs parade shooters, there were multiple opportunities for intervention before that tragedy happened.”

Johnson plans to target juvenile-committed crimes by using focused deterrents to keep youth out of trouble and away from a life of crime. Johnson would coordinate the prosecutors’ office’s efforts with public and charter schools to place suspended kids with mentors and connect youth with resources when warning signs arise.

“Justice takes on a number of different forms,” says Johnson. “Sometimes justice is a diversion program. Sometimes, justice is or is not seeking the maximum sentence. Sometimes, justice is charging the case you believe you have evidence to support and letting the chips fall where they may.”

Johnson wants to add to the specialty court system with a diversionary “opportunity court” that would redirect certain non-violent offenders who make less than \$20,000 a year into modern job training, conflict resolution training, and financial literacy training.

“We have mental health court, veteran’s court, drug court - all of these courts - but we don’t have a

specialty court tailored to the leading cause of crime, which is poverty,” says Johnson.

To address property crime, which is often deprioritized, Johnson says she will create a division exclusively focused on prosecuting thefts and property damage cases. She envisions partnering with area law schools to host clinics where law students can gain real-life experience prosecuting property crimes. She says the plan increases the prosecutor’s case capacity and better serves struggling small businesses and residents who are victims of property crime.

“If we fail to hold people accountable, in a round-about way, we encourage their negative behavior,” says Johnson. “We need to charge cases, but use that charge as an opportunity to connect people with resources so that they can actually restore and sustain themselves.”

Johnson also pledges to have a true working partnership with law enforcement. She describes her vision as one of mutual respect, transparency, and aligned incentives. She says she’d also institute joint cultural competence training sessions between the prosecutor’s office and police departments to better serve the community.

“I am very pro-law enforcement. Where I live, I need police who feel empowered to do their jobs

effectively,” says Johnson. “My success as a prosecutor depends on their success and vice versa. When you establish that foundation of trust, you can have difficult conversations about making improvements.”

Johnson says advocacy is a part of the job of a prosecutor and that she will be in Jefferson City advocating for laws, specifically gun reform, that help make Jackson County safer. She says she will also work to diversify the prosecutor’s office through advocacy at area universities and HBCUs. “If we want

different results, we have to be prepared to elect different leaders,” Johnson says. “I’m intimately familiar with the people and issues most impacted by crime in our county. As prosecutor, I’ll bring that cultural competency and new perspectives to transform how we approach public safety.”

Melesa Johnson is running against Stephanie Burton and John Gromowsky in the Democratic primary election Aug. 8. For more info, visit MJForProsecutor.com.

Your equity belongs to you.
Let us show you how to use it.

The equity in your home belongs to you and can be a great source for financing whatever you need. Contact Commerce Bank and let us help you get started.



Commerce Bank[®] | Challenge Accepted.[™]

800.725.0512 | commercebank.com/neighborhoodbanking

©2024, Commerce Bancshares, Inc.





Igniting potential. *Driving progress.*

“ We are committed to Kansas City and its growth and recognition as a city of innovation, collaboration, and connectivity. ”

– Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace
President and CEO, Kauffman Foundation

Together with our community, the Kauffman Foundation is committed to help position Kansas City as a national model for equitable economic mobility.

Mr. Kauffman's core values remain at the heart of our mission, shaping our approach to increasing college access and completion, strengthening workforce opportunities, and improving access to business ownership.

Learn more about the
Foundation's strategic refresh at
[Kauffman.org/our-strategy](https://www.kauffman.org/our-strategy)





A rendering of the \$100M Swope Health Village

New \$100M 'Swope Health Village' Bringing Affordable Housing, Health Services to East Side

City Hall invests \$5M in Swope Health Village

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

Thanks to a \$5 million investment approved by the Kansas City Council, the ambitious \$100 million "Swope Health Village" is one step closer to reality.

Swope Health Village will be an innovative residential community in the central city that will promote healthy lifestyles. Swope Health plans to build the multi-phase, mixed-use development on 12 acres near 59th Street and Swope Parkway.

The project will transform the former Swope Ridge Geriatric Center

site into a community that interweaves affordable housing with onsite medical clinics, health-centered amenities, and support services.

"We are extremely grateful for the city's \$5 million investment in Swope Health Village," said Swope Health President and CEO Jeron Ravin. "In all that we do, we remain steadfastly committed to the cause of health equity and access for everyone."

According to details released by Swope Health, the \$100 million campus will include:

- 200 affordable apartments for seniors
- 75 residential units for

those requiring mental health treatment and care

- 15 apartments for elderly residents receiving comprehensive care
- Expanded inpatient substance abuse recovery services
- Community gardens and outdoor recreation spaces
- Relocation of Kansas City Health Dept. offices to the site
- Office and retail spaces for businesses like grocery stores

The vast development represents one of the largest investments in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Kansas City in

decades. Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks-Shaw, who represents the area and sponsored the ordinance, hailed the City Council's unanimous approval of \$5 million toward the project. "Every Kansas Citian deserves access to resources, amenities and neighborhoods that prioritize health, wellness and an improved quality of life," Parks-Shaw stated. "The City of Kansas City is eager to support this development."

In addition to the city's funding, Swope Health has received \$7.5 million from the state of Missouri through the American Rescue Plan Act. However,

tens of millions more will need to be raised through donor contributions and other funding sources to fully realize the sweeping health-focused campus.

The project is already underway, with demolition initiated at the site in January 2024. Swope Health aims to begin construction in early 2025 in partnership with architecture firms Perkins Eastman, HFG Architecture, Moody Nolan and contractor McCownGordon Construction.

The development is projected to create 80-90 new construction jobs and, when completed, add

dozens of healthcare positions. Swope Health says it will prioritize hiring local residents and utilizing Black-owned businesses and tradespeople as much as possible.

For the nonprofit provider founded in 1969, the Swope Health Village concept of intermixing affordable housing, healthcare services, community amenities and social services in a single setting is groundbreaking for the Kansas City region. Organizers hope it can serve as a model for how thoughtful urban design can help address socioeconomic inequities and racial health disparities.



Wichita, Ministerial League Organize 'Unity in the Community' Peace March

Marchers will gather at 10 a.m. on June 22

Key Points:

- Wichita and Greater Wichita Ministerial League organize "Unity in the Community" march for peace.
- Tips for promoting unity and peace, resources for help, and crime reporting information provided.
- After-march rally details shared, along with plans for monthly rallies.

By P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

The City of Wichita is teaming up with the Greater Wichita Ministerial League for a "Unity in the Community" march and rally for peace to encourage every community member to "Be an Ambassador of Peace."

Marchers will gather at 10 a.m. on Sat., June 22, at 21st and Opportunity Drive. Following a rally with music and speakers, the march will leave from 21st and Opportunity Drive, go south on Grove to 13th Street, west to Piatt, then north to 21st and back to Opportunity Drive

where there will be an after-march rally, food, and beverages.

First District Councilman Brandon Johnson told attendees at his breakfast meeting on June 1 that plans call for also having information on mental health resources and other services available for those who need help.

He added that there are plans to make the "Unity in the Community" rallies a monthly event in different areas of the city.

The Greater Ministerial League shared steps community members can take

See **MARCH** Page 20 →

St. Paul
African Methodist Episcopal Church
"The Church In The City With The City At Heart"
1756 N Piatt Ave • Wichita, KS 67214
316 265-5881
stpaulwichita@gmail.com • stpaulamewichita.com

In- Person and Virtual Worship Experience
Sundays at 11AM
f LIVE

Pastor Pamela M. Hughes Mason

Join us each Sunday in person @ 10 am & 5 pm for our Worship Services or online @ 10am @

Chisholm Trail Church of Christ
5833 E. 37th St. Wichita, KS 67220
316-683-1313

www.chisholmtrailcofc.org/live
Bible Classes for all ages on Wednesdays @ 7 pm

Barry L. Gainey, Minister

Care doesn't have to wait for open enrollment



PACE is available year-round!

Call 316-830-5921 (TTY: 800-766-3777) to speak with a person from our local center today.

For more information about PACE services and benefits, ascensionliving.org/HOPE

 **Ascension Living**
HOPE

Participants must be at least 55 years old and live in Sedgwick County. All PACE participants agree to receive all services other than emergency services from HOPE staff and its network of providers, and may be fully and personally liable for the costs of unauthorized or out-of-network services.

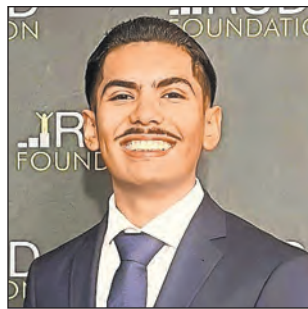


Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE®) benefits and services highlights

- No bills, co-pays or deductibles for covered services
- Door-to-door transportation with a familiar face
- Social work/care management and home health included
- Medication and medical equipment/supplies fully covered and delivered to your home
- Day center and activities
- A personalized plan to help you with your symptoms and to help you reach your goals



Richard Gwyn Jr.



Israel Torres Ayala



Vatedis Coleman

Rudd Scholarships Offer Full Ride for WSU Students

Scholarship program is for Pell Grant-eligible students who receive financial assistance, powerful mentoring & coaching support to help them succeed.

By P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

Two African American students and a first-generation Hispanic are among seven Wichita Public Schools seniors who will attend Wichita State University as Rudd Scholarship winners next fall.

