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A trusted voice from the community's perspective

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Volume 33, No. 15 · communityvoiceks.com · Friday, July 24, 2026

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

THE VOICE

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 14
FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2026

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This Year, Democrats Have Something They've Been Missing — Choices

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

People keep asking me the same question: "Who should I vote for?"

The truth is, I rarely endorse candidates, and I'm not going to this year. Instead, I encourage you to become an informed voter. That's easier said than done because there's a lot to sort through this election, but it's worth the effort.

The good news is that, for a change, Kansas Democrats actually have choices. Too often, Democratic voters have had only one candidate—or no candidate at all. Competitive primaries produce stronger candidates, and that's good for democracy.

If you're still making up your mind, I recommend the KMWV Voter Guide and the candidate debates available online through KWCH. (click QR code at right for link to debate) Both are excellent resources.

As for what I'm watching:

In the governor's race, I believe Democrats have several strong candidates. What disappoints me is Gov. Laura Kelly's decision to publicly support one ticket before voters had a chance to decide for themselves. I'd rather see Democrats make that choice without feeling pressure from party leaders. Personally, I'd be proud to see Wichita's **KC Ohaebosim** become lieutenant governor, but the most important thing is nominating the Democrat with the best chance to win in November.

The U.S. Senate race is equally fascinating. Eleven Democrats filed in hopes of taking on **Roger Marshall**. **Erik Murray** has the opportunity to make history as the first African American elected to statewide office in Kansas since Edward McCabe became state auditor in 1883. I'm also impressed by Army veteran **Noah Taylor**, whose straightforward style has attracted attention across the state.

The 4th Congressional District also



deserves attention. **Ron Estes** faces his strongest challenge in years. **Katy Tyndell** and **Chris Carmichael** are both quality candidates who offer different paths forward and could make this one of the most competitive congressional races Kansas has seen in some time.

Closer to my house, northeast Wichita voters also have real choices. The open **89th House District** race features two strong Democratic candidates, and residents of the **84th District** also have a competitive primary with one of the candidates being me. You'll find information about both races on Pages 9 and 10.

Finally, before you vote, be sure to read our story on Page 8 explaining the proposed constitutional amendment on



how **Kansas Supreme Court** justices are selected. It's one of the most important—and most misunderstood—questions on the ballot.

Most importantly, vote.

Your vote may not decide every election, but it does decide whether your voice is part of the conversation. Democracy works best when we all participate.

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

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

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

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I am pleased to vote for Chris Carmichael.
— **Charles McAfee**

He has committed his support for the "Senior Care Act" that was recently passed by the Senate.
— **Leroy Burton**

He leads with integrity and a genuine commitment to serving the people—not special interests.
— **Brock Booker**

It's time for something different. It's time for steady leadership again. It's time to bring some common sense back into the way we govern.
— **Fmr. Governor John Carlin**

Chris' life of service reminds me of the powerful sentiment in Isaiah 6:8: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me.'"
— **Randy & Keisha Coutts**

ENDORSEMENTS:

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KEISHA MCCLISH-COUTS
RANDY COUTS
FMR. GOV. JOHN CARLIN
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New Federal Medicaid Rules Could Catch Thousands of Missourians by Surprise

Community leaders are urging Medicaid expansion recipients to prepare now for new work requirements and twice-yearly eligibility reviews that begin Jan. 1.

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

Community leaders, churches and health-care providers across the Kansas City area are launching an education campaign to warn Missourians about major new federal Medicaid requirements they fear could cause thousands of eligible residents to lose health insurance—not because they no longer qualify, but because they miss new paperwork requirements.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2027, adults covered through Missouri's Medicaid expansion program will face new work and eligibility requirements created under last year's federal tax and spending law.

The changes apply only to adults enrolled through Missouri's Medicaid expansion program, which Missouri voters approved in 2020 under the Affordable Care Act. About 365,000 Missourians receive health coverage through the expansion program. The new rules do not apply to traditional Medicaid recipients, including most children, pregnant women, seniors and many people with disabilities. They also do not affect Kansas because Kansas has never expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

The concern is not just about the new requirements themselves. Last year, more than 333,000 Missourians lost Medicaid coverage, and nearly 92% of those cases

resulted from procedural issues—such as missing paperwork, incomplete forms or failing to respond to requests for information—rather than because recipients no longer qualified. Healthcare advocates fear the additional requirements could make that problem worse.

The concern has prompted the Jackson County Benefits Information Network—co-founded by Jackson County Legislator Donna Peyton and the Rev. Stan Archie of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church—to begin educating residents about the coming changes. The coalition of churches, healthcare providers and community organizations is urging Medicaid recipients to update their contact information and pay close attention to notices from the state.

What Changes Jan. 1?

Beginning Jan. 1, adults enrolled through Missouri's Medicaid expansion program generally will have to:

- Meet a new community engagement requirement.
- Renew their Medicaid eligibility every six months instead of once a year.

The Missouri Department of Social Services will begin notifying affected recipients about the changes beginning Aug. 1. Notices will be mailed throughout August and September.

What is the Community Engagement Requirement?

Under the new federal law,

participants generally can satisfy the requirement in one of several ways during at least one month of each six-month eligibility period.

Qualifying activities include:

- Completing **80 hours in a month** of work, community service and/or participation in an approved work program.
- Participating in an educational program for at least 40 hours during a month.
- Earning monthly income equal to at least 80 hours at minimum wage.
- Seasonal workers may qualify by averaging that income over the previous six months.

States may require participants to verify they met the requirement more frequently, but they cannot require more than one qualifying month during each six-month eligibility period.

How Will Missouri Verify Compliance?

Federal rules direct states to use available information—such as payroll records and unemployment data—to verify compliance whenever possible before asking recipients to submit additional documentation.

If Missouri cannot verify someone's eligibility electronically, the participant may be asked to provide documents showing they met the requirement.

What Happens if the State Says You Don't Qualify?

Recipients will not immediately lose coverage.

If Missouri determines someone has not met the requirements, the state must notify the individual and provide a 30-day opportunity to



Jackson County Legislator Donna Peyton (right) and the Rev. Stan Archie, senior pastor of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, are helping lead a community effort to educate Missouri Medicaid expansion recipients about new federal work and eligibility requirements that take effect Jan. 1, 2027. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BEACON.

show they complied with the requirement or qualify for an exemption. Medicaid coverage cannot be terminated during that 30-day period.

