

Chamber hosting civics competition

The Chamber is partnering with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation to host a first-of-its-kind civics competition that encourages young Americans to engage in civics and contribute to their communities.

Participating 6th-8th graders will flex their civics knowledge for a chance to win recognition and cash prizes. Finalists will compete in the inaugural National Civics Bee national championship in Fall 2024.

"The Chamber is participating in the National Civics Bee because we believe informed and active citizens make for a strong country, a strong economy, and a strong workforce and that our continued prosperity depends on the strength of all three," said Kevin Walker, Chamber Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer.

The essay portal is open until January 8, 2024. To enter the competition, participants are asked to write a 500-word essay in which they identify a problem facing his or her community and detailing how citizens might solve the problem. For more details, [click here](#).

Corporate sponsorships of the competition are available to showcase your company's commitment to developing active and engaged citizens. For details: Kevin Walker at (913) 766-7602 or kwalker@opchamber.org.



FastTrac class graduates

After an intensive 10 weeks of sessions, the 2023 cohort of Kauffman FastTrac® Aspiring Entrepreneur program graduated last month.

FastTrac® participants met with attorneys, financial planners, business advisors, bankers, HR reps, a loan specialist, social media marketers and other successful entrepreneurs.

Funded by the Chamber and Johnson County Community College, the program was facilitated by Breanna Jones.

Graduates were:

- Cathy Denesia, [Educational Therapy Center](#)
- Jianxin Kang Lohr
- Brad Moore, [Overland Park Historical Society](#)
- Emily Moore, Moonlight Pizzeria
- Jamy Nichols, Heart Me
- Samantha Smith, Sam's Hair OP
- Mark & Claire Yoder, Moonlight Renovations

If you are interested in participating or sponsoring the next FastTrac session, contact Tim Holverson at tholverson@opchamber.org.



Chamber Board

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Joan Wells, Chair
Augeo

Cindy Rock, Chair-Elect
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Kristen Leathers-Gratton, Affinis Corp

Will Mann, Zurich North America

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Rick Schier, CommunityAmerica Credit Union

Dr. Alan Verrill, AdventHealth South Overland Park

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Kim Winslow, Evergy

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Stan Lawson, Communications Director

Hannah Melton, Member Services Coordinator

Libbey Tucker, CECd, Senior Vice President of Economic Development

Tanya Rife, Executive Assistant

Kevin Walker, IOM, Executive Vice President & Chief Policy Officer

Andrew Weisberg, Director of Talent

Joan Wells
2023 Chamber Chairman
[Augeo](#)



The Year in Review

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

As I reflect on the Overland Park Chamber in 2023 it is summed up in one word – momentum. It was a year of starts and firsts and launches.

We kicked off the first year of implementation of Opportunity NOW, our 5-year community and economic development strategic plan that expands resources to address pain points in OP businesses. We raised \$3.2 million in private funding over five years, dedicated to three goal areas:

- Talent
- Jobs & Investment
- Creating a Pro-Business Environment.

To address the top pain point – Attracting and Retaining Talent – the Chamber added a workforce department. We developed tools to help you create internships, externships and apprenticeships and expand your talent pipeline. We launched a workforce study to analyze the local laborshed and barriers to our talent pipeline.

Progress is evident all across Overland Park:

- The long-awaited expansion of U.S. 69 – a top priority for the Chamber for years – began.
- We welcomed Hill's Pet Nutrition's new headquarters and 475 new employees to the Aspiria Campus.

- We celebrated the groundbreaking of Meridian, the \$2 billion, 200-acre mixed-use redevelopment at Brookridge.

The Chamber doubled down on small businesses as a backbone of economic development. We escalated small business and entrepreneurial programming with the graduation of our first GAME cohort to help second-stage businesses grow and the launch of our first Kauffman FastTrac® class. Johnson County's 1 Million Cups is now hosted by our Chamber.

Engaging and equipping our community members is a priority.

- Voter education and participation increased through www.votejoco.com with a 165% increase in viewership and 62,000 page views in this last local election cycle.
- Three recent Leadership Overland Park graduates were elected to local office in Johnson County. And, LOP honored 38 new graduates in 2023.