The Rudd Scholars Program helps Pell Grant-eligible high school students in Kansas attend top Kansas universities by paying the costs for their

four-year education, including tuition, fees, on-campus housing, and considerable networking and coaching support along the way.

This year's cohort of 45 Rudd Scholars will attend WSU, Emporia State, Fort Hays State or Kansas State.

Vatedis Coleman

Vatedis, a senior at Wichita Southeast High School, will be moving to Shocker Hall at the start of the summer session to complete his WSU Tech program and become a certified aircraft and powerplant technician (A&P) and will remain there in the fall as he begins work toward his goal of becoming an aerospace engineer.

"Eventually, I want to work for NASA," Vatedis said. "I might go for astronaut training, but I for sure want to work in the space program. I did an interview with the

first African-American astronaut, Guion Bluford, and I have wanted to work in the space program ever since."

Israel Torres Ayala

Israel, a senior at Northeast Magnet High School, is the son of immigrant parents, who came to Wichita from Mexico.

"They never had an opportunity to get a diploma or a degree and improve their situation in life," he said. "My encouragement came from my older brother. He didn't have good enough grades to get scholarships, but he did get his A&P license and he works for Textron. He really motivated me to work hard so I could go to college."

He said he will probably go to work for Textron after college graduation and is

See SCHOLARSHIPS Page ?? →

Cheshire Made National Spelling Bee Semifinals

Andover Middle School student scored a top-45 finish.

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief



Carey Chesire

Andover Middle School eighth-grader Carey Chebii Chesire, 13, spelled his way into the top ranks of the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee, ultimately reaching the semifinal round on May 29 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in Maryland.

He was eliminated after being stumped by the word "sagenite," which he spelled incorrectly as "saginite."

What is sagenite? It's a mineral made from a variety of rutile. So, what's a rutile? A black or reddish-brown mineral

consisting of titanium dioxide, typically occurring as needle-like crystals.

The sagenite variety of rutile was named in 1796 because it is composed of small crystals that cross at the same angles, forming a mesh-like network. "Sagenite" comes from the Greek and Latin word "sagena," which means net.

In recent months, Chesire battled his way through

local spelling bees and then won the Sunflower State Spelling Bee. He was among 245 competitors to take the stage for the three-day national event, sponsored by the E.W. Scripps Company, which broadcast the bee on its ION TV network.

Cheshire was among 46 students to advance to the semifinal round, and placed in the top 45.

The 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee was won on May 30 by 12-year-old Bruhat Soma, a seventh-grader from Tampa, FL, who scored the win in a nail-biting speed-spell-off in which he correctly spelled 29 words in 90 seconds.

Soma won a \$50,000 cash prize, a medal and the Scripps Cup trophy, plus a \$2,500 cash prize

See CHESIRE Page ?? →

It all starts with one class. Contact us today to get in tomorrow.

Apply Now for FREE!

Butler Community College

2024 2025 ENROLLMENT

Online enrollment will be available for grades 1-12 starting July 5, 2024.
In-person enrollment is July 29 - 30, 12 - 7 p.m.

All kindergarten families need to enroll in person.

Go to bit.ly/wpsevenroll2024 for more information about enrollment.

SEE THE GREAT THINGS HAPPENING IN OUR DISTRICT

- wichitapublicschools
- /escuelaspublicasdewichitausd259
- Cox 20 & usd259.org/wpstvonline
- @wichitausd259
- wichitapublicschools
- @wichitausd259

903 S. Edgemoor St. Wichita, KS 67218

WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(316) 973-4000 usd259.org

KC-area Beaches Open for Summer

Blue Springs Lake & Longview Lake Beaches are ready for fun.

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

Beach season has arrived in the Kansas City area with two popular sandy spots - Longview Lake Beach and Blue Springs Lake Beach - open for swimming, sunbathing, and water fun.

"Jackson County Parks + Rec is excited to usher in another beach season at Longview and Blue Springs Lakes," said Tina Spallo, superintendent of recreation and marinas. "Our staff looks forward to hosting thousands of people this summer as they enjoy swimming, lying in the sun, and building sandcastles with family and friends!"

Both beaches, operated by

Jackson County Parks + Rec, are open seven days a week through Aug. 10, then weekends only until Labor Day. Hours at Longview are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sat. and Sun. and 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays. Blue Springs Beach hours are weekdays, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends/holidays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

At both locations, admission is \$9 for adults, \$7 for children ages 3 to 15 and seniors over 65. Season passes and group rates are available.

Longview Lake Beach

Longview Lake Beach, located at 11101 Raytown Road in Kansas City, is host to many special events, including the popular "Sand Cinema" family movie series. The beach offers certified lifeguards, a covered picnic shelter, sand volleyball courts, showers, restrooms, and changing rooms. The Longview Beach area also

provides plenty of amenities, including picnic tables, a reservable shelter house for events, and parking.

Blue Springs Lake Beach

Blue Springs Lake Beach, situated at 1500 NE Bowlin Road in Lee's Summit, also features certified lifeguards, sand volleyball courts, showers, and restrooms. The beach is part of the 720-acre Blue Springs Lake located within Fleming Park.

In addition to the beach, Blue Springs Lake offers a marina with boat rentals, bait and tackle, a campground, picnic areas, and hiking trails. Boating, fishing, water skiing, and other water sports are popular pastimes on the lake. Permits are required for watercraft.

For more info on the Jackson County beaches or to reserve a shelter, call 816-503-4878 or visit MakeYourDayhere.com.



Park Elementary School Building could become the city's new Multi-Agency Center for homeless services.

Wichita Considers Park Elementary for New MAC

Former school is ideally located downtown near other homeless service providers

From Community Voice News Service

The City of Wichita announced today that it is considering the re-use of the former Park Elementary School facility at 1025 N. Main in Wichita as the future Multi-Agency Center (MAC), a one-stop, wraparound

homeless services coordinator, as well as space for congregate, non-congregate and emergency housing.

Earlier this year, Wichita Public Schools (WPS) announced it would close six schools before the 2024-2025 school year to reallocate resources.

The City approached WPS after the announcement to inquire about the potential availability of Park Elementary as it is ideally located near other homeless service providers

and would offer a centralized location for the MAC. As such, it is the intent of the City, pending due diligence on the property, to acquire the building from WPS for a nominal fee.

If the transaction occurs on schedule, the City intends to use the facility for the 2024-2025 winter emergency shelter and could open the full-service MAC in 2026.

The property will include a no-barrier, short term shelter open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year-round and feature comprehensive services to connect unhoused individuals to services and resources to transition them from shelter services into affordable housing.

The City will host a community open house this Saturday, June 8, 2024 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Advanced Learning Library in downtown Wichita to answer questions and address community concerns.

More information on the proposed MAC facility is available at www.wichita.gov/mac.

TODAY

is for welcoming you home.

With INTRUST Bank as your lending partner, we help turn the dream of home ownership into a reality. And when you finally find the right house, we make the lending experience as stress-free as possible. Our team of knowledgeable mortgage specialists are dedicated to guiding you through the process every step of the way. Today is for dreaming big.

Visit intrustbank.com to learn more and apply online.

Member FDIC | Equal Housing Lender  | © 2024 INTRUST Bank



 **INTRUST**
Bank.
Tradition for TODAY.

Celebrating Juneteenth

Juneteenth Celebrations Taking Over KC Metro

City celebrates 159th anniversary of Emancipation with diverse events.

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

As the metro area gears up to commemorate the 159th anniversary of the end of slavery in the South on June 19, a jam-packed lineup of events is set to honor and celebrate Black culture, history, and heritage.

If we missed info about your planned event, submit info at www.CommunityVoiceKS.com/submit-an-event/.

Here's a rundown of area festivities:

Thru June 26 - Juneteenth Film Festival

Celebrating Black storytellers, the Second Annual Juneteenth Film Festival, curated by film critic Shawn Edwards, runs June 4 to 26 at the Screenland Armour Theatre located at 408 Armour in North Kansas City.

The festival aims to provide a platform for the city's Black filmmakers to showcase their

work. This year's lineup boasts several locally produced independent films and documentaries each Wednesday of June at the Screenland Armour Theatre in North Kansas City. The short film "BF" by Jamie Addison will be shown before each feature, tickets for each film are \$13.

June 12 has two showings. "Kansas City Dreamin," directed by Diallo Javonne French, plays at 6:30 p.m. and examines the evolution of Jazz from the 1930s through today's popular music. "What's N Kansas City?" directed by Skiem Heim plays two hours later at 8:30 p.m. and highlights local Black-owned businesses.

"Binding Us Together," directed by Oscar winner Kevin Willmott, the film is about the renowned KC civil rights activist Alvin Brooks and has two showings June 19 at 6:30 & 8:30 p.m.

The festival ends with "Drout 2," which is written by Isaiah King and directed by Chuck Browne. The action revenge story plays June 26 at 6:30 p.m. *For more info or to purchase tickets, visit JuneteenthKC.com/calendar or Screenland.com.*

June 8 - Juneteenth in the Dotte Parade

Not to be outdone on the Kansas side, the Juneteenth in the Dotte committee will host its annual parade and festival

in Kansas City, KS, June 8, starting at 10 a.m. The parade showcases lively marching bands, energetic dance and drill teams, car clubs showing off their vehicles, and much more. The parade route runs along Fifth Street in KCK, from Rowland to Everett. Festival activities include live music and DJs, as well as food and retail vendors. There are also games and family-friendly events and games, raffles, giveaways, and a swag bag. FREE.