Who is Exempt?

Not everyone enrolled through Medicaid expansion will have to meet the new work requirement.

Federal law exempts numerous groups, including:

- Parents and caregivers of dependent children under the age specified in federal law.
- American Indians.
- Veterans with qualifying service-connected disabilities.
- People who are medically frail because of serious physical or mental health conditions.
- People already meeting work requirements under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Pregnant women receiving Medicaid's extended

postpartum coverage.

- Individuals recently released from public institutions and several other protected groups.

Federal officials are still finalizing some implementation details, including how states will determine whether someone qualifies as medically frail.

What Should Medicaid Recipients Do Now?

Advocates say the best way to avoid losing coverage is to prepare now.

They recommend that Medicaid expansion recipients:

- Make sure MO HealthNet has your current mailing address, phone number and email address.
- Watch for letters, emails or text messages from the Missouri Department of Social Services beginning in August.
- Respond promptly to any requests for information or documentation.
- Contact a healthcare provider, enrollment

specialist or community organization if you need help understanding or completing the paperwork.

The Jackson County Benefits Information Network plans to distribute educational materials, hold community meetings and train volunteers to help residents understand the new requirements before they take effect next year. For community leaders involved in the effort, the goal is simple: make sure eligible Missourians don't lose their health insurance because they didn't know the rules had changed.

I think this is a much stronger article than the original. It starts with why readers should care, quickly explains who is and isn't affected, then walks them through the new rules in a logical, question-and-answer format. Peyton and Archie provide credibility and a local connection without overshadowing the consumer information, which is really the heart of the story.

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Abarca Drama Overshadows and Reshapes
Focus of Jackson County Executive Race

With Arbarca Stepping
Back, Jackson County
Executive Candidates
Focus on Trust,
Leadership

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief



Dan Tarwater



Stacy Lake



Manny Abarca

Months of political infighting, accusations of dysfunction and now allegations of bribery have made one issue the clear focus of the Jackson County Executive race: Who can restore trust in county government?

Democratic candidates Stacy Lake and Dan Tarwater say the recent controversies underscore the need for experienced, steady leadership, arguing Jackson County needs an executive who can work effectively with the Legislature and restore public confidence.

That message gained new urgency this week after Legislator Manny Abarca announced he was

suspending his campaign while authorities investigate allegations that he was offered campaign contributions in exchange for a favorable legislative vote. Although Abarca remains on the Aug. 4 Democratic primary ballot, he said he is stepping away from campaign activities so the investigation does not become part of his campaign.

The announcement came just days after Abarca was removed as chair of the Jackson County Legislature. Fellow legislators said the move stemmed from concerns over his leadership style and the Legislature's effectiveness rather than the corruption allegations themselves.

Abarca disputes that characterization and says he brought forward concerns that deserve a full investigation.

The latest developments come as candidates increasingly frame the race around restoring stability to a county government that has been criticized for months as divided and dysfunctional.

Former Jackson County Legislator Dan Tarwater III has made experience and stability central to his campaign. Endorsed by Freedom Inc., one of Kansas City's most influential Democratic political organizations, Tarwater points to nearly 30 years on the County Legislature as preparation to lead the county through a difficult period.

Stacy Lake has similarly argued that Jackson County needs leadership capable of rebuilding trust. After two competitive campaigns against former County Executive Frank White, Lake enters the final weeks of the campaign with strong name recognition and an emphasis on restoring confidence in county government.

With early voting underway and Election Day approaching, the central question facing Democratic voters is no longer simply who will serve as Jackson County's next executive. After months of controversy inside county government, candidates are asking voters to decide who is best prepared to restore stability, rebuild trust and lead the county beyond one of its most turbulent political periods in recent memory.



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For nearly 30 years, Bonita Gooch has served Wichita as a journalist, business leader, and community advocate. As publisher of **The Community Voice**, she has spent decades listening to residents, supporting local businesses, and strengthening neighborhoods. A Wichita native and University of Kansas graduate, Bonita is ready to bring her experience, relationships, and commitment to service to Topeka.





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Advance Voting Open in Sedgwick County

Sedgwick County voters can cast their ballots before Election Day at any of the advance voting locations across the county.

If you're accustomed to voting early in the Historic Courthouse, don't head there this year. The Election Office has moved to 3639 N. Comotara St., just north of K-96 and Rock Road.

A new central location is the Advanced Learning Library, 711 W. 2nd St. N. All advance voting locations are open to any registered Sedgwick County voter, regardless of where they live within the county.

Advance Voting Schedule

Early In-Person Voting

Now– July 31

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 3: 8 a.m.–Noon

Sedgwick County Election Office (New Location)

3639 N. Comotara St., Wichita

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 1: 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Advanced Learning Library (New Location)

711 W. 2nd St. N., Wichita

Sedgwick County Extension Office

7001 W. 21st St. N., Wichita

Satellite Advance Voting Sites

July 28–31 Tuesday–Friday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 1: 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Wichita

Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 1958 N. Webb Rd.

Evangel Presbyterian Church, 1545 S. 135th St. W.

Grace Presbyterian Church, 5002 E. Douglas Ave.

Machinists Building, 3830 S. Meridian

Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, 5701 E. Mt. Vernon St.

Northside Church of Christ, 4545 N. Meridian

Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, 2727 E. 25th St. N.

Reformation Lutheran Church, 7601 E. 13th St. N.

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, 2555 Hyacinth Ln.

North County

Bel Aire City Building (New Location), 7651 E. Central Park Ave. Park City Senior Center (New Location), 1811 Stuart Dr

More outskirt advance locations can be found online.

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Why Kansas City Created the Central City Sales Tax — and Why It's Back on the Ballot

Voters will decide Aug. 4 whether to extend the 1/8-cent sales tax that has funded nearly \$1 billion in redevelopment across Kansas City's historic Central City.

By Bonita Gooch
The Community Voice

When Kansas City voters head to the polls Aug. 4, they'll decide the future of one of the city's largest neighborhood redevelopment efforts.

Question 3 asks voters whether to renew the Central City Economic Development (CCED) one-eighth-cent sales tax for another 10 years. The tax, first approved by voters in 2017, is set to expire in September 2027 unless it is renewed.

