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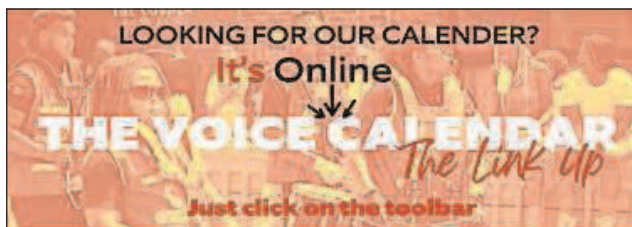
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What Were They Thinking: A Betrayal of Leadership?

By voting to enshrine a divisive figure, Congress traded principle for optics, exposing the cost of symbolic gestures over real reform.

By Dr. Frances Murphy Draper
AFRO CEO and Publisher

Last week the U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to establish Oct. 14, the birthday of Charlie Kirk, as a National Day of Remembrance. Ninety-five Democrats joined Republicans to pass the resolution. Only 118 Democrats voted "no," "present," or did not vote at all.

The senate, when considering their own resolution to honor Kirk with a national day, voted in favor—unanimously.

It is more than ironic — it is alarming — that Congress chose to elevate to national remembrance a man whose public words often demeaned Black women, belittled immigrants and dismissed civil rights progress. By attaching his name to a national day, Congress risks legitimizing rhetoric that was harmful and divisive.

The Courage to Vote "No"

Not everyone went along. Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.), Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), and dozens of other Democrats — many from the Congressional Black Caucus and the party's progressive wing — voted "no," holding firm to principle. They recognized that



condemning violence does not require sanctifying divisive rhetoric. These leaders deserve credit for refusing to let grief be weaponized into political ritual.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY-08) and others, however, justified their support by stressing that the resolution was nonbinding and did not endorse Kirk's views. Some even called it a Republican "trap" designed to divide Democrats. Yet these explanations raise their own troubling questions.

If Kirk's views are rejected, why vote to elevate his name at all? And why would leaders who have carried the mantle of civil rights choose optics over principle at such

a moment? In politics, the votes cast matter more than the disclaimers offered after the fact.

Symbolism Fast-Tracker, Reform Delayed

The irony runs deeper: Oct. 14 is also the birthday of George Floyd, whose murder in 2020 under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer shook the world. Floyd's death unmasked the deep racism of American policing, ignited global protests and forced a reckoning that this country still resists.

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act tells a different story. Passed once by the House but stalled in the Senate, it has been reintroduced in 2025 by Rep. Glenn

Ivey (D-Md.). Yet at the very moment reform is being revived, federal oversight and accountability tools are being rolled back. The contrast is stark: symbolic gestures are fast-tracked, while substantive change is pushed aside.

If Congress truly wishes to honor lives, it should begin by enacting reforms that protect lives today. Pass tougher gun laws so that fewer families are torn apart by violence. Advance police accountability so that no more unarmed Black men and women die without justice. Symbolic gestures may win headlines and offer short-term political cover, but substantive reform saves lives.

What we choose to commemorate is never neutral. It reveals whose stories we elevate and whose we ignore. That is why this vote is so troubling. Why did some Democratic leaders — Black and White — who know the weight of history go along? Their explanations may stress political traps or nonbinding language, but the truth is simpler: leadership failed when it mattered.

True leadership is measured not by symbolic gestures but by the courage to act. Until that courage is embraced, justice will remain deferred, and remembrance will remain a tool of politics instead of truth.

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With Shane Carter, TKAAM Prepares for Its Next Transformation

As renovation of new museum home begins, Carter brings a bold vision for exhibits, outreach, and growth.

By line is MISSING

When Shane Carter arrived in Wichita this summer to begin his tenure as executive director of The Kansas African American Museum (TKAAM), he was struck by how quickly the city began to feel like home.

"Within my first 90 days, I realized Wichita is a big-small city," he said. "People know each other. There's history everywhere. That feels like home to me."

For Carter, 38, this move represents both a professional milestone and a personal calling. He succeeds longtime director Denise Sherman, who led TKAAM through the ambitious purchase of a downtown building at 201 N. Main and a successful capital campaign that positioned the museum for a new chapter.

Carter's task now is both exciting and daunting: to guide the museum into a larger, more accessible space while keeping it financially strong and deeply rooted in community engagement.

From Troy, Ohio, to Wichita

Carter grew up in Troy, OH, a town of about 30,000 just north of Dayton. The region's history runs deep: Troy was an important stop on the Underground Railroad,

Shane Carter



Short Takeaways

- Shane Carter brings 13 years of experience leading a historic community center in Ohio.
- TKAAM will move to a 22,000-sq.-ft. downtown Wichita space, doubling its size and accessibility.
- A Dockum Sit-In immersive exhibit will anchor the new museum when it opens.

drawing abolitionist Quakers and formerly enslaved African Americans seeking opportunity.

"That history shaped me," Carter said.

His mother and his late father were defining influencers in his life. His dad, a commercial construction superintendent, worked across the country building major projects like Chicago's Sears Tower. He was also a union steward who fought fiercely for equal pay and fair treatment of Black, Latino, and immigrant workers.

Union meetings often took place in the Carter family home, where his mother would prepare large meals and his father would rally workers from different backgrounds.

That experience gave Carter an early understanding of how to bring diverse people together and instilled in him a clear sense of what leadership demands: courage, sacrifice, and the ability to build consensus across differences.

Carter also comes from an athletic family. Half-brother Butch Carter played in the NBA; and brother Cris Carter is a Hall-of-Fame NFL receiver. Shane himself played football at the University of Wisconsin. But rather than pursuing professional sports, Carter said "part of my calling and what the Lord asked me to do is to plug into my community."

H e ' s

been coaching football, building up community interest, and focusing on voter rights awareness and activism, and being a vehicle to create social, economic growth for our people.

Building Community in Ohio

Carter's most recent role before Wichita was as director of the Lincoln Community Center in Troy, a historically Black institution with roots dating back to 1865. When Carter took over, the center was in need of renewal.

He spearheaded a major expansion that turned the building into a state-of-the-art facility. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, he pushed forward with construction, ensuring the building could open by the end of 2020.

"The governor had shut the state down, but we made the gutsy call to keep moving," Carter said. "By December, we had occupancy. That allowed us to become a regional community hub during COVID."

The center provided daily meals, hosted remote learning programs, and became a trusted site for vaccinations and health education. "It provided a platform for our organization to be relied upon throughout COVID," Carter said.

Carter also operated his own contracting and construction management company that completed residential and commercial construction and remodeling.

Family & Welcoming

His wife and young daughter recently joined him in Kansas. They often spend Sundays driving around the city, getting to know landmarks and neighborhoods. "We've felt welcomed here," Carter said. "People have embraced us, and that means a lot."

The reception from Wichita's Black community helped seal their move here. He points to early conversations with civic leaders and museum board chair C. Edward Watson as critical. "I felt welcomed and wanted," he says. "That mattered."

It mattered to the board, too. When TKAAM announced Carter's hiring in May 2025, Watson cited his



A rendering of the new TKAAM building which will be located at 201 N. Main.

