



The Leawood Rotarian

The Newsletter of the Leawood Rotary Club

Celebrating Over 30 Years!

leawoodrotary.org

February 5, 2026

February 5 Program:

Kim Hammers – Embrace

Enriching Many By Reaching All in Catholic Education



MISSION

The mission of EMBRACE is to provide the opportunity for an inclusive education by supporting children with disabilities and learning differences in their Catholic schools.

EMBRACE (Enriching Many By Reaching All In Catholic Education) is an independent 501(c)3 organization. The organization was conceived by a group of dedicated, prayerful, and concerned parents of children with learning differences and disabilities, yearning for the opportunity for inclusion of their children in a Catholic school environment. Formed in 2013 and approved as a national non-profit in 2017, a formal board was established in 2017 and an Executive Director and staff were hired later that year.

Kim Hammers brings a wealth of knowledge from her 30 years of experience serving in three different Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. After receiving her Bachelor of Science degree from Kansas State University, Kim was a classroom teacher for twelve years. Her passion has always lied with serving students with learning differences and disabilities. She received her School Leadership Degree from the University of Missouri Kansas City. She then served as both a principal and vice principal for 18 years in the Catholic Schools. During that time, Kim grew the resource departments of the schools she led. This enabled those schools to better serve all students.



Click link below to launch Zoom

[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 813 1042 7816

Passcode: Rotary

February Greeters:

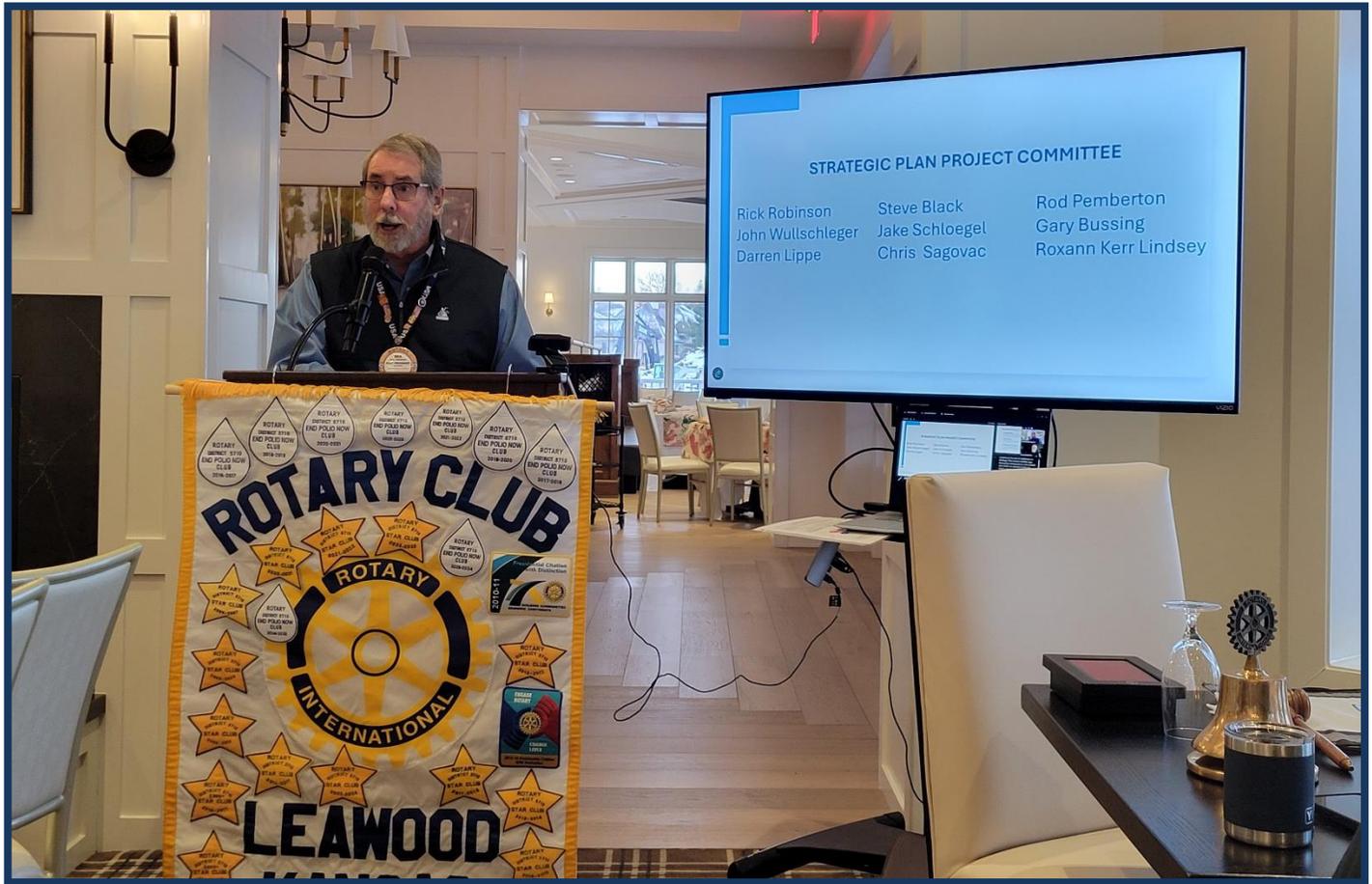
Ken Selzer, Stu Sharp, Chuck Sipple, Ron Slepitz, Diane Stoddard, Tom Sullivan

