The Leawood Rotarian

The Newsletter of the Leawood Rotary Club

Celebrating Over 32 Years! | leawoodrotary.org | September 3, 2026

This Week: Quindaro History

Speaker: Karen Arnold-Burger, Chief Judge of the Kansas Court of Appeals



Quindaro, located in present-day Kansas City, Kansas, emerged in the 1850s as a beacon of resistance against the expansion of slavery during a pivotal era of American history. Founded by both Black and white abolitionists, the settlement offered a safe haven for formerly enslaved individuals and became a vital point of entry into free territory. The town later became home to institutions like Western University, the first Black university west of the Mississippi River.

Invocator: Doug Wesselschmidt

Click link below to launch Zoom

Launch Meeting - Zoom

Meeting ID: 813 1042 7816
Passcode: Rotary

Upcoming Programs:

September 10: Leawood Stage Company

Speaker: Michael Blinn

September 17: Museum of Barbeque

Speaker: Jonathan Bender

September Greeters:

Milca Aguirre, David Anderson (Captain 9/3), Dirk Anthonis, Chris Armer, Jonathan Bagg, Mike Best (Captain 9/10), Steve Black (Captain 9/17), Jack Brown

Last Week: We Make Pour Choices

On August 27, Rotarians gathered at the home of Tim & Lisa Harrison for another wine tasting event. And the evening was all about Chianti! Thank you to the Harrisons for hosting this fun event!





Last Week: We Make Pour Choices





Last Week: We Make Pour Choices





YOU'RE INVITED to

A NIGHT ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

JCCB

2026

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 18, 2026

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 PM

THE FILLMORE *Event Space*
10000 MARSHALL DRIVE • LENEXA, KS 66215

Join us for Johnson County Christmas Bureau's
annual signature fundraising event -
HOLIDAY OF HOPE GALA

Together, we create a *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* impact, providing hope and essential support to low-income and under-served children & families across Johnson County, Kansas.

Holiday of Hope

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Sponsor a Table or Purchase a Ticket- either way, you're supporting neighbors in need and *changing lives.*

ISLAND VACATION EVENING ATTIRE

jccb.org

AN UNFORGETABLE EVENING

- Silent Auction
- Live Auction
- Entertainment
- Appetizers & Cocktails
- Mediterranean Dinner Buffet & Dessert

MAKE AN EVEN BIGGER IMPACT

Interested in donating a silent auction item or experience?
Your generosity helps us give even more.

TOGETHER, WE ESCAPE TO GIVE HOPE.

To Donate an Auction Item email: admin@jccb.org

Upcoming Events:

September 3: BVEF Breakfast

Thursday 7 a.m.
Overland Park Convention Center, 6000 College Blvd., O.P. KS 66211



September 7: Labor Day 5K

October 7: Women's Social

I am happy to announce our next Women's Social! For our newest members, this is a great way to get to know the other women members in our club. Thanks to Roxann for opening your beautiful home, yard and pool!

You are Invited
Leawood Rotary Women's Social
Wednesday, October 7, 2026
5:30-7:30 PM
Home of Roxann Kerr Lindsey
12710 Melrose, Overland Park, KS 66213

Please bring an appetizer, we need just a few deserts.
RSVP no later than Sept. 19, to Mary Reed (Membership Committee)

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department

With the fire department's recent hiring of Andrew Grove as the new Fire Chief, I thought it would be appropriate to do a deeper dive into the history of the city's fire department. The information and photos contained here are from a 1978 book detailing the history of all fire departments in Johnson County.

Leawood Fire Department

1948-1978



On December 1, 1948, the City of Leawood became an incorporated city of the third class. One of the major reasons for incorporation was to improve city services, i.e., fire and police protection which was, for all intents and purposes, nil since fire protection was furnished by the Volunteer Fire Department in Overland Park, and police protection was furnished by the Sheriff's Office in Olathe, both being quite distant from the then growing community of Leawood with its population of some 832 residents.