For more info, visit JNtheDotte.com.

June 15 - JuneteenthKC Heritage Festival

The 18th & Vine Jazz District hosts the 13th Annual JuneteenthKC Heritage Festival on June 15. National R&B star Kelly Price will headline the mainstage at 8:30 p.m.

The day kicks off at noon with a gospel jubilee featuring performances by Soul Therapy, Ashley Brewer, Chosen Generation, and headlined by Crystal Aiken, who won the first season of BET's "Sunday Best" gospel singing competition.

Music will play throughout the day and into the evening with community performances, along with guest personalities, contests, and giveaways. The whole of 18th & Vine will be taken over by Black vendors selling clothing, food, and wares. The festival also offers free, family-friendly



The Kansas City Metro area is celebrating Juneteenth all month long.

activities like the Youth Zone, which, from 1 to 4 p.m., offers puppet shows, face painters, and pony rides.

New this year is the Onyx Art Walk, which showcases over 30 local Black artists displaying and selling their works.

The closing night concert features Kelly Price, R&B songstress whose hits include "As We Lay" and "Friend of Mine."

For more info, visit JuneteenthKC.com.

June 15 - Brunch & Learn Health Symposium

Before the cultural heritage festival, there will be a brunch with Mayor Quinton Lucas and friends starting at 10 a.m. *More details were not available at press time, for updated info, visit facebook.com/JuneteenthKCMO/.*

June 19 - Johnson County Juneteenth Celebration

With the theme "The Jubilee of Juneteenth: Celebrating a Legacy of Freedom," Johnson

County celebrates on the holiday itself, June 19, with its third annual event from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Lenexa Civic Campus Commons.

The program will include keynote speaker Glenn North, emcee Steve Arledge, live music from the Louis Neal Big Band with vocalist Lisa Henry, a Roller Dance Performance by SK8SHOT Studios, and more.

At the event, the public can enjoy a children activity and craft area, engage with staff representing various county programs and services, purchase food and beverages from the Lenexa Public Market and park for free. *For more info, visit JocoGov.org/juneteenth.*

June 19 - Journey of Jazz: A Juneteenth Celebration of UNESCO

The free Journey of Jazz concert brings together local and internationally acclaimed artists, highlighting the historical timeline of jazz from birth to Bebop and beyond. The concert commemorating Kansas City's United Nations Creative City designation

takes place at UMKC's White Recital Hall from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

June 20 - Nelson-Atkins Museum 8th Annual Juneteenth Celebration

The Nelson-Atkins Museum partners with JuneteenthKC for the Eighth Annual Juneteenth Celebration on June 20 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The free event offers a full day of programming, including music, stepping and two-stepping performances, storytelling from community leaders and Buffalo Soldiers, art-making activities, and screenings of the documentary "Ailey!" about legendary choreographer Alvin Ailey. Visitors can also explore the museum's galleries with docents providing insights into works by African-American artists. The all-day celebration is free, but registration is required. To register or get more info, visit bit.ly/JuneteenthAtNelson.

Submit items for our Juneteenth 2024 calendar at www.CommunityVoiceKS.com/submit-an-event/

th: OUR Freedom Day



Juneteenth Across Kansas

HUTCHINSON

Thu., June 13, 6-9 pm: Talent Show, Chester I Lewis Plaza, 15 E 1st. Show Hutchinson your talent at the Juneteenth talent show! Registration is free. All ages and talents are welcome. First prize, 200

Fri., June 14, 7 - 11 pm: Juneteenth BBQ and Movie Night! Chester I Lewis Plaza, 15 E 1st. Join us for free food, inflatables, crafts, games, skits by our local NAACP Youth, and multiple screenings and labs performed by Hutch Regional

Fri. June 21, 10 am: Red Carpet Blood Drive, Stringer Fine Arts Center Stringer Fine Arts Center, 600 E. 11th. Blood donors in drawing for steak dinner for (2) at Airport Steak House, Red Carpet Photo Opportunity

Sat., June 22, 11:30 am: Brunch, Stringer Fine Arts Center, 600 E 11th. Guest Speaker: Tiffany Davidson w/ American Red Cross; Keynote Speaker: Dr. Kwanna King, VP Enrollment Pratt Community

College No cost listed

Sat., June 22, 1 pm: Hair Show. Guest Speaker: Michelle Watley (The Crown Act), Founder CEO Shirley's Kitchen Cabinets of Kansas City, MO

JUNCTION CITY

Sat., June 15 1-7 pm: Juneteenth Festival, Heritage Park, 6th & Washington. Live DJ, Food vendors, Craft vendors, Information vendors, Kids zone. Bethel Youth Ministry, speakers, Kenneth Ford Jr & Korion Golden. FREE

LAWRENCE

Now through June 16: Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let The World See. Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas. "Let the World See" is a touring exhibit created in collaboration with the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley Institute, the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, the Till family, and the Children's Museum of Indianapolis. The museum is open, 10 am - 5 pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10 am

- 8 pm Thursday Noon - 5 pm Saturday and Sunday

LEAVENWORTH

Sat., June 15, 6:30 - 10 pm: Twilight Parade and Festival, Haymaker Square, 649 Cherokee St. Live Music, Games, Food & Fun and Vendors FREE

LEAWOOD

Sat., June 22, 4 pm: 3rd Annual Juneteenth Celebration Pre-Talk: "The Underground Railroad, Quindaro to Lawrence", Resurrection Leawood, (The Parlor), 13720 Roe Ave, Parlor, Bldg. A. Pre-event discussion led by Dr. James Leiker, history professor, author and founder of Johnson County Community College Kansas Studies Institute.

Sat., June 22, 5 pm: Celebration Program: "Lift Every Voice, and Sing Together," Resurrection Leawood, , 13720 Roe Ave. , Sanctuary, Bldg. A. Keynote Presentation, Dr. Shana Mashego is a classical artist, administrator, ethnomusicologist,

and published researcher. Her work probes the origin of African Americans.

LENEXA

Wed., June 19, 4:30 - 6:30 pm: 3rd Annual Juneteenth Celebration, 17101 W 87th. Keynote speaker, Glenn North, Emcee Steve Arledge, Live Music Roller Dance performance, proclamations, children's activities, and food vendors. At the event, the public can enjoy children's activity and craft area and engage with staff representing various county programs and services, purchase food and beverages from the Lenexa Public Market, and park for free.

MANHATTAN

Thu. June 13, TBD: Fashion Show, Manhattan Arts Center, 1520 Poyntz Ave. in collaboration with Styled by Lydia. Check the website for more details manhattanjuneteenth.org

Fri, June 14, 5:30 pm: Grilling Contest, City Park, 1220 Poyntz Ave. Must register to compete

National Talent at Area Juneteenth Celebrations

Juneteenth Celebrations always include music as a way to entwine our culture into the celebration. This year, two of the celebrations are attracting national talent.



Regina Belle

In Manhattan, KS on Fri., June 14, their celebration will feature Regina Belle.

The R&B star has a list of hits in the late 80s including "Baby Come to Me," "Make it Like it Was," "If I Could," and "A Whole New World."



R&B singer Kelly Price closes down Juneteenth Heritage Festival

In Kansas City, MO on Sa., June 15, their celebration will close out with Kelly Price. Her biggest hits include "You Should Have Told Me," "As We Lay," and "Heart Break Hotel" a compilation with Whitney and Faith Evans.

Fri, June 14, 5:30 pm: Eat and Judge, City Park, 1220 Poyntz Ave. Help judge the best BBQ in Manhattan!

Sat, June 15, 7:00 am: Juneteenth Fitness Experience, Unity Run, Douglass Park, 10th & Yuma. UNITE, MOVE, EMPOWER 8 am: Sun-Up Yoga -Join Mitzie from MWOW Coaching in a revitalizing session

8:30 am: Community Boot Camp - Strength Together. Engage

in the 'Community Boot Camp,' led by diverse fitness professionals 9:00am: MIXXEDFIT - Dance and Sweat. Let loose in a dance-infused fitness session

9:25am: Zumba in the Park - Move and Groove Experience the rhythm with Mitzie from MWOW Coaching.

9:50am: African Fitness Dance Move your with ACE

See TALENT Page 14 →

TALENT, from Page 13 ↓

certified Coach Viv from Kukuwa® Dance Workout for a low-impact jam to the rhythms of Afrobeats and Afropop.

10:30am: Unity Walk, Join us for our annual Unity walk. First 100 participants will receive a free t-shirt.

11am - 2 pm: 3-ON-3 Tournament, Douglass Activity Center, 10th & Yuma. 1 Year of Bragging Rights, 2 Top Teams we receive awards, \$300 Cash Prize for the Winning Team COST: \$30 registration fee per team

10:30 am: Celebrating Unity and Community, Douglass Park, 10th & Yuma. Kicks off with a heartfelt Proclamation, followed by a Unity Walk. The day continues with an array of activities including live Music, delicious Food, engaging Games, and fun Children Activities. Explore a variety of Vendors showcasing their unique crafts and goods. It's a perfect day out for families and friends alike!

SALINA

Wed, June 19, 3 pm or Thu, June 20, 6 pm, "Juneteenth: Faith & Freedom" showing, Film Art Center Cinema, 150 S Santa Fe. A Black American is troubled by the legacy of American slavery and the misuse of Christianity to justify it. He travels throughout Texas, discovering how Juneteenth reveals faith and a fight for freedom in an unjust society. FREE

Thu, June 20, 7:15 pm: Virtual Discussion with "Juneteenth: Faith & Freedom" director, Professor Ya'Ke Smith. Art Center Cinema, 150 S Santa Fe. FREE

Sat, June 22, 1 - 5 pm: 2024 Citywide Celebration, City Lights Stage, Ash Street and Santa Fe. Celebration with vendors, live music, food, and fun!!