Greeter Captains:

February 5 – Diane Stoddard
February 12 – Chuck Sipple
February 19 – Tom Sullivan

Last Week's Meeting

Leawood Rotarians heard from Secretary Rick Robinson, who presented the club's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.



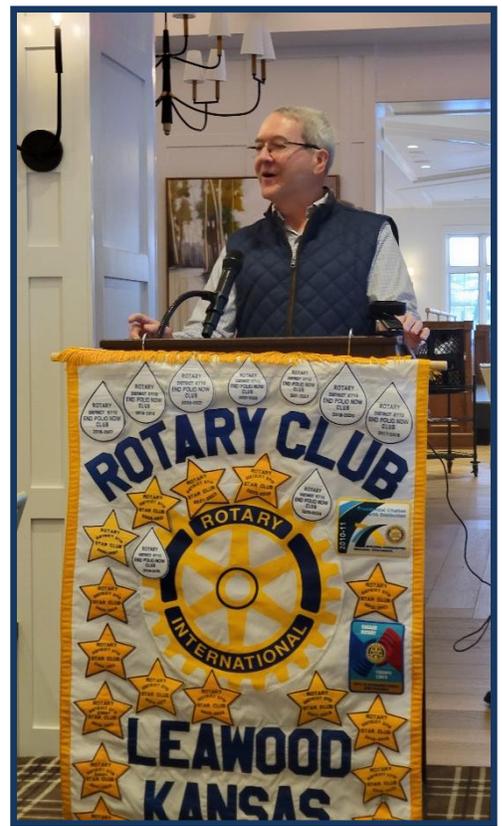
Priorities

 <p>INCREASE OUR IMPACT</p>	 <p>EXPAND OUR REACH</p>	 <p>ENHANCE PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT</p>	 <p>INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO ADAPT</p>
<p>In your club this might look like...</p> <p>Develop service projects that reflect the needs of your community and are more effective.</p>	<p>In your club this might look like...</p> <p>Work with groups, organizations, and community leaders that you haven't partnered with before.</p>	<p>In your club this might look like...</p> <p>Make all members feel like they have a role in the club and make sure that anyone who engages with your club feels empowered to share their ideas and get involved.</p>	<p>In your club this might look like...</p> <p>Ask members what your club should continue, start, or even stop doing to ensure that the club reflects the needs of its members and potential members.</p>

Kirk Nelsen (Re) Inducted



Kirk's first induction into the Leawood Rotary Club on February 12, 2015. Welcome back, Kirk!