The measure would not create a new tax. Instead, it asks voters whether to continue the existing tax through 2037 to fund redevelopment in neighborhoods that have struggled to attract private investment.

According to the Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City, which administers the program, CCED has funded 58 projects, invested more than \$88 million and helped leverage nearly \$1 billion in total development activity in the Central City district. The program also reports helping construct or renovate 1,473 housing units.

Here's what voters need to know before casting their ballots.

Why Was the Tax Created?

To understand the CCED sales tax, it's important to understand why Kansas City leaders believed a dedicated redevelopment fund was needed.

By 2017, many of Kansas City's historic Black neighborhoods had experienced decades of disinvestment following the end of segregation. Construction of U.S. Highway 71 further disrupted the community,



Harold and Diane Johnson stand outside Neyan's Place, a once fire-damaged six-unit apartment building on East 30th Street between The Paseo and Florida Avenue that they transformed into quality affordable housing. The redevelopment is one of dozens of projects supported by Kansas City's Central City Economic Development (CCED) sales tax program.

displacing homes and businesses and making redevelopment more difficult. While investment returned to other parts of the city, much of the Central City continued to struggle to attract private capital.

Another obstacle was financing.

While construction costs were similar to those elsewhere in Kansas City, lower property values often meant banks would not finance enough of a project's cost. Even financially sound developments could be left with a funding gap that prevented construction from moving forward.

CCED was created to help close that gap.

Rather than paying for entire developments, CCED provides "gap financing" that helps developers secure the additional funding needed to complete projects. Supporters say each dollar invested helps attract much larger investments from banks, tax credit programs and private investors.

Where Can the Money Be Spent?

Although the one-eighth-cent sales tax is collected citywide, the money may only be invested within the Central City district, generally bounded by Ninth Street on the north, Gregory Boulevard on the south, The Paseo on the west and Indiana Avenue on the east.

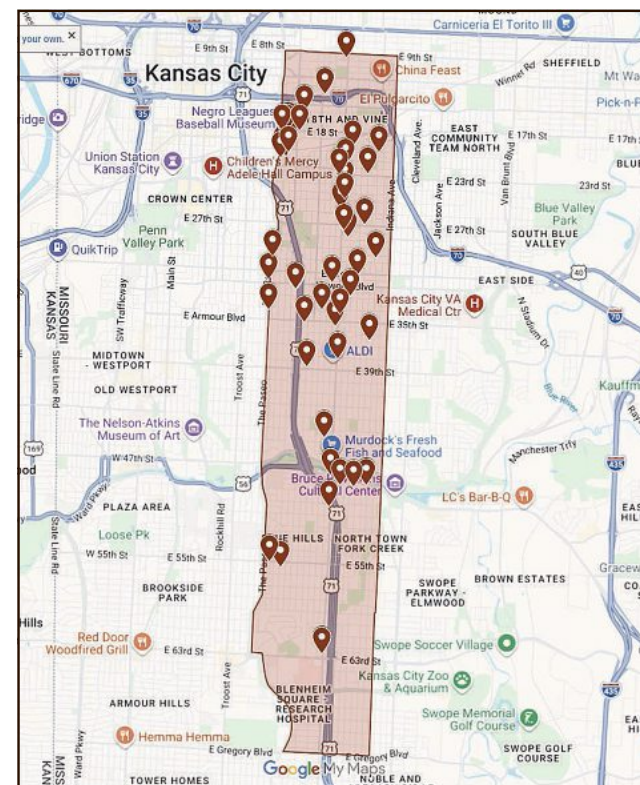
The district includes many of Kansas City's historic Black neighborhoods, commercial corridors and the 18th & Vine Historic District.

What Has the Program Funded?

CCED has supported housing, commercial, mixed-use and community development projects.

Among the better-known projects are One Nine Vine in the 18th & Vine district, KD Academy's 24-hour childcare center on Prospect Avenue, the new AdHoc Center for Healing and Justice headquarters, the restoration of the

See CCED Page 10 →



Where Has the Money Gone?

Since voters approved the Central City Economic Development sales tax in 2017, the program has invested in dozens of redevelopment projects across Kansas City's Central City district.

Here's a complete list of CCED funded projects with a map showing where CCED projects are located.

For more details—including the amount of CCED funding, total project cost and information about each development—scan the QR code to explore the interactive online map.



- 2000 Vine
- 21 Vine Live+Work
- 2534 Prospect Project
- AdHoc Center for Healing and Justice
- Ageless Adventures
- Allenwood Properties
- BT Wheatley Townhomes
- Community Builders of Kansas City
- Conrad Wright Media Building

- Developing Seeds of LUV
- East 27th Street Development
- Emelda Duplexes
- Emmanuel Family & Child Development
- Emmanuel Family & Child Development
- Essential Families Office Building
- Flora Avenue Apartments & Childcare
- Garfield East Senior Cottages
- GEM Theatre
- Heroes Home Gate
- Historic Boone Theater
- Hope Center Housing
- Incarceration and Health Diversion Program
- Jazz Hill Apartments
- Jazonian Hotel
- Jerusalem Farm
- KD Academy
- Ladd School Redevelopment
- Lineage Distribution Center
- Linvista Flats Historic Colonnades

See FUNDING Page 10 →

Kansas Supreme Court Amendment: Separating the Facts From the Campaign Ads.

We don't often republish stories, but we're making an exception because we're still hearing from readers who are confused about the proposed Kansas constitutional amendment involving the state Supreme Court.

The television commercials make the issue sound straightforward. The amendment itself is anything but.

Whether you read this guide before or are seeing it for the first time, we encourage you to take a few minutes to understand what the amendment would actually do before casting your ballot. If you've already read it, please share it with family and friends. You'll also find it on our website and social media, making it easy to pass along.

At The Community Voice, we believe voters deserve factual, nonpartisan information—not just campaign talking points. An informed electorate makes better decisions, regardless of how each person ultimately chooses to vote.

By Bonita Gooch
The Community Voice

If you've been watching television lately, you've probably seen a steady stream of commercials urging you to vote **"Yes"** or **"No"** on the Kansas Supreme Court constitutional amendment.

The ads make the issue sound simple.

Supporters call it the **"Right to Vote Amendment,"** saying Kansans should have the right to elect Supreme Court justices.

