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Volume 32, No. 5 · communityvoiceks.com · Friday, March 7, 2025

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# THE VOICE

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 5  
FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2025

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# McCray-Miller Contemplates Next Steps Following Close School Bond Issue Election

At-large Wichita School Board member believes low turnout and misinformation contributed to close election results

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

At-Large Wichita School Board member Melody McCray-Miller says she's not ready to concede the Wichita Public School's \$450 million bond vote failed.

With the No's ahead by 294 votes and the results of 535 provisional ballots to be added to the election totals, McCray-Miller signals Friday afternoon's canvassing of the election results may not bring the election process to an end. If addition of the provisional votes doesn't tip the election to a district win, McCray-Miller says the board may request a full recount of the ballots.

With YES behind by 294 votes and just 535 provisional ballots, to come out on top, more than 75% of the provisional ballots would need to be in favor of the bond issue, which is a pretty large lift.

### What Went Wrong

McCray-Miller believes low voter turnout contributed to the close election results. Just under 14% of the district's eligible voters participated in the election. The district had hoped for 15% turnout and she believes if they had met that goal, the election

results would have tipped in their favor.

McCray-Miller also says the proposed bond issue, billed as a zero-tax-rate bond issue, was negatively impacted by a poorly-timed announcement from the Sedgwick County Tax Appraiser's office. In the waning days of the election campaign, the appraiser's office alerted property owners to an average 9% increase on appraised taxable values notices due to be mailed March 1. The message: even though the bond issue wouldn't increase property owners' taxable rate, their taxes would still be going up since their appraisals were up.

### Next Steps

If after all steps – canvassing and a possible recount – the bond issue fails, McCray-Miller supports bringing the bond issue to the voters again. This time though, the bond issue may look different. Some members of the Vote Yes coalition, who helped support the bond issue, have signaled the possibility of the district coming back with a smaller bond issue proposal.

At the school board meeting on March 3, their first since the election, the district's Chief Financial Officer Addi Lowell outlined a process for the city to survey and gather feedback from the community.

"We do want to enact a focus group for constituents that cast a ballot on February 25 to help us get objective opinions on our education efforts to date and the



Historic Louverture School will be closed whether or not the bond issue passes, says USD 259 officials, but some members of the community hope the school board will reconsider closing it.

facilities master plan," Lowell told the board.

The district indicated they will use the feedback to help decide next steps.

### Closures Still Planned

However, with or without the bond issue, district representatives say they still plan to move ahead with closure of L'Ouverture, OK, Pleasant Valley and Woodland elementary schools. Under the bond issue, students at these schools were to be moved to newer, larger schools. The students may be moving to "newer" schools than they were previously in, but without the bond issue, there will be no "new" schools for them to move to.

At Monday's board meeting, architect and community-leader Charles McAfee asked the board to reconsider closing L'Ouverture, which is located across the street from McAdams Park and the pool house he designed that bears his name. L'Ouverture school building opened in 1951 at its current location, but the school's history dates back to 1914 when it was

opened, at a different nearby location, as part of the school district's segregation of its schools.

L'Ouverture is one of just four school buildings in near northeast Wichita that would be shuttered if the current bond issue passes. The other schools are Dunbar, Little Early Learning Center and Chester Lewis Academic Learning Center (the old Mathewson). Concerns about the number of closings in Northeast Wichita may have contributed to a loss in some support for the bond issue from Wichita's Black community.

McCray-Miller says she's heard a lot of interest in purchasing several of the facilities. She says churches near two of the buildings have expressed an interest in purchasing Dunbar and Chester Lewis. She also says there's a group interested in purchasing L'Ouverture for use as a high-achievement preschool.

Especially for L'ouveture, McCray-Miller says she will support a requirement that the new use for the facility include a permanent display recognizing the school's history.



Melody  
McCray Miller

**THE COMMUNITY VOICE**  
PO Box 20804 | Wichita, KS 67214  
316.681.1155 | ISSN 1090-3852  
[www.communityvoiceks.com](http://www.communityvoiceks.com)

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

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# Much Of The Black Middle Class Was Built By Federal Jobs. That May Change

By Associated Press

For decades, the federal government provided both reliable jobs and guardrails to offset systemic racial bias in hiring and promotions, offering an alternative for Black workers who might be overlooked or ignored in the private sector. Those jobs played a crucial role in helping Black workers join the middle class and thrive. But vast cuts by the Trump administration, led by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, are threatening to close down that once-dependable path to financial stability.

"The federal workforce was a means to help build Black middle class. It hired Black Americans at a higher rate than private employers," said Sheria Smith, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 252, which represents the

Education Department employees.

As a part of his efforts, President Trump is angling to shut down the Department of Education. . Nearly 30% of Education employees are Black according to a 2024 report by the department.

At the Department of Health and Human Services 20% of the staff was Black. And at the Department of Veterans Affairs 24% are Black.

These numbers illustrate how important government jobs have been and are for Black people, said Marcus Casey, a fellow in the Economic Studies program at the Brookings Institution. He said the administration's efforts are trying to undermine the gains of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination on the basis of race and other characteristics, and of affirmative action, which began in the federal government to make the hiring and

promoting process more inclusive.

"Whether it was from the post office, through direct growth of federal agencies, through the military — the government fought against the headwinds associated with the private sector," said Casey, an affiliated scholar with Brookings' Future of Middle Class Initiative.

### Undoing DEI to Cut the Federal Workforce

"A lot of Black people not only benefited from what they call DEI now, but the original affirmative action programs, and the veteran preferences," Casey said. "That combination helped a lot of people get a foothold in the civil service." These efforts, he said, "helped people get middle-class salaries and build middle-class lives with an ecosystem of race-specific businesses around Black communities."



In this Jan 2019 photo, federal government employees Cheryl Monroe and Bertrice Sanders rally to call for an end to the partial government shutdown in Detroit. The government shutdown was particularly painful for African Americans who make up nearly 20% of the federal workforce. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management says African-Americans make up about 18% of the federal workforce of approximately 2.1 million employees. (AP PHOTO/PAUL SANCYA, FILE)

Photo Courtesy of NASA

First African American woman to fly in space.

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# Black Economic Boycott: Success But the Effort Must Go On

The conveyors of Black economic boycotts say they're making an impact, while Black brands in these stores raise cause for concern.

## By The Voice News Service

While there hasn't been much post-boycott press about the effects of the Fri., Feb. 28, economic boycott, indicators are beginning to show some success.

In Wichita, several restaurants saw huge crowds in support of the focus on Black businesses pushed from the economic boycott campaign.

"Ya'll really showed out," posted one restaurant on their social page. "Yesterday was big blessings to local businesses.... We thank y'all in the most humblest way."

Another restaurant was equally grateful but hoped it wasn't just a one-time and done effort.

## Support of Black Businesses

That's the same message from other Black suppliers, who are hoping for an ongoing growth in their product sales. The campaign has encouraged a push to buy Black-owned products online, something that's particularly important for Black-owned companies who have been lucky enough to have their brands on the shelves of major retailers.

Tabitha Brown has her clothing, hair care and veg-an food lines on shelves in



Pastor Jamal Bryant of Stonecrest, GA, was one of the early organizers of the economic boycott. He's calling for the boycott to continue through the end of Lent.

Target. She speaks for herself and other Black-owned brands in stores that are being boycotted, when she says an increase in online sales is great, but it won't make up for the sales they'll lose during the boycott. The numbers just don't add up.

Despite the growing boom in online shopping, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Quarterly Retail E-commerce Sales Report, online sales are only 18% of all consumer sales, excluding groceries, in the United States.

Brown took to Instagram with this message.

"As disheartening as it is for me, I'm not the only one affected by this," said Brown, "It's for everyone who is a woman-owned business,



The owners of Black-owned Brands - like Tabitha Brown's and others in Target and other major retailers - support the economic boycotts but want people to know how the ban is negatively impacting Black brands that don't often get opportunities to be on the shelves of major store brands.

minority-owned businesses, Black-owned businesses.... Contrary to whatever the world might tell you, it has been very hard for Black-owned businesses to hit shelves.

"I understand the desire to boycott, but it's going to hurt a lot of Black businesses," said Victoria Christopher Murray, whose book "The First Ladies" was a Target Book of the Year. "Target is

a major distributor of Black books. When those sales are gone, it will have a minimal blip on the Target radar and leave tons of Black entrepreneurs in its destructive wake."

## Targeting Target

NNPA, the national membership organization of America's Black newspapers, has ramped up a boycott campaign almost single-handedly directed at Target.

They're joined in their single-focused approach by Pastor Jamal Bryant, from the Atlanta suburb of Stonecrest, GA, whose "Don't Shop at Target" videos went viral online.

According to Bryant, Black people spend \$12 million a day at Target.

Target once touted its commitment to DEI, a promise that seemed particularly important to a company headquartered in the city where the police killing of George

Floyd set off a wave of protests around the world. In 2022, the company set a goal of making a financial commitment of more than \$2 billion to Black-owned businesses by 2025 and to have more than 500 Black-owned brands in its stores.

The company has said it was on track to meet its goals and it showed on their store shelves.

But now that Trump has been on the DEI attack, Target has joined others in scaling back its DEI efforts. The move prompted one of the most vocal calls for a boycott. Led by Pastor Bryant, and picked up nationally, the initial campaign was for a month-long boycott on shopping at Target. Now, Bryant has called for a boycott of Target through the end of Lent, or April 13, and NNPA doesn't seem at all interested in ending their campaign against shopping at Target.

## UPCOMING BOYCOTT DATES

**March 5 – April 13**  
Target (40-day boycott)

**Feb. 28, March 28, & April 18**  
24-hour spending blackouts

**March 7 – 14**  
Amazon

**April 7 – 13**  
Walmart

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## The DEI Pullback

In the wake of corporations scaling back their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, Black activists, clergy, and consumers are turning to boycotts for economic resistance. Major companies, including Target, Disney and Wells Fargo have

See **BOYCOTT** Page 15 →



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# Rep. Ford Carr Files Complaint Against 'Abusive' Republican

A confrontation on the Kansas House floor that shut down the Legislature for two hours has led Rep. Carr to file a formal complaint.

By **Tim Carpenter**  
Kansas Reflector

Proceedings in the Kansas House of Representatives were abruptly suspended for two hours on Feb. 20 after Republican Nick Hoheisel walked into the Democratic side of the House chambers, put his finger in Rep. Ford Carr's face and began shouting at him.

Now, in response, Carr has filed a formal complaint against Hoheisel and a committee of legislators – three Republicans and three Democrats – have been selected to hear his complaint.

Carr said it appeared Hoheisel's disagreement with him was based on irritation about Carr's remark about racism.

"I can only guess," Carr said. "Because I had gotten up earlier that day, 15 minutes before, and asked a carrier of a bill several questions. I thanked that carrier for not being a particular kind of individual."

Carr had spoken to the entire House about his views of racism in politics. Carr used the House chamber's debate microphone to address Rep. Bill Rhiley of Wellington on a bill Rhiley was carrying.

"It's good to see that there are some members of the Republican party that are either not racist enough that they don't mind coming to answer my questions, or not so fearful they wouldn't either."

Hoheisel then approached Carr. In the filed complaint, Carr wrote, "He came and



Rep. Ford Carr in Capitol Hearing Room

immediately began yelling profanity. He repeatedly yelled 'bullshit.' Upon reaching my seat he stopped, leaned over, raised his hand and put a finger in my face while yelling 'Representative Carr that's Bullshit. Don't you ever talk about any of my colleagues that way.'"

Carr characterizes Hoheisel's actions as "uncalled for, inappropriate and in direct violation of the rules of the House."

In response to Carr's complaint, House Speaker Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita) has appointed the special committee of three Republicans and three Democrats. The committee has held a brief organizational meeting and requested the two lawmakers provide witness lists and other documents related to the altercation.

The committee has the option of dismissing the complaint or recommending the full House

consider reprimanding or ousting Hoheisel. Republicans hold a supermajority of more than two-thirds of House seats.

Hoheisel didn't attend the special committee's organizational meeting, but Carr did. Carr said in an interview he planned to call witnesses who observed Hoheisel's behavior and statements.

After the conclusion of the brief organizational meeting, Carr said in an interview he was uncertain whether the select committee would give his complaint a fair hearing. He said it wasn't clear whether House Republicans would counter by submitting a complaint against Carr.

Asked if he believed the Republican-appointed special investigative committee would be fair.

"I rarely think a man of color gets a fair shake

anyway," Carr said. "However, I'm not necessarily concerned with the shake being fair. There comes a time where you need to stand on principles. You have to teach people how to treat you. You have to show people that not everyone is going to cower and stay silent. If not me, today, then someone tomorrow. I'm standing today so someone else doesn't have to go through this tomorrow."

