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Volume 33, No. 10 · communityvoiceks.com · Friday, May 22, 2026

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VOLUME 33, NUMBER 10
FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026

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Ben Crump in Topeka: The Struggle Is Not the Problem — Surrender Is

Civil rights attorney tells Topeka audience the legacy of Brown v. Board is about ordinary people refusing to surrender in the struggle for equality.

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

As attacks on voting rights, diversity programs and long-standing civil rights protections continue across the country, attorney Ben Crump offered a message in Topeka that was less about despair — and more about endurance.

Speaking at the 72nd anniversary celebration of Brown v. Board of Education, Crump reminded the audience that the landmark case was not built by famous leaders alone, but by what he called "extraordinary ordinary sisters and brothers" — everyday people who kept fighting, even when the odds were against them.

The theme of this year's event focused on the power of collective action and the many cases and families whose combined efforts became the historic Supreme Court ruling that ended legal school segregation.

Crump said the true victory was not simply the final court ruling, but the willingness of ordinary people to continue showing up and pushing forward.

"The victory is when we fight," Crump told the crowd. "Frederick Douglass said, 'Without struggle there could be no progress.'"

He urged listeners not to become discouraged by today's political climate or recent court decisions weakening civil rights protections and voting rights laws.

"Don't get depressed because of the struggle," Crump said. "Don't get overwhelmed because of the struggle."

Instead, he challenged the audience to remember what earlier generations endured — slavery, lynchings, violence and legalized discrimination — and yet



Attorney Ben Crump delivers an empowering message during the 72nd anniversary celebration of Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka on May 17.

still refused to surrender.

"Our forefathers had it worse than us," Crump said in essence. "But they kept fighting anyway."

He said the lesson of Brown v. Board is not that progress comes easily, but that change happens because ordinary people continue getting up every day ready to struggle again.

"As long as we're struggling, as long as we don't surrender, as long as we don't wave the white flag every day and get up ready to struggle again and ready to fight, that means our children have a better future tomorrow," he said.

Then, in one of the speech's most powerful moments, Crump imagined what today's opponents of equality

must think when they look at Black Americans continuing to organize, vote, protest and push forward despite generations of oppression.

He said he wants "the enemies of equality, the powers that occupy the White House and the Congress and the Senate and the Supreme Court" to wake up every morning and say, "I'll be damned. After all we did to them, they still get up and fight yet again."

Near the end of his remarks, Crump returned to the spirit of the families behind Brown v. Board, saying they were ordinary people who simply refused to quit.

"Every morning," he said, "they got up and said, 'We fight yet again.'"

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

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: Published BiWeekly
\$35.95/yr. Sedgwick County
\$48.95/yr. Outside Sedgwick County
\$73.99/yr. Outside Kansas

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Keisha Lance Bottoms Advances in Georgia Governor's Race, Faces Tough November Test

Former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms won Georgia's Democratic gubernatorial primary Tuesday night, advancing to the general election after capturing more than 50% of the vote in a three-candidate field and avoiding a runoff.

The victory makes Bottoms only the second Black woman in U.S. history to win a major-party nomination for governor. The first was fellow Georgian Stacey Abrams, who won the Democratic nomination twice, in 2018 and 2022, but lost both general elections to Republican Gov. Brian Kemp.

Now Democrats are watching closely to see whether Bottoms can break through where Abrams could not. Political observers say Georgia has changed significantly over the past decade, with explosive growth around Atlanta, rising voter participation among younger and more diverse voters and



Keisha Lance Bottoms

Democratic statewide victories in recent federal races. Still, Republicans continue to dominate most statewide offices, especially in nonpresidential election cycles.

Bottoms is also viewed differently than Abrams politically. Abrams became a national figure tied closely to voting rights activism and Democratic organizing. Bottoms, while also a high-profile Democrat, is often perceived as more of an executive-style candidate because of her experience as Atlanta mayor and later as a senior advisor in the Biden White House.

Her chances may also depend on the Republican runoff between Lt. Gov. Burt Jones and businessman Rick Jackson, which will determine who Democrats face in November.

Google Agrees to \$50 Million Settlement in Black Employee Discrimination Lawsuit

Google has agreed to pay \$50 million to settle a racial discrimination lawsuit brought by Black former employees who alleged the company engaged in unfair hiring, pay and promotion practices.

The lawsuit, filed in 2022 by former employee April Curley and later granted class-action status, accused Google of steering Black workers into lower-level, lower-paying jobs and creating a hostile work environment for employees who spoke out about discrimination. The case also alleged Black job candidates were judged through racial stereotypes and considered not "Googly" enough during hiring decisions.

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who represented the plaintiffs, called the settlement "a significant step toward holding one of the world's most powerful companies accountable."

Google denied wrongdoing and said it remains committed to fair hiring and pay practices. The settlement, first announced in 2025 and finalized this week, does not include an admission of liability. However, it includes commitments to conduct pay equity analyses,



Ketanji Brown Jackson

increase pay transparency and limit mandatory arbitration in employment disputes through at least August 2026.

Ketanji Brown Jackson Warns Supreme Court Risks Losing Public Trust

Ketanji Brown Jackson warned Monday that the U.S. Supreme Court risks losing

public trust after a recent voting rights decision that critics say weakened protections for Black voters.

Speaking at the American Law Institute in Washington, D.C., Jackson said the judiciary depends on public confidence and must avoid appearing political. "Public confidence is really all the judiciary has," Jackson said, adding that courts must act in ways that strengthen trust in the legal system.

Polling in recent years has shown declining public confidence in the Supreme Court. Chief Justice John Roberts has also pushed back against perceptions that the justices act as political figures.

Conservative justices defended the ruling, saying allowing elections to proceed under maps found unconstitutional would have created even greater legal problems.

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Ohaebosim Pick Adds New Energy, Strategy to Crowded Kansas Governor's Race

Holscher's selection of Wichita lawmaker KC Ohaebosim strengthens geographic reach, generational diversity and minority representation on Democratic ticket.

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

When Democratic gubernatorial candidate Sen. Cindy Holscher selected Wichita State Rep. KC Ohaebosim as her running mate for lieutenant governor, the move immediately reshaped the dynamics of Kansas' crowded Democratic primary.

The pairing did more than unite two longtime legislative allies. It connected Kansas' two largest population centers — the Kansas City metro and Wichita — while also adding generational diversity, geographic balance and racial representation to the ticket.

At 57, Holscher represents experience and a familiar face in Kansas Democratic politics. Ohaebosim, 47, brings a younger voice, urban energy and the possibility of energizing Black, immigrant and younger voters Democrats increasingly need to turn out in stronger numbers.

For many in Wichita, Ohaebosim's rise has been years in the making.

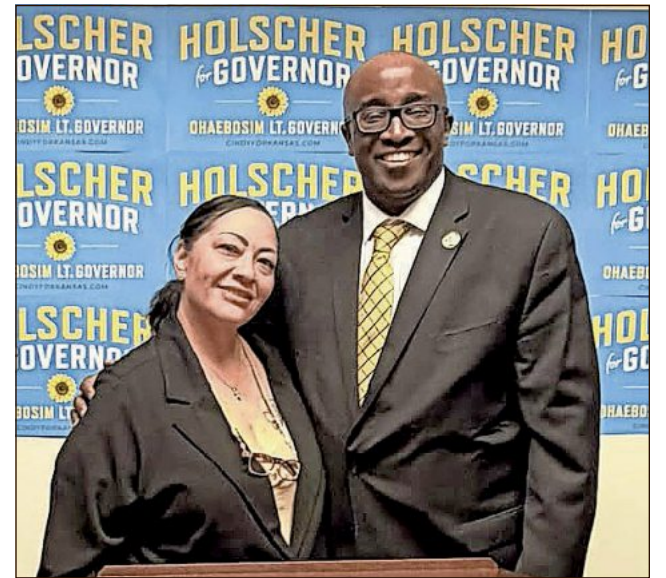
Long before reaching the Statehouse, he was active in local politics, working on campaigns to help elect local candidates and building connections throughout Sedgwick County politics. He unsuccessfully ran twice for the Kansas Senate before winning election to the Kansas House in 2016 at age 37.