Sat, June 22, 8 pm - 1 am: Juneteenth Celebration Dance, Martinelli's, 158 S. Santa Fe. COST: \$25.

TOPEKA

Mon., June 10, 6 pm: Juneteenth Pop & Paint Youth Event, Jefferson Square, Austin Park, 2300 SE Jefferson.

Tue., June 11, 6 pm: Taco Tuesday, Betty Phillips Neighborhood Park, 3303 SE Irving.

Wed., June 12, 6 pm: Juneteenth Fashion Show, St John AME Church, 701 SW Topeka Blvd.

Thu., June 13, 6 pm: Poppy & Helen Abbott Essay Contest Banquet, St John AME Church, 701 SW Topeka Blvd.

Fri., June 14, 6 pm: Sounds of Freedom Play, Location TBA

Sat., June 15, 12 - 10 pm: 11th Annual Juneteenth Community Celebration.

Hillcrest Community Center, 1800 SE 21st. Food, Crafts & Vendors.

Sun., June 16, 4 pm: Gospel Extravaganza, St John AME Church, 701 SW Topeka Blvd

Wed., June 19, 11 am: Topeka Family & Friends Juneteenth Parade & Program, downtown Topeka, Everygy Plaza.

Wed. June 19, 1:30-3:30 pm: Juneteenth Program, Everygy Plaza, 630 S Kansas Ave

For more info & Cost: <http://www.tffjc.org>

WICHITA

June 13 - 15, til 6 pm: Juneteenth Bracelet Making, Maya Angelou Northeast Library, 3051 E 21st. Celebrate freedom with the Wichita Public Library with this take and make craft, supplies available. FREE

(All events require \$6 armband for admission)

Sat, June 8, 10 pm - 11:30 am Books and Breakfast. French Quarters 1504 N Kansas. Join B&B Juneteenth ICT Edition. FREE.

Thu, June 13, 7 pm: Miss Juneteenth ICT, CAC Theater, 1845 N Fairmount, WSU. Miss Juneteenth ICT delegates compete for scholarship dollars to continue their education, advocate for civic causes, shine their light, and showcase their intelligence. Purchase your tickets from the delegates or other locations. See ad this issue. Presale tickets are \$10. Tickets at the door are \$15.

All events at Historic McAdams Park, 13th and Ohio

Fri, June 14, 6 pm: Sounds of Juneteenth ICT, McAdams Park. Talent lineup: 6:30 pm Roy Moye III; 6:50 pm Paris Jane; 8 pm New Funk Band

Sat, June 15, 10 am: Spirit AeroSystems Juneteenth ICT Parade. Parade will begin at Holy Savior Catholic Academy and continue down 13th St to McAdams Park.

Sat., June 15, festival grounds open, 11:30 am: Juneteenth Celebration ICT. Kid's Corner open,

Activity Schedule

Noon Steppers

12:15 pm - Introduce Miss Juneteenth ICT & Court

1 - 2 pm - State of the Youth Kids Corner

12:45 pm - Cheer Display

2:15 pm - Story Time Village - "We Are Family" Bubble Dance Party

2:30 - 4 pm - Kid's Corner Talent Show, Main Stage 5:00 pm Steppers, 5:30 - 6:30 pm Showtime Sounds, 6:45 - 7:00 pm - Miles Murray,

7 - 8 pm Delaney Ranese Williams

8 - 9 pm Kimberly Paige and Band

Sun, Jun 16, 6 pm: Juneteenth ICT Gospel Concert, McAdams Park, F.O.E Faith Over Everything. Hosted by Chisholm Trail Church

Miss Juneteenth Wichita Found Confidence in Reign

Dorothy Arnold will crown her successor at the 2024 pageant on June 13.

By PJ. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

On June 13, 15-year-old Dorothy Arnold will officially end her reign as Miss Juneteenth Wichita when she crowns her successor at the 2024 pageant at Wichita State University's CAC Theater.

Arnold, the daughter of Tia Allen and Jeremy Arnold, says her year reign taught her how to use her voice and share the things she is passionate about.

"During my reign, there was a certain confidence that was brought out of me that I didn't know was there and I have learned how to truly love who I am," she says.

Eventually, Arnold says, she plans to start a nonprofit and pursue her passion for raising awareness of suicide and how the community can do something to help prevent it.

"As someone who has lost someone to suicide, I hope that my voice

will be heard by someone who may be struggling mentally and show them they are not alone," she says.

She has several points of pride for what she's accomplished in the last year.

"I'm proud of myself for showing me that I am capable of accomplishing anything I put my mind to. I'm proud of myself for not cracking under pressure and staying true to who I am in spite of it all. Lastly, I am proud of myself for being an inspiration to other young ladies in my community," she says.

To her successor she says: "I advise you to stand in your confidence and stay truly authentic to you. Hold your head up high and fix your crown, persevere, and remember you are capable of so much more than you think and you will go far."

Seven girls are competing for the title of Miss Juneteenth Wichita 2024.

They are: (in alphabetical order) Ke'Aasia Dickens, 17, will be an incoming freshman at Coffeyville Community College in fall 2024;

Tamya Gipson, 18, daughter of Fiorella Dozier, is a student at Wichita Northeast Magnet High School;

Tiana Hardwell, 16, daughter



Dorothy Arnold, Miss Juneteenth 2023 says she found her voice in the role.

of Ti'Juana Hardwell and Maurice Howard, is a student at Wichita Southeast High School;

Deana Holmes, 16, daughter of Dominica Galloway and Alvin Holmes, is a student at Wichita Independent School;

Ta'Lyah Lewis, 15, daughter of Chandra Lewis, is a student at Wichita Northwest High School;

Jewell Moore, 17, is a student at Wichita Northeast Magnet; and

Kimora Potter, 16, daughter of Felicia Lewis and Shawn Potter, is a student at Wichita Northwest High School.

This year's pageant will be held on Thur., June 13 at the CAC Theater on the WSU campus. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show begins at 7. Tickets are \$10 through www.CoreofWichita.org/ScholarshipCompetition, or \$15 at the door.

Miss JuneteenthKC Pageant Crowns Winners

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

Returning for its third year, Miss JuneteenthKC crowned four new queens May 18, with Nevaeh Harding taking the top crown as Miss Juneteenth.

This year, 23 young women participated in a 10-week program that connected them to mentors and taught them history, public speaking, how to build relationships and etiquette. The young women had Brunch with Third District Councilwoman Melissa Robinson and participated in a mock City Hall session with Mayor Quinton Lucas and Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks Shaw.

"It was an amazing event, and it's always great to see it grow in the third year," says JuneteenthKC Program Director Makeda Peterson.

Judges gave two awards at the pageant based on scores that consider talent, evening wear presentation, poise, stage presence, personality, creativity, and



Nevaeh Harding
Miss JuneteenthKC
2024



Taelyn Sanders
Miss Jr
JuneteenthKC 2024

articulation. The contestant aged 16-18 with the highest judge's score was crowned Miss JuneteenthKC, while the highest score aged 12-15 was crowned Miss Jr JuneteenthKC.

Two other awards, Miss Executive and Sweetest Peach, were given during the presentation. The Miss Executive award is given to the most industrious contestant as judged by ticket sales and fundraising for the project. The Sweetest Peach Award is voted on by the contestants and is similar to "Miss Congeniality."

WINNERS:

Miss JuneteenthKC: Nevaeh Harding
Miss Jr JuneteenthKC: Taelyn Sanders
Miss Executive: Joye Thomas
Sweetest Peach: Syndnee Sims

In addition to cash prizes for the award winners, the program seeks to provide education, tools, and resources to young women to help build their resilience and confidence in making positive choices.

CELEBRATING
JUNETEENTH

Jackson
MORTUARY
Serving the Wichita Community for nearly 100 years

Historic McAdams Park
June 13 - 16, 2024

1125 E 13th • 316-262-5431

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

The Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is proud to offer dependable water and electric service to every household and business in our community. We're committed to the neighborhoods that we serve and work hard to maintain your satisfaction through stable and reliable service.

It's more than simply providing a service. It's a commitment to a better quality of life.



540 Minnesota Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66101
913-573-9000 | bpu.com



Urban League of Kansas Grows as New Family Resource Center Ramps Up

Key Points:

- Urban League of Kansas adds staff and launches Family Resource Center.
- Family Resource Specialist adds programs and services to the center.
- Center offers free classes, game day, and Neighborhood Night Out event.



John Castellaw

continued funding when it expires.

Miles said she felt like serving families is the core mission of the Urban League. “Education, stable housing, employment services, health programs are all about caring for our families and it seemed like having a family resource specialist just made sense,” she said.

Castellaw has set up a “family resource room” that doubles as a play area for children when their parents are attending Urban League classes and a storage area where shelves are stocked with food as well as hygiene supplies, diapers, games and other items that many families find difficult to afford.

Residents in need can simply stop in the Urban League building at 2418 E. Ninth St. to pick up items they need.

“I tell people to take only what they need right now because our supplies are dependent on donations,” Castellaw said.

There’s also a bookcase full of children’s books at various reading levels where families can choose books to build their own libraries.