Bob Lewis of Garden City, who is one of Republicans on the committee, said the select investigative committee would operate in a manner similar to a legislative committee, but the process could borrow features from judicial proceedings.

"First and foremost, we will expect and insist on decorum," said Lewis, an attorney. "We will insist that it be strictly observed by all participants and the audience. Any hint of disturbance or behavior unbecoming of the Kansas House of Representatives will be met with swift action by me, and if necessary, the person or persons responsible will be removed from the proceedings."

Gordon Self, who serves as the Legislature's revisor of statutes, said the House had total control of determining whether members were sanctioned for legislative conduct.

"I'm very serious when I say that," he said. "The House deals with its members. Not the Senate. Not the Legislature as a whole. Not the courts. At this juncture, this is a House matter to be decided by the House."

In wake of the disruption on the House floor Feb. 20, GOP House leadership ordered a two-hour recess and pulled several controversial bills from the debate calendar. Carr reported the incident to Capitol Police prior to submitting his complaint alleging Hoheisel engaged in "uncalled for, inappropriate" conduct "in direct violation of the rules of the House."

## Missouri Assembly Moves to Broaden Governor's Ban on DEI

By **Sterling Sewell**  
Missouri Independent

Last month, Gov. Mike Kehoe signed an executive order that forbids funding for DEI programs within state departments

under the purview of the governor. Now the Missouri General Assembly is fast tracking a bill that would make the governor's ban law and reach even further.

In addition to DEI programs within the state government, the bill would bar state

departments from mandating a DEI program in contracts with private organizations.

The bill prohibits the use of any state funding for DEI.

"The bottom line is we as a state should not be allowing propaganda to creep into the workplace that pushes preferential and unfair treatment of our state workers," said state Rep. Ben Baker (R-Neosho), who sponsored the bill.

Following the signing of Kehoe's executive order, a letter was sent to state employees explaining the executive order.

In the letter, the governor clarified that the order would not affect several key organizations like the Minority-Owned and the Women-Owned Business programs,

which provide opportunities for companies that are majority controlled by either women or minority individuals to bid on state contracts.

Another carve out listed in the governor's letter was the Model Employer Initiative, which seeks to increase the participation of disabled Missourians in the workforce.

The letter also makes it clear that recognition of Black History Month, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day are not prohibited in the order.

Baker said that his bill would have the same carveouts as the governor's bill and that this would be further clarified in the language of his bill.

# UPDATE: There's a Lot Going on With Expansion of The Kansas African American Museum

Press conference reveals great strides at the museum.

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

The Kansas African American Museum ended Black History Month with a downtown Wichita press conference full of surprising announcements, recognitions and milestone reveals.

The press conference was officially called to announce a \$250,000 grant to the museum from Bank of America Wichita. The grant is to aid the museum in completing renovations at its future location in downtown Wichita.

However, the presentation made by Shawn Lancelot, president of Bank of America Wichita, revealed more about what visitors can expect at the new museum. With the funds, Lancelot announced, BOA will be the presenting sponsor of the Dockum Drug Store Sit-in Immersive Experience at the new museum.

The Dockum Sit-in, which occurred in Wichita in 1958, has been officially recognized as the first successful lunch counter sit-in in the country.

This exhibit is the first permanent exhibit announced for the new museum.

Also at the press conference, Amy Williams, TKAAM acting executive director, identified the museum's "From Africa to Kansas" as an ongoing exhibit that will continue as a permanent exhibit at the new location.

## Museum's Planned Expansion

After a number of stops and starts on potential expansion plans, in 2023 TKAAM's board of directors announced they'd secured the former Sunflower Bank Building at 201 N. Main in downtown Wichita as a new home. That announcement also included the kick off of a \$6 million capital campaign for funds needed to complete the museum's move to the new location.

When it's complete, the building, with 22,000 sq. ft. of interior space, will have more than double the space over the museum's current location at 601 N. Water, in the historic Calvary Baptist Church.

In what was one of the biggest surprises of the morning, Williams announced reaching a "significant milestone" in the museum's capital campaign and relocation journey.

The milestone, she said, "is



Bank of America Market Manager Rocky Genz and Wichita President Shawn Lancelot present a check for \$250,000 to Acting TKAAM Executive Director Amy Williams and TKAAM Board President Atty. Ed Watson

one that allowed us to officially break ground and begin remediation and interior work on the new building."

"We fully realize that this is just the beginning of this work and, of course, there is still much to be done ... but we are starting," said Williams with a smile.

Williams said she describes this initial work as Phase Zero, "then we'll head into Phase One to get the building ready, and Phase Two is museum ready."

Currently, Williams says the goal is for a late 2026 opening at the new location.

Although the board met its original campaign goal, due to price increases, they still need to raise more funds for the final phase. Most of those funds will

be used to finish out the museum's exhibits.

## Exhibitions Announced

In addition to the Dockum Sit-in Immersive Exhibit, sponsored by Bank of America, and the "From Africa to Kansas" exhibit, Williams confirmed the museum's Trailblazer honorees will also be recognized in a permanent exhibit.

Annually, the museum's Trailblazer program recognizes a very select few African Americans for their significant contributions to Kansas history, culture, and society, often as pioneers in their respective fields.

Currently, only a few Trailblazers are featured in the museum. All of them will be recognized in a new interactive



Denise Sherman (right) who headed The Kansas African American Museum for six years, receives two small tokens of gratitude at the Feb. 28 press conference. Presenting are Amy Williams, TKAAM acting executive director, and Ed Watson, TKAAM board president.

exhibit planned for the new museum.

"You'll not only be able to look up who they are, but what they do and why they were recognized," said Williams.

## Recognition of Denise Sherman

During the recent press conference, Ed Watson, TKAAM's board president, joined by everyone in attendance, thanked Denise Sherman, the museum's former executive director who resigned in January, after six years of service.

Watson talked about the critical role Sherman played in getting the museum to where it is today.

"She led the museum and led us in our quest to grow the

museum and grow what we were going to be," said Watson. "She saw us in the future. She saw us much better than what we were at the moment ... She was necessary in getting us to this point.

"Thanks to your leadership, we've reached this critical milestone in the future of TKAAM, which will continue to be a legacy of your hard work and determination. I say this as we talk to our children, our children's children, about TKAAM. WE cannot talk about it without mentioning Miss Denise Curry Sherman."

Watson and Williams joined in presenting Sherman a small token of appreciation and the entire audience stood in applause.

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# DeShazer & Shepard Early Candidates for Wichita City Council

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

Two committed community activists have already filed to run for the District 1 seat on the Wichita City Council. The seat is currently occupied by Brandon Johnson, who can not seek reelection due to established term limits.

Most likely hoping to get an early start, both candidates filed well before the June 2 deadline.

**LaWanda DeShazer**  
DeShazer has been active



LaWanda DeShazer

in the community for more than two decades, working to make meaningful changes in Wichita through education, outreach and civic



Joseph Shepard

engagement. She's been active with youth organizations including youth football and cheerleading and as the

leader of the Wichita NAACP youth group. In addition, she currently serves on the District 1 Advisory Board.

DeShazer most recently served as senior program director for community outreach at the YMCA. Before that, she had a long tenure as senior administrative officer with the Sedgwick County Fire Dept.

The recipient of many community awards, she recently founded the nonprofit Communities in Action.

See **CANDIDATES**, Page 15 →

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# Fourteen Inducted into Kansas Black Educators Hall of Fame

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

For its 10th Anniversary ceremony, Art That Touches Your Heart Foundation in Wichita, Kansas, inducted 14 educators who had significantly contributed to the community into their Black Educators Hall of Fame.

These educators were honored for their unwavering commitment to academic excellence and their significant influence on the lives of countless students.

The Black Educators Hall of Fame serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of Black educators in Kansas, ensuring their contributions are celebrated and remembered for generations to come.

This year, the annual induction ceremony was held Sat., Feb. 22 at Wichita State University's Rhatigan Student Center.



Honorees and honoree representatives gathered for a photo after the Black Educators Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Sat. Feb. 22 at Wichita State University Rhatigan Student Center. They are: (Front Row L-R) Emalyn Roger, Dr. Galyn Vesey, Ester Anderson, Frankie Perkins, Sandra Barnes (Back Row L-R) Dr. Rhonda Hicks for Deltha Colvin, Felicia Chandler for Dr. Anna Chandler, Jesse Adams, Dr. Delia Shropshire, Shawna Wooden for Doris Wooden, Larry Bell, Eric Sexton for Linwood Sexton and representative for Berniece Westbrook.

**This year's honorees were:**

- Dr. Delia Shropshire
- Ester B. Anderson
- Larry Bell
- Frankie Perkins
- Emalyn Rogers
- Deltha Colvin
- Sandra Barnes
- Dr. Anna Chandler
- Jesse Adams
- Dr. Galyn A. Vesey
- Dr. John Gaston
- Doris Wooden
- Berniece Westbrook
- Linwood Sexton

For more information

about this year's honorees go to <https://bit.ly/4hdcWx0>

To see information on previous honorees go to <http://attyh.org/BEHOF.html>. So far, this year's honorees have not been added to this permanent page display.

## EXPLAINER:

# Why High Egg Prices May be the New Normal

By Thomas White  
Kansas City Reporter

Shoppers across Kansas and Missouri face empty egg shelves and purchase limits as prices soar to unprecedented levels, with little relief in sight.

Egg prices hit an all-time average high of \$4.95 per dozen in February. The USDA now predicts costs will rise 41.1% this year, potentially pushing an 18-count carton as high as \$11.69, according to government data.

## The Culprit

A persistent bird flu outbreak that began in 2022 has intensified in recent months, forcing the slaughter of millions of egg-laying hens.

It's become a "major" threat to commercial and backyard flocks in the United States, hitting egg-laying hens the hardest, according to the National Chicken Council. These hens account for more than 77% of the more than 162 million poultry affected by the virus since the outbreak began.

The U.S. has successfully dealt with sporadic outbreaks before, said Dr. Matt Koci, a professor in the Prestage Department of Poultry Science at North Carolina State University who specializes in immunology. Although poultry vaccines were studied, biosecurity measures and culling flocks with sick birds have been the strategy to take on the virus.

In the past, cases among chickens typically flared up only when wild birds, who can be carriers of the disease, would migrate through the US, Koci said. After they had flown on, case counts would fall to nothing.

Now, though, there is so much virus in circulation that it's been turning up in resident birds and spilled over



Are egg producers inflating prices during the bird flu outbreak to boost profits?

into other animals like cows, cats and even dolphins.

Many scientists believe it is unlikely that the virus will ever disappear completely from the U.S. again.

"Now that it's always here, kind of kicking around in the environment, we are seeing these little brush fires of cases popping up all the time," Koci said. "We were hoping it was a fluke, but this definitely seems like the new normal."

## 'A Horrible Way to Die'

When a domestic chicken, turkey or duck gets sick, it's devastating for the flock. Wild birds can live with the virus, but commercial flocks often cannot.

"It depends on the strain, but within 48 hours, a farmer may go from seeing a few dead birds to half his flock, and certainly, within three to five days, they're all dead," Koci said. Healthy members of the flock are often culled to help stop the spread. "That's the reason we stamp it out. We're trying to kill them before the virus does, because it's a horrible way to die, and that helps us contain it."

In the past 30 days alone, bird flu has been confirmed in 134 commercial and backyard flocks in the U.S., affecting 18.91 million birds, according to the USDA.

Some medications are in development, but nothing can cure chickens with bird flu. Culling is one of the most effective approaches, Koci said.

## The Problem With Vaccination

Some politicians have suggested vaccinating chickens. There are a few options available, and the Trump Administration has given the conditional green light to one made by Zoetis.

Zoetis initially got a contract to create a bird flu vaccine for chickens from the USDA's National Veterinary Stockpile in 2016. As with a human flu vaccine, the company has had to keep updating it to make sure it matches the virus strain in circulation.

It appears to be effective; the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service used it in 2023 to protect endangered California condors. But the commercial chicken industry isn't so interested.

For one thing, the US is the second biggest exporter of poultry products in the world, but overseas trading partners won't buy chickens vaccinated for bird flu.

The World Trade Organization doesn't forbid the sale of vaccinated birds outright, but other countries won't buy them. The seller has to demonstrate that the birds

are completely free of bird flu, and vaccines can mask the presence of the virus. Studies show that vaccines, just like human flu and COVID vaccines, can keep a chicken from developing severe disease, but they don't totally prevent infections.

The National Chicken Council, the U.S. industry's trade association, wrote to the Congressional Chicken Caucus recently to remind lawmakers that "vaccinating any poultry sector – egg layers, turkeys, broilers, or ducks – will jeopardize the entire export market for all U.S. poultry products."