Since then, he has been re-elected seven times to represent the 89th District, which covers a large portion of northeast Wichita, generally north of 21st Street to 53rd Street and east of I-135 to Woodlawn.

Ohaebosim's story also reflects the changing face of Kansas.

His parents immigrated to Wichita from Nigeria. His father completed part of his residency in Kansas City and moved to Wichita, where he established a medical practice in northeast Wichita.

Over a 41-year career, he delivered more than 1,000 babies. Ohaebosim's



State Rep. KC Ohaebosim has endorsed Carol Brewer to succeed him in the Kansas House's 89th District seat. Brewer has already filed to run for the northeast Wichita district, which Ohaebosim has represented since 2017.

mother worked as a nurse.

Ohaebosim said watching his parents care for people helped shape his view of public service.

"My family loves Kansas," Ohaebosim said during an interview with The Community Voice. "A lot of citizens didn't have healthcare or health insurance, but we still cared for them. That was something that really touched me."

Ohaebosim graduated from Wichita Heights High School. He later attended Wichita State University and earned a business administration degree from Newman University in 2005. While in college, he joined Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity.

The Holscher campaign says Ohaebosim's background, legislative experience and

relationships across Kansas made him an attractive choice for the ticket.

The two lawmakers entered the Legislature together in 2016 during the political fallout of former Gov. Sam Brownback's tax-cut experiment and spent years working side-by-side in Topeka.

Ohaebosim said the two shared office suites for four years before Holscher was elected to the Kansas Senate, giving them time to build both a political and personal working relationship.

"We both came in when the Brownback tax experiment had really crippled our state," Ohaebosim said. "We reversed the Brownback tax cuts. We started rebuilding our bond rating. We started solving problems for the people of Kansas."

According to the campaign, Ohaebosim's legislative

See **OHAEBOSIM** Page 7 →

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Democratic gubernatorial candidate Cindy Holscher



Kansas Gives Foster Youth a New Way To Choose Their *Forever Family*

The nation's first SOUL Family permanency program lets older youth in foster care choose trusted adults, leave state custody early, and build lasting support systems beyond adoption.

By Tyjuan Davis and Bonita Gooch

For decades, young people in foster care have largely faced three choices: reunite with their parents, be adopted, or remain in foster care until they age out of the system.

Now, Kansas is trying something different — and it's the first state in the nation to do it.

The new option is called SOUL Family Legal Permanency. SOUL stands for Support, Opportunity, Unity, and Legal Relationships, and the program allows youth in foster care ages 16 and older to identify the adults they trust and want as part of their permanent support system and legal family.

Instead of the system deciding where a teenager belongs, young people help define who their forever connections are.

That could mean an older sibling, a coach, teacher, mentor, aunt, former foster parent, or another trusted adult who has already shown up consistently in their life.

"It's not you telling the young person, 'You're going to live here,'" said Wichita advocate Alexandria Ware. "It's the young person telling you, 'These are my people, and this is where I feel safe and connected.'"

Ware, who spent time in foster care herself, helped advocate for the law in Kansas and has become one of the state's leading voices helping families and communities understand what this permanency option truly means.

Under the Kansas law, youth can choose one or more approved adults to become part of their SOUL Family support system. One person may serve as the residential custodian — the adult the youth lives with — while others may provide emotional support, mentorship, guidance, transportation, educational support, or simply remain a consistent lifelong connection.

For example, a 16-year-old might choose to live with an older sibling while also identifying a coach, teacher, uncle, or mentor as part of their circle of support.

Ware says SOUL Family reflects something many communities have practiced for generations — the understanding that

family and belonging are built through relationships, consistency, and care.

Through her organization, Culture Creations Inc., Ware works with foster youth on healing, identity, mentorship, and community connection. She believes those same values are at the heart of SOUL Family.

"The young person is telling us who their village is," Ware said. "Permanency is belonging. Permanency is knowing you have people who will continue to show up for you long after a case closes."

Unlike traditional foster care, the goal is not temporary placement.

The goal is lifelong connection and permanence.

Youth who choose the SOUL Family option are able to leave foster care with a legal support system they helped create, while still maintaining healthy relationships with siblings, biological family members, and other important people in their lives when appropriate.

Kansas implemented the permanency option in 2024, becoming the first state in the nation to do so. Since then, nearly 50 families statewide have begun using the model to create permanent, youth-centered support systems.

Ware believes awareness is one of the biggest challenges right now — not because people are unwilling to step up, but because many youth and adults still do not realize this option exists.

"I think one of the biggest struggles is helping people understand what SOUL Family really is," she said. "This is about making sure young people know they do not have to walk through life alone."

While the state offers support services to help families during the transition, Ware emphasizes that the heart of SOUL Family is not financial assistance — it is relationships, commitment, and community.

For some youth, those relationships may look like a parent. For others, it may feel more like an aunt, uncle, older sibling, coach, or lifelong mentor.

What matters most is that the young person feels chosen, supported, and connected to people who will remain in their life far beyond foster care.



Kansas' new SOUL Family permanency option allows older youth in foster care to choose trusted adults — such as an older sibling, family friend, teacher, mentor, or former foster parent — to become part of their long-term support system and legal family.



Alexandria Ware, a former foster youth and Wichita advocate, helped advocate for Kansas' SOUL Family permanency law and has become one of the state's leading voices helping families and communities understand the new option for older youth in foster care.

KC Honors *Black Economic Union* as Summit Revives Focus on “Green Power”

Nearly 60 years after helping launch redevelopment in Kansas City’s urban core, BEU leaders are working to reconnect athletes, investment and community development.

When the Black Economic Union was recognized earlier this month by the Kansas City, Missouri City Council, the proclamation honored nearly six decades of affordable housing, Black business development, community investment and redevelopment work in the historic 18th & Vine District.

The recognition, which included the presentation of a city proclamation, was led by Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks-Shaw, who praised the organization’s long-standing role in shaping economic development in Kansas City’s Black community.

“The organization stands as a powerful testament to visionary leadership, community partnership, and the belief that economic opportunity strengthens entire communities,” Parks-Shaw said.

But the recognition only scratched the surface of the organization’s history — and its impact on Kansas City.

From Civil Rights to “Green Power”

Long before the Jazz District Redevelopment Corporation was formed in 1997, the Black Economic Union was already trying to turn Black power into what its founders called “green power.”

The organization traces its roots to the historic 1967 Cleveland Summit organized by former NFL star Jim Brown. Brown brought

together some of the nation’s top Black athletes — including Muhammad Ali, Bill Russell and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — to support Ali after he refused induction into the Vietnam War draft.

But the gathering also became a conversation about economic empowerment and “green power” at a time when much of the Civil Rights Movement was still focused on Black power in the form of voting rights, addressing segregation and access.

Out of that movement came the Negro Industrial and Economic Union, later renamed the Black Economic Union. Kansas City became one of the organization’s earliest chapters in 1968, led in large part by former Kansas City Chiefs running back Curtis McClinton, who was in attendance at the 1967 summit.

McClinton, a Wichita native, brought more than football fame to the Black Economic Union. The former Kansas City Chiefs running back became the first president of the Kansas City chapter and played a major role in shaping its early development vision. McClinton later built a career in banking, real estate and economic development, helping found Kansas City’s first Black-owned bank, Swope Parkway Bank, and later serving in national development roles with the Department of Commerce, Amtrak and the Washington, D.C.

mayor’s office — positions that helped him continue guiding and supporting BEU’s growth long after his football career ended.

Nearly 60 years later, Kansas City’s chapter is believed to be the only continuously active BEU chapter remaining in the country and its influence on Kansas City runs far deeper than many residents realize.

Building 18th & Vine Before It Was Trendy

In 1979, the organization developed the office and commercial buildings at the northwest corner of 18th and Paseo, including the buildings now housing the Urban League of Greater Kansas City and Full Employment Council offices.