Momentum is built over time – the result of many committed individuals and initiatives coming together to create a movement that is powerful and difficult to stop. I am grateful to have had this moment in my life to build relationships with passionate community leaders and to have witnessed firsthand the beginnings of so much progress that will have decades long impact on our collective future.

Upcoming events

Wednesday Wake-up

Wednesday, December 13 – 8:00-9:00 a.m.

[Sheraton Overland Park Hotel](#), 6100 College Boulevard

Make connections, develop lasting business relationships and create new opportunities while enjoying coffee and breakfast.

The Sheraton will help us ring in the holidays with food and drinks plus a surprise visit from a Christmas icon.

Free for Chamber members.

To register, [click here](#).



SERIES SPONSOR



Ribbon cuttings

December 13 – [Charles River Labs](#), 17745 Metcalf Avenue – 4:00 p.m.

Young Professionals Holiday Mix & Mingle

Friday, December 15 – 4:30-6:30 p.m.

[BRKTHROUGH](#), 6403 West 135th Street

Socialize with other young professionals and enjoy delicious food, beverages and door prizes!

BRKTHROUGH is a social entertainment experience featuring 40 immersive high-technology challenge rooms that are a fast-paced combination of physical, mental and skill-based challenges.

Make sure to bring your friends!

To register, [click here](#).



Frank Ebling Retirement Party

Thursday, December 14 – 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Overland Park Chamber

We're celebrating the many contributions of our CFO, Frank Ebling, who retires this month. Frank joined the Chamber team in 2012 and has led many initiatives including a major renovation of the Chamber building.

To register, [click here](#).



Paula Fields joins Chamber team

Paula Fields has joined the Chamber staff as director of finance and administration.

Paula will lead finance, human resources and operations to ensure financial health and sustainability for our membership and community. In addition to budgeting and forecasting, she will be responsible for human resource functions and operations of the Chamber Foundation Building and oversee database management.

You can reach Paula at pfields@opchamber.org or (913) 766-7609.



Paula Fields

1 Million Cups

Wednesday, December 20 – 8:45-10:15 a.m.

Overland Park Chamber, 9001 West 110th Street

Join fellow entrepreneurs for Collisions, Connections and Collaborations – an opportunity to connect with an active and engaged community for conversations and viewing of the live 1 Million Cups pitch presentations.

To register, [click here](#).



Annual Meeting

Wednesday, December 6

Overland Park Convention Center

Featuring a panel of industry leaders sharing perspectives on "Our Economy and the Future of Work."

For speaker bios, [click here](#).



Presenting Sponsor



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Welcome to the Chamber!

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Birth Biologic

Julie Beck, Chief Operating Officer
19532 Metcalf Avenue, Suite C
Stillwell KS 66085
(913) 283-9811
info@birthbiologic.com
www.birthbiologic.com
Medical Equipment & Supplies

Chappelow Events

Sal Scott, Business Development Coordinator
(816) 377-9409
hello@chappelowevents.com
www.chappelowevents.com
Event Services

IMA, Inc.

Meggan Lussier, Executive Assistant
9393 West 110th Street, Suite 600
Overland Park KS 66210
(913) 982-3650
meggan.lussier@imacorp.com
www.imacorp.com
Financial Services, Insurance

Verlo Mattress

Michelle Johnson, Owner
9140 Metcalf Avenue
Overland Park KS 66212
(913) 363-2337
www.verlo.com
Mattresses

Refer a potential Chamber member to Dave at ddyer@opchamber.org and receive a credit when they join!

Thanks for reinvesting!

NOVEMBER MEMBER RENEWALS

50+ Years

Payne & Jones, Chartered
Varnum/Armstrong/Deeter, L.L.C.

40-49 Years

Valbridge Property Advisors |
Kansas City

20-39 Years

Ash Grove Cement Company
Corporate Woods
Holmes Murphy & Associates
Nicklaus Golf Club at LionsGate
Parris Communications Inc.
Paul Henson Family YMCA

10-19 Years

Andre's Confiserie Suisse-
Andre's Rivaz

Red Robin Gourmet Burgers-
South Overland Park
The Andersons, Inc.