"knowledge, enthusiasm, and experience with programming for diverse age groups, fundraising, and community engagement." Carter, in turn, said he was drawn by the board's bold vision for a museum that is both a cultural tourism anchor and a hometown gathering place — onsite and online.

A Museum on the Move

Carter steps into leadership at a pivotal moment. For decades, TKAAM has operated inside the historic Calvary Baptist Church at 601 N. Water. The building carries profound significance: it was a hub of Black religious and civic life, but it is also hemmed in by the county jail and plagued by accessibility and parking challenges.

Under Sherman's leadership, the museum purchased a 22,000-sq.-ft. building downtown and raised funds for renovation. The move promises better parking, modern accessibility, and space for expanded archives and traveling exhibits. "We'll finally be able to preserve our collections properly and show more of our history," Carter said.

So far, renovation crews have cleared out the interior, and now

Carter faces crucial decisions about what stories the new museum will tell.

A Centerpiece Story: The Dockum Sit-In

One permanent exhibit is already announced — and it will be the museum's heartbeat: an immersive experience dedicated to the 1958 Dockum Drug Store Sit-In. Organized by the Wichita NAACP Youth Council, Black students staged a disciplined, weeks-long protest at the downtown lunch counter until it integrated. It stands as the first successful student-led sit-in in the nation.

"It still blows my mind that Dockum didn't get the national attention it deserved," Carter says. "We're going to change that."

A \$250,000 gift from Bank of America Wichita will make the bank the presenting sponsor of the Dockum experience. Architects are working now on designs that lean into interactivity — possibly placing the visitor on the stool, hearing the waiter's refusal to serve them, feeling the tension of the crowd and the resolve of the students.

KC East Side Sales Tax Fund ‘Shift’ Announced

City leaders say the initiative will speed up investment in neighborhood housing, small business and cultural projects

By The Voice News Service

A major change is underway for one of Kansas City’s most important community investment tools. The Central City Economic Development (CCED) program — funded by a voter-approved ½-cent sales tax — will now be administered by the Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City (EDCKC), a move city leaders say will strengthen oversight, improve collaboration, and deliver greater impact for neighborhoods in the city’s urban core.

What is CCED?

Launched in 2017 after voters approved the dedicated sales tax, CCED was designed to spur economic growth in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Council Districts, areas that for decades saw limited private investment. The program’s mission is

broad but clear: support affordable housing, small business growth, cultural preservation, and community-driven revitalization.

Since its inception, CCED has directed more than \$60 million into 60 projects intended to uplift neighborhoods often left out of Kansas City’s development boom. Its funding has backed everything from housing and community centers to museums and cultural institutions.

A Slow But Steady Start

Despite its promise, the program faced criticism in its early years. Residents and developers noted that the application process was slow and sometimes confusing, while some projects stalled or took years to break ground. Questions about transparency and accountability also dogged the program.

But as the years went on, the

program’s impact became visible. “Their growing list of projects is transforming the city’s east side,” said Dion Lewis, deputy director of Housing for KCMO, in a city release.

Among the notable CCED-supported projects:

- **Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and Hotel** (\$3.9 million, 1800 Paseo)
- **Zhou B Art Center** (\$1.9 million, 1801 E. 18th St.)
- **KD Academy/MACPEN Enterprise** (\$1 million, day care.)
- **Jazz Hill Apartments** (redevelopment) (\$4.12 million, affordable housing)
- **The Parker** (\$4 million , 18th & Vine mixed-income housing / commercial)
- **Parade Park Homes Redevelopment** (Phase 1) (\$5 million)

See SALES TAX Page 15 →



Zhou B Art Center in Kansas City, a historic renovation project in the former Crispus Attucks School that was supported by funding through the Central City Economic Development (CCED). CREDIT: ZHOU B ART CENTER

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What Data Centers Are, Why They're Booming — and Why Kansas City is on the Map

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

Despite the airy name, the “cloud” is not floating above us. Every email we send, video we stream, and AI tool we use is processed and stored in massive, secure buildings called data centers. These facilities are filled with servers and networking equipment that power the digital economy.

A Growing Appetite for Space & Power

As life moves increasingly online — from banking and health care to artificial intelligence — demand for data storage is surging. That requires ever-larger facilities, often spread across hundreds of acres, with massive needs for electricity and sometimes water for cooling.

Industry experts estimate U.S. data center electricity use is growing about 15% per year, four times faster than overall demand. By 2030, they could consume nearly 9% of the nation's electricity — more than double today's share. That scale has utility planners and environmental advocates paying close attention.

Cooling adds another layer. Some data centers use billions of gallons of water annually, while others shift to refrigerant-based systems that save water but consume more energy.

The Business of Data Centers

There are three common models:

- **Colocation:** private operators lease space, power, and connectivity to many customers.
- **Wholesale/Hyperscale:** large leases to a handful of tenants.
- **Owner-operated hyperscale:** cloud giants such as Amazon, Google, Microsoft, or Meta build their own.

Investor-owned centers earn revenue from long-term contracts for power and connectivity. The viability of projects often hinges on factors like power availability, tax treatment, and government incentives. In 2022, Kansas lawmakers approved a 20-year state sales tax exemption for data centers costing more than \$250 million, part of a broader push to lure major tech investment.

Why Kansas City?

KC has emerged as a prime location for data center growth for several reasons:

- **Fiber crossroads:** KC sits on major



Microsoft Data Center is pretty typical. Your emails or photos may be stored in one of these racks, or a place that looks pretty much like it.



Mayor Quinton Lucas shared this post just days after breaking ground on the \$800 million, 1 million sq. ft. data center in North Kansas City

- national fiber optic routes, making it a “connectivity hub” that speeds up the time it takes data to move between coasts.
- **Central location:** Being in the middle of the country shortens physical distance for data traffic compared with coastal sites.
- **Low natural hazard profile:** Unlike coastal regions, KC is less prone to hurricanes or earthquakes.
- **Lower land and construction costs:** Compared to tech-heavy coasts, building here is more affordable.

Together, these factors have put KC on industry watchlists as a market with high potential for data center expansion.

What's Happening Now

Google is moving forward with “Project Mica,” a multibillion-dollar Northland campus. In 2025, Meta opened an \$800 million, 1 million sq. foot data center U.S.

169. In the Golden Plains Technology Park. Netality's 1102 Grand downtown serves as a major interconnection hub for networks. Other developers are exploring large-scale campuses that could rival some of the country's biggest projects.

Local planners say such campuses could generate tens of millions in new property tax revenue, turning underused land into major economic engines. At the same time, the scale of electricity demand — hundreds of megawatts per project — raises questions about utility upgrades, new substations, and who pays for improvements. Environmental advocates are pushing for requirements that these facilities run on renewable energy.

Noise has also been raised as a concern, since backup diesel generators can be loud during tests or power outages. However, many newer campuses are designed with

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KCK Leaders See Big Promise in Data Centers, But at What Cost?