It also developed warehouse space east of the former Attucks School building, now home to the Zhou B Art Center campus.

That same year, BEU purchased the historic Lincoln Building at 18th and Vine and began renovations on the structure.

The organization’s work in the district was never just about entertainment.

Former BEU director Chester Thompson said during a 2012 interview the goal was always broader community development.

“We’re going to develop a community,” Thompson said. “Not just an entertainment district.”

That vision included housing, commercial



Members of the Black Economic Union board stand with Dr. Marguerite McClinton-Stoglin, daughter of Curtis McClinton, and Kim Brown, daughter of Jim Brown, during “The Next Play: BEU Ownership & Investment Summit” in Kansas City. The summit revisited the organization’s nearly 60-year legacy of economic development and investment in Kansas City’s urban core. (Left to Right) Jim Coleman; Eric Hawthorne; Charles Parker, treasurer; Martinez Denmon, secretary; Cathy Brodhurst, president; Kim Brown, Marguerite McClinton-Stoglin, and Vewiser Dixon, board adviser.

development, small businesses and neighborhood investment stretching south from 18th & Vine to 29th Street.

Today, that vision is firmly taking shape on the north end of the district, where housing, restaurants, museums, offices and entertainment venues now create steady activity. But much of their vision for South Vine — the area south of the railroad tracks to 29th Street — was cleared but remains mostly undeveloped.

Housing, Businesses and Community Development

Still, the body of their work is quite impressive.

Over the decades, BEU helped facilitate development of 635 affordable multifamily housing units, 320 elderly housing units, 85 single-family homes and more than 720,000 square feet of office, retail and commercial space in Kansas City’s urban core.

Among its major housing



A group of prominent Black athletes gathers in Cleveland on June 4, 1967, during the historic Cleveland Summit organized by former NFL star Jim Brown. The gathering, held in support of boxer Muhammad Ali after he refused induction into the Vietnam War draft, also helped launch conversations about Black economic empowerment that eventually led to the formation of the Black Economic Union. Seated in front, from left, are Bill Russell, Muhammad Ali, Jim Brown and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Standing behind them are Carl Stokes, Walter Beach, Bobby Mitchell, Sid Williams, Curtis McClinton, Willie Davis, Jim Shorter and John Wooten. (ROBERT ABBOTT SENGSTACKE/GETTY IMAGES)

developments were MLK Court Apartments at 1940 Woodland, completed in 2004 near 25th and Euclid, and Basie See **BEU Page 7** →

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OHAEBOSIM, from Page 4 ↓

priorities closely align with Holscher's platform focused on affordability, healthcare access, public education and worker protections. The campaign platform includes expanding Medicaid, increasing education funding, raising the minimum wage, reducing property taxes and legalizing medical marijuana. Ohaebosim repeatedly framed those issues as policies that would help all Kansans, while also addressing disparities that often hit minority

communities hardest.

"Kansas today still has not expanded Medicaid," Ohaebosim said. "Minorities are often the ones without access to healthcare. But expanding Medicaid benefits everybody."

Campaign officials also believe Ohaebosim brings added energy and visibility to the race.

Peter Adams, a senior staffer for the Holscher campaign, said Ohaebosim's candidacy represents "hope" and the "American dream" for Black and immigrant communities

while also showing young Kansans what is possible.

"When they see KC Ohaebosim, they see hope, they see the American dream, they see character, honesty, integrity and empathy," Adams said.

Kansas has never elected a Black lieutenant governor, and in a competitive Democratic primary, Ohaebosim's selection immediately created buzz among many Black Democrats and younger voters.

"I think I'm going to bring a lot of excitement this cycle,"

Ohaebosim said.

Still, Ohaebosim said he does not want voters focused solely on the historic nature of the candidacy.

"What I want people to see is that no matter your background, you can aspire to be anything you want to be," he said.

For Holscher, the choice ultimately may come down to trust as much as strategy.

"We've been working together a very long time," Ohaebosim said. "We know how to solve problems together."

BEU, from Page 6 ↓

2010 to provide affordable housing in the Jazz District area.

BEU was also one of the earliest Community Development Corporations in the country, a concept that gained national attention during the Kennedy administration as a way to address urban poverty and neighborhood decline.

BEU's work is credited with encouraging the growth of other community development corporations and non-profit development work in Kansas City, including efforts connected to Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center and Swope Health.

Both organizations became more than health centers, expanding into housing and commercial development aimed at strengthening surrounding neighborhoods. Swope Health eventually spun off Community Builders, one of the largest CDCs in the country.

While the pace of development slowed in recent years, BEU has continued work in the areas of affordable housing and business and workforce development. Their work also includes



Affordable housing developments such as Basie Court Apartments reflect the Black Economic Union's decades-long focus on housing, economic development and community investment in Kansas City's urban core.

financial literacy programming, youth engagement initiatives and efforts including their Youth Ambassadors program.

Eric Hawthorne Sr., the organization's director of economic development, said BEU remains focused on helping residents build long-term economic stability.

The Unfinished Vision for South Vine

BEU's influence can still be seen in current redevelopment efforts around the Jazz District.

In the early 2000s, Bank of America partnered on plans for a massive redevelopment of South Vine that would have brought new housing and mixed-use development across nearly 100 acres.

When those plans collapsed, longtime BEU board adviser Vewiser Dixon acquired control of large portions of the land through negotiations and redevelopment agreements.

Earlier this year, Dixon announced a new partnership and updated plans for redeveloping the historic "castle" property near 20th and Vine into The Jazonian — a proposed boutique hotel, event center and winery that continues the redevelopment vision BEU began decades ago.

Summit Revives Push for Black Investment

That project was among several highlighted during last week's "The Next Play: BEU Ownership &

Investment Summit."

Attending the summit, almost 60 years after the original one their fathers attended, were Dr. Marguerite McClinton-Stoglin, daughter of Curtis McClinton, and Kim Brown, daughter of Jim Brown.

Together, along with John Wooten — who attended the original Cleveland Summit and later served in BEU leadership for decades — they are working to refocus attention on BEU, its legacy of economic development and its original push to get professional athletes investing financially in the growth of urban communities.

A proposed Enterprise Impact Capital Opportunity Zone Fund was introduced during the summit as a way to attract investment into Black-led development projects along the Prospect Corridor and South Vine areas. Organizers hope the fund can attract investments from Black athletes with a goal of building "green power" in Black communities.

Nearly 60 years after Black athletes gathered in Cleveland to support Muhammad Ali and discuss economic independence, BEU's leaders are still chasing the same goal — turning influence, ownership and investment into long-term community wealth.



Protesters with People Not Politicians rallied outside of the Missouri Supreme Court ahead of the ruling on Missouri's new congressional districts. (RYLEIGH HINDLE/THE BEACON)

Missouri's Redistricting Fight *Isn't Over*

Here's Why the August Primary Is Still Surrounded by Uncertainty

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

Missouri's congressional redistricting battle may look settled after the Missouri Supreme Court upheld the state's new congressional map last week.

But for voters in Kansas City — where the new map splits the city into three congressional districts — the legal and political fight is far from over.

In fact, election officials across Missouri are still struggling to determine exactly which district lines should govern the Aug. 4 primary election, while a separate lawsuit now accuses state officials of intentionally delaying decisions long enough for elections to move forward under the disputed map.

At the center of the fight are two overlapping questions:

First, is the new congressional map constitutional?

Second, even if it is constitutional, do Missouri voters still have the right to stop it through the state's referendum process?

The answers have become tangled in a series of lawsuits, court

rulings and procedural delays that even some election officials say are difficult to fully untangle.

How Missouri Got Here

The fight began after Missouri Republicans approved a new congressional map during a 2025 special session aimed at strengthening GOP power in Congress.

The new map splits Kansas City among three congressional districts instead of largely keeping the city together in one district. Critics argue the changes weaken Kansas City's political influence and dilute Black and urban voting strength.