5-9 Years

Nifty Promotions
Rotary Club of Overland Park
Rx Savings Solutions
SelectQuote

1-4 Years

Back On Track Chiropractic +
Acupuncture
Best Roofing Kansas City
Blue Valley Commodities, LLC
Chiefs Fit
Compass Minerals
Fiorella's
FunDaLogic Robotics
St. Croix Hospice
The Forum at Overland Park
TrueFix Physical Therapy
Worlds of Fun

2024 Board Officers

The Chamber Board of Directors announces the following board officers for 2024:

Chair: Cindy Rock, **C2FO**

Chair-Elect: Josh Beck, **MarksNelson LLC**

1st Vice-Chair: Matt Sogard, **Overland Park Regional Medical Center**

2nd Vice-Chair: Kim Winslow, **Evergy**

Secretary: Matt Sheets, **FNBO**

Treasurer: Chris Wally, **Wally & Co.**

Past Chairman: Joan Wells, **Augeo**

President & CEO: Tracey Osborne Oltjen, CCE

Chamber is hiring

The Chamber is hiring for the position of Economic Development Project Coordinator.

This position provides research, marketing, communication and administrative support for the strategic goals and initiatives to promote economic development in Overland Park. The coordinator is responsible for database management, demographic research and analysis, and communication with Economic Development Council investors and business prospects. The coordinator manages the website and other marketing functions of the department.

Qualified candidates must demonstrate exceptional research, communication, technical and organizational skills. Ability to analyze and communicate the meaning of data required. A bachelor's degree and experience in economic development preferred.

For details, [click here](#).



Bryan Dehner shared his leadership insights from his 30-year career with the Overland Park Fire Department at our most recent breakfast in the Executive Leadership Series sponsored by **FNBO**. The former fire chief continues to serve our community as Assistant City Manager, providing strategic leadership in many important areas including mental health services – [click here](#).

Please support these businesses investing in our community!



As part of the Chamber's Opportunity NOW initiative to address workforce challenges of Overland Park employers, Andrew Weisberg, Director of Talent, and Courtney Cavlovic, Workforce Program Coordinator, engaged with students from Shawnee Mission West. Students were tasked with creating a presentation of recommendations for the Chamber to undertake for youth to learn more about local career opportunities and consider Overland Park in their work future.

Join our Young Pros Steering Committee!

Are you ready to take your professional career to the next level?

We have an exciting opportunity that puts you at the forefront of leadership, networking and community impact. The Overland Park Young Professionals Steering Committee is accepting applications for passionate individuals like you.

To learn more about the steering committee, [click here](#).

To fill out an interest form, [click here](#).



Seeking council members

These new councils are working to address the goals outlined in the Opportunity NOW initiative and welcome your participation or someone from your company:

Talent Council – contact Andrew at aweisberg@opchamber.org.

Small Business Council – contact Tim Holverson at tholverson@opchamber.org.



Mayor Curt Skoog and Chamber President Tracey Osborne Oltjen joined Phil Buttell, CEO at [Menorah Medical Center](#), and other HCA Midwest Health officials to celebrate a ribbon cutting for a permanent location for Family Health Medical Group and the second location of Town Plaza Women's Health at 13801 Metcalf Avenue.

The specialty center offers residents greater, more convenient access to comprehensive primary care and preventive care for all ages and obstetrics and gynecology care for every stage in life.

For details, [click here](#).



Council Member Tom Carignan joined the Chamber to help Gerrardo Serrano and his family celebrate a ribbon cutting for [Kolaches and Coffee](#), 7214 West 119th Street in Rosana Square!

Kolaches and Coffee offers traditional kolaches stuffed with fruit, cheese or meat served with premium coffees and tea. Catering and private parties also are available.

For more info: (913) 343-4410 or [click here](#).

2024 sponsorships

Gain visibility in front of business professionals by sponsoring a Chamber event or program!

