



The Leawood Rotarian

The Newsletter of the Leawood Rotary Club

Celebrating Over 30 Years!

leawoodrotary.org

March 19, 2026

March 19 Meeting:



KCcrossroads.org

Mark your calendar! On the **First Friday of every month**, thousands of residents and visitors fill the Crossroads Arts District in Kansas City to enjoy what has become the City's most dynamic and popular event: **#firstfridayskc**. Our community comes alive as arts organizations, galleries, studios, and a wide variety of businesses in the district feature local, regional, national, and international artists. Also catch one of the **Crossroads' creative wall murals** or visit our exciting new Art Alleys between Baltimore and Wyandotte from 18th Street to Southwest Blvd which are filled with Art Vendors and their individual artistic creations!



Click link below to launch Zoom

[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 813 1042 7816

Passcode: Rotary

Invoker: Kirk Nelsen

March Greeters:

Carlos Vidas, Jonn Wullschleger (Captain 3/19),
Kirt Yoder, Dave Anderson, Stephen Black

Last Week's Meeting

Doug Wesselschmidt transferred his Rotary membership to Leawood Rotary Club, with Stephen Powell as his sponsor. Then, Tasheka Garrett presented shocking statistics and ways everyone can help defeat human trafficking, particularly among brown and black girls and women.



Guess This Rotarian

When she's not representing fellow residents of the City of Leawood, this servant leader fulfills many roles for Leawood Rotary Club and her church. Who can name this sassy young lady?



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

Upcoming Events – Save the Dates!

April 7:

Tuesday, April 7, 2026
6-8 pm

Dine & Drink to benefit Polio Plus



Chicken N Pickle
5901 W 135th St.
Overland Park, KS 66223

April 11:

Gathering for Good Event - Lawrence, KS

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Doubletree Hotel – 200 McDonald Drive

You're invited *Back to the 60's* at Gathering for Good, a themed evening benefiting The Rotary Foundation!

Event Highlights:

- Live & silent auction (proceeds benefit The Rotary Foundation and are credited to the winning member)
- Wine & Liquor Pull
- Trivia game
- Open bar with themed drinks
- 60's attire encouraged

Tickets are \$75 per person (covers event costs, no donation to the Foundation is included in ticket price).



Visit the [Event Site](#) to get your tickets today!

Upcoming Events – Save the Dates!

April 30:

Fifth Thursday Social Event - Discover O.P.

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

8001 Santa Fe Dr., Overland Park, KS

Save the Date!

Leawood Rotary Social Event

Thursday, April 30, 2026 – 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.



- *Food & Beverages provided!*
- *See the newest attraction in Downtown O.P.!*
- *Details to come.*

Discover O.P. - 8001 Santa Fe Drive, Overland Park, KS

Service Project March 21



FLOURISH
A FURNITURE BANK

We are set to have a Community Service event at Flourish Furnishings in Grandview on Saturday morning, March 21, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. If you have not been there before, please join us. They have many jobs from “shopping assistance”, furniture repair, electrical repair, linen sorting, household goods sorting, truck unloading, and much more. If you wish to attend the event, please email me ASAP as they limit our participation to only ten volunteers. Please plan on wearing your Rotary Work vest for a group picture early in the shift.

Please register online or at the event.: flourishfurniturebank.org

Chuck Sipple
Community Services Committee

Service Project April 14

We have scheduled a Service Day at Project Cure for Tuesday, April 14th from 1 -3:30pm. As far as I know, we will be doing our regular sorting and warehouse work, but we may have other things to do that day also.



We will meet at 12:30pm in the parking lot just east of the old/new UMB bank site at I-435 and State Line for those who wish to carpool. This is another great chance to do good and have some fun with your Rotarian friends.

For newer members, the Kansas City warehouse where we volunteer is in the Hunt Midwest Subtropolis (the caves) near Worlds of Fun. If you would like more information before volunteering, please contact me.

Please let me know if you can make it by emailing me at the email below. Also let me know if you plan on driving yourself and I will get you directions.

Thanks very much and let me know if you have any questions.

Rick Robinson
International Committee Project Cure Coordinator

rickrobinson.kc@gmail.com

Rotary Rewind – April 2012

Brad Moore was invited to speak at the Rotary Club of St. Charles, Missouri. The topic was the runway expansion at Lambert Airport, which decimated the town of Bridgeton. Brad exchanged club banners and still stays connected with some members of the club.



Member Moment

In our sixth installment of "Rotary Member Moment," we feature Past President, Jonn Wullschleger.

You can watch Jonn's video on Facebook by clicking on the link below:

https://www.facebook.com/reel/1162240949226401/?s=single_unit



Leawood History:

Kansas City Star - June 11, 1980

Retaining the past, planning for the future

Leawood looks beyond the bedroom community to plan a southern development strategy

By Brenda Spillman

staff writer

It's all a question of image. Shawnee is an old town hoping to become the new development hot spot of the metropolitan area.

Overland Park, with its coveted College Boulevard corridor of commercial and office development and square mile of open space to the south, sees itself as "executive country."

And Leawood. Ah, Leawood, land of tall trees, sweeping lawns and curving, go-nowhere streets that preclude heavy traffic.

Some in Leawood still point with pride to the May 15, 1971, issue of *Time* magazine, which—in a not altogether flattering profile—chose Leawood as THE example of an affluent bedroom community in the United States.

Although Champ Clark, the author of the article and a former *Kansas City Star* reporter, characterized the typical resident as being inclined toward drinking at the country club and being exclusive almost to the point of racism, Kroh Bros. Realty, Leawood's original developer, liked part of the article well enough to include it in the preface to its history of the community:

"A majority of the newer, more transient residents are often-transferred executives of major U.S. corporations. In many cases, their company (sic) helps foot the home owner's bill just for the prestige of

having a Leawood address for its man in Kansas City."