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department

Since there would be no funds available to the neophite City until the ensuing tax year, a campaign was launched to raise donations from home owners for the purchase of a fire truck and related equipment. By November, 1949, sufficient funds had been obtained to purchase a 1949 Ford 500 GPM Pumper fully equipped. Brook Beatty, the owner of a plastics company in the Waldo Area of Kansas City, Missouri, lived at 9435 Lee Blvd., and the committee approached him to accept the job as Fire Chief on a volunteer basis, which he did. As Fire Chief he developed the Department into a highly efficient firefighting unit, later purchasing a 1951 Ford 500 GPM Pumper, and housing both apparatus in the new fire station that Kroh Brothers, the developers of Leawood, built on donated land at the cost of $19,245.47 which was financed through the first bond issue in the City. As the City grew, Chief Beatty determined that there was a need for specialized equipment such as a 1954 Jeep grass firefighting rig that was built and equipped by the Chief, and affectionately nick-named "Junior".

As time passed, the Chief saw a critical need for some type of ambulance service in Leawood, since it usually took 30 to 45 minutes or longer to get an ambulance under emergency conditions. This being the case, Chief Beatty purchased a 1956 Ford Panel Truck and skillfully converted it into a most functional Rescue Vehicle, the first of its kind in the area. In 1959 this panel truck was replaced by a Cadillac Superior Royal Rescuer that was the pride of the Fire Department. As the City grew it became necessary to increase the pumping capacity of the fire apparatus, and the two Ford Pumpers were replaced by a 1957 American LaFrance 750 GPM Invader and a 1961 American LaFrance 1,000 GPM Spartan. It was during this period that the first paid firefighter was hired, and started on a daytime shift basis September 23, 1958, which later developed into 24 hour firefighters during the year 1960 which were, and still are, supplemented by a most able staff of Volunteer firefighters.

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department

It was during 1961 that Chief Beatty suffered a heart attack which eventually required him giving up his position as Chief, so at the first of 1962 the membership voted to make Max S. O'Brien the new Fire Chief who served the City in that capacity for the next four years. During his tenure in office he added more personnel to the professional staff and another piece of equipment, a 1963 Chevrolet Panel Truck to be used a back-up unit to the Rescue Car. It was at this time that "Junior", the Jeep grass firefighting apparatus, was sold, and, to say the least, it was greatly missed by all members of the Department. It was during Chief O'Brien's tenure of office that the first professional Assistant Fire Chief was employed with the idea in mind that the City would eventually have a professional Fire Chief in charge of the Fire Department.

The foregoing eventuality became a reality on June 23, 1962, when Jourdan A. Toman, Sr., the Assistant Chief at Consolidated Fire District No. 2, Prairie Village, with 13½ years experience with that Department, was employed by the City as Assistant Fire Chief, the first professional of that rank on record in the Leawood Fire Department. This was not the only "first" for Toman who was actually the first Assistant Fire Chief for Consolidated Fire District No. 2. Toman's service record with the Leawood Fire Department reads as follows: September 23, 1958—the "first" paid firefighter for the City; September 30, 1958—promoted to the "first" paid Captain for the City; September 30, 1960—resigned as a daytime paid Captain, assuming the position of Volunteer Firefighter in favor of the addition of full-time 24 hour shift firefighters; June 23, 1962—employed as the "first" paid Assistant Fire Chief; May 1, 1966—upon the resignation of Max S. O'Brien, Toman was promoted to the position of Fire Chief, the "first" professional Fire Chief to be employed by the City.

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department

As the City grew, the Fire Department, by necessity, grew to meet the demands made upon it. In 1970, three ladies were added to the volunteer portion of the Rescue Squad to assist during the manpower short daytime hours. These ladies served most efficiently after an extensive training program, and were given the title of "Rescuettes". The team dwindled over the years to one remaining member, the Chief's Wife. In 1967 the Chevrolet Panel Truck was replaced by a new Ford Station Wagon that was to become the new "Chief's Buggy". In 1973 the 1959 Cadillac Rescue Car was replaced by a new Cadillac Miller Meteor Lifeliner by the Wayne Corp. followed by an additional pumper, a 1974 American LaFrance 1,500 GPM Dominion, the first diesel powered vehicle in the Department, and another rescue vehicle, a 1977 Wayne Care-O-Van.