Opponents challenged the map in court while a coalition called People Not Politicians launched a referendum petition drive seeking to place the issue before Missouri voters. The group submitted more than 300,000 signatures in December.

The Missouri Supreme Court Upheld the Map

Last week, the Missouri Supreme Court ruled the congressional map itself could remain in place.

The court rejected arguments

that the map violated constitutional standards for compactness and contiguous districts. The court also said challengers failed to prove the districts clearly violated the Missouri Constitution.

In its ruling, the court emphasized that congressional map drawing is largely a political decision left to lawmakers rather than judges.

That ruling was viewed as a major victory for Missouri Republicans.

But it did not settle the separate referendum fight.

Why the Referendum Fight Is Still Active

The major unresolved issue now is whether Missouri Secretary of State Denny Hoskins will certify the referendum petition for the November ballot.

Under Missouri law, Hoskins has until primary election day to officially decide whether the petition has enough valid signatures and whether the referendum is legally allowed.

Hoskins has publicly indicated he intends to use most or all of the time available to make that decision.

That timing has created enormous uncertainty for election officials.

Under Missouri's Constitution, referendum petitions are supposed to suspend laws from taking effect until voters decide the issue.

But in last week's ruling, the Missouri Supreme Court said that suspension does not officially occur until the secretary of state certifies the petition.

At the same time, however, the court also said that if the petition is eventually certified, the suspension could apply retroactively back to Dec. 9, the date the signatures were originally submitted.

That legal distinction has become the center of the current controversy.

Why Election Officials Are Concerned

The possibility of retroactive suspension means Missouri could conduct the August primary election under the new congressional districts only to later face legal arguments that the districts should never have been used in the first place.

County clerks and election

officials say that uncertainty makes it difficult to prepare ballots, assign voters to districts and finalize precinct maps.

Kansas City election officials have said the new map affects more than 100,000 voters and requires extensive precinct-by-precinct review because some district lines split existing precincts and neighborhoods.

Boone County Clerk Brianna Lennon publicly announced she would not update voter rolls until Hoskins officially decides the referendum question, arguing the court ruling left the legal status of the districts uncertain.

Other local election officials have also expressed frustration over what they describe as limited guidance from the secretary of state's office.

Why Critics Believe the Delay Matters

Opponents of the map argue Hoskins' decision to delay his ruling to the last possible day — primary day — allows Missouri Republicans to move the election

See **FIGHT** Page 10 →

A STRATEGY TO FIGHT BACK

From Kansas City to Alabama, organizers said rebuilding Black political power will require sustained voter turnout, local organizing, coalition building and renewed focus on state and local elections.

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

What unfolded this weekend was far larger than a march in Alabama. From Kansas City to Montgomery, Selma and communities across the country, civil rights groups launched what organizers called a national Voting Rights Day of Action — a coordinated effort aimed at warning Black communities and their allies that the fight over political representation has entered a new and dangerous phase.

The largest gatherings were intentionally centered in Alabama, where organizers planned major marches and rallies in Montgomery and Selma as the focal points of the national day of action. Organizers said the South was chosen because it remains home to a majority of Black Americans and many of the nation's majority-Black voting districts.

Speakers repeatedly described the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling weakening parts of the Voting Rights Act as more than a legal setback. Many framed it as a turning point that could reverse decades of gains won during the Civil Rights era.

Civil rights groups Fair Fight Action and Black Voters Matter Fund estimate Republicans could potentially gain more than 190 seats in Southern state legislatures if majority-Black districts are weakened or eliminated in future redistricting battles.

At the local level, advocates warn the effects could extend to city councils, county commissions and school boards if district maps are redrawn in ways that dilute Black voting strength or divide historically Black neighborhoods among several districts.

Sen. Raphael Warnock called the current moment “Jim Crow in new clothes.”

Rev. Bernice King described the ruling as “a shameless assault on Black political power.”

But organizers also made clear they do not believe symbolic marches alone will

stop what is happening.

“**This is a call to action,**” said **U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell** during the Montgomery rally.

Throughout the weekend, leaders repeatedly stressed the need for sustained organizing back home in communities across the country — not simply large demonstrations tied to national moments.

The message coming from many organizers was that communities must now focus on rebuilding long-term political infrastructure: knocking doors, talking to neighbors, registering voters, increasing turnout and staying engaged in local politics between presidential elections.

Underlying that urgency is a growing concern among activists that Black voter participation has declined in many areas since the record turnout years surrounding President Barack Obama’s campaigns.

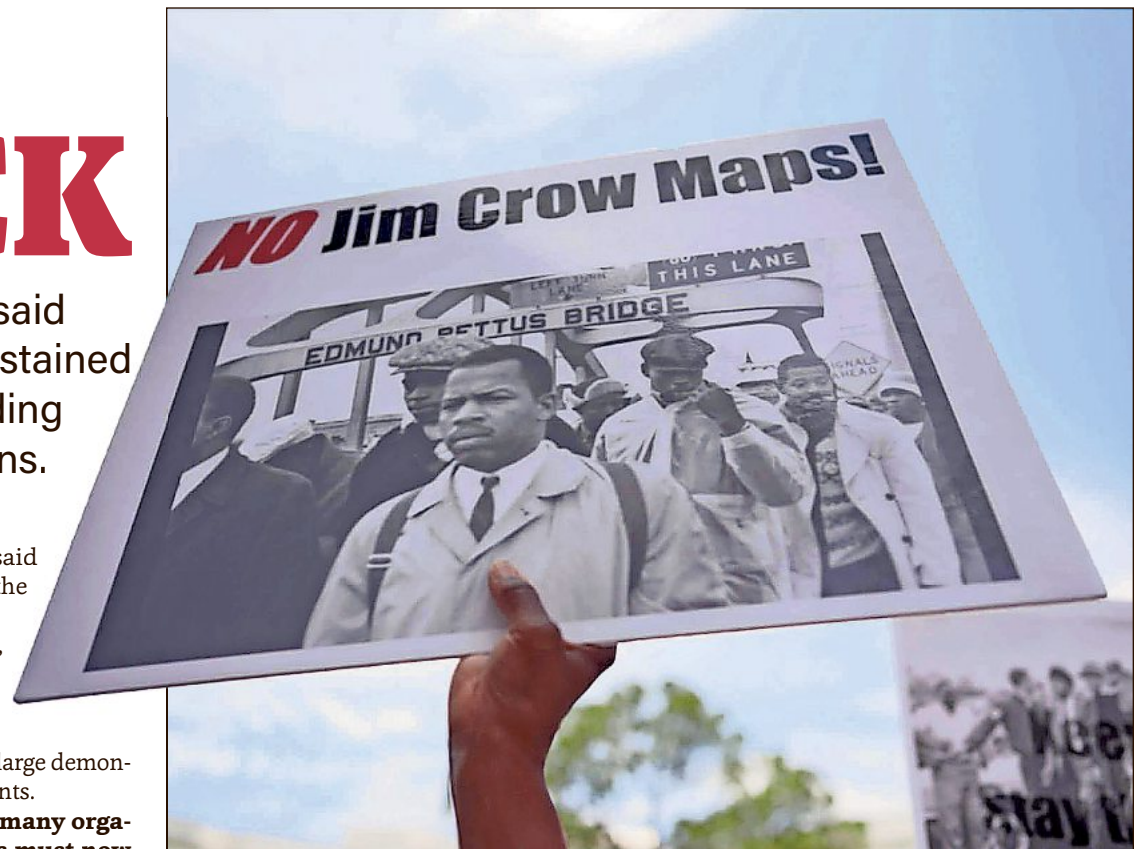
Several leaders argued the current redistricting battles are partly the result of long-term conservative gains in state legislatures across the South and other states — victories that gave Republicans control over map drawing and judicial appointments over the past decade.

For many organizers, **rebuilding power now means focusing not only on Congress or presidential elections, but also on governors’ races, state legislatures, county governments, school boards and judicial races that often receive far less public attention.**

The emphasis reflects a broader strategic shift underway within parts of the modern voting rights movement.