The council said that if farmers can't trade overseas, the U.S. would face a potential \$10 billion-plus annual economic loss, as well as significant harm to its poultry business.

Vaccination would also add expense. There is no aerosolized or waterborne vaccine, so workers would have to pick up each one of millions of chickens and vaccinate them individually.

Other countries have gone the vaccination route, and it seems to have helped. France started vaccinating millions of farmed ducks in 2023, along with biosecurity measures and enhanced surveillance. The number of outbreaks fell to 10 during the first six months of the campaign, compared with 315 over the same time period. The Trump administration's response

## Trump Administration Response

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins unveiled a \$1 billion plan last month to combat the outbreak, adding to roughly \$2 billion already spent since 2022.

The plan includes \$500 million to help farmers



We were hoping it was a fluke, but this definitely seems like the new normal."

DR. MATT KOCI

strengthen biosecurity measures, \$400 million in additional aid for affected farms, \$100 million for vaccine research and includes plans to import eggs from Turkey to help meet America's demand.

When the outbreak started in 2022, many commercial farms stepped up biosecurity measures like isolating chickens from wild birds, keeping workers' clothes and boots clean, and spraying disinfectants.

Under the Trump rollout, Rollins said the biosecurity funds will be used to further a pilot program that involved

150 separate poultry operations employing specific biosecurity measures. Of the 150 operations that implemented the pilot called Wildlife Biosecurity Assessments, only one has seen avian flu.

"USDA will now provide this consulting service at no cost to all commercial egg-laying chicken farms," Rollins said in the Journal piece. "We will also pay up to 75% of the cost to repair biosecurity vulnerabilities."

## Expansion Beyond Birds

The flu has also expanded into other animals including dairy cows, cats, dogs, marine and forest mammals such as skunks and dolphins.

These infections typically occur when animals consume infected birds or come into contact with contaminated environments.

The virus is still considered a low threat to humans, but as of press time, 70 people in the U.S. had been infected. Farm workers and people who have backyard flocks are at higher risk of infection, but scientists are concerned that the virus will spread further – and possibly adapt to spread between people.

## Price Gouging Allegations

Some consumer advocates question whether the outbreak fully explains the price surge. Farm Action, which advocates for smaller farmers, points out that egg production is only down about 4% from last year despite the dramatic price increases.

"Dominant egg corporations are blaming avian flu for the price hikes that we're seeing. But while the egg supply has fallen only slightly, these companies' profits have soared," said Angela Huffman, Farm Action's president.

The largest publicly traded egg producer, Cal-Maine Foods, reported a \$219 million profit in its most recent quarter, up from just \$1.2 million before the outbreak began in early 2022.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren has called for an investigation.

# Feeling fine

A Special Quarterly Health Supplement to the Community Voice

**THE VOICE**

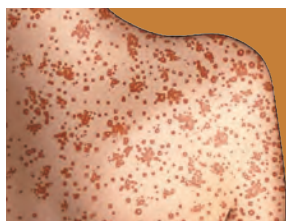


*In Memory of Bob Tutt*

# BLOOD CLOTS

Another Deadly Problem Disproportionately Impacting African Americans FF3

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## VACCINATION RATES DECLINING

What Other Diseases Could Re-Emerge FF6



## BLACK FAMILY WELLNESS EXPOS

Areas Links Chapters to join organization's National Day For Health Education & Outreach



One thing you can do to help lower ozone levels in your community is to fule your automobile before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. Learn what else you can do.  
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# Ozone Season 2025 Kicks off March 1

Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), a gas composed of three oxygen atoms, occurs naturally in the Earth's stratosphere, where it forms a protective layer that shields us from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation. However, at ground level, ozone is a harmful air pollutant.

### When is Ozone a Problem?

Ground-level ozone is a significant issue during the warmer months, typically from late spring through early fall (May to September). This is because ozone forms when pollutants from vehicles, industrial facilities, and other sources react with sunlight and heat. The problem worsens on hot,

sunny days with little wind.

### How Does Ozone Affect People?

Breathing in high levels of ground-level ozone can cause serious health issues, especially for sensitive groups, including children, older adults, people with lung diseases (such as asthma or COPD), and those who are active outdoors. Effects include:

- Respiratory Problems – Coughing, throat irritation, and shortness of breath
- Worsening Asthma & Lung Diseases – Increased attacks and hospital visits
- Reduced Lung Function – Harder to breathe deeply, especially during exercise
- Increased Risk of Infections

– More susceptibility to respiratory illnesses

### How Can You Help Reduce Ozone Gas Emissions?

- You can help reduce ozone emissions by:
- Reducing driving and idling time
  - Lowering home energy usage
  - Fueling automobile before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m.
  - Using public transit.

### To Reduce Your Exposure to Ozone

- Check Air Quality Reports
- Look for ozone alerts in your area
- Limit Outdoor Activities – Especially during the afternoon when ozone levels peak

## Ready to Quit Tobacco?

**We're Ready to Help!**

Quitting tobacco or vape is hard! Our **FREE** program can help:

- Weekly classes on Zoom with peer support
- Text message tips to help you quit/stay quit and text support when you need more help

Scan the QR code or visit the link to learn more.  
[www.bit.ly/MCATobaccoCessation](http://www.bit.ly/MCATobaccoCessation)






## Don't delay getting a colon cancer screening

As you approach age 45, you should be talking with your doctor about regular colorectal screenings. If you are having symptoms or have any questions or family history, talk with your doctor sooner.

Colon and rectal cancers are among the most common types of cancer for both men and women. And the colon screening isn't just for finding cancer but, more importantly, for finding signs and symptoms before it starts.



Find a doctor at  
[ascension.org/ViaChristi](http://ascension.org/ViaChristi)



**Ascension  
 Via Christi**

# Watch Out for Death by Blood Clots

Black Populations Are at Higher Risk for Blood Clots

By Bonita Gooch  
Voice Editor-in-Chief

- Each year, some 100,000 people die from complications of a blood clot, including heart attack or a stroke.
- Black Americans are particularly at risk, with up to a 60% higher incidence of blood clots, and mortality from them, than white people.
- The condition remains a leading cause of Black maternal mortality in this country.

Bob Tutt was a kind and giving man. This is a man who for his 75th birthday, took the time to drive 90-year-old friends from Wichita to Omaha so they could relocate to assisted living near their son.

The other thing about Bob is that he was extremely healthy. He took no prescribed medications, something that's almost miraculous for a Black man of his age. So it was an optional outpatient surgery for an enlarged prostate – a not surprising condition for his age – that was the start of a spiral that would find this otherwise healthy man dead just 16 days later.

Bob died of a blood clot that formed after his surgery.

Bob had a lot of things working against him. He was Black, he had a family history of blood clots and after his surgery, and according to his wife Vicky Howard, he relaxed at home watching television for a couple of days after the surgery instead of getting up and moving around.

On his one-week post op follow-up to his doctor, he mentioned a soreness in his leg, but speculated it might be the result of gym workout on Christmas eve. The next morning, he was experiencing a shortness of breath, a typical symptom of blood clots. Vicki – who is a retired RN – insisted on calling the paramedics for what would start 10 days of work to treat the clot, but failed.



Bob Tutt (pictured with his wife Vicky Howard) was a healthy senior who took no medications, but he lost his life just 15 days after a simple outpatient surgery due to a blood clot.

## About Blood Clots

Blood clotting is a normal bodily process that helps prevent excessive bleeding from an injury or cut. However, sometimes blood clots can form abnormally for other reasons. This prevents normal blood flow and can cause serious and sometimes life-threatening medical issues.

A venous blood clot is a semi-solid or gel-like collection of blood that can form inside a vein.

Bob had a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). It's a blood clot that occurs in a deep vein, most often in the leg or arm.

Another kind of blood clot is a Pulmonary embolism (PE): A blood clot that started elsewhere in the body, usually a DVT, that breaks free and becomes lodged in the lungs. This is a very serious and life-threatening condition. It's believed Bob's clot broke off and ended up in his lungs or brain, killing him almost immediately.

## Symptoms of the DVT:

- Are leg pains, which Bob was experiencing, and it's often described as a cramp or charley horse. Leg pain or tenderness often described as a cramp or charley horse
- Reddish or bluish skin discoloration
- Leg (or arm) warm to touch

## Symptoms of a PE are:

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Unexplained cough, sometimes with bloody mucus
- Chest pain that's sharp and stabbing; may get worse with deep breath
- Rapid heart rate

Call an ambulance or 9-1-1 immediately if you experience these PE symptoms.

## Black People Are at Higher Risk

Each year, an estimated 100,000 people die from complications from a blood clot, including heart attack or a stroke. An additional 900,000 people who survive blood clots face long-term health complications,

including paralysis or brain damage.

Black Americans are particularly at risk: we have up to a 60% higher incidence of blood clots, and mortality from them, than white people. The condition remains a leading cause of Black maternal mortality in this country.

## Why are Black People at a Higher Risk for Blood Clots?

There are a number of factors that put African Americans at higher risk.

**Family history/genetics** and Bob had a family history of it. His father died of a blood clot, his mother and one sister died of strokes, which are blood clots to the brain. He has three other sisters, all of whom are in their late 70s or 80s who have had strokes, but survived.

Certain diseases that primarily affect people of African ancestry, including sickle cell disease, increase the blood clot risk. Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that causes healthy red blood cells to become sickle or crescent-shaped. These cells reduce blood flow, causing pain and life-threatening health conditions, including blood clots.

Some other conditions that make Black people more prone to blood clots include:

**Chronic health conditions.** Black people who have blood clots tend to be more likely than Whites to also have chronic health problems like high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, or chronic kidney disease, which can lead to blood clots.

**Structural racism.** Black Americans may be less likely to receive life-saving treatments for blood clots and less likely to be admitted to the hospital in a more serious condition than White people.

This wasn't the case for Bob, when he went to the hospital he was treated with heparin, a blood thinner, but the thinners were keeping his surgery wound from healing, so they stopped that process and eventually installed a filter designed to catch a blood clot that might break loose to keep it

from going to the heart, lungs or brain. Why this didn't work for Bob, we're not sure, but it may have been there was a clot already above where the filter was installed that made its way to one of the vital organs.

**Smoking/secondhand smoke.** Black populations have similar rates of smoking as other racial and ethnic groups, but they're more likely to die from tobacco-related causes. Black people have higher rates of exposure to secondhand smoke, including Black children.

**Surgery.** Having surgery, including C-sections, increases your risk of a blood clot. Among U.S. adults, Black people have the highest risk of a DVT after they've had surgery, followed by White people, Hispanics, and Asian Americans.

## What Can You Do to Prevent Blood Clots?

- Know your risk for blood clots.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of blood clots.
- Tell your doctor if you have any risk factors for blood clots.
- Before any surgery, talk with your doctor about the plan to prevent blood clots.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you have any symptoms of a blood clot.

## Other steps you can take to reduce your risk for blood clots

- Know your family history. Tell your doctor and other family members if you learn that there is a history of blood clots among your relatives.
- If you are confined to a bed in a hospital or at home for any reason, ask your doctor what options exist to prevent blood clots.
- Get up and move if you've been sitting for a long time or traveling for a long time by plane, train, or car. Stand up, walk around, and stretch your legs every two to three hours.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Don't smoke. Smoking reduces blood flow and increases your blood clot risk.

**Source: National Blood Clot Alliance [stoptheclot.org](http://stoptheclot.org)**

# Toxic Trends in Black Hair Care Products

Even though Black consumers spent more than \$9 billion on beauty supplies in 2023, there are signs that the industry isn't doing enough to protect their health.

An analysis of more than 4,000 beauty and personal care products marketed to Black women revealed that nearly 80% of them contain toxic chemicals, according to a report released by the Environmental Working Group in February.

That analysis was followed this week by a Consumers Report study that found ingredients that can cause cancer in 10 synthetic hair products used in braids, extensions and other hairstyles popular with Black women, including artificial hair from popular brands.

The latest findings build on a 2016 report by EWG that examined cosmetics marketed to Black women.

"Almost a decade after our first report, what we found was that Black women are still being exposed to higher hazards in personal care products," said Alexa Friedman, a senior scientist at EWG and co-author of their report, during a webinar.

Instead of the situation improving, these customers are being exposed to even more toxins than before.

## Serious Health Risks of Hair Care Products

Relaxers and Brazilian blowout products have been targeted for reform.

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

Studies have consistently found that hair and beauty products marketed to Black women contain higher levels of harmful chemicals compared to those marketed to the general public.

These chemicals include endocrine disruptors, carcinogens, and irritants that have been linked to hormonal imbalances, reproductive issues, and cancer risks.