Opponents counter that electing judges would open the door to political campaigns, special-interest money and outside influence over the state's highest court.

So what's the amendment really about?

The answer matters because the Kansas Supreme Court has made decisions that affect nearly every Kansan—from public school funding and abortion rights to business lawsuits, criminal appeals and how the Kansas Constitution is interpreted.

On **Aug. 4**, voters will decide whether to dramatically change how members of the state's highest court are selected.

Behind the television commercials lies one of the most significant proposed changes to Kansas government in decades.

Why is This Amendment on the Ballot?

The debate didn't begin because anyone questioned whether current justices were qualified.

It began after a series of Kansas Supreme Court decisions frustrated many Republican lawmakers.

Among the biggest were rulings requiring the Legislature to adequately fund public education and the 2019 decision declaring abortion is a constitutional right under the Kansas Constitution.

Legislative leaders have repeatedly



criticized those rulings, arguing the court has become too powerful and no longer reflects the values of many Kansans. Attorney General Kris Kobach has also publicly identified changing how Supreme Court justices are selected as part of the path toward allowing Kansas to ban abortion.

In television commercials, supporters describe the amendment simply as giving Kansans the right to elect their Supreme Court justices.

However, opponents argue the amendment is really about reshaping the court after lawmakers were unable to achieve some policy goals through the existing judicial system.

How Does the Current System Work?

Since 1958, Kansas has used what's known as the **Missouri Plan** to select members of the Kansas Supreme Court. The system was adopted after a political scandal involving judicial appointments convinced voters to move away from judicial elections.

When a vacancy occurs, a **nine-member Supreme Court Nominating Commission** reviews applicants.

The commission consists of **five attorneys elected by lawyers and four non-lawyers appointed by the governor**, with one citizen member representing each of Kansas' four congressional districts.

Commission members review hundreds of pages of applications, writing samples, disciplinary records, references and judicial evaluations before interviewing candidates.

Former commission member Jay Fowler said commissioners are not trying to determine how someone might rule on abortion, taxes or any other issue. Instead, they're asking different questions:

- Does the candidate have integrity?
- Do they have good judgment?
- Can they separate personal opinions from the law?
- Do they have the temperament to treat everyone fairly?
- Can they clearly explain their decisions?

"We're looking for people who will fairly and impartially consider the facts, apply the law and explain how they reached that decision," Fowler said.

The commission forwards three finalists to the governor, who appoints one.

Every six years, justices stand in a retention election where voters decide whether they should remain on the court.

Why do Supporters Want to Change it?

Supporters argue the current system gives too much influence to lawyers and not enough to ordinary Kansans.

They question why attorneys select a majority of the nominating commission when no other profession has that level of influence over another branch of government.

They also argue Kansans should have the same right to elect Supreme Court justices that they have when choosing governors, legislators and many local judges.

Opponents Say Judges Should Answer to the Law — Not Politics

Supporters of elections argue judges should be more accountable to voters, but opponents say that's not how judges are supposed to make decisions.

Former Kansas Supreme Court Justice Carol Beier said judges are

See Amendment Page 10 →

VOTE YES



Supporters Say...
Supporters call the proposal the **"Right to Vote Amendment."** They believe Kansans—not a commission of lawyers and citizens—should choose who serves on the state's highest court. They also argue the current system gives lawyers too much influence over judicial selection and that elections would make Supreme Court justices more accountable to the public.

Their message:
Greater voter control creates greater accountability.

VOTE NO



Opponents Say...
Opponents argue Supreme Court justices should be selected based on their legal qualifications—not their ability to campaign or raise money. They worry statewide elections could bring political parties, wealthy donors and special-interest groups into judicial races and make judges feel pressure beyond the facts, the law and the Constitution.

Their message:
Greater judicial independence protects courts from politics and special interests.

89th District Democratic Primary

Meet the Candidates

The Democratic primary for Kansas House District 89 will likely determine who represents the district in Topeka next year, as no Republican has filed for the seat.

Candidates Jalon Britton and Carol Brewer are seeking to succeed Rep. KC Ohaebosim, who is leaving the Legislature to run for

lieutenant governor on the ticket with Cindy Holscher. Both candidates have previously run for the Kansas Legislature in other districts.

House District 89 covers much of northeast Wichita, generally bounded by I-135 on the west, 53rd Street on the north, Woodlawn Boulevard on the east and 21st Street on

the south, on the southern border the district extends to pick up the Wichita State University campus and portions and goes south between Oliver and Woodlawn to 13th Street. There is also a small bump out to the east a couple of blocks between 21st and 29th streets.

The candidates share

similar positions on several high-profile issues, including support for Medicaid expansion, abortion rights and opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment changing how Kansas Supreme Court justices are selected.

Because the Democratic primary is expected to decide

the district's next representative, voters who want a voice in choosing the next lawmaker for District 89 should make plans to vote in the August 4 primary.

Want to learn more about these candidates and their views on important issues. Click the QR Code.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ What District Do You Live In? See map for District 89 on page 10. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Carol Brewer

Age: 50

Position: Business owner

Education: Bachelor's in social work, currently working on master's with concentration in trauma

Why should voters consider you the most qualified candidate? What is your overall vision?

I've spent my life serving, helping families, seniors, veterans, and foster youth navigate housing, healthcare, and education challenges. My vision is stronger families, safer neighborhoods, and greater opportunity. I believe in accessible, accountable government that delivers real results. My priorities are fully funding education, expanding healthcare and mental health services, supporting foster families, promoting affordable housing, and strengthening small businesses. I lead by listening and working together, and I will serve with integrity to help every family thrive.

What is the top issue for you and your constituents and what would you do to address it?

Affordability and government accountability are my top priorities. Families are struggling with rising taxes, housing, healthcare, and everyday costs. I will fight for property tax relief, affordable healthcare, support for small businesses, and responsible spending. Kansans deserve a transparent government that is accountable for every taxpayer dollar and focused on improving the lives of the people it serves.

What do you see as the biggest threats to public safety in your district? As a lawmaker, what budget items or legislation would you champion to help your constituents feel safe at home and in their communities?

The biggest threats to public safety in my district are violent crime, the mental health crisis, substance abuse, and the lack of resources for youth and families. I would support funding for community-based mental health services,



stronger victim support, violence prevention programs, and partnerships with law

enforcement that focus on both accountability and prevention. Safer communities are built by investing in people, strengthening neighborhoods, and addressing the root causes of crime.