We Make Pour Choices

German Rieslings were the focus for January's We Make Pour Choices gathering. The Lippes hosted once again, much to the delight of Doris Lippe's fans (her baked goods are always a hit). Those in attendance agreed the event was well worth braving the cold!



We Make Pour Choices



January 31 Service Project

About 40 people, including several Leewood Rotarians, showed up bright and early Saturday Morning, January 31, to pack 10,000 meals for The Outreach Program. The 50 boxes, filled with shelf-stable Spanish rice with protein, will benefit people in need due to circumstances such as government shut-downs that affect school nutrition programs. The majority of meals stay in the local area where packed. Students from Pembroke Hill School and the National Honor Society at Blue Valley North High School were a tremendous help with meal packing.





For the Goal – A Service Opportunity in Leawood

Happy New Year, Rotarians-

As we prepare to welcome people from around the globe to Kansas City, it will come as no surprise that the City of Leawood has a committee of busy volunteers and staff who are organizing many events. From Watch Parties to Business Readiness Grants, from a better-than-ever Celebration in the Park for America's 250th, to a **new** Independence Day parade on the morning of July 4, we are busy AND excited!

Our theme is "For the Goal" in honor of the soccer statue in City Park.

Rotarians Stephen Powell and I are enjoying our time on the executive committee and are very excited about the many things we've already accomplished.

So finally- the reason for this note: This spring, we are inviting Leawood community groups and individuals to help us pick up litter along some of our main corridors and intersections.

We've created the following SignUpGenius and I ask that you consider signing up AND sharing it with anyone who might be interested.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B49A9AB2CA7FD0-61376952-leawood>



We may add more dates and locations once these start to fill, so I'll probably share it again in early March. But I'd VERY MUCH appreciate it if you'd consider being an early-signer-upper!

Please let me or Stephen know if you have any questions.