Rather than relying mainly on one-time protests or court victories, organizers increasingly appear focused on long-view organizing similar to the strategy that sustained the original Civil Rights Movement for decades.

NAACP President Derrick Johnson reminded audiences that even after the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954, it



Protesters at the national Voting Rights Day of Action rally in Montgomery, Alabama, hold signs comparing new redistricting efforts to “Jim Crow maps” as civil rights groups warn recent court rulings could weaken Black political representation unless we ORGANIZE, MOBILIZE AND VOTE

still took years of organizing, legal battles and political pressure before meaningful desegregation occurred across much of the South.

The implication was clear: **leaders do not expect quick victories** now either.

Instead, many appear focused on **building durable networks capable of sustaining activism over years — and possibly generations.**

Organizers pointed to signs that this process may already be beginning. Johnson referenced a Mississippi organizing call that reportedly drew 8,000 participants, while activists described crowded statehouse hearings in Louisiana and Tennessee during recent redistricting battles.

Another major theme emerging from the weekend was that Black communities cannot carry the burden alone.

Leaders increasingly framed the issue as a broader democratic struggle affecting workers’ rights, civil liberties and political participation for multiple communities.

“**It’s not a Black problem,**” Johnson said. “**That’s an American problem.**”

That broader coalition-building effort was visible throughout the rallies, which included labor unions, clergy members, progressive organizers and multiracial advocacy

groups alongside traditional civil rights organizations.

At the same time, legal fights are continuing.

Alabama plaintiff Shalela Dowdy, who is involved in the federal court challenge over the state’s congressional maps, told rallygoers the fight would continue “inside and outside of the courtroom.” Activists expect the ongoing legal battle could eventually return to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Still, many leaders appeared to acknowledge that lawsuits alone will not determine the future.

For veterans like Kirk Carrington, 75, who marched during Bloody Sunday as a teenager, the painful reality is that many of the same battles from the 1960s are resurfacing again.

“It’s sad that it’s continuing after 60-plus-odd years that we are still fighting for the same thing we fought for back then,” Carrington said.

But organizers also insisted the next chapter will depend on whether communities remain engaged after the marches end — not just showing up for a single rally, but rebuilding sustained political power block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood and election by election.

FIGHT, from Page 8 ↓

process forward under the new map before courts can fully resolve whether the referendum should have suspended the law months ago.

The strategy, critics argue, may be less about ultimately winning every legal argument and more about pushing the election process so far forward that courts become reluctant to disrupt it.

Once candidates have filed, ballots are printed, absentee voting begins and

primary elections are completed, courts historically become much more cautious about ordering major election changes because of the confusion and disruption it could create for voters and local election systems.

That is one reason opponents accuse Hoskins and Missouri Attorney General Catherine Hanaway of intentionally slowing the process.

A new lawsuit filed this week by People Not Politicians accuses both officials of acting in bad faith

by delaying certification and pressuring local election officials to move ahead using the new districts.

Republicans, meanwhile, argue the new map is currently lawful, the Missouri Supreme Court has already upheld it and Hoskins is simply operating within the timeline provided under state law.

What Happens Next

At this point, the congressional map remains legally in effect because the

referendum petition has not yet been certified.

But the legal fight over the referendum itself is continuing.

The new lawsuit asks a judge to force Hoskins to make a certification decision before the Aug. 4 primary election.

No timeline has been announced for when a judge may rule on that request.

However, because the case directly affects Missouri's election calendar, pressure is growing for courts to act quickly as local officials approach deadlines for ballot preparation and voter assignment changes.

For now, Missouri voters — especially those in Kansas City — remain caught in a legal and political battle that could continue right up to the primary election itself.

Sources: *Missouri Independent*



Leola Brown Montgomery

Brown v. Board Widow Celebrated at 105 During Topeka Anniversary Event

At 105 years old, Leola Brown Montgomery still draws smiles, applause and amazement everywhere she goes.

Montgomery, the widow of Rev. Oliver Brown — the lead plaintiff in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education case — attended the 72nd anniversary

celebration banquet in Topeka on May 17, where the audience rose together to sing "Happy Birthday" in honor of her 105th birthday.

Asked how she is doing at 105, Montgomery smiled and answered simply: "I don't have any aches and pains. I just move slow."



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Jewel McLaurian Celebrates 102 Years

Surrounded by church family and loved ones, Jewel McLaurian marked an extraordinary milestone—her 102nd birthday—on March 19.

Following Sunday service at St. Paul AME Church, members of the congregation gathered to celebrate McLaurian, honoring a life rooted in education, service, and faith.

A lifelong educator, McLaurian dedicated her career to shaping young minds in Wichita, teaching at Little Elementary School and Woodman Elementary School. Her commitment to education extended beyond the classroom. Alongside her late husband, Julius McLaurian, an elementary school principal, she helped launch a tutoring program at St. Paul AME Church—continuing a shared mission to support

students and families in the community.

Now at 102, McLaurian’s legacy continues through her family. She is the mother of two children, Dr. Marsha Butler and Michael McLaurian, and a proud matriarch to six grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

The birthday celebration brought together multiple generations, including a special moment with her 91-year-old sister, Bettie Lewallen, as well as children and great-grandchildren who gathered to honor her life and legacy.

At St. Paul, where she has poured so much of herself into others, the celebration reflected the deep impact of a woman whose life has been defined by service, education, and enduring faith.



Jewel McLaurian celebrates her 102nd birthday surrounded by grandchildren and great-grandchildren, reflecting a legacy that spans generations.

Celebrating a Special Birthday?

Reach out to us about coverage. Email guillory@tcvpub.com with photos and some information about the celebration.

What do we consider a special birthday? 50, 75, 80, 85 and any year 90 or over. If we’ve covered your birthday the previous year, you’re not eligible for the next year unless you’re 100 or over.

Make sure to include a closeup shot of the honoree. You can include additional photos but we will only include them if space allows.

Kansas City Celebrates Alvin Brooks’ Legacy at 94th Birthday Tribute

Civic leaders, family, and community members honored Brooks’ decades of service during a celebration hosted by Rockhurst University and Metropolitan Community College.

By Voice News Service

For nearly 70 years, if something important was happening in Kansas City’s Black community — a tragedy, a protest, a prayer vigil, a community meeting, or a celebration — chances are Alvin Brooks was somewhere in the room.

That enduring presence was celebrated this week as community leaders, elected officials, educators, law enforcement officials, family, and longtime friends gathered at the Alvin L. Brooks Center for Faith-Justice at Rockhurst University to honor Brooks’ 94th birthday and a lifetime of leadership, public service, and community advocacy.

The event was co-hosted by Rockhurst University and Metropolitan Community College and drew city, county, and state officials, law enforcement leaders, and residents from across the Kansas City metro.

Brooks joined the Kansas City Police Department in 1954 as one of the department’s first Black officers, later serving as assistant city manager and mayor pro tem while becoming one of Kansas City’s most recognized voices for peace, justice, and violence prevention. He also founded the AdHoc Group Against Crime and remains a regular and respected presence at community and civic events throughout the city.

U.S. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II



Alvin Brooks speaks to supporters, community leaders, family members, and elected officials gathered to celebrate his 94th birthday and decades of public service in Kansas City.

praised Brooks’ decades of influence and leadership.

“Alvin Brooks is a diamond for us and it shines brightly having paved the way in the way he lived for so many people,” Cleaver said. “He has done so much.”

Former Kansas City Councilmember Jermaine Reed said Brooks continues to unite generations of Kansas Citians through his message of “faith, justice, and humanity,” calling him “the standard for what it means to serve Kansas City.”

The evening included a legacy exhibit and a screening of *The True Adventures of Alvin*



Surrounded by his daughters, longtime Kansas City civic leader Alvin Brooks celebrates his 94th birthday during a community tribute at the Alvin L. Brooks Center for Faith-Justice at Rockhurst University. Brooks, known by many as both a public servant and devoted “girl dad,” was honored for decades of leadership and service in Kansas City. (PHOTOS COURTESY: BROOKS FAMILY AND DIGNIFIED DIGITALS)

Brooks, a documentary by acclaimed filmmaker Kevin Willmott that blends interviews and animation to tell Brooks’ life story in an unconventional and deeply personal way.