Parents Helping Parents

“We have a Parent Advisory Council that lets us know what the community needs most,” Castellaw said. “It is because of them that



Children enjoy a coloring project during a Neighborhood Night Out event sponsored by the League’s new Family Resource program. The Family Resource Center provides a wide range of services to families in need. COURTESY PHOTO

we paired with Consumer Counseling to offer free classes in how to make and follow a budget, how to repair credit, and how to get in position to buy a home.”

The Family Resource Center offers Family Game Day where families can gather to play board games or video games or, thanks to the generosity of a building tenant, Gift of Chess, learn to play chess.

The center held a Neighborhood Night Out event last summer shortly after he started.

“We had 26 vendors come out and we had free hot dogs and chips and even some wings donated,” he said. “We’ve also had the mobile van here to do free mammograms and we had a very successful holiday decorations exchange where we had trees, ornaments, stockings and lights. It was a big

hit and we’ll definitely do that again.”

Getting Youth Involved

“We have some additional youth workers coming for the summer and I hope that will lead to a Youth Advisory Council that will function much the way our Parent Council works to offer us advice on what programs, classes and services will be the most helpful for our young people,” he added.

The youth workers will be courtesy of the YMCA Job Prep Program and perhaps from the City of Wichita’s Way to Work program, Castellaw said.

“I’m looking forward to them being able to start a Youth Ambassadors social media campaign,” he said.

Castellaw’s Story

Castellaw said his early childhood was difficult, as his mother struggled to care for her younger children – and ultimately could not.

“We were sometimes homeless. We moved a lot and then my mom surrendered us to the state when we lived in Las Vegas. My grandmother had a talk with my uncles who were still at home and the family agreed

that they should take me and my younger siblings and she came and got us,” he said.

He was a middle school student when he came to Wichita. He attended Truesdell Middle and graduated from South High before going on to earn his BS in Public Administration at the University of Kansas and his Master’s in Public Health at the University of Arizona.

“I loved school and I soon had leadership positions and all kinds of opportunities. Wichita has been very, very good to me. When I heard about a position being open for a Family Resources director, I knew it was my chance to give back. And here I am.”

What Family Resource Center Needs

There are several items almost always needed to help the center help families. They include: bus passes, diapers, children’s books, coloring books and crayons, ethnic hair products, gas cards, healthy snacks, new children’s underwear and socks, school supplies and backpacks, special event passes, and toiletries like toothpaste, soap, and deodorant.

New classes & services help Urban League of Kansas make a comeback.

By P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

The Urban League of Kansas is in growth mode.

After suffering a hard blow during the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization once heavily relied on in the community it serves has added staff and launched a new Family Resource Center to provide a wide range of services to families in need.

John Castellaw joined the Urban League Staff last year as Family Resource Specialist.


The goal is to keep growing the Resource Center, adding more programs and services as funding becomes available.

Creation of the Families Resource Center was funded by a 20-month grant from the Kansas Dept. of Children and Families. Urban League Interim President and CEO Cindy Miles said the grant is renewable for another 30 months and she feels confident that it will have demonstrated enough value to earn



LegalShield

Sylvester Thompson



We offer unlimited access to attorneys nationwide for ALL legal and identity theft issues. Your Membership includes preparation of your will, power of attorney, identity theft protection, and IRS Audit Assistance.

Contact me at:
Cell (316) 648-1972
Email: nvestor77@gmail.com

Vapor Intrusion Testing Ongoing in 29th and Grove Contamination Zone

Key Points:

- Union Pacific Railroad updates community on chemical spill cleanup efforts.
- Effort to get more homeowners to participate in air sampling program inside homes.
- UP working with Wichita to map best spots to install wells to pump contaminated water to surface.

Union Pacific needs more owners to agree to air testing in homes, businesses

By P.J. Griekspoor
Wichita Reporter

Representatives of Union Pacific Railroad, scientists working for UP and representatives from the Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment spent about three hours on June 1 updating the community on efforts to clean up the contaminated groundwater resulting from a spill of the chemical trichloroethylene (TCE) decades ago at 29th and Grove streets.

A particular focus of the informational meeting was to let community members know KDHE had identified two areas where air inside homes should be tested to rule out possible contamination from TCE vapor intrusion.

NEW: Vapor Intrusion Testing in Homes

The areas in question are in the center of the groundwater plume from 21st Street south to 18th Street and from 16th Street to 10th Street. The west boundary is Piatt Ave. and the east boundary is Spruce.

Kristen South with the UP communications team said vapor



Representatives of Union Pacific Railroad, scientists working for UP and representatives from the Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment updated residents and answered questions on efforts to clean up TCE contamination from a chemical spill decades ago.

intrusion tests have been conducted in the Boys and Girls' Club, several schools and public buildings in the contaminated zone which stretches from the site of the spill at the Union Pacific Railyard at 29th and Grove south to Murdock and west to I-135.

Notices of the new recommended testing have gone out to the identified property owners, but only a few letters of permission have been received.

"What we are trying to do is find as many homeowners as possible and get permission to test the air in homes," South said. "We have a lot of renters and we have to get the owner's permission, even if the resident wants the testing. We've started going door to door to talk to people, explain what we are doing and get those signed permission forms."

What if They Find TCE Gas Vapors?

Exposure to high levels of TCE, typically a concern for workers using the chemical in

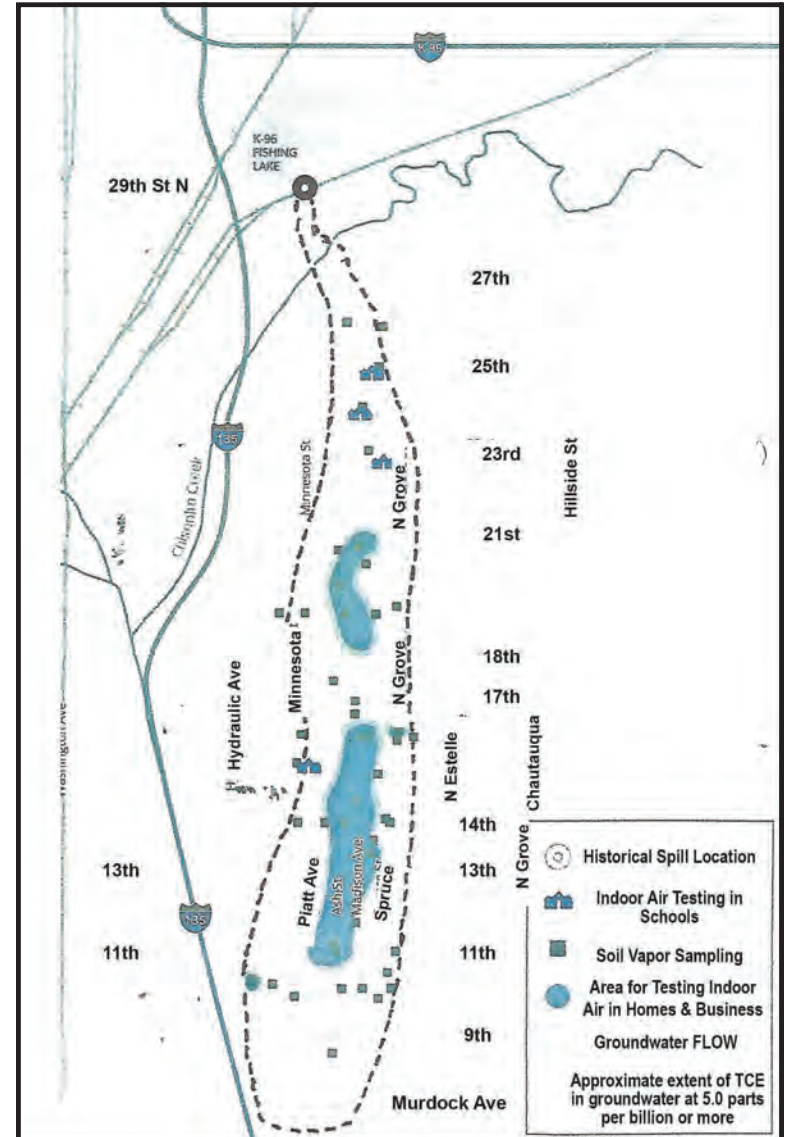
poorly ventilated areas or those who drink contaminated water, can cause health issues, including prostate and hepatic system cancers, miscarriages and birth defects.

A recent health study in the contamination area revealed a liver cancer rate double the rest of the city and a higher-than-average rate of birth defects.

TCE rapidly evaporates and disappears when exposed to air. But the gas is released as the chemical moves through the soil and can enter structures through basement cracks, plumbing lines and sumps in basements.

When soil probes reveal the presence of significant TCE gas in the soil, testing of the interior of nearby structures is recommended.

As part of the final remediation plan in the 29th and Grove contamination area, KDHE recommended soil probe testing to determine if there are still high levels of gas in the soil. If high levels are detected, venting similar to



Based on sample plugs taken in the 29th and Oliver spill area, KDHE believes there is a possibility TCE gasses may be seeping into homes in the areas designated on this map. To find out, they're offering to test homes for the gas intrusion free of charge. If the toxic gas is found, they will vent your home to remove the gasses and seal cracks where the gas is entering your home. KDHE needs the property owner's signed permission before tests or corrective measures can be done. Read the article on this page to learn more.

that used to remove radon or carbon monoxide are used to clean the air. South said the team would also seal up any cracks.