That's how most of Leawood's 13,000 residents perceive the city—as a prestigious address where a homeowner can settle in to the joys and securities of suburban living.

Now, however, as the city trembles on the brink of the plunge southward from Interstate 435—the dividing line between the solidly developed northern section of the city and the sparsely developed southern frontier—Leawood has a real identity crisis: How can it change while remaining the same?

Change is necessary "so the taxpayer can afford to live here," said Mayor Kent Crippin.

Of Leawood's 12,000 acres, only 73.2 scattered along the city limits are commercial. Most of the sales tax revenue in Leawood is generated by a single source, Ranch Mart shopping center at 95th and Mission, according to Joe Herring, city treasurer.

Herring, who lives at 8435 Cherokee Lane in the older part of the city, says he took the job of treasurer because he had been a leader in complaints about some of the problems beginning to appear in the original part of the city.

And the answer to the problems? "Money," Herring said.

The city's tax base, already a problem when *Time* wrote about Leawood nine years ago, is stretched thin. Signs of deterioration—aging curbs, gutters and streets and drainage ditches needing improvement—are showing up in the northern part of the city, Crippin says.

Without more commercial development and the taxes it would generate, that creeping deterioration could ruin Leawood's fiercely defended reputation; uncontrolled commercial development could have effects as devastating.

Controlled or uncontrolled, there's only one place commercial development can go—south of the highway, where 14 square miles of largely undeveloped land lie fallow.

Faced with the task of deciding what the view south from I-435 will be, the city is working on a plan that, when complete in six to eight months, will yield a detailed picture of how development is to occur, the mayor says. The city has hired two consulting firms, one local and one national, to help develop a plan.

And, as the city plots its strategy for the south, it is glancing over its shoulder to remind itself of the image it is trying to preserve by careful planning.

"I've always said that the city north of I-435 needs the area south because that's the only place where commercial development can occur that will improve our tax base," Crippin said.

Continued...

Leawood History:

Kansas City Star - June 11, 1980

"And the south is very much in need of the cooperation of the north area because that's where the image began. If that image is destroyed by deterioration, the south will be very much affected."

No one shares that opinion more strongly than Mrs. Karen Hess, a newcomer to the City Council who lives at 12407 Overbrook in the Leawood South subdivision. She says she might not have sought a council seat if her home had been tucked in the northern part of the city.

"We're going to live here a long time, and when you're living in an area that's growing as fast as ours is, you need to have some say in what happens," she said. "The name Leawood conjures up a certain image—quiet, conservative, residential—and I think that image should be preserved (in the south) if it can be."

The only place for more commercial development is southern Leawood, Mrs. Hess said. "There's room for it, but what no one really wants is a convenience store right next door. They want some kind of planned development that won't infringe on their rights (to a private, peaceful residential area)."

Particularly if, like Mrs. Hess, a homeowner has invested in a house in an area surrounded by wide-open space.

Residents in Leawood, whether in the old part of the city or in the new developments to the south, traditionally have taken any perceived encroachment seriously.

"There's a lot at stake in Leawood," Crippin said. "For most people, the largest investment is their house, so you're really treading on someone's turf when you come in and say you want to do something that's not conducive to a good residential area."

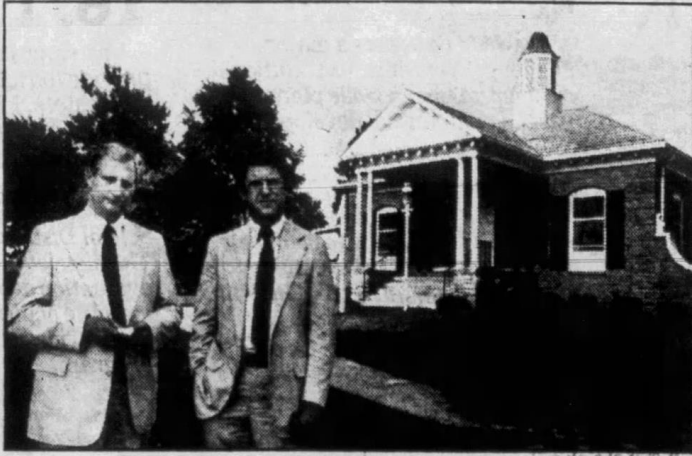
Residents near 123rd and State Line, the site of the old Leawood Drive-In Theater, rose up when a developer wanted to build a shopping center there. They had such persuasive opposition that they convinced the city to block the development. The developer's challenge is pending in Johnson County District Court.

That is the type of confrontation the city is hoping to avoid by planning where commercial development will go and how it can blend with residential development, Crippin said.

"I think that what's going to come out of this will be somewhat of a model for other cities," Crippin said. "Of course, it all depends on future (city) councils."

He added, "This council has committed itself to the idea that we need more commercial development, but we're going to tell the developer where it's going to go, and if he doesn't want to go along with that, he can go somewhere else."

Leawood History:



Left, in front of Leawood City Hall stand Mayor Kent Crippin, left, and City Treasurer Joe Herring.



Above and left, an abandoned drive-in theater on State Line was the center of controversy when area residents opposed plans to build a shopping center at the site. City officials hope to avoid another such conflict as Leawood looks toward development in the south. Below, one of those keeping watch on development in the Leawood South subdivision is Mrs. Karen Hess, Leawood councilwoman. (staff photos by Tom Strongman)

Kansas City Star - June 11, 1980