What ideas do you have for improving academic success for Kansas K-12 students?

Improving academic success starts with fully funding public education, especially special education, supporting and retaining great teachers, expanding early childhood education, and ensuring every student has access to mental health resources and safe learning environments. I also support strengthening career and technical education so students are prepared for college, careers, or military service after graduation.

Jalon Britton

Age: 32

Education: Bachelor's of psychology from Wichita State University

Campaign website: Jalonforkansas.com

Why should voters consider you the most qualified candidate? What is your overall vision?

I'm running because I believe our government should work for everyday Kansans, not just those with the loudest voices or deepest pockets. As a father, foster parent, educator, coach, and community leader, I've seen the challenges families face firsthand. Those experiences have shaped my commitment to serving others and finding practical solutions. I'm not running to be a career politician. I'm running to fight for strong public schools, affordable healthcare, good-paying jobs, and safer neighborhoods.

What is the top issue for you and your constituents and what would you do to address it?

The top issue I hear about is the rising cost of living. Families are working hard but still struggling to afford

groceries, housing, healthcare, childcare, and other everyday necessities. Small businesses are also feeling the strain of rising costs and workforce challenges. I would focus on lowering costs by expanding Medicaid, investing in small businesses, supporting good-paying jobs, protecting and strengthening public education, and increasing access to affordable housing.

What do you see as the biggest threats to public safety in your district? As a lawmaker, what budget items or legislation would you champion to help your constituents feel safe at home and in their communities?

When I talk to voters, they care about both crime and the safety of their neighborhoods. One issue I've heard repeatedly is the construction on Woodlawn and in Bel Aire pushing heavy traffic into residential neighborhoods. I've stood with neighbors who showed me how speeding and cut-through



traffic make it difficult to back out of their driveway for nearly 30

minutes during the evening. Parents are especially concerned because children are playing outside and will be getting on and off school buses soon.

What ideas do you have for improving academic success for Kansas K-12 students?

My priorities are fully funding our public schools, strengthening early childhood education, expanding career and technical education, and ensuring every student has access to the support they need to succeed. We should also invest in recruiting and retaining great teachers, reduce class sizes where possible, and partner more closely with parents and local businesses to prepare students for life after graduation. Strong schools create stronger communities and a stronger Kansas.

CCED, from Page 7 ↓

historic Boone Theater, and the transformation of the long-abandoned former Kansas City Water and Street Department buildings at 2000 Vine—across from the iconic Workhouse Castle—into a mixed-use campus with offices, event space, an art gallery and restaurant.

According to CCED, the program has funded 58 projects through seven funding rounds, investing \$88.29 million that has helped generate nearly \$968 million in total development activity—roughly \$10 in total investment for every \$1 invested through CCED.

Supporters say the investments are restoring vacant properties, creating housing and businesses, generating jobs and preserving historic neighborhoods.

Why Do Supporters Want to Continue It?

Supporters argue that neighborhood revitalization doesn't happen overnight.

Supporters say redevelopment is a long-term investment. Planning, financing and construction often take years before visible changes appear, while broader benefits such as stronger business districts, increased private investment and a larger tax base may take a decade or more.

They also argue the need that led to the program's creation has not disappeared.

Many vacant buildings and underdeveloped properties remain, affordable housing is still needed, and financing challenges continue to make redevelopment difficult in parts of the Central City district. Without continued gap financing, supporters say some projects now in the development pipeline could be delayed or never built.

As the program states in its Impact Brief, CCED "is not simply a project funding source." Instead, supporters

describe it as a long-term re-investment strategy designed to ensure Central City neighborhoods participate in—and benefit from—Kansas City's continued economic growth.

Why Are Some People Skeptical?

Not everyone believes the program has moved quickly enough.

Some community members and critics have questioned whether taxpayers have seen enough completed projects after nearly a decade of collections. Others have raised concerns over transparency, administrative costs and whether redevelopment has progressed at the pace originally envisioned.

Supporters respond that many projects approved after the program launched in 2017 encountered delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, rising construction costs and financing challenges. They argue large redevelopment projects often require years of planning, financing and construction before visible results appear, particularly in neighborhoods where traditional financing remains difficult to obtain.

What Happens if Voters Approve or Reject It?

A yes vote would continue the existing one-eighth-cent sales tax for another 10 years, allowing the program to continue funding redevelopment projects within the Central City district through 2037.

A no vote would allow the tax to expire in September 2027, ending the dedicated funding source unless a new funding source is approved in the future.

Ultimately, voters aren't deciding whether to create a new tax. They're deciding whether one of Kansas City's largest long-term efforts to rebuild historically underserved neighborhoods should continue for another decade.

84th Kansas House District

The 84th Kansas House District race features incumbent **Rep. Ford Carr** and **Bonita Gooch**, publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Community Voice*.

Because our owner is a candidate in this race, *The Community Voice* has chosen not to provide campaign coverage, endorsements or

election reporting on this contest beyond this voter notice.

We believe this is the most appropriate way to avoid any appearance of bias or conflict of interest. To help voters make informed decisions, we encourage residents of the district to review each candidate's responses