### Bad Chemicals to Watch For

One such chemical is formaldehyde, a naturally occurring substance that can appear in small traces in food. In larger quantities, it's also an ingredient in hair straighteners that the EWG has lobbied the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to ban for at least a decade.

Analysts from the organization expressed concern not just for people who use the products, but for the hair stylists who have occupational exposure to formaldehyde and other chemicals, sometimes



over the course of decades.

Aside from hair care products, formaldehyde is used in the funeral industry to preserve bodies and in the manufacturing of plywood and other pressed wood products. It's also a component of tobacco smoke, which is linked to cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, formaldehyde exposure has caused nasal cancer and leukemia in lab animals, and it has been linked to similar cancer in humans and report co-author, during a webinar.

Parabens are a group of synthetic preservatives widely used in cosmetics,

including hair care products, to prevent bacterial and fungal growth, extending shelf life. Common parabens found in hair products

include methylparaben, propylparaben, butylparaben, and ethylparaben.

While parabens are effective preservatives, concerns have been raised about

their potential health risks, particularly

due to their ability to act as endocrine disruptors. The endocrine system is a network of glands and hormone that regulate essential bodily functions like growth and development, metabolism, reproduction and fertility, mood and stress responses.

Parabens can penetrate the skin and accumulate in the body over time. Potential negative impact includes reproductive problems, increases risk of breast, ovarian and prostate cancer, hormonal imbalances and developmental problems in children.

Parabens are still used in products because they are so effective at preventing mold and bacteria growth. So look for products labeled paraben free.

## Most Common Harmful Chemicals in Black Hair & Beauty Products

### Formaldehyde & Formaldehyde-Releasing Preservatives

**Found in:** Hair relaxers, keratin treatments, some shampoos

**Health Risks:** A known carcinogen, linked to respiratory issues, scalp burns, and cancer risks

**Disproportionate Exposure:** Black women use relaxers more frequently, leading to higher cumulative exposure

consumers often contain more synthetic fragrances, increasing phthalate exposure

### Heavy Metals (Lead, Mercury, Arsenic, etc.)

**Found in:** Some skin-lightening creams, lipsticks, and eyeliners

**Health Risks:** Neurological damage, kidney disease, developmental issues in children

**Disproportionate Exposure:** Skin-lightening products (which contain mercury) are marketed more heavily to Black, Latinx, and Asian communities

### Toluene

**Found in:** Nail polishes, hair dyes, relaxers

**Health Risks:** Toxic to the nervous system, can cause reproductive harm

**Disproportionate Exposure:** Black women and nail salon workers face higher exposure levels

### Triclosan

**Found in:** Some antibacterial soaps, shampoos, and deodorants

**Health Risks:** Disrupts thyroid function, linked to antibiotic resistance

**Disproportionate Exposure:** More commonly found in affordable personal care products marketed in Black communities

### Parabens (Methylparaben, Propylparaben, Butylparaben, etc.)

**Found in:** Shampoos, conditioners, leave-in treatments, styling products

**Health Risks:** Endocrine disruptors linked to breast cancer, reproductive issues, and early puberty

**Disproportionate Exposure:** A study found that Black women had higher paraben levels in their bodies than White women

### Phthalates (Often Hidden in "Fragrance")

**Found in:** Hair oils, lotions, perfumes, and styling creams

**Health Risks:** Hormone disruption, infertility, birth defects, asthma

**Disproportionate Exposure:** Products marketed to Black

## 4 to 30

A 2018 study test of hair products used primarily by Black women and children found at least 4 and as many as 30 chemicals that secrete hormones or other products directly into the blood.

"People aren't using just one product or one type of fragrance blend," said Alexa Friedman, a senior scientist with Environmental Working Group, a non-profit committed to providing people easy access to the information then need to make smart, healthy choices.

## 84 - 95%

of Black women in the U.S. have reported using relaxers.

# JUST RELEASED: Synthetic Hair Marketed to Black Women Contains Carcinogens and Lead

Consumer Reports study found Ingredients that can cause cancer in 10 synthetic hair products used for extensions.

By Voice News Service

Braids, twists, extensions, the styles Black women have turned to as a way to give their own hair a break from harmful styling and chemicals, are the subject of the latest Black news for Black women. According to a recent report, these beloved protective hairstyles may be doing more harm than good.

Ingredients that can cause cancer were found in 10 synthetic hair products used in braids, extensions and other hairstyles popular with Black women, including artificial hair from popular brands such as Magic Fingers, Sensationnel and Shake-N-Go, according to a Consumer Reports study published this week.

Lead, which can cause serious health and developmental problems, was also found in nine of the 10 packs of synthetic hair surveyed, including one package of braiding hair that exceeded the maximum allowed dose of lead by more than 600%. Consumer Reports used California's maximum allowable dosage level, describing it as the "most protective available in the U.S.," because there are no federal limits on lead in synthetic braiding hair.

These styles are often worn for weeks at a time, which translates to longer exposure to the chemicals.

Many of the products you synthetic hair made from Kanekalon, a material produced by the Kaneka brand, according to Consumer Reports.

Kaneka told Consumer Reports, "Kaneka only manufactures the Kanekalon fibers that are used in various hair products, such as synthetic hair braids and wigs, and does not produce any of the final products." The braiding hair companies themselves dye and style the Kanekalon, Kaneka added. The company also told Consumer Reports it would need more information to properly analyze the complaint.

Sensationnel, Magic Fingers and other products contain benzene, known to be a cancer-causing ingredient, according to the study. The chemical likely causes acute myeloid leukemia, according to the American

**100%**  
Carcinogens and VOCs were found in 100% of the synthetic braiding hair tested for the Consumer Report's recent analysis.

Cancer Society.

Consumer Reports also found methylene chloride, which the EPA says can lead to liver and lung cancer after chronic exposure. No level of methylene chloride is permitted in cosmetics by the Food and Drug Administration.

"There is no safe level of exposure to lead or benzene," Alexa Friedman, a senior scientist for the Environmental Working Group, a research and advocacy health organization, said.

Nine of the 10 products tested also contained lead, the report found. Lead can cause a number of developmental disabilities in children, as well as reproductive issues in adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Magic Fingers told Consumer Reports that its customers "can count on us for braids and extensions that meet their highest expectations for fashion and performance."

Sensationnel told Consumer Reports, "We unequivocally stand by the safety of Sensationnel products."

Black women are the primary users of these products, and people of African descent are the largest group of consumers of hair wigs and extensions. In 2023, the U.S. market for these products was valued at \$2.79 billion and is expected to reach a value of \$6.34 billion by 2029.

## National Ban on Formaldehyde in Hair-Straightening Products in Limbo Under Trump

By Bonita Gooch  
The Voice Editor-in-Chief

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration appeared close to issuing a ban on formaldehyde and certain formaldehyde-releasing chemicals from being used in hair-straightening products, but the future of these bans remains in limbo under President Donald Trump.

U.S. Reps. Shontel Brown of Ohio, Nydia Velázquez of New York, and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts have long supported the proposed rule, encouraging the FDA to propose a ban and through persistence and help from the Biden administration a ban seemed possible.

However final action was never taken, and action on the rules is now left to the Trump administration.

"The frustrating thing is that this shouldn't be controversial. We're talking about basic consumer protection here," wrote Brown in an email. "It's heartbreaking to think that all this time these products could have been harmful and it's enraging that now we have so much evidence that we need to take action and it's not happening. You wonder why we're not being listened to."

### The Ban History

In 2021, the FDA received a citizen petition from salon workers, the Environmental Working Group and the nonprofit Women's Voices for the Earth requesting that the agency take regulatory action to prohibit formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing chemicals, like methylene or glycol, in hair-smoothing products and hair-straightening products.

The FDA had agreed to grant the petition and the proposed rule had a possible action date of April 2024, which was pushed back to July 2024 and then September 2024.

The latest action date, set before the change in administration, is March 2025. However, the Trump Administration take-over makes that date seem unrealistic.

The Trump Administration has issued a freeze on all rules that have not been sent to the Federal Register. That would include this formaldehyde ban. Plus, the Trump Administration has publicly shown its support for a deregulatory agenda.

Some states – including Maryland, California and Washington – have issued their own rules on the use of formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing chemicals in hair-straightening products at the state level, and other states have expressed interest.

## Find out About the Safety of Hair Care Products

Check out EWG's Skin Deep database

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) offers the Skin Deep® database, a comprehensive resource that evaluates the safety of personal care products, including those specifically formulated for people of color – individuals with textured hair types – and specifically for Black women.

This tool empowers consumers to make informed decisions by providing detailed information on product ingredients and their associated health risks.

The database includes product rating from 1 to 10, indicating the product's potential hazard level. The data also includes insights into individual ingredients, highlighting potential concerns such as carcinogenicity, developmental toxicity and allergenicity.

The user-friendly database allows users to search for products by category, brand, or specific ingredient, facilitating easy access to safety information. An extra bonus: the database also allows users to search for products by black-owned companies.

Go to <https://bit.ly/4irVJRx> to access the database.

# With Vaccination Rates Declining, Other Diseases Could Re-Emerge

Outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses could be on the rise, requiring increased public health measures.

## By Associated Press

The measles outbreak is surging in West Texas, especially in under-vaccinated communities, but it's not just coverage with the measles vaccine that is lagging behind. The use of other key vaccines in the childhood immunization schedule has decreased too.

With lower vaccination rates, experts worry about what vaccine preventable illnesses we could see next.

Coverage with measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis (DTaP), polio, and varicella, or chickenpox vaccines, all declined in more than 30 states last year compared with the year before.

"We are extremely concerned that all of these vaccine preventable illnesses may potentially be making a comeback ... But that is, sadly, what may be a reality for us if we continue on a path of questioning legitimate science," said Dr. Christina Johns, a pediatric emergency physician at PM Pediatrics in Annapolis, Maryland.

Here are some of the illnesses that could emerge again.

### Whooping Cough

The percentage of kindergartners who received the DTaP vaccine has steadily declined over the past five years, leaving thousands of children vulnerable. Protection among those who are vaccinated can also fade over time.

Rates of pertussis, better known as whooping cough, declined after widespread vaccine use began in 1948. They started to rise again in the 1980s, largely due to

increased surveillance and some waning vaccine immunity, but later decreased during the pandemic, when spread of many infectious diseases slowed due to masking and distancing.

Experts say declining vaccination has now led to an uptick in cases. Last year, there were more than 35,000 cases of whooping cough in the US, the largest number seen in more than a decade.

"Early on during the pandemic, access to healthcare was limited and persons were recommended to stay home. This led to a lack of access to vaccines and a clear, early decrease in rates of vaccination," Dr. Richard Martinello chief medical officer and professor of infectious diseases at Yale Medicine wrote in an email to CNN. "However, during this time, we also saw an acceleration in the spread of misinformation and disinformation about vaccines."

Whooping cough, a contagious respiratory illness can develop into a painful, full-body cough. The coughing fits can be severe, often accompanied by a whooping sound when people try to catch their breath. Severe cases can be fatal. Last year 10 people died, including six less than 1 year old.

It most severely affects infants but the DTaP vaccine can prevent nine out of 10 infants from hospitalization. The CDC recommends five DTaP doses before the age of 7, with follow up boosters of Tdap in adolescence and adulthood.

### Polio

Polio is a contagious virus that at first may give flu-like symptoms but could in some



Outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses could be on the rise, requiring increased public health measures.

more serious cases progress to meningitis or even paralysis. The CDC recommends four doses of the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV), which is 99% effective, before the age of 6.

"If you drop immunization rates low enough in various areas, polio could come back," said Dr. Paul Offit, the director of the Vaccine Education Center at the Philadelphia Children's Hospital.

Polio cases were once common in the United States and around the world. During one of the most severe outbreaks in 1952, the virus infected 58,000 people in the US, paralyzed more than 21,000 and killed more than 3,100. However, vaccination campaigns cut cases dramatically. The last naturally occurring case of polio in the US was in 1979.

In 2022, a man in Rockland County, New York, developed a paralysis from polio.

"He represented the tip of much bigger iceberg. Only one in 200 people who are infected with polio will be paralyzed by it," said Offit.

More of the community likely had the virus, experts say. Vaccination rates in Rockland County were only around 60%.

"In that particular man's ZIP code or area, immunization rates had dropped ... that's why it arose there. So let that happen elsewhere and you could see that happen again," said Offit.

### Fewer vaccinations and more illnesses

If vaccination rates continue to decline, the US can expect to see more cases of pneumococcal disease, Haemophilus influenzae type b, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, hepatitis, and rotavirus, according to Martinello.

Without use of the HPV

vaccine, experts warn there could be an increase in HPV associated cancers, like cervical, throat and neck cancer, within the next few decades.