By Matt Resnick
Kansas City Reporter

Large, energy-hungry data centers that power artificial intelligence and other cutting-edge technology could soon be coming to Wyandotte County.

Two facilities are already in the planning phase, but residents are raising concerns about what they say is a lack of transparency from local officials.

Despite those objections, most BPU board members, WYCO commissioners, candidates for both offices, and Mayor Tyrone Garner are enthusiastic about the projects — and the property tax revenue they could generate.

Mayor's Vision

Garner has embraced the developments, calling them a centerpiece of his administration's equity agenda. He argues that revenue from a proposed multi-billion-dollar facility in western Wyandotte County could provide resources to help struggling residents.

Garner says the project will “grow, build, and maximize” the state's top tourism destination, Village West Parkway. The blueprint initially called for a 550-acre business park with six 330,000-sq.-ft. buildings on the north and south ends of Parallel Parkway between 121st and 131st streets.

The project, which could break ground as early as 2027, is projected to generate \$12.9 million in property tax revenue annually. The site now produces only about \$43,000 a year in taxes for the city, county, state, schools, colleges, and library.

Energy & Water Consumption

The original plan was scaled back after a successful protest petition stopped momentum on the north end. Another petition against the southern portion failed.

Had the full plan been approved, the facilities would have required more electrical capacity than all of Wyandotte County combined — likely raising costs for residents.

Even with the scaled-down project, developers and officials acknowledge the need for staged power additions, new substations, and possibly importing electricity from regional transmission lines. Detailed plans for how Red Wolf DCD's

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From Nursing Home to \$126M Swope Village

KC's Swope Health launches biggest project yet on historic Swope Ridge site

By Mike Sherry
The Beacon

Takeaways

- Swope Health is developing a \$126 million multiuse campus on the grounds of a shuttered nursing home.
- The project is designed to serve the affordable housing and service needs of the rapidly growing number of seniors.
- So far, backers have secured \$25 million to start building the first phase of the campus, which could take a decade to complete.

Six decades ago, Kansas City architects were already grappling with the housing needs of an aging population. In 1963, the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects devoted a special issue of its journal to local senior living projects, noting the graying of America would only continue.

One of those projects was the Swope Ridge nursing home, built in 1957 at 5900 Swope Parkway. Once a haven for middle-class seniors, it later evolved into a safety-net facility serving mostly frail, low-income residents. By the time it closed in 2022, Swope Ridge had dwindled to about 80 residents, its aging structure and low Medicaid reimbursements making it unsustainable. The closure

left a void in the Town Fork Creek neighborhood — and questions about what would replace it.

Now, Swope Health is proposing a \$126 million intergenerational development on the site, the largest initiative in its nearly 60-year history. The 12-acre Swope Health Village, which could take a decade to complete, broke ground Aug. 7 with city and neighborhood leaders present. About \$25 million has been secured to launch the first phase.

“This is for the neighbors who said to me when Swope Ridge was closing, ‘What are you going to do about that?’” said Kansas City Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks-Shaw. “We are here and we are delivering on the promises that we made.”

The ‘Gray Revolution’

The need is clear. In 1960, seniors made up 9.2% of the U.S. population; by 2020, they were nearly 17%. National reports have warned of a “dual burden” of housing and health costs facing older Americans. About a third of older households now spend more than 30% of their income on housing, leaving little for health care.

Swope Health’s vision is one response: a “modern residential campus” blending health and housing. The plan calls for 200 units of affordable senior housing, 90 units for mental health and PACE KC participants, and 10 beds for substance abuse treatment in collaboration with the courts.

The site will also include retail space, services from the Kansas City Health Department, a community center, gardens, and training opportunities for local entrepreneurs and students. “When we talk about holistic care, we’re defining health



Swope Health recently broke ground on the first phase of Swope Village, a multi-phase \$126 million project designed to address the growing housing and other service needs of seniors. (CREDIT: RENDERING BY PERKINS EASTMAN)

care as a broader umbrella,” said Swope Health CEO Jeron Ravin.

Beyond Health Care

Swope Health intends the Village to be a mixed-use Purpose Built Community — a model that integrates housing, health, and economic vitality. Plans include financial literacy classes, job training, and career pipelines into health care.

Sonja Bachus, chief experience officer for the National Association of Community Health Centers, said projects like this reflect a national shift. “This type of development is how we keep people functioning in their own space longer, instead of moving loved ones into a full-service nursing home earlier on,” she said.

Initial support has included \$12.5 million in city and state funding. Ravin said additional public and philanthropic backing will be needed for future phases.

Neighborhood Impact

For longtime residents, the project is both personal and practical. Lisa Ray, president of the Town Fork Creek Neighborhood Association, remembers volunteering at



Swope Ridge nursing home, built in 1957 at 5900 Swope Parkway. Once a haven for middle-class seniors, it later evolved into a safety-net facility serving mostly frail, low-income residents. By the time it closed in 2022, Swope Ridge had dwindled to about 80 residents, its aging structure and low Medicaid reimbursements making it unsustainable.

Swope Ridge as a teen, delivering soap and sundries to residents. The facility was a neighborhood anchor, she said — providing care for local seniors and jobs within walking distance.

Its closure not only displaced residents but also eliminated employment opportunities nearby. Today, she sees former workers walking to Prospect Avenue to catch buses to jobs farther away.

Ray is cautiously optimistic about Swope Health Village. “Because of its long service to

the community, people will be inclined to support Swope Health,” she said. But she also wants assurances that the new housing will be truly affordable for seniors in Town Fork Creek, and that parking and traffic won’t overwhelm the area.

For Ravin, ensuring the site continues to serve the community is the point. “For Swope Ridge to no longer exist and not have any type of replacement services would have been a significant disservice,” he said.

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DATA CENTERS, from Page 5 ↓

fewer test runs, sound insulation, and larger buffer zones from neighborhoods. As a result, noise is still an issue to watch but is mentioned less frequently today than in earlier debates.

Looking Ahead

Forecasting the next two decades is difficult, but analysts agree on one point: demand will keep climbing. The International Energy Agency projects data center electricity demand to rise about 15% annually worldwide, driven by AI adoption, chip advances, and grid expansion.

For Kansas City, that means choices ahead. If data center growth materializes as expected, the region will need careful planning around power, water, land use, and incentives. Supporters highlight the potential for jobs, a stronger tax base, and a growing tech ecosystem. Critics warn about environmental strain and subsidies that may outweigh benefits.

The bottom line: the “cloud” lives somewhere — and increasingly, that somewhere could be Kansas City.

KCK LEADERS, from Page 5 ↓

demand will be met are still in development.

With their 24/7 electrical needs, data centers often put major stress on local grids. They can also be water-intensive, requiring large volumes for cooling, though some newer designs use closed-loop or refrigerant systems to reduce demand.

Getting the Agreement Right

Sierra Club senior strategist Ty Gorman told The Community Voice the WYCO Unified Government should secure strong contractual assurances from Kansas City-based Red Wolf DCD Properties LLC, the developer.