Bonita Gooch

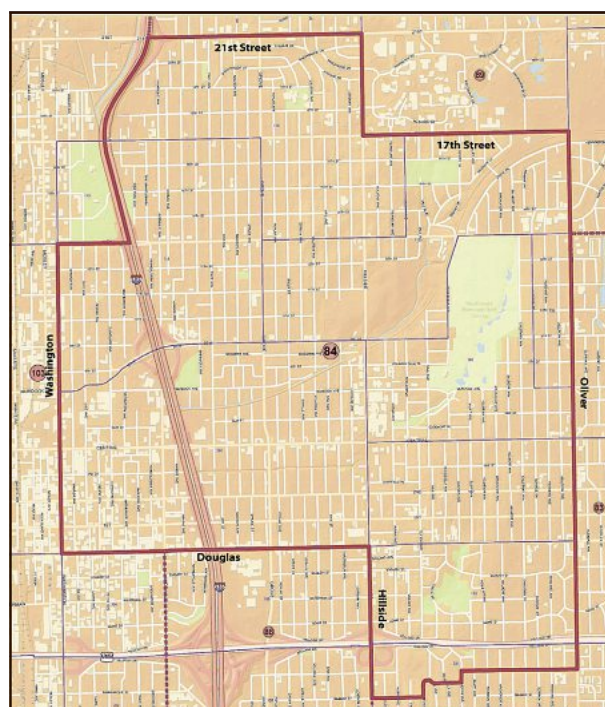


Ford Carr

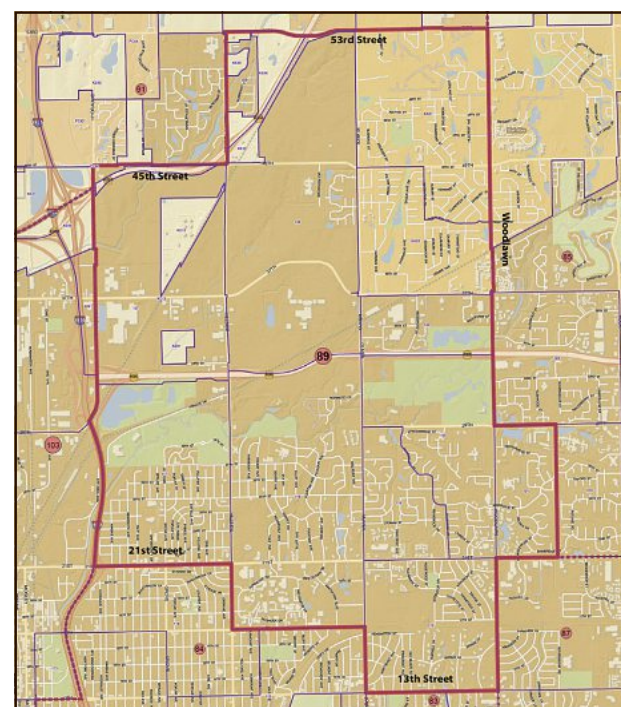
in the KMWU 2026 Voter Guide and other nonpartisan voter resources before casting their ballots.

We've included the district map below so voters

can determine whether they live in the 84th District and encourage all voters to become informed and to participate in this important election.



84th district map



89th district map

AMENDMENT, from Page 8 ↓

supposed to base every decision on only three things: **the facts of the case, the law and the Constitution**. Personal opinions, political beliefs, campaign promises and public pressure are not supposed to influence judicial decisions.

Opponents say campaigning for office introduces new pressures judges were never intended to face. Instead of asking only, "What does the law require?" judges seeking election could also face pressure from campaign donors, political parties or public opinion.

Can Elections Produce the Best Judges?

Opponents also argue statewide elections reward candidates who are the best campaigners, not necessarily the best judges.

Under the current system, members of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission spend months reviewing applications, writing samples, disciplinary records, judicial evaluations and references while interviewing candidates about ethics, judgment and judicial temperament.

A statewide election measures something very different: whether a candidate can raise money, build name recognition, communicate through advertising and win votes.

Beier pointed to Wisconsin's 2025 Supreme Court race, where more than **\$100 million** was spent on a single judicial election. She warned that similar races in Kansas could attract billionaires, corporations and national political organizations hoping to influence who serves on the state's highest court.

"If you're getting a million dollars from a billionaire or special-interest group," former commission member Jay Fowler said, "it creates at least the appearance of potential bias."

Former Wichita City Council member Brandon Johnson questioned whether even well-qualified judges could completely ignore the pressure that comes with millions of dollars in campaign spending.

Building Consensus: How Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau Turned Relationships Into Results

The Wichita senator says preparation, trust and finding common ground—not politics—have helped her pass nearly 20 bills in a Republican-controlled Legislature.

By Ty Davis

The Community Voice

In a Legislature where Democrats hold just nine of the Kansas Senate's 40 seats, Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau has built a reputation for accomplishing something many lawmakers never do: turning ideas into law.

This year, three measures she sponsored or helped shepherd through the Republican-controlled Legislature took effect July 1, bringing the total number of bills she has helped pass during her legislative career to approximately 18.

Faust-Goudeau said her success has never been about political victories. Instead, she credits relationships, preparation and learning how to build consensus in a place where agreement is often hard to find.

Finding Common Ground

That lesson reshaped how Faust-Goudeau approaches public policy.

Rather than viewing legislation solely through the needs of Wichita, she said she began asking how a proposal might also benefit western Kansas, small rural communities and districts represented by Republicans.

"In the Senate, you've got nine Democrats," she said. "You've got to convince 23 people to vote for your bill."

As the first Black Assistant Minority Leader in Kansas Senate history, Faust-Goudeau has learned that passing legislation begins long before lawmakers cast their votes. A proposal must survive committee hearings, floor



Kansas Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau joins Gov. Laura Kelly and supporters during one of several bill signings this year. Faust-Goudeau has helped pass approximately 18 bills during her legislative career by building bipartisan relationships and finding common ground in the Republican-controlled Kansas Legislature.

debate in both chambers and countless conversations with colleagues before it ever reaches the governor's desk.

"It's a long process," she said. "You've got to become a negotiator."

Winning those votes, she said, requires understanding what matters to legislators whose communities may look very different from her own.



Listening carefully often accomplishes more than arguing loudly."

SEN. OLETHA FAUST-GOUDEAU



"When you're presenting your proposal to people who may already oppose you, you've got to present something they're going to benefit from too," she said.

Laws Designed to Solve Real Problems

Two of the three bills Faust-Goudeau sponsored reflect what she values most often -- people rather than policy.

One of this year's new laws grew out of a Sunday afternoon serving meals to people experiencing homelessness in downtown Wichita. While volunteering with a local ministry, she repeatedly met homeless veterans who could not obtain housing, employment or veterans benefits because they lacked basic identification. For many, replacing a birth certificate required money they simply did not have.

That experience led her to

introduce Senate Bill 106, later incorporated into Substitute for House Bill 2274. The new law allows eligible homeless veterans to receive birth certificates at no cost, removing a barrier that often prevented them from obtaining the identification needed to rebuild their lives.

She also worked with House lawmakers on legislation allowing eligible Kansans to have their eviction records automatically cleared after meeting legal requirements. The law gives people who recovered from financial hardship an opportunity to move forward without years-old eviction filings continuing to stand in the way of finding housing.

A third measure established the Kansas Railroad Hall of Fame, honoring the workers who helped build Kansas and preserving an important part of the state's transportation history.