These are all included in the routine childhood vaccine schedule – the one that US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said he plans to investigate.

The childhood immunization schedule is decided by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with input from its outside vaccine advisers. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists also approve the schedule.

This informs the best time for children to get vaccinated depending on when they will best be able to build immunity against specific illnesses and when they could become

most susceptible to diseases. The vaccines on the schedule undergo studies to make sure they are safe to use with other vaccines in the schedule and safety data is continuously evaluated, according to experts.

"All of these aren't necessarily benign illnesses," said Johns. "Everybody seems to think that these are all just mild illnesses that you have to get through. And I think that sadly, because vaccines have been such a victim of their own success, we haven't seen a lot of these infections ... so it's it can be easy to be tricked into thinking that it's not a big deal."

### A Global View

Some vaccine preventable illnesses still circulate abroad, a problem which could be exacerbated by the Trump administration's extensive funding cuts from USAID, which supported immunization programs around the world.

"I think we're very selfish," said Offit. "We're just focused on ourselves, as if what happens in the world doesn't affect us, even if we want to be selfish about it ... what happens in other places matters."

Seeing the toll these illnesses can have on patients, some countries experience less hesitation with vaccination than the US does, according to experts.

"One of the drivers of [vaccination] success in these countries is the acute awareness that parents' have about the potential devastation these vaccine preventable diseases may have on their children and families," wrote Martinello.

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# Scared of Flying After Recent Accidents? Here's How to Stay Calm

By **Adriana Diaz**  
 New York Post

Flight anxiety has taken off this year after a series of deadly collisions and scary incidents have occurred in the last few weeks.

More planes are hitting the air than ever before, but the industry is lagging with filling shifts for airline staff and air traffic controllers. That along with several investigations into airplane malfunctions has some travelers worried about flying.

A study published last year found that a staggering 49% of Gen Z, 39% of millennials, 38% of Gen X and 40% of baby boomers are afraid to take to the skies.

And it's safe to assume those numbers have only increased

in recent months.

A study released last month found that 64% of adults think flying is "very or somewhat safe," compared to 71% in 2024.

However, it should be noted that the majority of adults still believe it's safe to board a plane.

"Anxiety about flying can range from mild to severe," licensed therapist Jenny Matthews, owner of Minnesota-based State of Mind Therapy, previously told Travel + Leisure.

"If someone has mild anxiety symptoms, they may feel on edge about their flight or experience nausea, but they continue to travel by plane anyway. Others with more severe flight anxiety [might experience] significant anxiety symptoms like panic attacks, difficulty breathing, and intense fear, which may lead them to avoid flying completely."

To help passengers check their anxiety at the gate, here are some pro tips to help you have a calm flight.

## Find the Facts

Traveling thousands of feet in the air is the safest form of transportation, experts say, including the National Safety Council.

Commercial pilots must have an airline transport pilot certification, the highest possible aviation credential, Thomas Anthony, director of the USC Aviation Safety and Security Program, recently told the Los Angeles Times.

Almost half of Gen Z are afraid to fly after Boeing safety issues: "They've lost the ability to trust"

And all commercial aircraft are routinely inspected and maintained by the Federal Aviation Administration and directed to fly within a



If you're feeling anxious about flying due to recent plane crashes, you're probably not alone. © ROSSPARRY.CO.UK

regulated air traffic control system.

However, some seats can be safer than others.

Statistically, the middle seats in the back of the aircraft are the safest, with just a 28% fatality rate compared to aisle seats in the middle of the cabin, which had a rate of 44%, according to a Time analysis of 35 years of FAA data.

Travel experts at Kayak.com confirmed that sitting over the wings will give you the smoothest flight experience as the most stable point in the plane, subject to less turbulence than the nose and tail.

## Act It Out

"The odds of something happening don't matter as much to the anxious brain," Andrea Bonior, a teaching professor in Georgetown University's department of psychology, told the LA Times.

"The anxious brain is drawn in by the horrific stakes of something."

If knowing the facts doesn't soothe you, one way to manage your anxious brain is to visualize what's making you nervous.

Play out the situations that worry you in your head and be realistic about how you would likely respond.

If you know you might freak out, board the plane knowing that and run through what

you would need to do to stay safe and calm to ease your anxiety and not add more stress by being disappointed in your reaction, Bonior advised.

Once you've gone through the worst-case scenarios, be ready with whatever you might need to get through a possible anxiety-inducing situation, whether it be a fidget spinner or downloaded meditation.

## Acknowledge Your Emotions

Labeling emotions lowered anxiety for people with flight anxiety, according to a study published in PLOS One.

Acknowledge your feelings and put them into words; that will help you to face and work past them.

And don't just keep them to yourself. Interacting with others around you can be a nice distraction, and sharing how you feel can relieve some of the built-up anxiety as well.

## Relax Your Body

If managing your mind isn't working, try relaxing your body.

The combat breathing technique used by people in the military to calm down

Focus on how you're feeling physically and unclench your

See **FLYING**, Page 11 →

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# Area Links Participating With National Black Family Wellness Expos

March 15 is the day for The Links, Incorporated, Black Family Wellness Expos. Across the country, Links chapters are holding community health expos in March with most of them being held on March 15.

The Kansas City, Wichita and Topeka Links chapters are all participating and have free events planned for March 15.

The Black Family Wellness Expo serves as a National Impact Day of Service, aiming to address health disparities within African American communities by providing vital health education, screenings, and resources. The event focuses on a holistic approach to wellness, encompassing physical, mental, and emotional health for individuals of all ages—from infants to seniors.

The expos will feature various activities, including health screenings, educational workshops, fitness demonstrations, and opportunities to engage with healthcare professionals. The event is designed to

empower families with knowledge and tools to improve their overall well-being.

All of the regional events are open to the public.

Here are the details.

## Wichita Black Family Wellness Expo

Sat., March 15, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
WSU Hughes Metroplex  
5015 E. 29th St. N., Wichita

There's something for everyone in the community at this event, from infants to senior citizens. Over 35 community organizations will be providing information and resources about their services. Some of the services include dental screenings, blood pressure checks, physicals, elder care, diabetes resources, heart health, suicide signs and prevention, mental health awareness and resources, maternal health, prenatal and newborn care, yoga demonstrations, and free giveaways to include children's books. HealthCore will be present with their mobile

van to provide health screenings and more.

## Topeka Black Family Wellness Expo

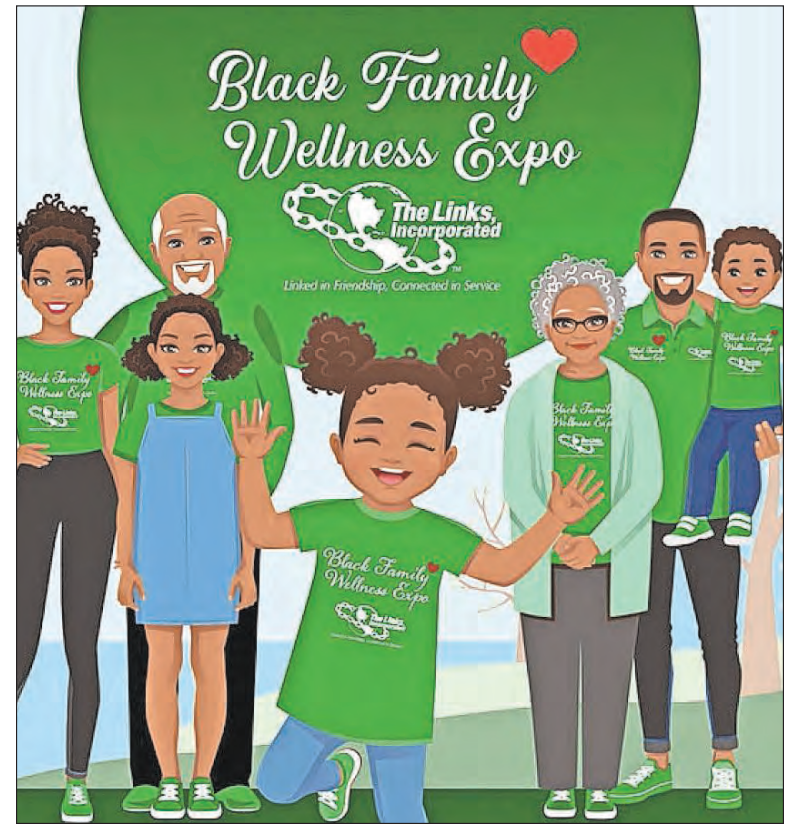
Sat., March 15, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Topeka Shawnee County Library  
1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka

Along with many community partners, the Topeka Links will have opportunities for children, teens and adults to access complimentary services including: health assessments and screening, fitness facts, mental wellness activities, speakers, resources and Safe, Healing and Empowerment (SHE) Circle with Topeka Center for Peace and Justice.

## Kansas Black Family Wellness Expo

Sat., March 15, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Morning Star Youth & Family Life Center  
2525 E. 27th St., KCMO

No additional information at press time check online for more details.



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# KCATA Faces Budget Crisis: City Funding Decisions Could Impact Transit Service

KCATA fears service cuts, layoffs, and the end of zero-fare if it isn't fully funded

By Thomas White  
Kansas City Reporter

Kansas City's public transit system stands at a crossroads. The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) faces a potential \$12 million budget shortfall that threatens to cut bus routes, jobs, and services for thousands of residents.

The 2025-2026 proposed budget presented by Mayor Quinton Lucas and City Manager Brian Platt allocates around \$70 million to KCATA, which is less than the funding amount for the previous year and transit officials say it falls far short of what's needed to maintain current service levels.

"Having a fully funded transit system is so essential to our city: 60% of our riders depend upon public transportation to get to and from work, not to mention those that are trying to get to doctors' appointments as well as the grocery stores," said President of Local 1287 of the Amalgamated Transit Union Nic Miller to The Defender. "A reduction in service not only affects KCATA employees—union and non-union—it affects our entire community."

## Impact on Communities

The potential service cuts would have a disproportionate impact on the city's third and fifth districts, which have predominantly Black populations and higher transit ridership. The cuts would include reductions to routes that would affect 5,000 to 6,500 people.

"With ridership being greater than any other districts, the third and the fifth would be dramatically impacted by whatever decisions are made by the policy of the council and the mayor," said Rodney Bland, President of Freedom Inc. "That's the heart of our community and folks can't get to work safely if we keep reducing [support for KCATA]."

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1287, which represents bus drivers, has warned that approximately 150 jobs are at risk if funding is not secured.

Multiple demonstrations have been held in support of funding the KCATA. In January,



Will KCATA bus fares remain free after May 1. This is a question that will likely be decided in the next few weeks. Several alternatives to free bus fare for all seem to have considerable support, especially with a proposed reduction in funding for KCATA.

more than 100 bus riders, drivers, and climate activists with Sunrise Movement KC and Stand Up KC gathered outside KCATA headquarters to protest potential cuts. Some demonstrators have been particularly vocal, disrupting a Jackson County Legislature meeting and protesting outside Jackson County Executive Frank White Jr's home to demand regional funding solutions for public transit.

## Dispute Between the City and KCATA

Mayor Lucas has been sharply critical of KCATA's governance structure and management, suggesting the agency's problems go beyond simple funding issues.

"The KCATA challenge, in my opinion, isn't actually a pure budget thing, but the governance and management type thing. They are several million dollars short, partially because of the delivery concern and a service delivery issue," said Mayor Lucas in a radio interview. "You can beat up zero-fare transit and put fares back on tomorrow but from what I'm reading [KCATA] will still have a long-term structural imbalance in how they are operating."

Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks Shaw has also expressed concerns about KCATA's operations while acknowledging the city's responsibility.

"We definitely need them to streamline processes and services," said Parks Shaw to KCUR. "Kansas City has continued to primarily support the work that they're doing, but I think the fact that many of the other cities and counties—that were utilizing KCATA

services—have now backed out of that service, is very telling."

KCATA CEO Frank White III has forcefully defended his agency's management and efficiency. White noted that while the city contract allows for 25% overhead, KCATA operates at 15%.



The city council must adopt the final budget by March 20, with the new fiscal year beginning May 1, so this is a decision that will be made quickly."

"We are not mismanaged financially, we aren't top heavy and we do good with a little," said White. "Since I've been CEO we've been very transparent, we are one of the most regulated industries around so we keep receipts on our stuff, I'll show you anything."

White points to a study conducted by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) that compared the KCATA to 11 peer agencies and found that the KCATA rated as the

second most efficient despite being one of the lowest funded.

Kansas City collects two sales taxes related to public transportation: a 3/8-cent sales tax that goes entirely to KCATA and a half-cent public mass transportation tax. Only about half of the revenue from the latter goes to KCATA, with the remainder diverted to other purposes like street lighting. Third District Councilwoman Mellissa Robinson says she disagrees with this practice.