“Data center developers must negotiate a 24/7 clean energy capacity agreement with BPU to ensure pollution and cost impacts are not shifted to Wyandotte County families and businesses,” Gorman said. “Hardworking folks do not need to subsidize multi-billion-dollar tech company data centers on our utility bills or our health.”

In an email to BPU and Unified Government commissioners, Gorman warned of “devastating effects” in other communities where data centers have proliferated. He pointed to Virginia and Georgia, where he said local governments underestimated the facilities’ energy and infrastructure demands.

“Large companies have sold local officials on small community benefits packages and then hit the utility district with massive electricity and water



Investors have offered to buy the Kansas City, KS, Board of Public Utilities’ defunct Quindaro Power Station and develop a data center on the site. (CREDIT: VAUGHN WHEAT / THE BEACON)

use that brought billions of dollars of hidden costs and pollution from coal and gas plants running to supply the AI corporation — raising residents’ bills significantly,” Gorman wrote.

Transparency Questions

A perceived lack of transparency has fueled public frustration. A planned community forum on the western Wyandotte County project was postponed earlier this month due to funeral services for a slain KCK police officer.

At a May 1 meeting, activist Rochelle Donald criticized commissioners and the mayor over a separate

data center project in east Kansas City’s heavily polluted Fairfax district. Donald called the expedited process “questionable because it’s bypassing community engagement” and detailed potential environmental harms.

She argued that data centers primarily benefit investors while leaving minority and low-income communities with pollution, displacement risks, and few jobs. A medium-sized facility, she noted, typically employs only about two dozen onsite staff.

A Hot-Button Issue

BPU President David Haley said he plans to make data centers a key campaign issue in his 2026 re-election bid.

The Quindaro water plant, he said, is being repurposed into a modern facility after sitting dormant. Haley said he pushed the idea of leasing or selling the site “for the betterment of ratepayers that are already overcharged.”

However, the site is located within 100 yards of low-income housing, raising additional questions.

“I had the vision to foresee using our dormant plant innovatively,” Haley said. “Here is something in front of us now: what are the innovations for the largest-generating entity in the history of Wyandotte County?”

For Haley, the debate isn’t just about money. “My thought is always, what can my service on BPU bring to make livable changes better for my constituents? And data centers are going to be key.”

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Wyandotte Commission District 5: Candidates in Their Words

Due to space constraints we only provided two answers here. Their answers to the remaining three questions can be found online @ <https://bit.ly/4mMKoxq>. Those questions cover public transportation, economic development and infrastructure and neighborhood investment.



Wyandotte County District 1 and 8

Candidates for Wyandotte County District 1 - and District 8 were invited to respond to the same questions, but we did not receive their answers in time for this edition. When we receive their responses, their answers will be available online.

LAVERT A. MURRAY

LaVert is a lifelong resident of Kansas City, Kansas, and has lived in the 5th District for nearly 50 years. He is married to retired USD 500 Assistant Superintendent, Linda G. Murray. They have two sons and seven grandchildren. LaVert completed his Undergrad and Graduate studies at the University of Kansas in Political Science and Public Administration / Urban Structure and Process. He was an executive manager for the City and the Unified Government for nearly 40 years retiring in 2010, after serving as



Director of Development, Community Development and Economic Development. He has been involved in nearly every major development that occurred in the City during that time, including the planning for the I-435 alignment and assembling the 400 acre site for Village West, LaVert recently came out of retirement to serve in Mayor Garner's administration as the Chief Economic Advisor. He retired from that position to run for this seat.

DR. CARLOS PACHECO III

Current Occupation: Family Physician and Clinic Owner at Heartland Primary Care
Age: 37

Lifelong Wyandotte County resident, physician, and dedicated public servant committed to responsible, community-centered governance. As both a practicing physician and clinic owner, I manage



the dual demands of patient care and financial oversight—skills I bring directly to public service. My leadership is rooted in high-impact execution: optimizing resources, scaling solutions, and delivering measurable results. I have a proven track record of exceeding expectations, and I intend to do the same for the 5th District and all of Wyandotte County.

QUESTION 1: SEPARATING PILOT FROM BPU BILL

Many residents struggle when Unified Government charges—including PILOT, stormwater, and trash fees—appear on a single BPU bill: failure to pay even one leads to disconnection of all services. Would you support reconfiguring BPU billing so that county-administered service charges (like PILOT, stormwater, trash) are separate from actual utility charges, thereby reducing the risk of losing critical services? How would you implement such a change while ensuring continuity in revenue and minimizing administrative costs?

Realistically, UG leadership, including the mayor, cannot force investors to develop in specific areas of our community. However, we can be intentional about attracting investment to traditionally disenfranchised areas. For example, the potential for the defunct Quindaro power plant property to be remediated and re-purposed into another business (likely a data center) can serve as a catalyst for further housing and business investment in the Northeast area. The influx of both property and

utility sales taxes from a project like that could be intentionally reinvested as incentives to further “destination-type” projects. The UG needs a strong and creative economic development team that is working in lock step with Wyandotte EDC as well as BPU to ensure all facets needed for new projects. It will be my job as mayor to ensure our county administration team is doing just that. When we all work together, nothing can stop us.

Yes, I support separating PILOT and other county-administered charges from BPU utility billing. Residents shouldn't lose access to water or electricity due to unrelated fees. I'd work with BPU and UG to create a phased billing model that itemizes charges and allows partial payments without full disconnection. We can pilot this in high-risk zip codes, monitor revenue impact, and streamline collections through UG's existing systems. Transparency and flexibility will reduce hardship while preserving fiscal stability.

QUESTION 3: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & DEVELOPMENT

Many residents east of 435 in Kansas City feel left behind as development and investment have flowed westward. What specific policies or initiatives would you champion to bring economic development, jobs, and small business support to the eastern parts of the county?

The Neighborhood Revitalization Act (NRA) tax rebate program was created to encourage development in distressed areas in a revenue-neutral way. Over time, the Unified Government expanded it into areas already attracting investment, giving developers incentives where there was little risk rather than spurring projects in

neighborhoods that needed them most. As Commissioner, I would push for policies requiring programs like NRA to be reviewed and updated to ensure they meet their intended goals instead of simply boosting developer profits. Such measures would strengthen public-private partnerships and promote balanced growth. I would also prioritize

small business support, restoring the UG's past focus on securing federal grants and collaborating with the SBA and state agencies. Finally, I would back the creation of a sustainable Community Investment Fund to drive equitable economic growth across the county without adding new burdens to taxpayers.

I'd champion a targeted “Eastside Investment Zone” with tax incentives for small businesses, startups, and community developers. We need storefront rehab grants, flexible zoning for mixed-use projects, and a local hiring mandate for county contracts. I'd also push for a business incubator near Quindaro to support entrepreneurs with training, capital, and mentorship. East of I-435 deserves more than promises—it deserves a plan.

KCKPS Candidates: In Their Words

Three of the seven seats on the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools Board of Education are up for reelection in November. Incumbents Rachel Russell – first elected in 2022 – and Wanda Brownlee Paige – first elected in 2018 – are seeking reelection. Former Board Member

Maxine Drew resigned her position in 2025, and her seat is up for election. In addition to the two incumbents, four new candidates are running for election – for a total of six candidates for the three open positions. KCKPS school board candidates do not run by district. The top three vote

recipients win a seat on the board.