Branding your name with the Chamber can:

- Increase your brand awareness and visibility
- Highly target advertising placement across a variety of print and digital media
- Access new business relationships and potential customers
- Enhance credibility with new connections
- Align your business with the Chamber's core purpose: To make Overland Park prosper

For more information, [click here](#) or contact Alex at acook@opchamber.org or (913) 491-3600.

Leads groups offer referral network

The Chamber has two leads groups that give Chamber member representatives the opportunity for more intensive networking.

Leads groups meet consistently in a non-competitive and mutually supportive environment to exchange leads and business referrals. Leads groups are a tool for members to cultivate professional relationships, establish trust, increase knowledge and build business. Each leads group has a capacity of up to 25 participants from different industries.



Participation in a Leads Group offers:

- Focused opportunity to create and maintain an effective network;
- Build personal and professional relationships with Chamber members;
- Develop strategies to grow and expand your business.

Leads groups meet in person twice a month. If you would like more information about leads groups, contact Dave Dyer at (913) 766-7604 or ddyer@opchamber.org.

This newsletter is distributed monthly by the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, 9001 West 110th Street, Suite 150, Overland Park, KS 66210. | (913) 491-3600
opcc@opchamber.org | www.opchamber.org



The Chamber helped Zach Arwood, Manager; and his team at [Gearhead Outfitters](#) celebrate opening in Oak Park Mall.

Founded in 1997, Gearhead Outfitters helps customers live active, fulfilling lives with quality outdoor-inspired products including The North Face, Patagonia, Yeti, Chaco, Birkenstock and more.

For more info: (913) 802-4327 or [click here](#).



City Council President Jim Kite joined the Chamber to help Tammy Eickhoff, Michelle Butler and their team celebrate a ribbon cutting for [Fantastic Sams Cut & Color](#), 9633 West 87th Street.

Fantastic Sams is a full service hair salon, providing professional color, haircuts, styling, updos, special occasion hair, highlights, facial waxing, treatment, perms, specialty color, beard trim and more.

Locally and independently owned, Fantastic Sams is proud to be part of the neighborhood. For more info: (913) 831-1007 or [click here](#).

Meeting space available

Whether you're planning an event, a training session, or a one-on-one interview, the Chamber Foundation Building offers the perfect, low-cost space for meetings.

Our individual office space is ideal for remote working or when you're wanting to work away from your regular office.

For more information, contact Hannah at hmeltan@opchamber.org or (913) 766-7610.

Black & Veatch is Building a World of Difference

CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

For more than a century, **Black & Veatch** has led the way in critical infrastructure solutions, ensuring reliable and sustainable power, water, telecommunications and more.

The global company and its employee-owners have been equally committed to making the communities where they live and work better, stronger places.

Because it's the right thing to do for a company true to its mission of Building a World of Difference.

Black & Veatch's 27-year support of **Children's Mercy Kansas City** hospital, including proceeds from its 25th charity golf tournament in September, have eclipsed \$5 million to help in the fight against childhood diseases. In addition to supporting the hospital's Genomic Medicine Center, the company's fundraising has supported construction and renovations for Children's Mercy facilities and such things as magnetic resonance imaging equipment, robotic surgery, a neonatal intensive

care nursery, the emergency department and urgent care centers.

Last year, the company announced its commitment to three organizations combating human trafficking, and the Black & Veatch Foundation has contributed financial support to the cause. The company's philanthropy includes funding renovations and HVAC upgrades at Veronica's Voice – a Kansas City, Kansas-based organization that strives to empower women to exit sexual exploitation.

Black & Veatch has led the charge when it comes to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The company has joined the STEM-focused CAPS Network Council of Champions as its inaugural CAPS Network Engineering Champion, committing to helping expand profession-based learning to deliver experience to students, regardless of backgrounds or locations.

Since 1969, Black & Veatch professionals have run the metropolitan area's only engineering Explorer Post. The company's collaboration with

(continued on next page)



City Council President Jim Kite joined the Chamber to help founder Bill Oades, Billy Oades and Jimmy Oades and their families celebrate a ribbon cutting for **Oades Brothers Tire & Auto's** new location at 7625 Metcalf Avenue.