"When the public transit tax passed, the reason why the city had some oversight was to make sure that there were checks and balances with the KCATA, it was not to be able to divert money to other things like sidewalks and street lights," said Robinson. "I feel like we're eroding the public trust when we go for these taxes and we're not doing the right thing. We're not following through on our promises and our commitments."

## Safety Concerns and Future of Zero Fare

Beyond funding and governance, safety has emerged as a significant concern for city officials and riders alike. Councilwoman Robinson shared a personal connection to the issue.

"My son rides the bus almost every day and reports back on the things that are happening," said Robinson. "We need to ensure that we're investing in the technology that they need to keep riders safe."

White acknowledged safety challenges under the current zero-fare system implemented during the pandemic, noting an increase in security incidents and the need to divert funding to safety measures.

"We have seen security incidents go up," said White. "We've made adjustments by adding more private security, more road supervisors, and hiring two KCPD officers as well as private security guards. When those dollars are going toward security issues, they're not going to service on the street."

The future of Kansas City's zero-fare program, which began in 2020 during the pandemic, now looks to be in jeopardy. According to KCATA, the agency collected approximately \$9.8 million from fares before the program began—funds that could help address the current budget gap.

The decision about whether to maintain zero-fare transportation ultimately rests

See **KCATA**, Page 13 →

# Long-Awaited Renovations Begin at Boston Daniels Park in KCK

Park named for KCK's first Black police chief to receive a nearly \$1M renovation.

By **Thomas White**  
Kansas City Reporter

After years of advocacy, Boston Daniels Park in Northeast Kansas City, Kansas, officially began a nearly \$1 million renovation with a groundbreaking ceremony Feb. 26.

The park is named in honor of Boston Daniels, the first Black chief of police in KCK. Daniels was known for a progressive approach to policing that insisted on community engagement, respect, and addressing the root causes of crime.

Northeast KCK community members and officials gathered at the triangular Boston Daniels Park at 725 Quindaro Blvd to celebrate the start of construction that will transform the neglected greenspace into a vibrant community hub.

Tyrone Garner, elected KCK's first Black mayor in 2021 and himself a former police officer, expressed strong support for the park renovation.

"It's a great day, especially when you [get to] talk about Boston Daniels and what he meant to the community. He was well respected and well loved," said Garner. "This park is beyond deserving of the upgrade that it's about to receive."

The renovated park will feature a 5,000-sq.-ft. playground, a picnic shelter, accessible walkways, solar lighting, landscaping, and a seven-foot bronze statue of Daniels along with a placard detailing his history.

United Government of Wyandotte County Parks Director Angel Ferrara outlined additional improvements planned for the site.

"We'll be installing a new shelter, which doesn't currently exist in the park," said Ferrara. "We'll also be doing repairs and upgrades to a



Boston and Rosemary Daniels

lot of the flat work within the park, repairing the east entrance wall, and adding some landscaping and solar lighting as well."

The project, funded through Community Development Block Grants and American Rescue Plan Act funds, is expected to be completed by late summer 2025.

## Years in the Making

Boston Daniels Park was dedicated in 1996, a year before Daniels' passing at 91 years old. The park was previously known as the 8th Street Park and hasn't been substantially updated since its dedication. The park deteriorated over the years with cracked sidewalks, rusting playground equipment, and limited amenities. So in 2017, Karen Daniels began formally advocating for park improvements by reaching out to the UG, applying for grants, navigating bureaucracy, and hosting fundraisers and awareness campaigns.

"I'm so happy, so emotional, so grateful, so honored and I know my uncle and my dad



Wyandotte County Commissioners and officials join in the groundbreaking activities.

are looking down and they're proud of this moment," Karen Daniels said at the groundbreaking. Her persistent advocacy ultimately helped secure the \$1 million in funding from Community Development Block Grants and American Rescue Plan Act funds that made the current renovation possible.

"We appreciate the vision, resilience, and tenacity of Karen Daniels as she has worked tirelessly to not only bring attention to the life and legacy of the first Black police Chief in KCK, Boston Daniels, but to also facilitate enshrining that amazing legacy through the restoration of Boston Daniels park," said Mayor Garner.



## About Boston Daniels

Boston Daniels was born in 1905 in Foreman, Arkansas. He moved to Kansas City at 23, working as a ditch digger, gas station attendant, and Pullman porter before joining the police force in 1945, at age 40.

Over his 25-year career with KCKPD, Daniels worked his way up the ranks and established himself as a masterful investigator with unconventional methods.

The day after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, Daniels and other Black officers joined Wyandotte and Sumner High School students who left classes to march in King's memory. Their peaceful demonstration was without incident and stood in stark contrast to riots occurring across the country including in Kansas City, MO.

The episode showed Daniels' commitment to both community engagement and peaceful resolution of conflict — principles that would define his approach as chief two years later.

Daniels took a humane approach to policing at a time when brutality was often the norm. He rarely drew his weapon and never killed anyone in the line of duty.

"Better housing, education, health programs, recreational facilities and jobs are the best ways to fight crime — not force or intimidation," Daniels told *Ebony Magazine* in 1970.

When appointed chief in 1970, Daniels was the first Black police chief in KCK but was also believed to be the first Black police chief of a major city in the country.

Though his tenure as chief lasted only one year, he initiated a police cadet program, modernized communications equipment, established an internal affairs unit, and added police substations to improve community coverage.



Mayor Tyrone Garner with Karen Daniels — Boston's niece — at the groundbreaking.

# City Council Approves Historic Funding for Parade Park

The funding represents one of the largest investments in affordable housing on KC's eastside

By **Thomas White**  
Kansas City Reporter

The Kansas City City Council has approved an ordinance that will provide developers the funding needed to complete phase one of Parade Park's \$300 million redevelopment, following a proposal from Mayor Quinton Lucas, Third District Councilwomen Melissa Robinson, and Melissa Patterson-Hazley.

The council-approved measure gives developers — a joint venture between Flaherty & Collins and local developers Twelfth Street Heritage — the final \$19 million needed to begin construction on the project this year. The funding represents the city's largest recent investment in affordable housing and in the predominantly Black East Side.

"Parade Park Homes represents both Kansas City's heritage and our future—and I am proud and honored to be the mayor privileged to ensure this historically Black neighborhood will be strong for generations to come," said Mayor Lucas. "Today's Council approval ensures Kansas City will continue to honor Parade Park's legacy while also creating modern, affordable housing that keeps this community intact and thriving."

Parade Park Homes was the nation's



Parade Park Phase One will include a mix of 480 town homes and apartments, with 80 units dedicated for elderly and 280 units for income-restricted affordable housing.

first Black-owned housing cooperative and had many famous former residents before defaulting on loans and being foreclosed on last year.

The city has shown a particular interest in the project that sits at the north end of the historic 18th & Vine Jazz District that the city has invested significantly in revitalizing.

"There's long been talk within city council chambers about how the city cares about all citizens and all corners of the city deserve investment," said Gavriel Schreiber, general counsel with the mayor's office. "This ordinance is a chance for the city council to walk that walk."

## City & Federal Money Coming to the Project

Parade Park's redevelopment will be a multi-phase large-scale project over several years with projected cost of

nearly \$300 million. The city has now secured a portion of the necessary \$148 million in funding for the first phase of the project, which is expected to begin construction this summer.

The city's financial support includes:

- \$12 million no-interest loan from the Housing Trust Fund
- \$5 million from the Central City Economic Development (CCED) sales tax
- Reallocation of \$2 million previously appropriated for dangerous building demolition

The \$12 million Housing Trust Fund loan will be repaid through six annual \$2 million payments starting in fiscal year 2025-2026, which the mayor's office says ensures that the money returns to fund other affordable housing initiatives throughout the city.

The redevelopment project received a boost and city funding became a priority after Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II announced in January he had secured \$15.5 million in federal funding for the project through HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program.

The funding plan also includes the establishment of a dedicated Parade Park Homes Future Fund, a mechanism designed to sustain ongoing development and community support in subsequent phases.

"The passage of this ordinance is a signal from my colleagues that they support creating more diverse housing that appeals to multiple ages, income and family size," said Councilwoman Patterson Hazley. "This project happens to sit in the 3rd district, but it is clear that it benefits the entirety of Kansas City. I am excited to see this project come to fruition."

## Project Scale & Affordability

The ambitious redevelopment project will ultimately create 1,085 housing units of apartments and townhomes across three phases, including 60 for-sale units priced from \$200,000 and approximately 15,000 square feet of commercial space.

Phase one of the project will create 480 housing units:

- 42 units at 30% AMI: For very low-income families (~\$32K or less for a family of four)
- 48 units at 50% AMI: For lower-income families (~\$53K or less)
- 150 units at 60% AMI: For

moderate-income families (~\$64K or less)

- 240 units at 60-80% AMI: For families making up to ~\$85K

In total, the project will include 465 affordable rental housing units (30% to 60% AMI), 560 workforce rental housing units (60% to 80% AMI), and community green spaces. The development plan also includes provisions for cultural preservation to honor Parade Park's historic significance.

\*AMI = Area Media Income.

Julie Collier, vice president of development for Flaherty & Collins, explained during committee testimony that rents would accommodate various income levels and would range between \$500 for a studio and \$2,000 a month for a three-bedroom.

"The first phase will have 80 units set aside for senior housing and 280 units will be income-restricted affordable housing," said Collier.

## Protecting Former Residents & Redevelopment Timeline

The relocation of Parade Park residents has been carefully managed throughout the process. According to project data, 62 households from Phase 1 have already been relocated, with three residents becoming first-time homeowners.

Importantly, 36 residents (58%) were approved and issued tenant protection vouchers, with 20% experiencing a reduction in housing costs. Nearly 50% of relocated residents moved within two miles of the Parade Park property.

## FLYING, from Page FF 7 ↓

muscles. Take deep breaths and scan your body, starting with the muscles in your face, making sure to release any tension from your head down to your toes.

Once you've melted into your seat, continue with some breathing exercises to keep from clenching back up.

One effective method is tactical breathing — it's used by service members, first responders and law enforcement personnel to steady nerves and stay sharp in

high-stress situations.

Practice this technique:

Close your eyes and inhale slowly through your nose, counting 1-2-3-4, visualizing each number as you breathe in.

Hold your breath for a count of 1-2-3-4.

Slowly exhale through your mouth to the same count: 1-2-3-4.

Repeat the cycle three to five times.

## Distract yourself

Once you've done your best to calm yourself and settle into your seat, try to enjoy

the ride.

Ryanair flight attendant Rhia Kerr previously shared some tips to help anxious passengers get through a bout of turbulence — and they are likely to help beyond just getting through a bumpy ride.

She suggests "getting noise-canceling headphones, as certain noises that the aircraft makes can be unsettling."

Kerr also recommends that a nervous flier write a list of things to do or exciting moments that will happen once he or she gets off the plane, which can act as a distraction.

Turning on an in-flight movie, reading a few chapters

of a book or listening to music can also help to take your

mind off your worries and pass the time.