Extraction Wells Coming

UP is also working with the City

of Wichita to choose the best sites for installing wells that will pump the contaminated water to the surface so it can be tested, treated, and returned to groundwater or

See **TESTING**, Page 23 →



KC to Host National Conference Celebrating U.S., U.N., Arts and Jazz

The schedule includes receptions, panel discussion, and a jazz concert.

By Bonita Gooch and Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

On June 18-20, Kansas City will play host to a free national conference to celebrate and discuss the United States' return to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and how with that return can help Kansas City grow.

The conference is sponsored by Creative City KC, who applied for and in 2017 helped Kansas City receive designation as a UNESCO Creative City for Music.

Thanks to its jazz heritage, Kansas City was designated as a UNESCO Creative City for Music under the organization's cultural umbrella. UNESCO's goal, as well as Creative City KC's, was to use the designation to help build economically around the city's jazz culture.

The vision was to use the designation as part of an effort to use jazz as an economic driver for local artists and as a way to help grow a market for jazz-related tourism in Kansas City.

However, in 2018, then Pres. Donald Trump pulled the United States out of UNESCO, citing alleged bias against Israel. Last summer, the United States was reinstated as a UNESCO member after the body's 193 member countries approved the

Biden administration's request for readmission. .

The two-day "Return to UNESCO" conference provides a unique opportunity to learn and network for artists, educators, tourism officials, creative professionals, and civic leaders.

The conference is free, but registration is required. Register by June 11 at bit.ly/Return2UNESCO.

Schedule of Events

June 18: Opening reception at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, 5 p.m. dinner, 6 p.m. reception.

June 19: Open-forum panel discussion at UMKC from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Speakers will include representatives from the U.S. State Department and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The forum is followed by a dinner and jazz concert.

June 19: Free "Journey of Jazz" concert at UMKC's White Recital Hall at 6 p.m. The concert goes through the history of jazz from its beginnings to Bebop through today.

June 20: Next steps discussion and an optional tour.

"We are pleased to be the first in the UNESCO network to welcome our nation back into the largest cultural organization in the world," said Anita Dixon-Brown, Creative City KC Executive Director. "This conference will educate participants on the importance of the United States' international presence of cultural arts and world heritage and celebrate our country's diverse legacy and creativity"

Leaders at Work to Stand Against Violence (SAVE KC)

Mayor Quinton Lucas, Police Chief Stacey Graves, and Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker sat at the table with those driving Kansas City's crime, giving them an ultimatum and an offer of resources to get their lives back on track.

By Quinton Lucas
Mayor of Kansas City, MO

Leaders at Work to SAVE KC

This week, for the first time in half a decade, we — the city, law enforcement, the prosecutor's office, and community service providers — sat at the table with those driving Kansas City's crime, giving them an ultimatum: Put down the guns and leave behind crime, and we will help you obtain the resources to get your life back on track to succeed.

Or, you will face the full consequences of the law, with swift and certain consequences.

The meeting, the first of many, is part of Kansas City government's focused deterrence strategy Stand Against Violence (SAVE KC) to save lives.

Participants include those associated with violence who consistently encounter police and those who are high risk or prone to committing retaliatory

violent crime based on their proximity to violent incidents.

Our message: We want to see each one of you leave behind crime and go on to live a successful life with your families, friends, community, and everyone you love. We are here to help you, but if you won't let us, we will stop you. The choice is yours alone.

Focused deterrence efforts have worked in several American cities, including Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Detroit. Kansas City even implemented a different focused deterrence effort, KC NOVA, in 2014, which reduced the city's homicide and shooting totals to historically low levels, but it used more punitive strategies, which were not sustainable long-term.

On the other hand, SAVE KC is an enhanced focused deterrence model, using new efforts to infuse restorative practices responding to the needs of the participant, helping them change their ways, while holding them accountable — without doing more harm.

We must intervene before we have no choice but to put them in handcuffs and send them away to prison or before they end up dead or put someone else's life in danger.

SAVE KC is how we get to the root of the issue, providing an alternative path away from crime and violence and toward the support and resources needed to reach a successful future.

A vital aspect of SAVE KC is involving community members with lived experiences. During last week's meeting, participants heard stories of former criminals who turned their lives around, explaining how and why they left behind their path of violence and crime. They heard stories from victims impacted by violent crimes — family members of murdered victims, victims who survived shootings, but their lives changed forever by their injuries.

They also heard from service providers about the resources available for them and their families. A key part of focused deterrence is understanding that when people have their needs met, including housing, well-paying job, education, and other resources, they are less likely to engage in risky or violent behavior. It's why at our first meeting we offered job training and placement, GED courses, counseling, emergency assistance, housing assistance, witness protection, and other resources to help them and their families.

So, why are we doing this? Why now?

Violence has reached epidemic levels in Kansas City. We are using every tool in our toolbox to save lives. No one wants to attend the

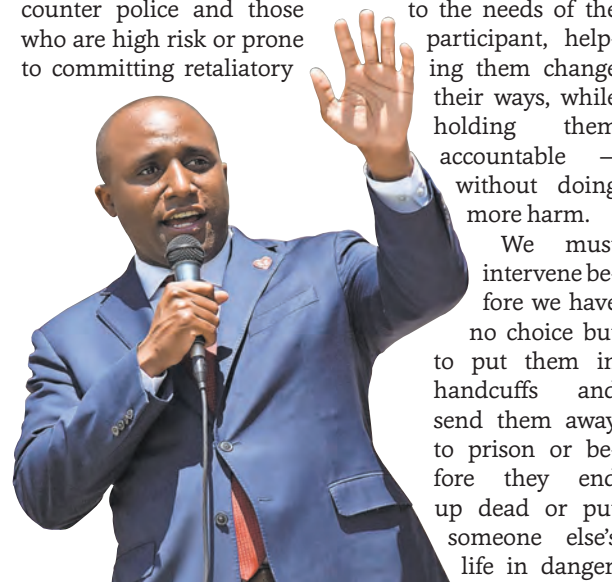
funeral of another child. No one wants to work the scene of another mass shooting. No one wants to bury another police officer.

It's why you see us, Kansas City's leaders, collaborating and exploring new, proven ways to save lives. Reducing violence is not simple and there is no one solution. It's difficult to convince those involved in violence there's an alternative path, a better way. But we've seen in city after city that the only certain way to achieve our goal is to work together.

SAVE KC will continue to hold meetings regularly, bringing together groups of participants from our community we identify at high-risk for committing violent crime. Each participant will receive regular follow-ups from our service providers to ensure they continue to stay on a successful path forward with the support they need.

As we continue to host SAVE KC meetings, we will evaluate where we're improving and where we need to keep working. In fact, we contracted with an academic researcher to help us ensure we are making data-informed decisions for improvement. We are looking forward to sharing more in the weeks ahead.

We have a long way to go before we will be able to say we're healing. But our journey is underway and we're proud to say we are in it together. Any success, even small, is a life saved.



Dirt Cheap: How Compressed Earth Legos Could Help Solve Kansas City's Affordable Housing Crisis

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

Key Points

- CEBs, is a historic building model regaining popularity.
- Riddle plans to build smaller CEB homes and make them affordable for homeownership
- His goal is to rebuild in the central city as an alternative to gentrification.

Godfrey Riddle's family lost their home to foreclosure when he was a child. That experience catalyzed his drive to build affordable housing and enable

wealth-building and empowerment in marginalized communities.

"Affordable housing is a problem in life generally and has been in my own," Riddle says. "My family lost our home to foreclosure, and it really changed my perspective on housing."

Riddle is the founder of Civic Saint, a local social venture that aims to create sustainable, ultra-affordable homes directly for consumers. Civic Saint uses a combination of unfired earth bricks and prefabricated home designs to offer affordable housing options in Kansas City's historically redlined neighborhoods.

Reclaiming a Historic Building Model

"The future of affordable housing is underneath our feet," Riddle says of his bricks.

The bricks are made by compressing a mixture of soil, water, and cement into oversized earth blocks known as compressed earth bricks (CEBs). It's a historic building process that's regaining popularity.

Riddle says CEBs are substantially more energy-efficient while being less expensive to produce than standard building materials and non-toxic.

"They're twice as strong as concrete or clay," Riddle notes, "and resistant to fire, moisture, and even bullets."



Civic Saint Houses will sustainable and affordable.

An Affordable Housing Option

He sees the smaller 600 to 850-square-foot homes he plans to build using this

technique as one solution to the city's dire need for affordable housing.

Skyrocketing rental costs and home prices

have pushed homeownership out of reach for many working families. According to estimates, the metro area faces a deficit of around 66,000 affordable homes for households earning under \$35,000 annually.

"We are in a real crisis with affordable housing, particularly in the urban core," says Pat Jordan, President of the Gem Cultural & Educational Center and a longtime housing advocate. "We have to address it like it's a pandemic and find creative solutions across sectors, even moderate-income folks cannot afford housing."

Riddle says that CEB construction can represent one option to help alleviate the problem.

That low production cost enables Civic Saint to offer single-family homes at prices virtually unheard of

We buy houses For Ca\$h

- No Repairs Needed
- No Agents or Commission
- No Hassles or Headaches
- Family emergency
- House needs repair
- Behind on payments
- Relocation
- Divorce
- Problem tenants
- Unwanted property
- Inherited property
- Vacant house

SOLD For SALE

Anthony Wilkins • 316-806-3644

ASANTE' REFRIGERATION
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

(316) 312-7690

Residential & commercial jobs
Emergency services & more
PO BOX 20361
WICHITA, KS 67208
Asante2@cox.net

BIG SONS CONSTRUCTION

- Trusted Family-Owned
- Over 30 years
- Craftmanship & Commitment of excellence

• Build a sturdy foundation • Construct a beautiful driveway • Enhance your outdoor space with a custom concrete patio

Our experienced team has you covered. We combine traditional techniques with the latest industry innovations to deliver durable and aesthetically pleasing results that stand the test of time.