With appreciation--

Lisa Harrison

913.522.5049

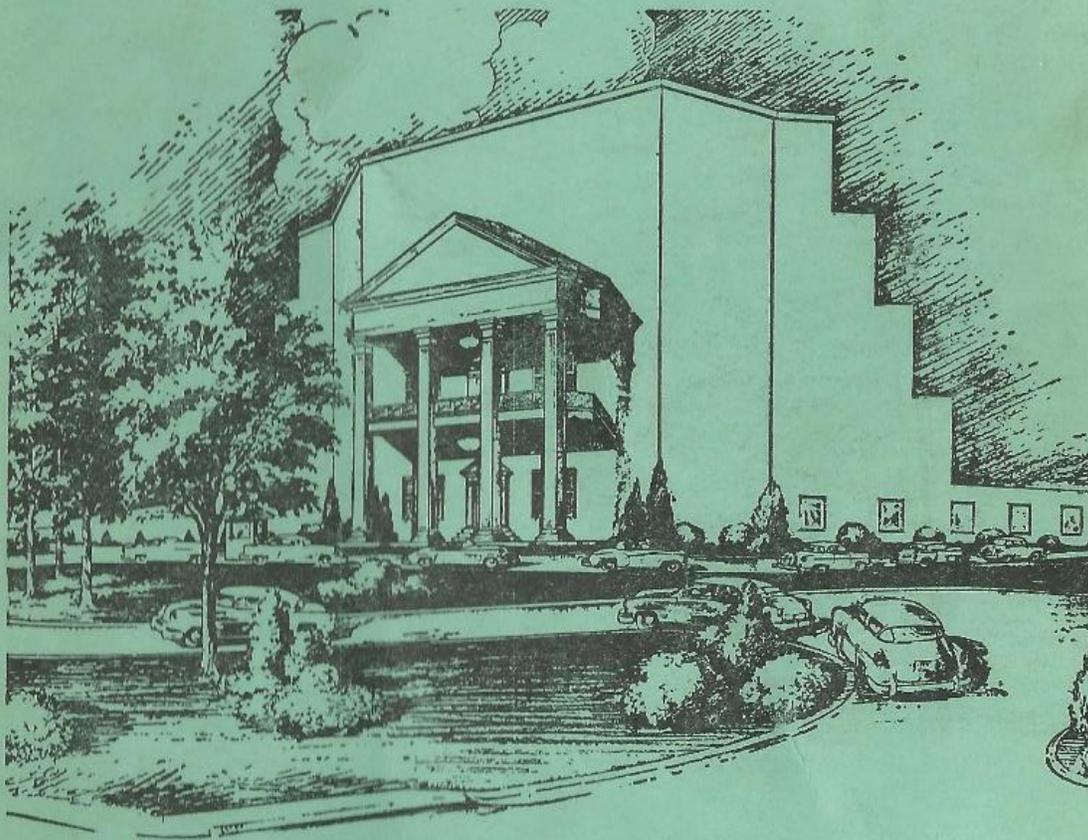
Leawood History: The Leawood Drive-In



The multi-story screens that popped up with great frequency in the 1950s were the sign that drive-in movie theaters had become a growing part of the entertainment scene across the nation and here in Leawood. When the Leawood Drive-In opened on June 26, 1953, at 120th & State Line Road, it was billed as “the showplace of Kansas City.” The \$350,000 theater featured the “largest screen in the Midwest” in a facility designed with the appearance of a “Southern Mansion.” The six-story-tall screen was designed to give a “third dimension effect,” something the drive-in’s owner, Dickinson Theatres, Inc., stressed in its advertising.

Able to accommodate over one thousand cars, the theatre also offered a free playground for the children, located at the base of the screen. Opening night featured the film *Lure of the Wilderness* with Jeffrey Hunter, and *Tembo* with Howard Hill. Donald Duck and Pluto cartoons targeted the younger members of the audience. Customers were entertained between feature films with a “mammoth” fireworks display. Various prizes were advertised to encourage attendance at the opening: flowers to the ladies, an “Indian war bonnet for each child,” and a flashing key ring for the first 500 men. A Westinghouse washing machine was promised to the car that arrived with the most adults inside.

★ ★ ★ ★
Leawood
DRIVE-IN THEATRE



The Beautiful
Leawood Drive-In

GRAND OPENING - FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 1953

Souvenir Program

Press Story of The LEAWOOD Drive-In Theatre

The LEAWOOD DRIVE-IN THEATRE, located four miles south of Kansas City, Mo., and in the suburbs of Leawood, Kas., at 120th and State Line, makes its bow to the public tonight with a grand opening. The box office will be open at 6:00 P.M. for early arrivals.

We have a wonderful all technicolor show for tonight. Jean Peters and Jeffery Hunter in "Lure of The Wilderness", also an African wild animal picture "Tembo" featuring Howard Hill, world famous archer plus Donald Duck in "Slide Donald Slide" and Pluto in "Pluto and The Gopher." Also there will be a big display of fireworks at approximately 10 p.m. The snack bar will be open so you may have a hot-dog, candy, cold drinks, pop corn and other good things to eat. It will be open before the show and will remain open all through the show. A large playground with an asphalt surface, equipped with slides, teeter-totter and swings is available for the children to play.

Construction of this beautiful Drive-In was started approximately a year ago, and is now in readiness for your enjoyment and relaxation for years to come. This Drive-In is located on high ground so you will always have a nice breeze to keep you cool. The theatre is located on a plot of ground containing 32 acres. The construction is of the most modern design, with the landscaping and beautification designed by specialists. The snack bar is equipped with the latest designs and models of refreshment service equipment.

The ultra modern screen tower which is as high as a six story building, has been given a new treatment. In addition to the mammoth picture surface which measures 52 by 70 feet, side panels 16 ft. wide and top and bottom panels 8 ft. wide have been added, creating an illusion of greater size and depth. Every piece of equipment in this entire plant is the latest and finest obtainable.