We received responses to our questions from four of the candidates. We did not hear from newcomer Josh Young, who indicated he was running to add some diversity to the board, which currently has a 100% minority membership – five African Americans and one Hispanic. We also did not hear from Wanda Brownlee Paige, who also currently serves in the Kansas

House, representing District 35 – which covers a large part of Northeast Wyandotte County.

We asked the candidates three questions. Due to space limitations, we were only able to include answers to one of the questions here. The other answers can be found online at <https://bit.ly/3IF3Iyj>.

SHEYVETTE DINKENS

Current Occupation: NonProfit
Director & Professor
Age: 40

Sheyvette Dinkens is a community advocate, a licensed real estate agent, an innovative thinker, doer, and an award-winning educator. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Washburn University, a Master of Business Administration from Baker University, and a Master's degree in Secondary



Education from Fort Hays University. She serves as the Precinct Committee Person for 11-03 in Wyandotte County, a member for the Superintendent's Parent, Caregiver, Community Collaborative Council

(SPCCCC), the KCKPS Boundary Committee, an advisory member for Wyandotte County's DA Office's Community Liaison Board, Leadership Kansas alumni, and Centurion, Class of 2027.

PAMELA PENN-HICKS

Current Occupation: Retired
Federal employee
Age: 69

Homeowner/resident of Kansas City Kansas for 43 years. Mother of 2, grandmother of 7 and great-grandmother of 2. Employed with the United States Postal Service for 38 years,



proud union member. Attended Duke University, graduated from Kansas University with a bachelor degree in Psychology. Community involvement: grassroots

organizations serving the underserved and community development, nonprofit boards serving youth, appointed to education and community task forces.

RACHEL RUSSELL

Current Occupation: Director of Equity and Community at Local Nonprofit
Age: 36

Rachel is a dynamic nonprofit professional dedicated to volunteerism, equity, and service. She is Director of Equity & Community Engagement at United Community Services of Johnson County, leading race equity and community initiatives. With nearly a decade of nonprofit



experience, Rachel is passionate about advancing systemic change to improve health outcomes. She also serves as Vice President of the Kansas City Kansas USD 500

Board of Education, chairing Facilities and Boundary Committees. A proud mother of three, avid traveler, and die-hard Chiefs fan, Rachel lives by her favorite quote: "Love the life you live; live the life you love."

JOYCELYN STRICKLAND-EGANS

Current Occupation: Educator
Age: 58

My professional experience includes an Elementary Education Degree: Emporia State University and a Master's Degree: Kansas State University. I'm a lifelong resident of Wyandotte Co., alumni of Banneker, Arrowhead and Washington High School. My biological children graduated from Sumner Academy. I come with



School Board experience, having served as treasurer and vice president. I retired from KCKPS District after 35 years of service. I served in many roles including Instructional Coach, Grade Level Leader, Efficacy Curriculum Writer, and stakeholder.

Currently, I volunteer at Lindbergh and Banneker through Community Partnerships. I also serve on the Superintendent's Council, KNEA, Metropolitan Leadership Board, and am an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

QUESTION 1: ADDRESSING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Chronic absenteeism—driven by factors like housing insecurity and transportation—remains a key issue in district schools. What strategies would you support to improve student attendance and foster environments where students feel seen, supported, and motivated to attend?

One of my core platforms is amplifying student voices. I truly believe it starts by welcoming every student into the conversation. Together, we can look honestly at the reasons behind attendance challenges and work toward solutions that make a real difference. Since August 2023, I've proudly championed half-day schedules for Juniors and Seniors, knowing that many of our students balance full-time jobs and family commitments. Picture a system where students spend part of their day in essential classes and the rest gaining valuable real-world experience through work, college courses, or internships. I wholeheartedly support a district shelter for our McKinney-Vento families, so every student has a safe place to call home. Most importantly, strong relationships with families are at the heart of our success. That's why I'm committed to making sure every school building has a Family and Community Engagement Specialist to support and connect us all.

Addressing absenteeism requires developing a support structure that focuses on the individual student's needs. Build a relationship with the student and their family to identify what factors are contributing to absences. Identify resources that address and resolve those factors. Other strategies that support attendance include mentoring, coaching and providing alternative learning options when necessary. The goal is to re-orient the student towards participating in their education process by providing an engaging, structured, safe, supportive environment.

Improving student attendance requires addressing both external barriers and in-school experiences. While tackling challenges like housing insecurity and transportation is essential, schools must also create environments where students feel seen, supported, and excited to learn. I support strengthening student involvement in curriculum development, ensuring their voices shape what and how they learn. Offering more flexible class scheduling can also help meet diverse family and student needs. Moving away from a lecture-based model toward hands-on, student-guided learning allows students to engage more deeply, with teachers serving as facilitators rather than lecturers. This approach fosters ownership, creativity, and relevance in learning. Additionally, incentivizing learning through recognition, celebrations, and real-world connections provides students with meaningful reasons to attend. When schools cultivate belonging, elevate student voice, and make learning engaging, students are far more likely to show up, thrive, and succeed.

To develop an engaging environment where students feel seen and supported, we need to be available and open to speaking with student groups. We need to have sports/arts/extra curricular activities that cater to a variety of diverse talents and interests. We need to support Social and Emotional Learning. Building school climates that welcome students and their parents is key. Students should feel the school is safe, with a relevant and engaging curriculum. We should award school attendance, and act proactively. By engaging parents positively, we can ensure their support with getting students to school.


BPU Board Races: Candidates in Their Words

For more than 100 years, the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities has supplied Wyandotte County residents with water and electricity. Operated as an administrative arm of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, BPU is self-governed, with an elected six-member board of directors. This year, two at-large seats on the board and the District 2 seat on the board are up for election. David Haley, the incumbent for the District 2 Position, is seeking reelection. He is running against former KCK Mayor David Alvey. The District 1 at-large seat on the board is currently held by Mary Gonzales who has served on the board since 2001. She has chosen not to seek reelection. Candidates for that seat are Gary Bradley Lopez and Lisa Walker Yeager. Walker and Alvey did not provide a response to our questions. Candidates responded to four questions.

Due to space limitations, only one answer is included here. The rest can be found on our website at communityoiceks.com.

**GARY ENRIQUE
BRADLEY-LOPEZ**

Current occupation: Middle School Speech and Theater Teacher
Age: 27



DAVID HALEY

Current occupation: Legislator, Lawyer, Property Developer
Age: 65



QUESTION 4: CUSTOMER SERVICE & DISCONNECT POLICIES


Shut-offs due to unpaid bills can have severe consequences for families. Do you support reforms such as more flexible payment plans, separating utility and government charges, or expanding assistance programs to protect vulnerable residents from losing essential services?