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**WICHITA**

**Sun., March 9, 12 pm: Reggae Sunday,** Central Standard Brewing, 156 N. Greenwood. Reggae, jerk chicken, coconut rice, vibes. **FREE+**

**Sun., March 9, 1-5 pm: Free Sunday Admission,** Sedgwick County Historical Museum, 204 S. Main. Since 2022, SCHM has received a generous gift from the Ruth Spooner Stone Charitable Trust, Intrust Bank, to make free Sundays possible. Explore local history in one of America's finest museums, occupying the original 1890 Wichita City Hall. Dozens of exhibits feature thousands of artifacts. Visit the museum store for books, local souvenirs and gift items. **FREE**

**Fri., March 14, 6 - 8 pm: Drop-in Art Making,** WAM, 1400 Museum Blvd. Explore your creative side by turning discarded book pages into unique works of art. **FREE**

**Fri., March 14, 6 - 8 pm: Artist Kenna Green Closing Reception,** Mulberry Art Gallery, 2721 E. Central. **FREE**

**Sat., March 15, 7 pm: Keith Sweat & Joe Torry,** featuring Sunshine Anderson & Levelle, Century II, 225. W Douglas. A night of music, love, soul & comedy. COST \$69+ selectaseat.com/sweat

**Sat. March. 15, 10 am - 2 pm: Wichita Black Wellness Expo,** WSU Metroplex, 5015 E 29th. Some of the services include dental screenings, blood pressure checks, physicals, elder care, diabetes resources, heart health, suicide signs and prevention, mental health awareness and resources, maternal health, prenatal and newborn care, yoga demonstrations, and free giveaways to include children's books. **FREE**

**Sat., March 15, 10 am - 6 pm: Delano St. Patrick's Day Parade and Fun,** Historic Delano. The parade route will run west on Douglas from McLean Blvd. to Walnut St. Kids Zone - 10am-3pm; Drink Truck Zone 1, 3 Booze Trucks & 2 local tap trucks, 14 Food Trucks, Live DJ 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm - DJ Dugger. COST \$5 armband

**Sat., March 15, 1 pm:**

**Navigating the National Archives,** Wichita Advanced Learning Library, 711 W. 2nd St. A presentation designed to help genealogists of all levels explore and access online catalog and databases of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). **FREE**

**March 17 - 19, 7 pm: Antioch Missionary Baptist Church Revival,** Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, 1654 N. Matthewson. Guest Pastor: JD White, Greater Olivet MBC, Detroit. **FREE**

**Tue., March 18, 7 pm: R.E.S.P.E.C.T.,** Century II, 225 W. Douglas. An electrifying tribute celebrating the music of the legendary Aretha Franklin. This concert experience takes audiences on a journey of love, tragedy, courage, and triumph. COST \$35+ selectaseat.com/respect

**Tue., March 18-21, 6:30 pm: KSW Spring Workers Conference,** St. Mark UMC, 1018 N. Dellrose. Join Kansas Southwest COGIC for a dynamic time of worship. With Supr. Donald Smith, Bishop Herman Hicks, Roy Hines, and Mother Vicki Taylor. **FREE**

**Wed., March 19, 9 am - 3 pm: Wichita Education Advocate & Parent Rights Training,** WSU Metroplex, 5015 E. 29th. This training is required for persons wishing to serve as an education advocate, and for parents who wish to learn about their rights. Education Advocates "step into the role" of the parent in special education matters and advocate for the child/student. **FREE** must register <https://bit.ly/4kbt4LU>

**Thu. & Sat., March 20 & 22, 10 am - 10 pm: ESPN Wichita Fan Zone,** Historic Union Station. The ultimate destination for basketball fans during March Madness. This event offers games on the big screen, interactive activities, giveaways, and appearances by local sports personalities. Enjoy local restaurants, music, and an electric atmosphere. **FREE**

**Fri., March 21, 10 am - 10 pm: FanFest,** Naftzger Park, 601 E. Douglas. The ultimate game-day experience. Catch all the tournament action LIVE on

the digital board. Enjoy a rotating lineup of food trucks and a booze truck. Activities for All Ages - From interactive games to family fun, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Team Pep Rallies, Live DJ & Event Coverage. **FREE**

**Sat., March 22, 9 am: Brunch & Blooms,** Atwater Neighborhood City Hall, 2755 E. 19th. Join us for brunch and connect with local growers & help you plan your garden for the year. **FREE**

**Sat., March 22, 10 am - 10 pm: Fan Fest,** Naftzger Park, 601 E. Douglas. Catch all the tournament action LIVE on the digital board. Food & drinks, activities for all ages, team pep rallies, live DJ & event coverage. **FREE**

**Sat., March 29, 7 pm: Chris "Kid" Reid,** Vorshay's, 417 E. Douglas. Best known as half of late-1980s/early-1990s hip-hop musical act Kid 'n Play, Reid has been touring as a standup comedian for the past several years. Come see his hilarious comedy stylings at Vorshay's for one weekend only. COST \$25+

**Sun., March 30, 3 pm: Harlem Globetrotters,** Intrust Arena, 500 E. Waterman. Witness the world-record-breaking, trick-shot stars of basketball live as they bring their signature spins, dunks, and slams to the court, taking on their determined rivals, the Washington Generals. COST \$25+ selectaseat.com/globetrotters25

**TOPEKA**

**Sat. March 15, 10 am - 2 pm: Topeka Black Wellness Expo,** Topeka Shawnee County Library, 1515 SW 10th. Some of the services include dental screenings, blood pressure checks, physicals, elder care, diabetes resources, heart health, suicide signs and prevention, mental health awareness and resources, maternal health, prenatal and newborn care, yoga demonstrations, and free giveaways to include children's books. **FREE**

**KANSAS CITY**

**Sat., March 8, 1 - 5:30 pm: Discover Your Roots with**

**Genealogy,** The Black Archives of Mid-America, 1722 E. 17th St. Session 1: Introduction to ancestry.com with Sherry Golden. Session 2: Newspapers and African-American genealogy research with Preston Washington. **FREE** - register at <https://form.jotform.com/250134755225048>

**Wed., March 12, 6 pm: KC Business Social Networking Event,** Vine Street Brewing Company, 2010 Vine St. Join us at the Vine Street Brewing Company for an evening of connecting, collaborating, and creating new business opportunities. A fantastic opportunity to meet like-minded professionals, exchange ideas, and build valuable relationships. **FREE**

**Thu., March 13, 5:30 - 7:30 pm: Fumée Chic Cigar Concierge presents:** E.X.H.A.L.E. Series- "Cigar 101," Vine Street Brewing Co., 2010 Vine. Celebrating Women's Month and it's time to NETWORK, PSSITA & EXHALE! "Elevate. Xperience. Heighten. Aromatic. Lifestyle. Elegance." COST \$25+ <https://bit.ly/41lr8V>

**Thu., March 13, 7 - 9 pm: Women in Jazz Trivia,** Blue Room, 1600 E. 18th St. Join The American Jazz Museum for a night of trivia that tests your knowledge of women in jazz. **FREE**

**Sat., March 15, 10 am - 1 pm: Black Family Wellness Expo,** Morning Star Youth & Family Life Center, 2525 E. 27th St. Come out for healthcare info, youth arts & science experiences, voter registration, **FREE** groceries, prizes, and food. **FREE**

**Sun., March 16, 12 - 3 pm: "Brown Sugar Lab: Network. Collaborate. Create." Urban Neighborhood Initiative,** 2300 Main St. Build connections: Network with other women, foster meaningful relationships and find support within a supportive community. Collaborate & grow, empower & inspire, seek feedback, contribute and engage. Snacks and drinks will be provided. <https://bit.ly/4ijPz5Z>

**Mon., March 17, 10 am - 5 pm: ArtsTech Spring Break Club,** ArtsTech, 1522 Holmes. A fun-filled week of creativity

and innovation. Unleash your imagination through hands-on workshops, interactive demos, and collaborative projects. COST \$10+ <https://bit.ly/4i1Z2z8>

**Wed., March 19, 4:30 pm: Keystone Sessions,** Keystone CoLAB, 800 E. 18th St. 5-6 pm: The Disruption Lab with Megan Sturges, president/CEO of Junior Achievement of Greater Kansas City. 6 - 7 pm: The Black Town Hall. **FREE**

**Thu., March 20, 7 - 8:30 pm: "Jazz Voices: Her Song, Her Story,"** Zhou B Art Center, 1801 E. 18th St. Zhou B Art Center KC & the American Jazz Museum present a night of song and story celebrating these KC Women in Jazz and their musical journeys. Featuring vocalists Millie Edwards Nottingham, Lisa Henry, and Lori Tucker. **FREE**

**Fri., March 21, 5 pm: Financial Freedom Conference,** Linwood Boulevard SDA Temple, 4300 Linwood Blvd. Gain actionable tools to improve your finances immediately. Learn from experienced coaches who have helped others succeed. Walk away with a clear roadmap to financial freedom. Presenters: Joseph Nyamwang, a financial strategist and the founder of Financial Legacy Academy; and Kymone Hinds, a business coach, speaker, and founder of Monetize Your Ministry Academy. **FREE**

**Sat., March 22, 12 pm: KCPS School Board Candidate Forum,** KC Public Library-Plaza Branch, 4801 Main St. Join The BLAQUE Vote Cohort and BLAQUE KC for a high-stakes KCPS School Board Candidate Debate Forum. **FREE**

**Thu., March 27, 11:45 am - 1:30 pm: 2025 Difference Maker 67th Awards Luncheon,** The Abbott, 1901 Cherry St. Profound conversation speaking "Power of Truth; Unshocking Potential for Justice, Equity and Empowerment for All" featuring Melesa Johnson, Jackson County Prosecutor; Dr. Eddie Glaude Jr., NYT Bestselling Author, professor at Princeton University and MSNBC commentator; with moderator Gwendolyn Grand, president & CEO, Urban League

of Greater KC. COST \$100 <https://bit.ly/3CD5IUP>

**Sat., April 12, 10 am - 12 pm: "Spring Edition: Kansas City Jazz Alive,"** 18th & Vine Walking Tour, 1616 E. 18th St. A fun and informative walking tour on the rich history of jazz in this vibrant neighborhood. The tour will start at 1616 E 18th St, with guide Chuck Haddix, author and radio host, who will lead you through the streets where jazz legends once roamed. Learn about the iconic venues, musicians, and stories that have shaped the KC jazz scene. COST \$25

**Fri, April 25, 6:30 pm: Gala - Black Achievers Society of Greater Kansas City 50th Celebration,** Museum at Prairiefire, 5801 W. 135th St. Kick off the evening with a warm welcome and a brief showcase of the Black Achievers Society's tremendous impact over the past five decades in Kansas City. Following the welcome, the silent auction will open, featuring a diverse selection of items generously donated by local businesses, supporters, and partners. Guests will then enjoy a specially curated dinner, providing an opportunity to connect with fellow attendees while supporting our primary fundraising initiative. COST \$75+ <https://bit.ly/4aKZJdb>

**Fri., April 25, 7:30 pm & Sat., April 26, 1 pm: Ailey II Dance Concert,** Folly Theater, 300 W. 12th. Come see Ailey II, the renowned second company of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater from NYC, as they take the stage under the direction of Francesca Harper. An unforgettable performance featuring Kansas City premieres, along with Alvin Ailey's powerful "Streams" and "Revelations," a timeless masterpiece that celebrates hope and resilience. Cost \$41+ Tickets on sale now <https://follytheater.org/event-category/ailey-ii/>

**Sat., April 26, Noon - 4 pm: Gumbo Fest 2025,** The ProspectKC, 11 E. 40th St. Live gumbo tasting contest, prizes & giveaways, tons of local vendors, live music, games & family fun ... and more. COST \$15

# 'Black-owned Dining Passport' Launches in Response To Trump's Attacks On Diversity

'Savor the Flavor' passport lists 13 Black-owned KC-area restaurants.

## By Startland News

A new effort encouraging support for local, Black-owned businesses — many in Kansas City's historically redlined neighborhoods — is a timely reminder of the purchasing power in each diner's hands, said Brandon Calloway.

Kansas City G.I.F.T. launched the first edition of its "Savor The Flavor" Black-Owned Dining Passport, which features 13 restaurants. Diners can use the passports to read recommendations, access QR codes to their menus, and engage with an interactive feature that allows diners to rate each restaurant on a scale of 1 to 5 plates.

"As the current administration is trying



to actively tear down support for Black and Brown communities, KC G.I.F.T. remains dedicated to supporting Black-owned businesses through aggressive funding and support," said Brandon Calloway, CEO and co-founder of Kansas City G.I.F.T., a nonprofit founded in 2020 to help close the racial wealth gap and reduce poverty-related crime by empowering small, Black-owned businesses in Kansas City, specifically east of Troost.

This initiative encourages the community to grab their friends and explore local dining options while supporting Black-owned businesses, he said.

"As a community, it is up to us to actively create the world we want to see," Calloway continued. "This passport offers a fun and engaging way for people to take action on that and make a difference by supporting local Black entrepreneurs."

"Savor The Flavor" passports can be picked up at the G.I.F.T. Business Center at 5008 Prospect Ave. in KCMO, as well as select restaurants.

## Businesses featured in the passport include:

- Ruby Jean's Juicery, 3000 Troost Ave.
- Vee's Sweets and Treats, 8005 The Paseo
- Black Wall Street, 5908 Prospect Ave.
- Niece's, 6441 Troost Ave.
- PeachTree Cafeteria, 6800 Eastwood Trafficway

- Union on the Hill, 2976 Gillham Rd.
- District Biskuits, 504 Armour Rd.
- The Combine, 2999 Troost Ave.
- The Prospect KC, 11 E. 40th St.
- District Fish & Pasta House, 1664 E. 63rd St.
- Urban Restaurant, 3420 Troost Ave.
- Karen's Kakes, 6144 Raytown Trafficway
- Gigi's Vegan Wellness Cafe, 1103 Westport Rd.

Some of the participating restaurants are past grant recipients Kansas City G.I.F.T., which awards funding from \$10,000 to \$50,000 to Black-owned ventures. In the past four years, the nonprofit has given out nearly \$1.7 million to more than 70 local businesses, according to the organization's most recent annual report.

"By fostering economic growth, we are not only reversing the effects of systemic racism but also transforming communities, one business at a time, for a more equitable future," Calloway said.