A Colonial motif has been followed in the design of the tower, "marquee," box office and "attraction display. Two fountain statues in front of a background of colored lights add to the atmosphere and beauty of the Colonial setting. Display cases have been

lighted up and give more atmosphere to this beautiful drive-in.

Wide curved drives at the front of the theatre have been installed to handle the Traffic and to improve the appearance of the entire front. These drives have been covered with the best of road surfacing to keep down all dust and to give our customers the smoothest possible entrance and exit.

The Patio, 30x75 feet located directly in front of the concession stand, and equipped with tables and deck chairs, can be used as a comfortable place to watch the show, visit your friends, and enjoy refreshments. This patio can be used at anytime.

An eight foot walk-way has been provided in the center of the entire project which leads from the playground to the back ramp. This walk-way makes it possible for patrons of the concession to walk north and south to the walk, and then to the concession stand.

The projectors and speaker equipment are the finest made. Each car is provided with an individual speaker which can be placed inside the car by the patrons themselves. Each speaker has an individual volume control so each person viewing the picture can control the degree of volume.

The policy of this theatre is to give you the best motion pictures for a down to earth price. Come as you are and be comfortable. Bring the children early and let them have fun on the supervised playground. Admission is 75c with children under 12 free, when accompanied by an adult.

This addition of the Leawood Drive-In Theatre, to the Dickinson Chain will complete a total of 48 theatres, of which 5 are Drive-Ins. The Dickinson Operating Co., now service five states with the same outstanding policy as we do here.

The Leawood Drive-In is the largest drive-in theatre west of Chicago and the finest in the United States. We have selected Ralph Rhodes as the manager of this outstanding theatre. Johnson County has a right to feel proud of the Leawood, the finest drive-in theatre in the United States.

Always a Good Show

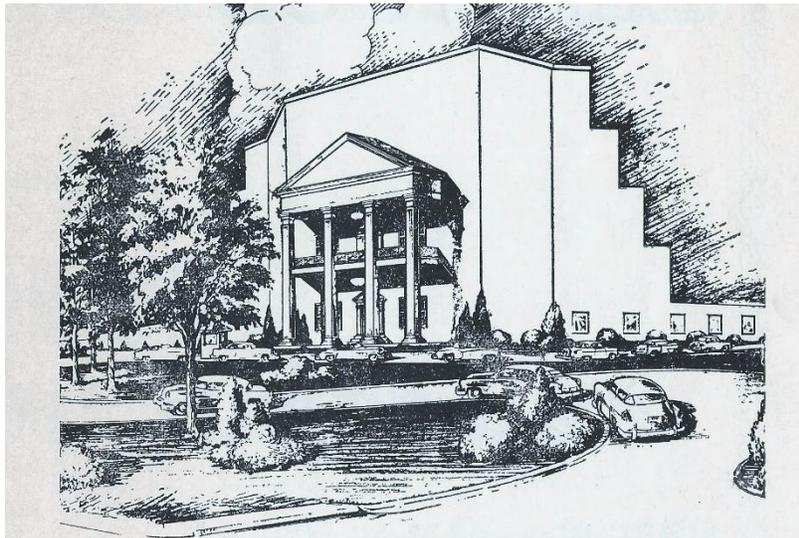
and the
BEST
in
ENTERTAINMENT



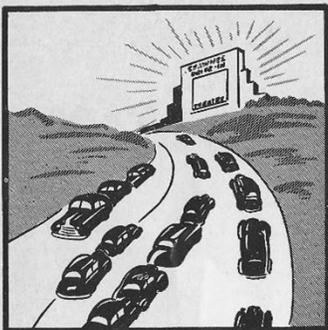
Leawood Drive-In

120th & State Line

Boxoffice opens 6 p.m.
Show starts at dusk

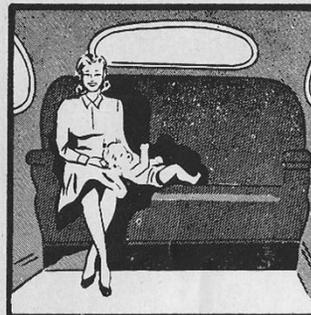


NEW LEAWOOD DRIVE-IN



Why a Drive-In Theatre?