I know firsthand how difficult it can be when you fall behind—I once had my lights cut off over a few dollars, and even after trying in Spanish, I couldn't reach anyone by phone. That experience showed me how hard it must be for seniors, low-literacy residents, community members learning english, or those without internet access. As a board member, I will fight to reopen the lobby for face-to-face service and restore the human connection BPU has lost. I'll push for flexible payment plans for seniors and low-income families, and for BPU to expand assistance programs directly rather than relying only on outside organizations. I also believe we need stronger outreach so residents know what help is available before they face disconnection. Most importantly, I'll advocate for policies that protect vulnerable residents from losing essential services—because BPU is a public utility, and it belongs to the people.

My current record on the Board has been being the original board member to have the UG charges (like PILOT, sewer, trash, stormwater, etc.) segregated from electric/water consumption charges on the monthly bills; resulting, to date, in color-coding for UG fees...but not yet the full separation, and corresponding benefit of "no-service-disruption-for-unpaid-UG-taxes" that, if reelected, every one knows I'll continue to push for. Also, I alone continue the push to re-open the customer service lobby which will enable swifter person-to-person resolutions to many, many issues. Further, I believe many deposits are usurious and unnecessary; re-connection fees punitive and "late fees" disrespectfully onerous ... all symbolic of a lingering culture of greed that sadly remains a part of our jewel of a Utility.

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Spinach, Strawberries Lead 2025 'Dirty Dozen' of Pesticide-Heavy Produce

New research shows diet directly raises pesticide levels in people.

By The Voice Health News

Fruits and vegetables are essential for good health — but a new study finds that some popular produce may deliver more than vitamins and fiber. It may also raise levels of dozens of pesticides in the body.

Researchers with the Environmental Working Group (EWG) compared pesticide residues found on fruits and vegetables by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

with urine samples from people in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The results, published in the International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health, revealed a clear pattern: people who ate more high-residue produce had higher pesticide levels in their urine.

"We found consuming different types of fruits and vegetables changes your pesticide levels accordingly," said Alexis Temkin, EWG's vice president of science and lead author of the study. "Greater consumption of the higher-residue foods increased pesticide levels more than lower-residue foods."

Linda Birnbaum, former director of the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, said the findings show just how directly diet influences exposure. "This tells us that when people eat a lot of produce with high residues of pesticides, they're more likely to have elevated levels in their urine," she said. Importantly, Birnbaum said, the study looked at the combined effects of multiple pesticides, not just one chemical at a time.

Health Concerns

Scientists have long warned that pesticides can

be linked to health problems ranging from premature birth and birth defects to reduced sperm counts, heart disease, and cancer. Children are considered especially vulnerable. The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that exposure during pregnancy may raise the risk of low birth weight, birth defects, or fetal death, while exposure in childhood has been tied to learning problems and cancer.

The "Dirty Dozen" & "Clean Fifteen"

The findings lend support to EWG's annual Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce, which lists the most and least contaminated foods. In the 2025 report, 203 pesticides were found across the "Dirty Dozen," with spinach topping the list for the heaviest pesticide residue by weight. Strawberries, kale (including mustard and collard greens), grapes, peaches, cherries, nectarines, pears, apples, blackberries, blueberries, and potatoes rounded out the list.

The most toxic mix of pesticides was identified in green beans, spinach, peppers, and leafy greens. On the other end of the spectrum, pineapples ranked cleanest, followed by sweet corn, avocados, papaya, onions, peas, asparagus, cabbage,



Testing identified the dirty dozen of produce with the highest levels of pesticides by weight. Read, to find out the dirtiest and the cleanest produce on grocery shelves

watermelon, cauliflower, bananas, mangos, carrots, mushrooms, and kiwi.

Reducing Exposure

Temkin emphasized that the answer is not to avoid fruits and vegetables altogether. Instead, she suggested choosing items from the "Clean Fifteen" when possible, or buying organic versions of the most contaminated foods.

If organic isn't an option, proper washing helps. USDA researchers wash produce before testing, but thorough rinsing at home can still reduce residue.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends washing under running

water, drying with a clean cloth, and scrubbing firm produce with a vegetable brush. Leafy greens should have their outer leaves removed and be rinsed gently.

Experts caution against bleach, soap, or commercial produce washes, which can leave their own residues. Bagged greens labeled "triple washed" do not require an additional rinse.

Even if you peel, you should still wash first, says the FDA. All produce, even organic, should be washed before peeling so dirt and bacteria aren't transferred from a knife onto the fruit or vegetable. After washing, dry with a clean cloth or paper towel.

Quick Takeaways

- Eating high-residue produce raises pesticide levels in people.
- Spinach tops 2025's "Dirty Dozen" with the most residue.
- Choose "Clean Fifteen" items or organic to cut exposure.

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VOICES OF THE PAST

St. Paul AME Choir Members Reflect on Historic Recording

By Carla Eckels, KMWU

St. Paul AME Church is 150 years old and is the oldest Black church in Wichita. Among the congregation are fond memories of the gospel album, "Lord I'll Be Willing." Recorded in 1968 by the St. Paul Gospel Chorus, the album is a rare artifact from that era.

Ninety-three-year-old Marvin Stone Jr. and 80-year-old Donna Miller are two of the original choir members. They survey the album cover, looking at the faces of fellow singers clothed in their robes and stoles. Several have passed away; others have moved away. The choir, mostly in their 20s and 30s at the time, was primed and ready to record in May 1968.

"When I joined St. Paul, I knew right off that I was going

to join that choir," Miller said with a laugh, "and I did. We all got along and had a good time, and we traveled quite a bit. I think we were better than we realized we were, I mean we were very good."

Miller moved from El Dorado to Wichita in her early 20s.

"The directress, Dr. Betty [Eubanks] Lessard, would give us songs to learn," Miller said. "Back then, I could learn the words a little quicker and she'd give us time to practice the song."

Miller recalls the choir coming together to record in St. Paul's sanctuary.

When she recorded the song, "You Must Be Born Again," she thought about her mother, Florance Garland.

"It was like listening to my

mother," she said tearfully. "Just saying, 'You must be born again.' I do think about my mother when I would sing that song."

Stone was the soloist on the song, "It All Belongs To My Father."

"I've always been singing," said Marvin Stone, Jr. We had a choir at Elder Cremo's church. At one time ... [had] many Stones in the church that we were the choir. When I came to St. Paul, I thought I was ready for prime time."

Stone was the soloist on the song, "It All Belongs To My Father."

"Some of these solos I did with the choir prior to the recording," Stone said. "That was just one of the songs that I thought I really wanted to sing, and Betty thought I did a real good job with it."

Coming from my background in singing in the holiness church, we just learned to just sing and don't think about it, so once you do that, you just



Cover of the 1968 recording by St. Paul AME Choir. It wasn't a frivolous thing because sometimes we sang ourselves to tears.

(COURTESY PHOTO)

feel it, and so it's not the words on a piece of paper.

"By the way, when we made that album, none of us had a piece of paper in front of us. We all knew the words, so it was just kind of like a feeling because we were all young and just thought we were ready."

"We did not play," Miller said. "We listened and when Betty said this is what we are going to do, we did it. She ran

a tight ship."