All-in-all, the Leawood Fire Department has come a long way from its original beginning as a small Volunteer Department with one pumper truck housed in the Kroh Brothers barn at 96th & Lee Blvd. Station No. 1, the original station at 9609 Lee Blvd., has grown in size to accommodate more paid personnel which included a full time Fire Inspector who initiated a fully operational Fire Prevention Bureau in 1973. Station No. 2, located at 12701 Mission Road went into operation on March 1, 1978. It is from these two locations that the following equipment is operated: three pumpers, two rescue cars and three station wagons. This equipment is manned by twenty-seven professionals, thirteen volunteers and one Rescuette.

The City of Leawood, Kansas Fire Department is proud of its history, and will continue to serve its citizenry through the years by observing its motto—"SAVE LIVES—STOP FIRES"!

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department

The following is a list of former Volunteer Firefighting Officers and Men of the Leawood Fire Department. They are listed in honor of their service to the Leawood Fire Department and the Citizens of the City that they served. If any are omitted it is not intentional, but the omissions have occurred due to the fact that the past history and records of the Department are quite sketchy or were never in existence at all or lost in the shuffle during the changes made in the Department over the years. The ranks listed after the names are the ones that Chief Toman knows from memory were assigned to those people. If others held a rank, and it is omitted, it is only because there is no recall or record of same.

Brook Beatty, Chief
Al Moynagh, Ass't Chief
Harry Basore, Ass't Chief
August Diehn
Earl Boutell
Fred Gardner
James Haglund
Dick Halsted
James Haver
Jerry Bickley
Red Lisenby
Davis
Max O'Brien, Chief
Bill Turner
Dr. Walton Ingham
Cam Blazer III
Tom Johnston
Fred Kuchem, Ass't Chief
Bill Donnelly
Joe Hanna
Frank House, Inspector
Gene Kroh
Norman Nelson
Ole Nesmith
Robert Plagens
Carl Schupp
Verne Thouvenelle
Cecil Jenkins
Walt Helms
Ray Hall
Glen Stevenson
Jim Nixon
Ray Burchett
Jack Richardson
George Aostole
Fred Twitchell
Chuck Koehler
Chris Glenn
Paul Meyers

Those who have served as "Rescuettes" and have gone are as follows:

Ginger Anselmi
Ruby Ingham
Joan Donnelly
Marti Dart

The Officers and Firefighters of the Leawood Fire Department salute these former Members, and are proud to have served with them and hope that they carry the same pride in their hearts. Those who have passed away as well as those who are still living, and, along with our salute "A JOB WELL DONE FOR YOUR FELLOW MAN!"

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department



Chief Beatty and other original members in the early 1950's.



As Leawood grew a 1954 Jeep and a 1956 Ford panel rescue car were added.

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department



1949 Ford central pumper and a 1951 Ford central pumper. The fire station as it looked in the late 1950's with stall on rear for rescue car and jeep.



The interior of the 1956 Ford panel illustrates the skills of the original fire chief, Brook Beatty, in converting the vehicle into the first rescue unit in this area.

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department



In 1957, the 1949 Ford 500 G.P.M. pumper was replaced with a new American LaFrance 750 G.P.M. Invader pumper.



In 1959 delivery of a Cadillac Superior Royal rescuer was taken at the factory in Lima, Ohio.

Leawood History:
The Leawood Fire Department



Delivery was taken in 1961 of an American LaFrance 1000 G.P.M. Spartan pumper to replace the 1951 Ford 500 G.P.M. pumper.



Chief Toman proudly displays the first chief's buggy, a 1967 Ford country sedan.