Kansas City Police Chief Stacy Graves said Brooks’ influence still shapes the department today.

“One thing that he brought through to the

police department ... is just that always calming and always for peace — justice, fairness, and just treating people right,” Graves said.

As he enters his 95th year, Brooks remains an active and familiar face in the community, still attending neighborhood meetings, church events, educational programs, and civic gatherings across Kansas City.

Free Summer Tennis Program Returns to McAdams Park

McAdams NJTL offers free tennis lessons and summer camps for youth and adults in Wichita.

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

Maybe you've watched stars like Serena Williams, Venus Williams or Coco Gauff dominate on the court and wondered if tennis might be something you'd enjoy. Or maybe you're just looking for a free summer activity that gets you moving, meeting people and spending more time outdoors.

This summer, Wichita residents of all ages can again pick up a racquet and learn the game through the free McAdams National Junior Tennis League (NJTL) summer tennis program at McAdams Park.

Even though the program includes "junior" in the name, the lessons are open to youth and adults, beginners and experienced players alike. Organizers say the program is designed to make tennis accessible to everyone while continuing a decades-long tradition of community-based instruction on Wichita's north side.

The free Summer Evening Program begins May 19 and runs through July 23 at the



A young player practices her game during the McAdams NJTL summer tennis program in Wichita. Organizers say the program welcomes players of all skill levels, from beginners to experienced competitors.

Charles "Goose" Doughty Jr. Tennis Courts in McAdams Park. Sessions are held every Tuesday and Thursday.

Players ages 12 and younger meet at 6 p.m., while sessions for ages 13 through adults begin at 7 p.m.

Participants are grouped by age and skill level so beginners can comfortably learn the

basics while more experienced players continue improving their games. Preregistration is not required. Organizers encourage people to simply show up and participate.

In addition to the evening sessions, the program also offers the free Charles "Goose" Doughty Jr. Tennis Camp, a more intensive morning program for players who want additional instruction and court time.

The camp runs from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the McAdams Park tennis courts during two separate weeks: June 1-5 and June 8-12.

For more than 50 years, the McAdams tennis program has introduced generations of Wichita youth and families to the game. The local tradition traces back to legendary coach Charles "Goose" Doughty Jr., who taught tennis and life lessons to students at nearby L'Ouverture Elementary School, located across from the McAdams Park courts.

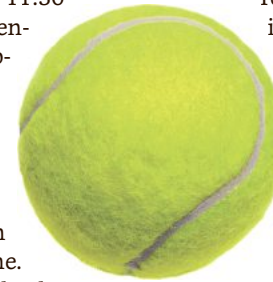
Over the years, many students from the

program earned college tennis scholarships, while countless others developed a lifelong love for a sport they can continue playing well into adulthood.

Since Doughty's death in 2013, members of Wichita's McAdams tennis community have continued the program each summer to preserve both the sport and the legacy he built.

Tennis continues growing in popularity in Black communities across the country, thanks in part to the influence of athletes like the Williams sisters and Gauff. Community-based programs like the one at McAdams Park have long played an important role in introducing the sport to youth and adults who might not otherwise have access to lessons or organized play.

Participants who already own racquets are encouraged to bring them, but organizers say a limited number of racquets are usually available for use during sessions. Beginner racquets can also often be purchased locally for less than \$20.



20
26

WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Board of Education Update

The Wichita Board of Education has selected Sheila Brown-Kinnard for the At-Large position. Ms. Brown-Kinnard is a retired WPS educator and an East High School graduate. The position fills the vacancy left by Melody McCray-Miller, who passed away this spring. Brown-Kinnard said she is ready to listen and learn as she takes on this role.

Facilities Update

At the district's May press conference, Chief Operations Officer Dr. Steve Noble and East High principal Sara Richardson shared an update about a structural issue in East High's 105-year-old west wing and the temporary relocation plans for students and staff while repairs are made beginning this summer. To see a recap of the press conference, go to bit.ly/3PcpE7p.

Summer Food Program

Free breakfasts and lunches will be offered at 33 locations as part of the WPS Summer Food Program. The Summer Food program runs May 27 – July 24, 2026. The free meals are available to all children ages 1-18, not just WPS students or students who qualify for free/reduced meals. Visit usd259.org/summerfood for locations, times and menus.





Wichita's 54th RiverFest returns May 29 - June 6 with concerts, fireworks, Gospel Fest and longtime community traditions. From The Jacksons and Jonathan McReynolds to free river events and family activities, organizers hope people explore more than just the main stage.

RiverFest RETURNS

With Music, Fireworks & Family Traditions

The Jacksons, Gospel Fest, fireworks and free family events highlight Wichita's 54th RiverFest.

By Bonita Gooch
The Community Voice

Wichita RiverFest, the largest community event in Kansas, returns May 29 through June 6 with nine days of concerts, fireworks, food and longtime family traditions as the festival celebrates its 54th year.

The festival officially opens Friday evening with the Sundown Parade from 6:30-8 p.m. The free parade — no button required — travels south on Main Street from Second Street to English before looping north on Market back to Second Street, giving spectators multiple downtown viewing areas.

Opening night also features a concert by The Jacksons, the legendary family group that rose to fame as The Jackson 5 before becoming one of the most successful acts in pop music history. Known for hits including

“ABC,” “I Want You Back,” “I’ll Be There” and “Can You Feel It,” the group headlines the main stage Friday night before RiverFest’s first fireworks display at 10:45 p.m.

Fireworks are also scheduled for Wednesday, June 3, at 9:45 p.m. and Saturday, June 6, at 10:45 p.m., making them one of the festival’s biggest annual attractions.

Music remains a major part of RiverFest throughout the week.

Monday’s Gospel Fest features Brent Jones and Jonathan McReynolds, one of gospel music’s most popular contemporary artists known for blending worship music with soulful, modern storytelling. Here’s the Gospelfest lineup

Gospelfest Lineup

6:00 pm

Sons of God

6:20 pm

Dottie Thompson
Children’s Choir

6:40 pm

TRU

6:50 pm

Community Choir

7:45 pm

Brent Jones

9:00 pm

Jonathan McReynolds

Thursday’s Zydeco Night wraps up with Keith Frank, the Louisiana accordion player and singer known as the “Zydeco Boss.” His high-energy Creole sound blends zydeco with R&B, hip-hop and Southern dance rhythms, giving festivalgoers a chance to experience a different side of Black music culture.

Friday night, June 5, leans toward younger audiences with rapper Sage the Gemini opening for Gym Class Heroes front man Travie McCoy, whose hits include “Stereo Hearts” and “Cupid’s Chokehold.”

The festival closes Saturday night with fireworks and Hank Azaria and The EZ Street Band, a tribute celebration of Bruce Springsteen music.

Still, many longtime RiverFest fans say the festival is about much more than the concerts.

Some of the most entertaining events happen away from the main festival grounds — and several are completely free to watch without a RiverFest

button, making them especially attractive for families watching their budgets.

The Cowboy Bathtub Races take place Saturday, May 30, while the Cardboard Regatta happens Sunday, May 31. Both events are free and held near River Park Place at Waco and the Arkansas River.

The Riverfest Fishing Derby follows Saturday morning, June 6, at the same location. Participants do not need to bring fishing gear or even a fishing license. Rods, reels, bait and hooks are provided free, and Kansas Wildlife and Parks staff will help beginners learn how to fish.

Families with children will also find plenty to do.

The Kids Corner and Inflatables area, located near the South Gate behind the old library building, features bubble shows, inflatables, balloon twisting, princess appearances, music, art activities and outdoor family fun throughout the festival. The activities are free with a RiverFest button, and children 5 and under do not need a button.