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## KCATA, from Page 9 ↓

with the City Council, not the KCATA board. Many council members have signaled they're open to changes.

"It's going to definitely look different," said Parks Shaw. "We may have to look at proposals that will offer 'functionally free' service, where it may still be free for some, but they might need to have a card or go through some additional steps."

A KCATA study found that reinstating fares at 2019 levels of \$1.50 per ride could raise between \$5.8 and \$7.1 million annually but could potentially reduce ridership by up to 33%.

"We have to make sure that our bus systems are safe," said Councilman Darrell Curls. "I believe that there is probably some middle ground that I think that we can come to, it just is going to take some political will."

## Possible Solutions

The transit funding crisis highlights broader challenges in developing comprehensive regional transit in the Kansas City metro area, which spans two states and multiple counties.

Several municipalities, including Raytown, Grandview, and Gladstone, have ended their bus contracts with KCATA over costs. Their share of running the buses increased as

Kansas City resisted subsidizing suburban service. White says that many of the smaller cities stopped funding the KCATA when COVID relief money ran out.

"I would love for Kansas City to really get into the regional conversation," said Parks Shaw. "I think KCATA and all of the entities in this region need to come together to talk about how we can truly create a regional transit system that works for all of us."

One potential compromise gaining traction is a "functionally free" fare system. Under this model, riders who meet certain socioeconomic qualifications would still ride for free, while others would pay reduced or full fares.

White noted that before zero-fare was implemented, KCATA already had programs to assist those in need.

"We always had zero fare in some fashion. We [used to have] veterans' community passes, U-pass programs with schools and colleges, and low-income passes," said White. "No one was ever denied a ride who needed one."

Councilwoman Robinson, who has been a proponent of a functionally free system since White became CEO, believes it would offer a more sustainable approach.

"We want everyone who needs to ride the bus to be able to do that, but it needs to be in a way that is comfortable and safe for everyone," said Robinson.

# KC Black Rep Resurrects Mahalia Jackson's Gospel Legacy

Musical celebrating the Queen of Gospel runs March 20 through April 6.

By **Thomas White**  
Kansas City Reporter

A voice that moved millions—alongside Martin Luther King—will resound again as Mia Ramsey channels the Queen of Gospel Mahalia Jackson at The Black Box Theater starting March 20.

The Black Repertory Theatre of Kansas City's production distills Jackson's journey from New Orleans poverty to international acclaim with this gospel musical that includes 20 soul-stirring numbers.

Ramsey, who leads Kansas City's Boys and Girls choirs, anchors a three-person cast delivering spirituals that shaped American music and powered the civil rights movement. The intimate Black Box space at 1060 Union Ave.

transforms into sacred ground for this musical testament that runs through April 6.

While Mahalia Jackson would eventually come to be known as the leading voice of gospel music, she was born in 1911 the granddaughter of formerly enslaved people, and was raised in a poor household in New Orleans that was big on religion. She sang in the church choir but at age 16 she moved to Chicago in search of better opportunities.

Jackson began singing wherever she could and struggled for fifteen years before her 1947 recording "Move On Up a Little Higher" sold two million copies. This breakthrough propelled her from Chicago's church circuit to European tours and presidential performances.

Audiences will witness more than Jackson's musical journey. The production delves into her friendship with Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and shows how her voice



Mahalia Jackson

became the soundtrack of the civil rights movement for many. Standing beside Dr. King, Jackson didn't just sing—she embodied the hope and determination of a people fighting for justice.

The stripped down production of "Mahalia" gets at the essence of Jackson's music as soul and humor

punctuate a show that is staged with only three actors, a piano and an organ accompaniment.

The award-winning Black Repertory Theatre of Kansas City says this show continues its mission of presenting works that speak to the Black experience while welcoming all.



Mia Ramsey

## "Mahalia" Showtimes:

The Black Box Theater  
1060 Union Ave., KCMO  
March 20 - 22 at 7:30 p.m.

March 23 at 3 p.m.

March 27 - 29 at 7:30 p.m.

March 30 at 3 p.m.

April 3 - 5 at 7:30 p.m.

April 6 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are available at [brtkc.org](http://brtkc.org) for \$30 or \$20 for groups over 10.

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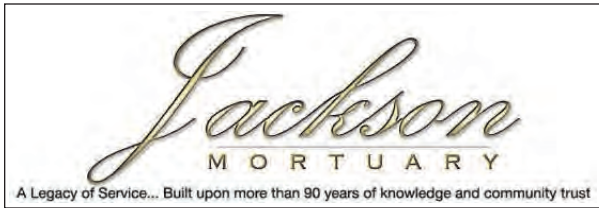
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**Ethel Jean Carter-Boniface, 87**

October 31, 1937 - February 25, 2025

Service will be held at 10 am on Sat., Mar. 15 at Greater Pentecostal COGIC, 730 N. Cleveland

**Rocky Gene Baldwin, 61**

August 6, 1963 - February 24, 2025

Service will be held at 2 pm on Sat. Mar.15, at Greater Harvest Tabernacle Christian Fellowship 1700 S. Market

**Kevin Lynn Washington Jr., 45**

November 16, 1979 - February 22, 2025

Service was held on Sat., Mar. 8, at Jackson Mortuary.

**Paula Diane Givens, 73**

June 17, 1952 - February 21, 2025

Service will be held at 11 am on Sat, Mar 22 at St. Mary's Missionary Baptist, 1648 E. 17th St. N.

**Mark McCray, 65**

July 25, 1959 - February 20, 2025

Service was held on Mar. 7 at Chisholm Trail C.O.C

**Angyla D. Roberts, 61**

August 1, 1963 - February 19, 2025

Service was held on Mar. 4, at the Jackson Mortuary Chapel.

**Cornelious Liddell, 69**

June 12, 1955 - February 18, 2025

**Lorenzo Jackson, 41**

December 31, 1983 - February 17, 2025

Service was held on Mar. 8, at 123 Psalms Church.

**Skylard Mashea Johnson, 34**

January 8, 1991 - February 12, 2025

Service was held on Mar. 8 at Mizpah Baptist Church.

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**BOYCOTT, from Page 4 ↓**

quietly retreated from commitments made after the racial reckoning of 2020, sparking frustration and calls for accountability.

- But do Black-led boycotts have the power to effect lasting change?
- Why are companies retreating?

For many companies, the retreat from DEI programs is often attributed to political pressure, financial concerns and shifting corporate priorities. Conservative push-back, including lawsuits challenging race-conscious programs, has made some companies cautious. Others cite economic downturns as a reason to deprioritize DEI funding. But for many Black consumers, these shifts feel like broken promises.

"Corporations saw DEI as a public relations strategy, not a core value," says Houston business analyst Angela Matthews. "Once the heat died down, many chose to scale back. That's where consumer power comes in."

**Boycott Impact?**

Target has experienced a slight downturn in their sales, but most of that was last year's sales, where Target received a lot of backlash for its support of LGBTQ products

in their store.

It's too early this year to judge the impact of the boycotts on any of the retailer's sales.

However, with over \$188 trillion in buying power, a Black economic boycott could theoretically have a major impact on a retailer.

"Boycotts can force corporations to listen — if they're sustained and well-organized," Matthews said.

Research supports this. A study from the Kellogg School of Management found that boycotts don't necessarily need to hurt sales to be impactful. Instead, they succeed when they generate negative press and shift public perception.

**The Power & Limitation of Boycotts**

Black consumer activism has historically yielded results. The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955–56 desegregated public transportation, and more recently the backlash against brands like Gucci and H&M led to public apologies and increased DEI commitments.

However, not all boycotts succeed. Some fizzle due to lack of coordination or unintended consequences.

The Rev. Al Sharpton and the National Action Network have also organized

"buy-cotts," directing supporters to companies like Costco, which has upheld its DEI commitments.

Meanwhile, the NAACP is tracking corporate compliance with DEI pledges and urging Black consumers to support brands that honor their promises.

Influencer Danisha Carter recently criticized short-term boycotts.

"Staging a boycott for three days just tells the company to move money around temporarily," she said in an Instagram video. "We need longer commitments."

The People's Union USA, a grassroots movement advocating for economic resistance, argues that collective action over time is key.

"If we disrupt the economy for just ONE day, it sends a powerful message," the organization stated. "But sustained action is where real change happens."

Some boycotts have unintended fallout, especially for Black-owned brands stocked in major retailers.

When Nike faced conservative-led boycotts over its support of Colin Kaepernick, Black business owners selling Nike products saw their sales impacted, as well. Some have fizzled due to lack of coordination or unintended consequences, like harming Black

employees and entrepreneurs who rely on these corporations for their livelihoods.

Malik Johnson, a marketing manager at a Fortune 500 company, sees both sides.

"I work for one of these companies and advocate for change from within," Johnson said. "Boycotting could threaten jobs and erase progress made internally. But I also understand why people are frustrated."

While corporate America's retreat from DEI disappoints many, it has also ignited a renewed commitment to Black economic independence. Entrepreneurs like Carlton Mackey, founder of the Black Men Smile movement, believe the backlash presents an opportunity.

"If big brands won't back us, we have to double down on our own communities," Mackey said. "Resistance must lead to revolution."

Pastor Bryant points to recent revenue loss due to McDonald's and Starbucks boycotts as examples of how the boycotts can succeed.

"You're seeing a great awakening in America, and corporate communities are going to have to really show their responsibility," he said.

Portions of this article come from the Houston Defender

**CANDIDATES, from Page 7 ↓**

**Joseph Shepard**

Shepard currently serves as chief of staff at Lead for America, a nonprofit that trains young people to become community leaders. He's also an instructor at Kansas Leadership Center and uses the KLC principles as well as leadership

framework to empower audiences to recognize their leadership skills and use them to drive progress.

His professional experience includes working as a director of multicultural engagement and campus life at Wichita State University. He's a two-time graduate of WSU, with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and

a master's degree in public administration.

Shepard has served on the board of directors for The Kansas African American Museum, Interfaith Ministries, and the Women's Health Network. He also served as president of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity - Eta Beta Lambda Chapter and is a current member of the District 1 Advisory Board.

District 1 covers core Northeast Wichita and has a history of having African-American representation since the city moved from

candidates running city-wide to running and being elected by districts in the early '80s.

The District 3 seat currently held by Mike Hoheisel and the District 6 seat currently held by Maggie Ballard are both up for reelection in November. Both of them are completing their first term and are eligible to run for reelection.

District 3 covers predominantly Southeast Wichita and District 6 covers predominantly North Central Wichita.

**Faith Temple Full Gospel, 1652 N Salina, Wichita, KS is looking for a lead pastor please call For more information 316 214-0248.**

# Operation Safe Passage Adds to Effort to Improve Conditions at 31st and Prospect

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

The ongoing effort to improve conditions at 31st and Prospect in Kansas City, MO took a new turn last Sat., March 1, with the implementation of Operation Safe Passage.

Members of the Fruit of Islam, with KC Clergy, positioned themselves in front of the Sun Fresh grocery store from noon to 4 p.m.. Operation Safe Passage was

designed to make shoppers feel safe in the Linwood Shopping Center parking lot and inside the Sun Fresh.

A flyer about Operation Safe Passage was also promoted in the community to encourage individuals, who might not otherwise, to shop at the store.

Members of the Fruit of Islam greeted shoppers and watched over the parking lot. According to the brothers, they received positive feedback from shoppers as well

as messages of gratitude for them being there.

Their presence helped. During their time at the center, there were no incidents of significance.

So far, Operation Safe Passage is planned for one Saturday per month.

Other efforts to improve safety at the 31st and Prospect intersection include increased KCMO police presence at the shopping center.

In September 2024, a parking lot meeting with Mayor Quinton Lucas, District 3 City Councilmembers and Sun Fresh management team, brought attention to many issues at the center.

Concerns with fencing at the center, expressed at that meeting, still haven't been addressed six months later.

Big concerns were also expressed about loitering, panhandling, drug sales, prostitution, homelessness and mental health issues, many raising to criminal levels



Brothers from the Fruit of Islam in Kansas City, MO greet a shopper at the Sun Fresh Market at 31st and Prospect. It was part of Operation Safe Passage, an effort to improve safety conditions at the Linwood Shopping Center.

requiring police action. In response, KCPD has increased their presence at the center.

A lot of the concerns were around saving the Sun Fresh Market. The market, operated by the Kansas City non-profit Community Builders, has

been losing money for more than a year. However, they haven't closed the market to avoid creating a major food desert in the area.

They've asked the City for financial help, which would free up Community Builder's

funds to help the community in other ways. Emmet Pierson, Community Builders CEO, said the organization recently – six months later – received a funding agreement from the city, but they find it unacceptable.

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