Miller said her favorite was "Peace Be Still" by soloist Jesse Shepard, who passed away in 1982.

"I can hear your daddy, Carla [Eckels], singing that song, 'Peace Be Still', and when he would say, 'Master... the tempest is raging' — you knew what was coming."

See **Choir Page 15** →

Choir member Donna Miller moved from El Dorado to Wichita in her early 20s and joined the St. Paul AME Church choir.

(CARLA ECKELS / KMWU)

Marvin Stone Jr. was the soloist on the song, "It All Belongs To My Father." (CARLA ECKELS / KMWU)

Jesse Shepard, the father of Carla Eckels, was part of the 1968 recording of the St. Paul Gospel Chorus. (COURTESY PHOTO)



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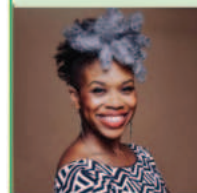
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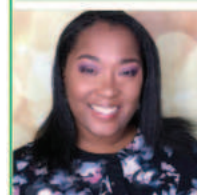
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Angela Tucker is a transracial adoptee who shares her story through documentary, book, & podcast. She also mentors adoptees & advocates for adoption issues as a speaker & founder of The Adoptee Mentoring Society.



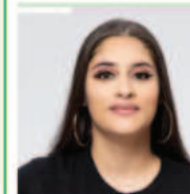
April Dinwoodie is a thought in transracial adoption & offers tools to help people navigate differences of race, class & culture.



Dr. Sharilyn Ray, LCSW is the CEO and Founder of Restoration Family Services, a non-profit organization focused on helping families & children & holistic healing



Pastor Cameron Martin is Lead Administrator at St. Mark Cathedral COGIC, where he focuses on fostering spiritual growth, community engagement, and operational excellence within the church. In addition, Cameron is the former Continuing Legal Education Director at the Wichita Bar Association.



Mayda Berrios, MS is the Founder & Owner of "In Her Shoes, LLC." she is a distinguished professional speaker, traveling the United States, and recognized for her award winning presentations.

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TKAAM, from Page 3 ↓

"We want people traveling through Kansas to think: I have to see Dockum," Carter says.

Two more anchor exhibits are already identified: a refreshed "From Africa to Kansas" gallery and a permanent, interactive Trailblazers exhibit that lets visitors explore honorees' biographies and contributions across time.

Expanding Access & Outreach

Early signals are promising. TKAAM saw a surge of first-time visitors during this summer's **Sunflower Summer** program, which offered once-per-destination free admission for Kansas families to select Kansas tourist sites. Saturdays were particularly busy, with lots of travelers visiting from Kansas City, Tulsa, and even Oklahoma City.

The museum also took learning beyond the building, delivering programs to daycares and welcoming groups for scavenger hunts and kid-friendly gallery introductions.

"Again and again we heard, 'I never knew you were here,'" Carter says. "That's what we want to change."

Carter also wants to expand beyond

the museum's two signature events: Taste of Africa and the Trailblazers Awards, though he emphasizes their importance.

Trailblazers 2025 is set for Nov. 15 at Exploration Place, and he is actively seeking sponsorships.

The museum's newsletter, "We Are Culture," has been revived. "It's one more way to stay connected with the museum," Carter said.

He encourages community members to sign up for the newsletter through the museum's website or follow TKAAM on Facebook.

Challenges Ahead

Even as Carter looks ahead with optimism, he is realistic about challenges. Across the country, museums are facing funding pressures, especially in a climate where diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives have become politically charged.

"My White mother reminds me that we're in a time we haven't seen since the 1960s," Carter said. "We have to be prepared."

Maintaining operational revenue will be just as important as completing the new museum's build-out. Carter credits

Sherman for securing the building and raising capital funds, but notes that costs continue to rise.

"We'll need ongoing support from donors, corporations, and members to keep this institution strong," he said.

At the same time, he is committed to celebrating the museum's present home. "The Calvary Baptist Church building is historic and sacred," he said. "We don't want people to only look forward. We want them to come and celebrate the history we have here now."

A Vision for the Future

For Carter, TKAAM's next chapter is about creating a true cultural hub — one that blends history with innovation, accessibility with affordability, and scholarship with community connection.

"We want immersive, interactive exhibits that appeal to kids, parents, and grandparents alike," he said. "We want families to come back, not just once, but many times. And we want people across Kansas to know that African American history is Kansas history."

It's a big vision, but Carter's background in community building, his entrepreneurial drive, and his faith give him confidence. "This is more than a job," he said. "It's a calling."

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Willie Young, seated, posed for a photo with family members (L-R)

Daughter-in-law Kimmie Young, Denver; son Lavelle Young, KC; son W.D. Young, KC; son Reggie Young, Denver; son-in-law Donald T. Pear, KC; daughter Gwendolyn R. Pearl, KC; daughter Michelle Young, Atlanta; and granddaughter Jaynaye Cobbs, D.C. Not pictured: daughter Vera Little, Detroit; son Willie Gene Young, deceased; Calvin Young, deceased; daughter-in-law Barbara Young, KC; and a host of grands and great grands.

A Community Icon: Willie Young Celebrates 99 Years

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

Nearly a century of life and service was on full display last month when family, friends and neighbors gathered to honor Willie Young's 99th birthday at Nefertiti's Banquet and Ballroom on Quindaro Boulevard in Kansas City, KS. They celebrated not only his milestone age but also the influence he has had on generations of KCK residents.

From Arkansas to Kansas City

Born Aug. 16, 1926, in Dumas, AR, Young moved to Kansas City in 1951 in search of steady work and a better life for his family. It was here that he and his late wife, Elgridie, put down roots and began building a legacy of service, mentorship, and hospitality.

Work, Barbering & Community Service

Young spent more than three decades at the Kansas City Railroad Terminal in Union Station, where he advanced from the mailroom into supervisory roles. At the same time, his home basement became his barbershop and a community staple, where children and adults alike could get a haircut for a quarter — or for free, if they couldn't pay.

That barbershop became much more than a place for trims. Conversations in the chair often turned into lessons about

staying in school, avoiding trouble, and pursuing bigger dreams.

Mentorship & Activism

In the 1960s and '70s, Young also stood alongside civil rights activists pushing for better educational opportunities for Black youth. He believed education was the surest path forward.

Young opened his backyard as a makeshift playground. Children from several blocks away would gather there to play basketball and other games under his watchful eye.

"He was the neighborhood dad," community members said — a mentor, role model, and advocate rolled into one.

A Family That Shared the Mission

Young's home was always open. Relatives and friends who needed a place to stay found one, rent-free, until they could get on their feet. Elgridie, remembered fondly for her cookies and home-cooked meals, made sure no visitor left hungry. Together, the couple's hospitality became part of their community service.

Celebrating a Living Legacy

At 99, Young remains a living example of perseverance and service. His story is one not only of personal achievement but also of how one person's consistent generosity can ripple through a community.