Mike Reid - (316) 706-6677
BIG SONS CONSTRUCTION

MARCH, from Page 9 ↓**to promote unity and peace:**

- Get to know your next-door neighbors and those across the street
- Greet every person you come

across

- Engage young people in conversations and activities
- Be a part of the village and
- If you see something, say something.

For parents and guardians, they offered additional tips:

- Pay attention to your young person's social media activity
- Get to know their friends
- Verify where they are going when they leave the house

- Check their room for anything of concern.

Anyone in need of resources can call United Way at 211 to get help. Anyone who witnesses a crime can report it anonymously through CrimeStoppers at

316-267-2111.

Promoters of the "Unity in the Community" event will be sharing information and handing out flyers during the Juneteenth celebration at McAdams Park June 14, 15 and 16.

HOUSING, from Page 19 ↓

in today's market.

Estimated complete building costs for a Civic Saint house is around \$98,000 for an 850-square-foot, two-story unit. Based on current rates, Riddle estimates the homes could appraise between \$130,000 and \$140,000 – nearly half of the average price for a home in Missouri and a fraction of the national average sale price.

"The main idea is to create something not only obtainable but sustainable," Riddle says. "We want to make a quality structure that a person can call home and a stepping stone for Black families becoming homeowners."

Accepting Something Different

While the compressed brick model shows promise as an affordable housing solution, scaling up production poses challenges that could limit Civic Saint's initial impact.

"I estimate I can manufacture over 13,000 earthen blocks in eight hours and erect a tiny house within a week with a team of 8 to 10 workers," Riddle says. "But that's still a relatively small scale compared to the full scope of the need."

There are also regulatory hurdles around permitting the non-traditional construction material that Riddle has had to navigate by educating city officials. Construction companies have also been resistant due to unfamiliarity with CEBs.

"The biggest problem is education because people tend to pump the brakes when they're uncertain," Riddle acknowledges.

However, Civic Saint's model is gaining momentum. Last August, Civic Saint won both the Inaugural Communities of Color Initiative (CoCi) Biz Pitch and the overall Biz Pitch competitions hosted by the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, bringing in \$55,000 total. Further facilitating growth,



Godfrey Riddle

Riddle's venture was also selected for the latest LaunchKC Social Venture Studio accelerator cohort, which offers office space, mentorship, technical assistance and will give Civic Saint a grant of up to \$25k.

With that backing, Civic Saint aims to construct its first full home in Kansas City's Montgall neighborhood this summer, with plans for 4 to 20 additional units by the end of 2024. Riddle says over 50 people have already expressed interest in purchasing one of the affordable compressed brick homes.

An Answer to Gentrification

Beyond affordability, a core mission for Civic Saint is revitalizing and empowering marginalized communities systematically shut out from homeownership and economic mobility through racist housing practices like redlining.

"We have the ability to rebuild the urban core in an equitable fashion," Jordan says. "We just have to work on more than one thing at a time, it's probably more like five or six different issues to have an impact."

While likely not a silver bullet to all the metro's housing woes, Riddle's dirt-cheap construction method hopes to offer culturally affirming affordable housing and grassroots economic empowerment.

"Our business model is focused on creating artful, affordable



Riddle has built a proof-of-concept wall on the lot downhill from the Vine Street Castle. You can stop by and check out how a CEB house comes together.

homes sustainably," Riddle says. "We're not just looking at bricks and mortar, we're looking at people. We have to work together to better tackle this issue as a community."

Part of that involves rethinking traditional gentrification models, which often displace existing residents through the rapid development of high-end housing.

"We don't necessarily want \$500k to \$600k houses in the neighborhoods in the urban core, that's not what they need," Jordan explains.

Rather than pushing out longtime residents, Riddle aims to create an affordable path to homeownership directly within their communities.

As Jordan echoes: "It's not a political issue, it's a human issue." By tapping into the ancient legacy of



CEB bricks are made by compressing a mixture of soil, water and cement into oversized earth bricks.

earthen construction, Civic Saint could help chart a way forward for

Kansas City's housing future, starting from its redlined past.

KC Commends Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Alumnae

City Hall recognized the KC alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta on its 55-year anniversary

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

City Council gave a special commendation honoring the Delta Sigma Theta Kansas City Alumnae Chapter on its 55th anniversary.

The Kansas City Delta Sigma Theta Alumnae Chapter was chartered on June 13, 1969.

"I'm honored to be a part of Delta Sigma Theta," said Councilwoman Melissa Patterson-Hazley. "I'm constantly surrounded by women who are doing outstanding and powerful things."

Since its founding 55 years ago, the alumna group has grown to 300 members and has worked on public service programs focused on a host of issues. The group has also given \$1.8M



Delta Joanne Collins, the city's first Black Mayor Pro Tem, greeting third district council members Melissa Hazley-Patterson and Melissa Robinson.

in scholarships to area students.

"We are glad and excited to have this recognition," said DST Alumnae KC Chapter President

Dionne Greenfield. "Thank you for supporting and recognizing our shared destiny in the work and actions that are required in this community to ensure a promising future builds on our legacy."

Several members of the City Council shared stories about their interactions with the "powerhouses" in

the group, including first district councilman Nathan Willet, who had a former teacher in the group. On hand was Joanne Collins, the first Black female mayor pro tem who is a Delta soror. Mayor pro tem Ryana Parks Shaw personally commended Collins for her mentorship.

"I know that you all are making a true difference in the lives of our young people, especially our African American women," said Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks Shaw.



City Hall commended the KC chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority.



Zhou B Art Center Opens in Historic Crispus Attucks School Building

The cultural art hub held its grand opening June 1

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

After years of planning and renovation, the Zhou B Art Center celebrated its grand opening on June 1 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, exhibition premiere, and community celebration at the center in Kansas City's historic 18th & Vine Jazz District.

The new arts hub has revitalized the long-vacant Crispus Attucks School building at 1801 E. 18th Street. The school, which closed decades ago, was once an important pillar of education for Black students in Kansas City. The massive renovation preserved historic elements while adding 45 artist studios, multiple galleries, a 250-seat theater, event spaces, and a sculpture garden.

"It'll be one of the anchors of the jazz district," said Allan Gray, co-developer of the multi-million dollar project. "But this is not just a project for 18th and Vine; what the Zhou brothers are bringing is an arts center for Kansas City."

The ribbon cutting featured local officials and the renowned Zhou Brothers artists who spearheaded the development. The ribbon cutting was followed by a fund-raising gala with live music, refreshments and the premiere of the inaugural exhibition "A Benediction from the Rubble."

The Zhou B Arts Center of Kansas City will be the brothers' second arts center in the US. They intend to build programming and events around the needs of the artists in residence. Classes, workshops, exhibitions, and an artist of the month program are in the works for the center.



Kansas City artist Michael Brantley is one of the selected artists for the center's opening exhibit, "A Benediction from the Rubble."



The Zhou Brothers (center) were joined by Mayor Quinton Lucas and other dignitaries for the ribbon cutting of their new Art Center in the 18th and Vine Jazz District.

Kansas City Hosts Foresight Film and Music Workshop for Youth and Young Adults

The five-day workshop will include hands-on learning experiences led by local and Hollywood industry professionals

By Bonita Gooch
Voice Editor-in-Chief

If you're interested in learning more about the film and/or music industry, then register as soon as possible for the Foresight Film and Music Workshop to be held June 24-28 in Kansas City. The workshop, for youth and young adults, ages 18-25, will feature three days of workshops (24-26) taught by industry professionals followed by two-days (27-28) filming a proof-of-concept video showcasing the historical connection between jazz musicians and the preservation of the communities where these jazz legends lived



and thrived.

The workshops are ideal for individuals interested in careers in film and music, including directors, production engineers, crew and writer positions with novice-level experience in music and/or film. Session topics will include basics in acting, writing, sound and music production, set extra, streaming platforms and stage performance.

Creative City KC, Inc. is sponsoring this workshop in Kansas City in response to the declining availability of arts and music education in schools. This decline creates barriers for individuals interested in participating in creative industries that Creative City KC

wants to remove. This workshop is just one step that gives young people a chance to learn about an industry they are passionate about but lack access to.

Heading the workshop will be Willie D. Burton and Dorez Douglas, founders of Foresight Entertainment.

Burton is a two-time Academy Award-winning sound mixer with a history of groundbreaking work and Douglas is a Hollywood director and producer.

Joining them will be a talented group of professionals, who are talented educators as well. Each instructor will conduct a 2-hour presentation followed by a Q&A session. Daily sessions will last six to eight hours with a one-hour complimentary lunch.

Participation in the conference is free, but space is limited and pre-registration is required. The deadline to register is June 11. Registration is online at slfklsfklsfklsk.

The workshop will be held in room 109, Katz Hall, the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Filming location shots include neighborhoods and venues that reflect Kansas City's jazz heritage.