A Career Focused on Practical Solutions

Among the measures Faust-Goudeau considers most

meaningful is the Grandparents as Caregivers Act.

Before the law, many grandparents raising grandchildren received little assistance unless they became licensed foster parents. The legislation created support through the Kansas Department for Children and Families, helping more children remain safely with relatives instead of entering foster care.

She also authored the Driver's Solutions program, allowing eligible Kansans with suspended driver's licenses to obtain restricted driving privileges while making payments toward reinstatement. The program helps participants continue driving to work, school, medical appointments and court while restoring their full driving privileges.

"My goal," she said, "is to implement policies and procedures that help people across the board."

Relationships Before Politics

Faust-Goudeau acknowledges that serving in a Republican-controlled Legislature has presented challenges throughout her career.

"I have three strikes against me," she said with a laugh. "I'm a woman, I'm a Democrat and I'm Black. Well, I'll say four—I'm short too."

Behind the humor is a philosophy that has guided her career.

Faust-Goudeau said passing legislation begins with building relationships long before a bill is introduced. Over nearly two decades, she has made a point of getting to know colleagues on both sides of the aisle, learning what matters to them and earning their trust before asking for their support.

"I've studied with my colleagues," she said. "I've learned what matters to them."

Those relationships, she said, make it easier to have difficult conversations, negotiate differences

See FAUST-GOUDEAU Page 15 →

How Team Und3rated Turns Potential Into Champions

Sixteen Wichita athletes qualified for the AAU Junior Olympics after a season focused on developing young athletes on and off the track.

By Ty Davis and
By Bonita Gooch

Sixteen athletes from Wichita's Team Und3rated have qualified for the AAU Junior Olympic Games in Des Moines, Iowa, Aug. 1-8 — a remarkable jump from just three national qualifiers a year ago.

The accomplishment reflects more than talent. It reflects a coaching philosophy built on developing athletes from the ground up, even those who don't arrive looking like future champions.

Many successful club programs build their reputation by recruiting athletes who already look like champions.

Patton is just as interested in athletes who are willing to learn as those who already know how to win.



Ten members of Wichita's Team Und3rated gather before departing for the 2026 AAU Junior Olympic Games in Des Moines, Iowa. The program qualified 16 athletes for the national meet, where competitors advanced by finishing among the top six in their age division at the Region 16 championships.

Team Und3rated Members Qualifying for AAU Junior Olympics

Maielle Payne 4x100 - 15/16	Lakeya Fuller High Jump - 17/18
Ajay Montgomery 4x100 - 15/16	KD Williams 110 hurdles - 15/16
Smya Greene 4x 100 - 15/16	4x100 - 15/16
Raegan Stewart 4x100 - 15/16	Cam Akins 100 yard dash - 15/16 200 yard dash - 15/16
Kiera Smith 100 yard dash - 17/18 200 yard dash - 17/18	4x100 - 15/16
Kyra Carmenar Penthalon - 12	Jamarian Peters 4x100 - 17/18
Chris Neal 4x100 - 15/16	Demarco Wilcher 4x100 - 17/18
Kendhari Curry 4x100 - 15/16	S'king Neal 4x100 - 17/18
Malkai Clark High Jump - 17/18	Nico Snell 4x100 - 17/18

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“When a child first joins our program, they don’t even know who they are,” he said. “I like taking the kid that has bad form.”

Most coaches see unfinished athletes as projects. Patton sees possibilities.

He believes nearly every athletic weakness can be overcome if a child is willing to learn and a coach is willing to teach.

“It’s more to it than just getting on the track and running fast,” Patton said. “You’ve got to have proper mechanics. If your running form is messed up, we’ve got to fix it.”

That “fix it” philosophy extends beyond athletics.

“I tell my kids, ‘Be the sponge. I’ll be the water,’” he said.

Patton sees coaching as an opportunity to pour discipline, confidence and accountability into young people, believing those lessons will last long after the final race.

“A lot of kids don’t have hope,” he said. “We want to give them hope, knowing somebody’s going to believe in them, somebody’s not going to give up on them and somebody’s going to invest in them.”

“What we do on this track is going to translate outside the track,” he said.

That philosophy is producing results on the track.

See Und3rated Page 15 →

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Oak Ridge Missionary Baptist Church Celebrates 140 Years of Faith and Ministry

For 140 years, Oak Ridge Missionary Baptist Church has been a pillar of faith in Kansas City, Kansas, serving generations of families while remaining committed to sharing the Gospel and strengthening the community.

Founded in 1886, the church has grown from humble beginnings into one of the largest and most influential congregations in Wyandotte County. Throughout its history, Oak Ridge has emphasized biblical teaching, worship, family and community outreach while adapting to meet the needs of each new generation.

This August, the congregation will celebrate that rich

legacy with a monthlong **140th Church Anniversary Celebration** built around the theme, **"Reflecting, Celebrating, and Envisioning Our Future."** Inspired by Joshua 4:21-24, Psalm 103:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 2:9, the theme encourages members to remember God's faithfulness, celebrate His blessings and look ahead with confidence to what lies ahead.

The church has been led for the past 28 years by **Rev. Dr. Ricky D. Turner**, who became senior pastor in 1998 after leaving a successful banking career that included serving as a vice president for Commerce Bank. Under his leadership, Oak Ridge has expanded its ministries while continuing its longstanding commitment to spiritual growth, education and community service.

The anniversary celebration will feature special worship services each Sunday in August, with guest preachers bringing messages centered on the church's past, present and future.

Guest ministers will preach during worship services on **Aug. 2, Aug. 9 and Aug. 16.**

On **Sunday, Aug. 23**, the church will welcome **Rev.**

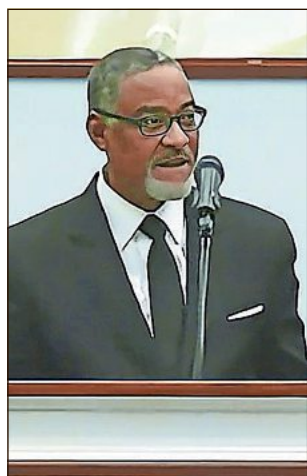
Dr. Jerry Young, president emeritus of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., as the featured anniversary speaker.