Nearby, the WEEE Carnival runs throughout RiverFest with rides including a Ferris wheel, Tilt-A-Whirl and several children’s rides. Unlimited



ride wristbands cost \$33 per session. Sunday, May 31, is Family Fun Day, when children 12 and under can enter RiverFest free with a paying adult.

Other festival attractions include the ArtFest Pop-Up Market inside Century II on May 30-31, featuring more than 100 artists, makers and local businesses. Organizers say vendor applications may still be open. A classic car show inside Century II takes place Saturday, June 6, while a youth entrepreneur event and three-on-three basketball tournament are also scheduled during the week.

Fiesta del Río on Saturday, May 30, highlights Hispanic culture with the Mercadito marketplace, cultural activities and Hispanic performers appearing throughout the evening on the concert stage.

Another longtime tradition returns Wednesday night with

the Linwood Sexton Hiland Dairy Ice Cream Social, where festivalgoers can enjoy a free bowl of ice cream while supplies last.

Admission to RiverFest requires a 2026 festival button. Buttons cost \$20 for ages 13 and older and \$10 for children ages 5-12. Children 5 and under are admitted free. Buttons are available at festival entrances and local QuikTrip stores.

Budget-conscious visitors may also want to remember Throwback Thursday on June 4, when admission is free for anyone bringing a RiverFest button or cloisonné pin from any previous year.

Organizers encourage people to explore beyond the headlining concerts and discover the many smaller traditions, activities and experiences that have made RiverFest a Wichita tradition for generations.

THE COMMUNITY VOICE

JUNETEENTH GUIDE

Juneteenth has grown far beyond a single weekend celebration. Since becoming a federal holiday in 2021, it has evolved into one of the biggest cultural celebrations of the summer – bringing together communities big and small for a celebration of freedom, culture, history and joy.

From parades, concerts and festivals to educational events, family gatherings and community celebrations, there are more opportunities than ever to experience Juneteenth in different ways and

different places.

The good news? You don't have to choose just one. With events spread across weeks and across the region, you can make this a true Juneteenth road trip summer.

And speaking of road trips, stay tuned to The Community Voice Facebook and Instagram pages as our publisher Bonita Gooch hits the road for our third annual Juneteenth Road Trip, sharing moments with you from celebrations across Kansas and the Kansas metro area. If you see her, make sure to say hello.



Juneteenth celebrations across Kansas and the Kansas City metro area bring communities together through music, culture, food and family activities. Find events in your community or plan a road trip to check out events in other cities near you.

HUTCHINSON

Thu., June 18 @ 6 – 8 pm

Juneteenth Youth Talent Show

Chester I Lewis Plaza, 15 E 1st

Come perform, come cheer, and come celebrate freedom, culture, and youth talent compete in 3 age brackets. Prizes awarded including a \$100 1st Place Prize!

Fri., June 19 @ 7 - 9 pm

Juneteenth Celebration Community BBQ

Chester I Lewis Plaza, 15 E 1st

Community BBQ — Come hungry and enjoy delicious food on us! Music, laughter & good Vibes - Games and fun for all ages.

JOHNSON COUNTY

Sat., June 6 @ 10 am - 1 pm

Celebrating Juneteenth

Johnson County
Arts & Heritage Center
8788 Metcalf Avenue

This FREE family-friendly event provides an opportunity to honor the history and celebrate Juneteenth with art, music, dance, storytelling, food, and more.

JUNCTION CITY

Sat., June 13 @ 1 – 8 pm

31st Annual JuneteenthJC

Heritage Park 6th & Washington

Live Concert featuring Carvin Winans
Special Guest: K-Drama, Topeka High Drumline, kids activities. Kid Zone, foam party, crafts, info and food vendors.

KANSAS CITY

Sun, May 31 @ 6 – 9pm

Queen of Hearts: 5th Annual Miss JuneteenthKC

Gem Theater, 1615 E 18th

Celebrate the crowning of the 2026 Miss JuneteenthKC & Jr. Miss JuneteenthKC as our outstanding young ladies take the stage for a night filled with beauty, confidence, talent, and inspiration!

VIP Reception: 4- 5:30 pm Experience an elegant evening featuring: Red Carpet moments, special guest appearances, live entertainment, formal presentations, community recognition

For tickets go to <https://events.ticketleap.com/tickets/jkc-1/5th-annual-miss-juneteenthkc-pageant-2026>

Sat., June 6 @ 3 - 7 pm

Jazz In The Garden

Global One Urban Farming,
4409 Cypress Ave.

Live jazz, wellness, and community in the garden—music, food, and purpose at Global One Urban Farming! Celebrate Juneteenth with us at Kansas City Jazz in the Garden

Sat., June 6 @ 8 am

9th Annual Juneteenth Cultural Parade

18th & Vine Jazz District

Drill & dance teams, best float, Best motor/car club, best business/organizations, family legacy awards.

Sat., June 13 @ 10 - 4 pm

10th Annual Juneteenth Celebration

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
4525 Oak St.

The free Juneteenth Celebration honors the enduring contributions of African Americans with a full day of festivities, including live music and dancing, storytelling performances, and educational experiences in the museum's galleries.

Sat., June 20 @ 8 am-11:30 pm

The JuneteenthKC Heritage Festival

18th & Vine Jazz District

The JuneteenthKC Heritage Festival is bringing a full day of music, culture, and community to the district, and this Main Stage moment is set to be one of the highlights of summer. Featuring Common.

LAWRENCE

Fri., June 19 @ 4:30 - 8 pm

Emancipation Proclamation Day

South Park, 1141 Massachusetts

Free meals while they last, DJ's and line dancing, children's activities, spades, Domino's and bingo. Live reading of the 2026 winning essay

Sat., June 20 @ 11 am – 5 pm

Juneteenth Celebration

South Park, 1141 Massachusetts

Food and retail vendors, community information tables, health and Wellness

activities free kids corner and activities, sporting KC soccer activities, mainstage with live performances and spoken word

LEAVENWORTH

Sat., June 13 @ 6:30 - 10 pm

Juneteenth Parade & Festival

Haymarket Square, 649 Cherokee St.

A fantastic day of celebration! Get ready for a day filled with music, food, and fun for the whole family. The parade will kick off the festivities, showcasing vibrant floats and lively performances. Afterward, immerse yourself in the festival atmosphere, delicious food from local vendors, enjoy live music, and explore various activities and exhibits

MANHATTAN

Fri., June 19 @ 5 pm - 10 pm

Manhattan Juneteenth Celebration

Manhattan City Park 1101 Fremont St

Music. Music, Music - Grilling Cookoff Begins | \$5.00 Taster kits and Voting. - Food Trucks and so much more. Fun for the entire family. - Them YO People! featuring your host, the King, Mr. Gary. Juneteenth Concert featuring the Soul-Funk Band "Party Train," formerly known as "Gap Band"

Sat., June 20 @ 10 am - 2 pm

Manhattan Juneteenth Celebration

Douglass Center, 900 Yuma St.

Music courtesy of DJ Smoov
10 am - Juneteenth Unity Walk



Bonita Gooch photographs moments during a stop on The Community Voice's Second Annual Juneteenth Road Trip. This year, follow along as she again reports live on Instagram and Facebook from Juneteenth events across Kansas and the Kansas City metro area.

OVERLAND PARK

Sat., June 13 @ 7:30 am – 1 pm

Juneteenth "Moving Forward with Resilience & Perseverance"

Prairiefire , 135th & Nall,
Overland Park

See the parade, watch performances, visit stores and vendor booths, and participate in fun family-friendly activities. The stage will be located near the Museum at Prairie Fire. Vendor booths will be along Access Road.

See **JUNETEENTH** Page 15 →



Marzette Scott, 71

August 4, 1954 – May 13, 2026
A celebration of life will be held with close family and friends.

Martha Diggs, 87

January 7, 1939 – May 12, 2026
Service will be held at 10 am on May 30 at Calvary Baptist Church, 2653 N Hillside

Craig Myers, 60

March 1, 1966 – May 10, 2026
Service will be held at 12 pm on May 30 at Greater Harvest Tabernacle Christian Fellowship, 1700 S Market St.