Professional Instructors

Television and film actor Lamman Rucker will be one of the workshop's celebrity



Television and film actor Lamman Rucker currently stars in BET+ series "The Black Hamptons"

instructors. Rucker currently stars in the BET Plus series "Black Hamptons," which was recently nominated for an NAACP Image Award. Rucker previously starred in the Oprah Winfrey Network hit "Green Leaf" and also co-starred in Tyler Perry's films "Why Did I Get Married" and "Why Did I Get Married Too?"

Three-time Grammy winner Scotty Barnhart is another celebrity who will present during the workshop. Barnhart is an internationally acclaimed jazz trumpeter and director of the Count Basie Orchestra. He's also a talented composer,



Three-time Grammy winner Scotty Barnhart is an internationally acclaimed jazz trumpeter and director of the Count Basie Orchestra.

author, and educator. He has worked with a diverse group of performers including Tony Bennet, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, and Barbara Streisand, to name a few.

Another highlight of the workshop is a virtual presentation by Phil Robinson the vice president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"As new technology allows the tools of filmmaking to become more and more accessible to young filmmakers everywhere, it's important to have programs that get outside of Hollywood to encourage and educate these artists," said Burton. "I am thrilled that Willie Burton invited me to participate in this workshop, and I'm eagerly looking forward to it."

About Creative City KC

Creative City KC – UNESCO Creative City of Music, is dedicated to fostering creative growth and cultural sustainability through arts and music. As a designated UNESCO City of Music, the organization strives to support and elevate the creative community in Kansas City and beyond. The organization sees this workshop as a medium to help grow new businesses, develop the workforce skills of participating youth and young adults and as a way to create a path for sustainability of culture and heritage through the arts.

Reel in Fun at Upcoming Urban Fishing Derby

Get outdoors with a fishing derbies June 1 & 15.

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

For all the young fish whisperers out there, grab your poles and bait – it's time to cast your line.

On June 15, Urban American Outdoors will host the Urban Kids Fishing Derby. This free event will take place from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the pond in Spring Valley Park. With a \$100 grand prize on the line, there's bound to be a friendly competition.

Here's the catch: spaces are limited to 200 lucky anglers aged 4 to 16, so you'll want to register for free as



Big fish and a cash prize await at the Urban Youth Fishing Derby held each year on the Saturday before Father's Day

soon as you can at <https://uaotv.com/urban-kids-fish-kcmo/>. Loaner rods won't be provided this year, so bring your own rod and other gear like a bucket, chair, and bait. With a fun

family atmosphere and that grand prize money almost begging to be reeled in, it's sure to be a whale of a good time.

"This is fishing with a purpose," says

Urban American Outdoors co-founder Wayne Hubbard. "Our goal is to reach diverse urban, suburban, and rural communities; to have them look at outdoor recreation and fishing as something they can be engaged in."

The Urban Kids Fishing Derby supports catch and eat, with families allowed to take the limit home for eating. Spring Valley Park's pond is stocked with hybrid bluegill, catfish, bass, trout, and perch. Unlike traditional catch-and-release practices, the derby promotes "catch and eat," allowing families to take home a limit of fish and enjoy a meal together.

Founded in 1998, Urban American Outdoors aims to engage with diverse audiences, including the Black

community, to connect with the outdoors. Urban American Outdoors also has a nationally syndicated television show by the same name, which airs locally Saturday mornings on 38 The Spot.

Urban Kids Fishing Derby

Location: 27th & Woodland, KCMO

Date: June 15

Time: 8:30 a.m. - noon

Spots: 200 available
<https://uaotv.com/urban-kids-fish-kcmo/>

LEGAL NOTICE

IF YOU ARE INCLUDED IN THE WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT'S GANG LIST/DATABASE AS AN ACTIVE OR INACTIVE GANG MEMBER OR GANG ASSOCIATE, YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE AFFECTED.

A settlement has been proposed in a class action lawsuit alleging that the City of Wichita violated the constitutional rights of Class members by including them in the Wichita Police Department's Gang List/Database in the case Progeny v. City of Wichita, Case No. 6:21-cv-01100-EFM (D. Kan.). The U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas authorized this notice.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT?

All living persons included in the Wichita Police Department's Gang List or Gang Database as an Active or Inactive Gang Member or Gang Associate.

WHAT IS THIS CASE ABOUT?

Plaintiffs allege the City of Wichita is violating their civil rights and the rights of Class members by including them in the WPD's Gang List/Database. This lawsuit seeks to change the WPD's policy and practices. The City denies it is violating the rights of Plaintiffs or Class members.

WHAT DOES THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?

This settlement makes changes to how the WPD operates its Gang List/Database. **The Settlement Agreement does not include payment of any money damages for Class members.** Full details about the proposed settlement, including the full Agreement, are available at www.kansasappleseed.org or www.aclukansas.org.

WHO REPRESENTS YOU?

The Court appointed lawyers from the ACLU of Kansas, Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, and the law firm Shook, Hardy & Bacon to represent you as "Class Counsel."

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

If you are a Class Member, you may (1) do nothing; (2) send in a comment supporting or objecting to the settlement; and/or (3) go to a hearing about the fairness of the settlement. The detailed or "Long Form" notice, which can be found at www.kansasappleseed.org or www.aclukansas.org, explains how to submit a comment.

The Court will hold a hearing on **August 23, 2024 at 1:30 PM in Courtroom 414, U.S. District Courthouse, 401 N. Market, Wichita, KS 67202.** The Court will decide whether the proposed settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate. You may but aren't required to go to the hearing. You may but aren't required to hire an attorney to go to the hearing.

HOW CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

A detailed notice and other information, including instructions on how to send a statement in support of or in objection to the settlement, are available at www.kansasappleseed.org or www.aclukansas.org.

DO NOT CONTACT THE COURT or the City of Wichita or the Wichita Police Department concerning this notice or lawsuit.

TESTING, from Page 17 ↓

surface streams.

The design for the wells to be used in the extraction process is ongoing, but a UP spokesperson said it is expected to be complete and wells in operation by next year. It will take another decade to complete the remediation.

Residents attending the June 1 event, billed as a "listening session," expressed frustration at the slow pace of remediation.

"Not this again!" Aujanee Bennett, president of the Northeast Millair Neighborhood Association, said when she walked into the room and saw a large circle

of materials displayed on tall easels. Mary Daly, a geologist with KDHE, said with the exception of the air vapor testing, not a lot has changed since KDHE completed its recommendations for final remediation more than a year ago.

That does not mean that work hasn't been done. Monitoring of surface water from Chisholm Creek is ongoing and no contamination has been found. Soil probes have helped identify which homes or private businesses should be tested for vapor intrusion and the best sites for extraction wells are being identified.

South, with UP, said the effort to spread the word about vapor intrusion testing was the primary reason for the meeting. She said UP also wanted concerned residents to have a chance to go over informational materials and get their questions about what happened and what's coming answered.

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION IN THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT DISTRICT COURT, SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS IN THE MATTER OF THE MARRIAGE OF

Olivia Richardson (Petitioner)

and

Dyemond Richardson (Respondent)

Case No. 23DM2746

PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 23 OF KANSAS STATUTES ANNOTATED NOTICE OF SUIT THE STATE OF KANSAS TO: YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a petition has been filed in the District Court of Sedgwick County, Kansas by Petitioner, praying for an absolute decree of divorce, and you are hereby required to plead to such petition on or before the 29th day of June, 2024, in said court at Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said petition.

Olivia Richardson
Petitioner



EST. 1951

NEIGHBORS
CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC.

BID SOLICITATION NOTICE TO ALL CERTIFIED KCATA MBE/WBE MEMBERS FOR THE ASCENT APARTMENTS

Neighbors Construction Company, Inc. is seeking subcontractor proposals from all subcontractors, including qualified MBE/WBE subcontractors who are in current good standing with the KCATA, The City of Kansas City, MO, The State of Missouri Office of Equal Opportunity, and/or the Kansas Department of Commerce, for the construction of the new Arrive KC Apartments. The participation goals for this project are 6.2% (MBE) and 6.9% (WBE).

This project will consist of the new construction of (341) apartment units, including an integral clubhouse, as well as detached garages.

All bid documents, including the bid invitation and the bid form, can be found at the following link: <https://www.bidplanroom.com/clientapp/project.php?id=MTMwM-jA=&k=a3b6g6bqfu>

Please call or email any questions to the NCCI Office at the following email address: nccibids@neighborsconstruction.com.

Phone: (913) 422-5555

Fax: (913) 422-7384

COME OUT TO CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH ICT



*** MUST HAVE ARMBAND ***

**JUNETEENTHICT ARMBANDS CAN BE
PURCHASED IN ADVANCE OR AT THE EVENTS**
GENERAL ADMISSION \$6 KIDS 4-13YRS \$3

ARMBANDS CAN BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS

THE BLACKPRINT ICT

104A St. Francis
Wichita, Ks 67202

2 BEATZ BOUTIQUE

320 S Market St
Wichita, Ks 67202

JEWEL ANGELS

3236 E Douglas Ave
Wichita, Ks 67208

SIMPLY SANGRIA

243 N Cleveland
Wichita, Ks 67214

JUNETEENTHICT 2024
AT HISTORIC MCADAMS PARK



JUNE 13TH - JUNE 16TH

MISS JUNETEENTHICT

COMPETITION

THURSDAY, JUNE 13TH

TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED

7:00PM DOORS OPEN 6:00PM

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY, CAC THEATER



LEARN MORE AT: COREOFWICHITA.ORG/JUNETEENTHICT