The monthlong celebration will conclude on **Sunday, Aug. 30**, when Pastor Turner delivers the closing anniversary message. The service will also feature the **Oak Ridge Reunion Choir**, bringing together

former and current members in a special musical tribute celebrating the church's 140-year legacy.

Oak Ridge will also host its **140th Anniversary Banquet** on **Saturday, Aug. 8**, from **2 to 4 p.m.**, at **The View at Briarcliff**, 4000 N. Mulberry Drive in Kansas City, MO. The special guest

See Church Page 15 →



Rev. Dr. Ricky D. Turner has served as senior pastor of Oak Ridge Missionary Baptist Church since 1998.

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Ruby L. Burdine, 80

May 2, 1946 — Jul 19, 2026
Service will be held at 11 am on Fri., Aug. 7 at New Jerusalem Baptist Church, 1625 N. Madison

James Lindsay Lee, 80

Jun 23, 1946 - Jul 17, 2026
Service will be held 10 am on Sat., Aug. 8 at St. Mark United Methodist Church, 1525 N Lorraine.

William Jackson Foster, 74

Apr 30, 1952 — Jul 17, 2026
Service will be held at 10 am on Wed., July 29 at Northside Church of Christ, 4545 N. Meridian.

Walter Ash, 94

Sep 27, 1931 — Jul 17, 2026

Graveside Service will be held at 2 pm on Fri., July 31 at Old Mission Cemetery, 3424 E. 21st St.

Rose Tyler, 87

Nov 26, 1938 — Jul 15, 2026
Graveside Service will be held at 1pm on Fri., July 31 at Winfield Veterans Cemetery, 1208 N College St Winfield, KS

Dasie Carter, 81

Aug 21, 1944 — Jul 14, 2026
Service will be held at 11 am on Sat., Aug. 1 at New Jerusalem Baptist Church, 1625 N. Madison.

Richard Loudermilk, 77

Aug 8, 1948 — Jul 13, 2026
Service was held on July 25 at St. James Missionary Baptist Church.

Sylvester "Bud" L. Canady, 77

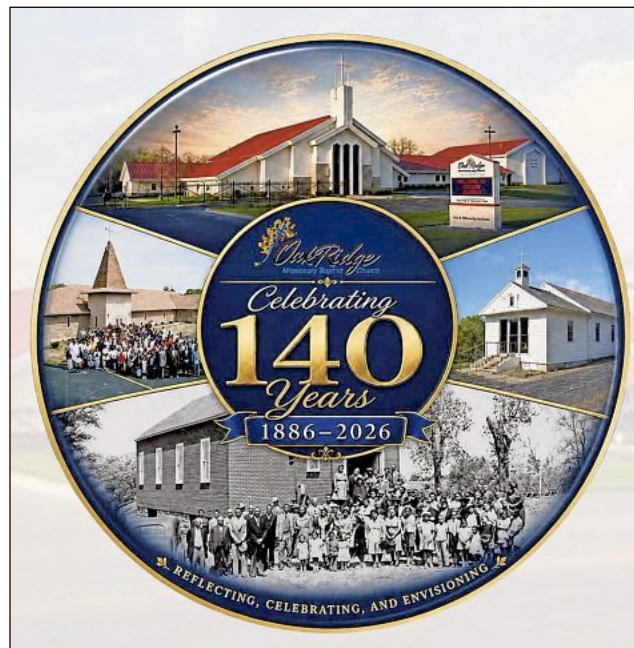
Dec 1, 1948 — Jul 11, 2026
Service will be held at 10 am on Sat., Aug. 1 at St. Andrews Missionary Baptist Church, 3901 E 25th St N.

Church, from Page 14 ↓

speaker will be Rev. Dr. Reginald E. Bachus, Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Chicago.

The church looks forward to a meaningful time of fellowship and Christian programming for members and the community.

Oak Ridge Missionary Baptist Church invites the community to join in this historic celebration. With gratitude for 140 years, ORMBC rejoices in faith, knowing that what God has ordained — the best is yet to come!



Oak Ridge Missionary Baptist Church is celebrating its 140th anniversary throughout August with special worship services, guest speakers and a commemorative banquet. Founded in 1886, the church has grown into one of the largest congregations in Wyandotte County while continuing its longstanding commitment to faith, family and community.

**READ MORE ONLINE AT
COMMUNITYVOICEKS.COM**

FAUST-GOUDEAU, from Page 11 ↓

and find support when legislation comes up for a vote.

Whether advocating for homeless veterans seeking identification, grandparents raising grandchildren or Kansans trying to move beyond financial hardship,

Faust-Goudeau measures success not by the number of bills carrying her name but by the number of lives those laws improve.

Looking ahead, she hopes to expand economic opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses while creating more reasons for young

professionals to build their futures in Kansas.

For Faust-Goudeau, the work has never been about collecting legislative victories.

"We can't fight every individual battle," she said. "But if we put it in policy and procedure, it helps everybody across the board."

Und3rated, from Page 12 ↓

Athletes don't simply register for the AAU Junior Olympic Games. They must first qualify through district competition before advancing to Region 16, which includes Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Nebraska. The top six finishers in each event and two-year age division advance to the national championships.

"Everybody wants to get to the Junior Olympics," Patton said.

Patton also understands that earning a spot is only part of the challenge.

Travel, hotels, entry fees and equipment can put national competition out of reach for many families.

As a child growing up in Pensacola, Florida, Patton qualified to compete but never made it to the Junior Olympics because his family couldn't afford the trip. Today, he works to make sure finances don't keep his athletes from having opportunities he never had.

"We pick up a lot of kids



Coach P.C. Patton talks with two Team Und3rated athletes during practice. Patton says coaching is about more than winning races, focusing on developing discipline, confidence and accountability that athletes can carry beyond the track.

because they don't have rides," he said.

To help families cover the cost of competition, Team Und3rated organizes fish fries, car washes and other community fundraisers throughout the season.

Patton's wife, Sheda, coaches alongside him and says the team's success is measured by more than the number of athletes qualifying for national competition.

"It's amazing," she said. "We're grateful for the kids just doing their best."

As Team Und3rated prepares to compete on one of youth track and field's biggest stages, Patton hopes the athletes leave with more than medals.

He hopes they leave believing they can accomplish more than they imagined.

For Team Und3rated, that's the real finish line.



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or at 913-642-6000.

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