Ellen Barrier, 79

November 19, 1946 – May 8, 2026

A Memorial Service will be held at 12 pm on June 13 at The Orchard Recreation Center, 4808 W 9th

Evelyn Burton, 91

June 16, 1934 – May 4, 2026

Graveside Service was held on May 19 at Maple Grove Cemetery

Jesse L. Staley, 91

March 21, 1935 – May 3, 2026
Service will be held at a pm on May 16 at Calvary Baptist Church, 2653 N Hillside

Chase Freeman, 20

July 6, 2005 – May 2, 2026
Service will be held at 1 pm on May 21 at St. Mark United Methodist Church, 1525 N. Lorraine

Robbie “Michelle” Baird, 48

January 30, 1978 – April 29, 2026

Service was held May 21 at Eastside Cathedral of Praise COGIC

Valerie Salton-Alford,

July 20, 1960 – April 29, 2026

Service was held May 15 at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church.

JUNETEENTH, from Page 14 ↓

7:30 am: June Freedom Run / Parade: Featuring local bands, entertainers, and

Emcee & Parade Grand Marshal Rae Daniel Kshb, 41 Reporter.

On stage: speakers, musicians, poets, dancers, comedians, & more!

SALINA

Wed, June 17 @ 6 - 9 pm

Salina Juneteenth Celebration

Salina Art Center Cinema, 150 S Santa Fe

Movie “Ain’t No Back to a Merry-Go-Round” - An untold Civil Rights Story Discussion following the movie

Fri., June 19 @ 6 - 10 pm

Salina Juneteenth Weekend

Oakdale Park, 730 Oakdale Dr. R & B in the Park

Sat., June 20 @ 10 am - 4 pm

Salina Juneteenth Weekend

Oakdale Park, 730 Oakdale Dr, Salina, KS

Parade at 10 am begins at Iron St down Santa Fe to Oakdale Park

11 am - 4 pm - Citywide Celebration in Oakdale Park featuring Kimberly Paige Band, Wichita

TOPEKA

Mon., June 1 @ 11:30 am

Flag Raising & Unity Walk

Kansas State capital

Sat., June 6 @ 6:30 pm

Miss Juneteenth Pageant

Topeka and Shawnee County Public, Library 1515 SW 10th Ave.

Sat., June 13 @ 6 pm

Sounds Of Freedom by Pastor Mae Hall

St John AME Church, 701 Topeka Blvd.

Sun., June 14 @ 3 pm

Gospel Extravaganza

St John AME Church, 701 SW Topeka Ave.

Mon., June 15 @ 6 pm

Paint and Pop Day

Lois Curtis Center, 1921 SE Indiana

Tue., June 16 @ 6 pm

Taco Tuesday

Louis Curtis Center, 1921 SE Indiana

Thu., June 18 @ 6 pm

Scholarship Awards Banquet

St. John’s AME church, 701 Topeka Blvd.

Fri., June 19 @ 11 am

Juneteenth Parade & Car Show

Kansas Judicial Building parking lot 11th and Jackson

Sat., June 20 @ Noon - 10 pm

13th Annual Topeka and Friends Juneteenth Celebration

Juneteenth Parade - 11 a.m. - Route: Staging at the east parking lot of the Judicial Building, north on SW Kansas Avenue, west on SW 7th Street, and south via SW Harrison.

Car Show - 11 am @ Kansas Judicial Building parking lot, 11th and Jackson

Community Celebration - Noon to 10 pm @ Hillcrest Community Center and Park, 1800 SE 21st St. This free gathering includes food truck vendors, live musical performances, and networking.

For the Culture KS Gala: A social gathering scheduled for 6 p.m. Hillcrest Community Center and Park, 1800 SE 21st St.

WESTON

Sat., June 13 @ 11 am - 5 pm

Common Threads: Weston’s 6th Annual Juneteenth Heritage Jubilee

Weston Red Barn Farm, 16300 Wilkerson Rd, Weston, MO

Celebrates the Tapestry of Community Living History: From Enslavement to Industry This year, JHJ6 highlights the stories of two pivotal Black Westonians who shaped the town’s iconic legacy: Event Highlights [...]

WICHITA

Sat., June 13 @ 3 pm - 6 pm

Miss Juneteenth ICT Pageant

Carl Brewer Community Center, 1329 E 13th

Meet your reigning Miss Juneteenth ICT and the eight outstanding young women competing to become your next Miss Juneteenth ICT! Join us as we celebrate culture, scholarship, and leadership and the crowning of Miss JuneteenthICT 2026

Fri., June 19 @ 6 pm. - 9 pm

Sounds of Juneteenth

McAdams Park 1329 E. 16th St Live entertainment and vendors

Sat., June 20 @ 10 am

Juneteenth Parade

The parade will start on 17th Street at Holy Savior Catholic Academy, proceed down 13th Street, and end at Historic McAdams Park.

Sat., June 20 @ 11 am - 9 pm

Day at the Park

Live entertainment, vendor corner, kids corner, and more

Sun., June 21 @ 6 - 8 pm

Gospel Fest

McAdams Park 1329 E. 16th St Event Concert and vendors

WYCO

Sat., June 13 @ 9 am - 9:30 pm

Celebrate Community and Culture at the Juneteenth Celebration

2026 Juneteenth in the Dotte Parade (5TH & Cleveland) Marching bands, dancers and other performers. Celebration Kaw Point Park, 1403 Fairfax Trafficway KCK

Sat., June 20 @ 3 - 9 pm


Spirit Life Line Dance presents Juneteenth Trailride


Wyandotte County Fairgrounds 13700 Polfer Rd Get ready to ride and dance your heart out celebrating freedom and good vibes with Spirit Life Line Dance!

In Memory of
Dr. Jasper Fullard, Jr
July 26, 1939 - May 12, 2026

Dr. Fullard, Jr., 86 was a retired Internal Medicine Physician in the Metropolitan Area and Co-Founder of the Black Health Care Coalition.

Services will be held at 11 am on June 6. at Ebenezer AME Church 3808 Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd. KCMO





OPUS

M/WBE INVITATION TO BID

Opus Group is soliciting bids for the Opus Congress Industrial project and encourages all Minority/Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) firms to submit a bid.

The bid package opens June 3, 2026, and closes June 23, 2026.

The project is located near NW 108 th Street and N Congress Avenue in Kansas City, MO. It includes two speculative warehouse buildings for a total of 710,000 square feet.

The following scopes of work are available to bid. This includes, but is not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitework • Concrete • Asphalt Paving • Misc. Metals • Structural Steel • Roofing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead Doors • Glass & Glazing • Painting • Interior Insulation • Dock Equipment
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Participation goals are 14.7% MBE and 14.4% WBE.

To obtain access to the bid documents or submit a question, contact Kristin Flanery at congress@opus-group.com or (816) 480-4308. MWBE Outreach related questions, contact Consuella McCain at operations@kccgrp.com or (913) 963-3815.

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THIS YEAR AT GOSPELFEST
JONATHAN MCREYNOLDS
MONDAY★JUNE 1
RIVERFEST
★ wichitariverfest.com ★



4TH ANNUAL
MIDWEST R&B FEST
PERFORMING LIVE!
JACQUEES | KELLY PRICE | LYFE JENNINGS | ROME
SATURDAY JUNE 6TH, 2026
DOORS OPEN AT 5PM SHOW STARTS AT 6PM
CAPITOL FEDERAL AMPHITHEATER
1407 E CENTRAL AVE, ANDOVER, KS 67002
GET YOUR TICKETS NOW! AT SELECTASEAT.COM **select seat**
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS EVENT CALL 316-207-5862

Act fast when it's a stroke

Get the highest level of care 24/7

Balance loss. Eye changes. Face drooping. Arm weakness. Speech difficulty. Time to call 911. Use **BE FAST** to spot a stroke and get emergency care. We're here for you 24/7 with specialized stroke care and support from the moment you arrive through every step of your recovery. Find your nearest stroke center at ascension.org/ViaChristiStroke