Family-owned and operated for 36 years, Oades Brothers has two locations in Overland Park and one in Lee's Summit.

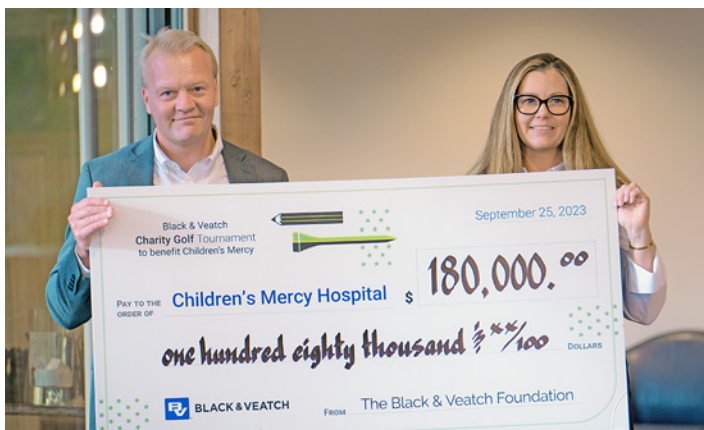
For more info: (913) 232-7878 or [click here](#).



Congratulations to owner Brent Pitts and his team on opening **Anytime Fitness of Downtown Overland Park**, 7620 Metcalf Avenue.

Starting this franchise gives Brent and his team the opportunity to make a difference in the community by helping their neighbors achieve their fitness and wellness goals.

For more info: (913) 648-9474 or [click here](#).



Black & Veatch has supported Children's Mercy Hospital for more than a quarter of a century.

Thank you!

Chamber Coffee Bar Sponsor!



PARISI

ARTISAN COFFEE®

Recent Events

MEMBERS CONNECTING WITH MEMBERS



Corporate Partners



Corporate Sponsors

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[Evergy](#)

[FNBO](#)

[Foulston Siefkin LLP](#)

[JE Dunn Construction Company](#)

[Johnson County Community College](#)

[Kansas Gas Service](#)

[McCownGordon Construction](#)

[The University of Kansas Edwards Campus](#)

To add your name to this list, contact Tracey Osborne Oltjen at (913) 491-3600 or tosborne@opchamber.org.

Member News

The recently completed Every solar array project was celebrated by [WaterOne](#) as well as representatives from Every. The 100 kW [Evergy](#) solar array is installed at WaterOne's Lamar Pump Station, located near 91st and Lamar Avenue in Overland Park.

[Rouse Frets White Goss Gentile Rhodes, P.C.](#), has been recognized in both national and regional rankings from Best Law Firms, a collaboration between Best Lawyers in America and U.S. News & World Report. The firm received 24 total rankings.

[Security Bank of Kansas City](#) provided a real-world learning experience for the [Shawnee Mission West Financial Literacy Class](#). Students gained useful knowledge in career exploration and competed in the financial literacy challenge.

Spring Hill School District seeks business reps to serve on its Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee, which meets twice a year to provide guidance, expertise and insights to enhance CTE programming. For more, contact Courtney at ccavlov-ic@opchamber.org.

[Overland Park Regional Medical Center](#) is the recipient of "Top 10% in the Nation for Coronary Interventional Procedures for 2 Years in a Row (2023-2024)"™ and "Top 10% in the Nation for Critical Care for 2 Years in a Row (2023-2024)"™ according to new research released by Healthgrades.

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To submit member news, log into your Member Info Hub at www.opchamber.org or contact Hannah at hmelton@opchamber.org.

Black & Veatch continued . . .

Operation Breakthrough – an advocacy and education nonprofit for vulnerable Kansas City children and their families – includes an instructive renewable energy lab.

Along the way, the Black & Veatch Foundation is underwriting targeted scholarships to engineering students at Johnson County (Kansas) Community College and Metropolitan Community College in Kansas City, Missouri, as well as at Pittsburg (Kansas) State University and the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg.

For 108 years, Black & Veatch has strived to be generous with time, money and spirit, quietly showing through socially conscious actions and deeds what's possible in creating meaningful change and building better communities.