Block Party Honors A. Price Woodard Neighbors for Beautification Win

The residents of Wichita's **A. Price Woodard Neighborhood Association** on Volutsia, from 13th to 9th Street, were treated to a block party on Sept. 4 in recognition of winning the association's **Prize Patrol Community Revitalization and Beautification Project** contest.

The celebration, held from 6 to 9 p.m., featured music from DJ Don, dinner, and door prizes. Judges determined the winning blocks based on the number of homes with **well-maintained yards, tidy curbsides, and overall cleanliness.**

"Your effort to participate was evident," said **Juanita Ridge**, president of the neighborhood association.

Neighborhoods with cared-for lawns, trimmed curbsides, and free of trash don't just look good — they bring real benefits. Well-maintained blocks help **preserve property values, build neighborhood pride, and even deter crime** by signaling that residents are active and engaged in their community.

A part of the party was connecting neighborhood members to the "Neighborhood Movement (TNM) an organization to build stronger neighborhoods by getting to know your closest neighbors. By building small, real relationships, from there, — TNM philosophy is — "larger change naturally grows." Find out more at WECAREICT.org

Dr. Harrison Black, College Hill Pediatric Dentistry helped sponsor the party. Wichita District One City Council candidate LaWanda DeShazar paid for yard signs recognizing the street as the winner of the beautification award.

In addition, City Council candidate Joseph Shepard and Councilmember Dalton Glasscock also stopped by the party.



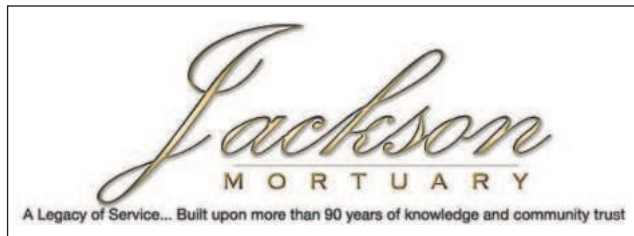
(L) Ada Barlow-Thompson with The Neighborhood Movement and Jaï'Malik Gist-Hogue with Simmons Bank with Juanita Ridge, A Price Woodard Neighborhood Association President.



Ms. Phyllis gave the organization permission to have the block party in front of her well groomed duplex.



Price Woodard Neighborhood residents on Volutsia from 9th to 13th were treated to a block party in recognition of winning the association's Prize Patrol Community Revitalization and Beautification Project contest.



Ms. Bennie D. Reagans, 83

Aug. 14, 1942 - Sept. 17, 2025

Service will be held at 11 a.m. Fri., Oct. 10, at Tabernacle Bible Church, 1817 N. Volutsia.

Margaret Ann Murray, 74

Dec. 5, 1950 - Sept. 15, 2025

Service will be held at 11 a.m. Sat., Oct. 11, at Dellrose United Methodist Church, 1502 N. Dellrose.

Charlotte Washington, 81

Sept. 19, 1943 - Sept. 12, 2025

Service was held Sept. 26 at Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Emmeretta Florence, 74

Aug. 29, 1951 - Sept. 9, 2025

A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. Thu., Oct. 2, at Lakeview Cemetery, 12100 E. 13th St. N.

Tracy "T.C" Collins, 62

Aug. 23, 1963 - Sept. 7, 2025

Service was held Sept. 27 at Jackson Mortuary Chapel.

Cardell Lytel DeGraftenreed, 70

Nov. 18, 1954 - Sept. 6, 2025

Service will be held at 10 a.m. Fri., Oct. 3, at Dellrose United Methodist Church, 1502 N. Dellrose.

SALES TAX, from Page 4 ↓

• **BT Washington Wheatley Townhomes** (\$1,825,130)

• **Ageless Adventures, LLC** (\$427,000, adult day services center)

• **Historic Boone Theater rehab** (\$8.7 million, 1701 E. 18th St.)

These investments represent both cultural preservation and essential services — a blend of projects aimed at strengthening the city's fabric.

Why the Transition?

City leaders say moving CCED under EDCKC is less about changing its mission than about improving how it operates. Melissa Patterson Hazley, 3rd District Councilmember, framed the shift as a way to align CCED with a broader development ecosystem.

"This transition isn't about changing the CCED program — it's about making it stronger," Patterson Hazley said. "By aligning

CCED with EDCKC's broader incentive services and development capacity while maintaining a strong partnership with City Hall, we are building a more cohesive, efficient, and responsive ecosystem for revitalizing our communities."

As administrator, EDCKC will appoint a dedicated CCED director and deploy its development team to manage implementation. That includes clearer performance metrics, stronger project tracking, and more consistent communication with developers and neighborhoods.

Why This Matters

Tracey Lewis, executive director of EDCKC, said the organization is committed to keeping the program's original goals at the forefront while ensuring projects are managed with professional oversight.

"We're honored to take



Tracey Lewis, president and CEO of the Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City, at EDCKC's offices in River Market.

(CREDIT: NIKKI OVERFELT CHIFALU / STARTLAND NEWS)

on the administration of the CCED program and help steward this important tool for community investment," Lewis said. "By aligning CCED with EDCKC's broader development efforts, we're not only enhancing efficiency — we're ensuring that projects are delivered with the transparency, equity, and impact our residents deserve."

Supporters believe the

change will bring long-term consistency to a program that has sometimes struggled with capacity. EDCKC's existing network of developers, legal advisors, and financial experts positions it to guide projects more effectively, while ongoing partnerships with technical advisors will continue to shape investment decisions.

Looking Ahead

For residents in Kansas City's east side, the stakes are high. The neighborhoods targeted by CCED represent some of the city's richest cultural history and also some of its most persistent economic challenges.

By tying the program's resources to EDCKC's infrastructure, officials hope the result will be more than just new buildings. The goal, they say, is to create a more equitable, transparent, and community-driven process that can truly uplift "both the people and the places at the heart of Kansas City."

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Choir, from Page 12 ↓

"It really appealed to me," Miller said. "It was peace — it just went through your soul when he was singing it. I think the time when Jesse would get in the middle of it, it just kind of consumed him and he really felt what he was saying and what we really loved about that is when Jesse got into a song it was just him."

Both Miller and Stone remember recording the lively "Battle of Jericho."

"Betty's brother, John Johnson, known as 'Sonny,' sang the lead," Miller said. "That was a lot of fun, and the walls came tumbling, tumbling down!"

The men start out singing, "Have You Heard About Joshua," and then the women responded, "At the Battle of Jericho!" The choir would sing softly and then crescendo.

"As the voices changed, everybody hit their notes," Stone

said. "We weren't caught up in the technology of producing the song, we just sang out of our hearts because we believed in what we were singing."

"Everybody was so dedicated to the choir. It wasn't a frivolous thing because sometimes we sang ourselves to tears."

"The community really liked it," Stone remembered. "I think we had albums across the country. Everybody had one. St. Paul did grow. There were people who were coming, and they wanted to join the choir, and it was a great time."

"I think that was one of the greater moments in St. Paul. We ceased to become a choir, and we were just an instrument of God to sing like that. The songs that we sang had meaning so it wasn't, 'This was my song or your song.' The choir was so together, and I think that our uplift of each other had a lot to do with it."

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