America living, working and playing on wheels created a demand for a place of Amusement where the family could go as a group in one automobile with no parking worries and remain in the car and thus be Entertained. Hence the reason for the Leawood Drive-In Theatre and its predecessors throughout the nation.



Costs Less Than a Sitter!

You can take the kiddies with you when you visit the Leawood Drive-In for less than it costs to hire a sitter to stay at home with them. And the nice thing about it is you don't have to worry about their safety or conduct because they are right beside you on the seat of your car. In fact, they are under your supervision better than at home.



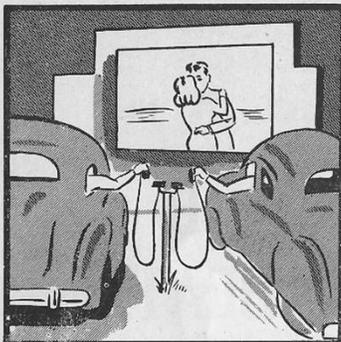
Snack Bar

For the pause that refreshes, cokes, pop corn, candy, hot dogs and other confections are available in the centrally located Snack Bar at the Leawood Drive-In. You won't miss any of the show while making your purchases at the Snack Bar as its glass front permits complete visibility of the screen.



Children's Playground

At the Leawood Drive-In you will find a completely equipped Children's Playground in the area immediately in front of the giant screen. There tiny tots can romp at will while their parents enjoy the show from special seats at the rear of the area which have been provided for them.



Individual Speakers

An individual speaker is provided for each car at the Shawnee Drive-In theatre, which can be installed on steering wheel or car window without the driver leaving car. Thus each car has intimate, individual sound, the volume being controlled by occupants. Care should always be used in replacing speaker on standard before driving off at conclusion of the show.



Free Bottle Warmer!

Mothers won't have to skip baby's feeding when they visit the Leawood Drive-In. Just bring along a bottle of baby's formula and have it warmed in our scientific and sanitary bottle warmer, free of charge, which is available at all times in the Snack Bar.



Eventually, drive-ins fell upon declining fortunes and reputations. What had started as a venue for family entertainment slowly became a venue jokingly referred to as “The Passion Pit” which began showing edited adult movies to keep customers coming. The Leawood Drive-In closed in 1976 and a further indignity came in June of 1979 when the property was declared by the Leawood City Council to be legally abandoned. Residential development in the area, particularly Verona Gardens to the north of the site, had created a situation that prohibited the once popular drive-in from reopening. In the early 1980s another battle was waged, namely with how the property was to be rezoned and redeveloped. Nearby residents wanted more single-family homes. Property owner, Wilson Williams, wanted to build a shopping center on the property. In the end, the shopping center prevailed, with a Hy-Vee grocery store as the anchor tenant.

Looking Ahead to February

Programs:

February 12: FIFA World Cup Preparations/Opportunities
– Lisa Harrison and Stephen Powell (Invokerator – Lisa May)

February 19: Jim Grant, Executive Director of the Global Birthing Home Foundation (Invokerator – John Meier)

February 26: Board Meeting



YOU'RE INVITED
Celebrate I-Lan's Lunar New Year!

THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

with Leawood Mayor Marc Elkins, the Leawood City Council, and the I-Lan Sister City Committee

FRIDAY, FEB. 20, 2026 | 6 P.M.
Vista I54 at Ironhorse Golf Club | I5400 Mission Rd.

\$40 per person
Cash bar, Cocktails, Asian cuisine, and a Lion Dance Performance

Reserve your spot at leawood.org/register starting Jan. 5.
Reservation deadline: Feb. 13

