

## Chamber Foundation presents Civics Bee

**The Overland Park Chamber Foundation presented the first-ever local round of the National Civics Bee.**

Eight finalists competed with three winners receiving cash prizes and the opportunity to advance to the state finals in Wichita on May 9.

"The Bee is foundational to our mission and provides long-lasting impact with future leaders we hope to see in our businesses, civic and governmental organizations," said Chamber President Tracey Osborne Oltjen. "Interacting with a chamber of commerce and critically thinking about our democracy at this young age will hopefully inspire them to engage in their communities throughout their lives."

The National Civics Bee is an initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation to encourage young Americans to engage in civics and contribute to their communities.

We thank [Johnson County Community College](#) for hosting the event and our **Signage Sponsor: [Fastsigns Blue Valley!](#)**



Civics Bee winners: 2nd place - Pranjal Adhikari, Lakewood Middle School; 1st place - Rishaan Panchal, Oxford Middle School; 3rd place - Caleb Bonnema, Blue Valley Middle School.



Participants: Pranjal Adhikari, Lakewood Middle School; Rishaan Panchal, Oxford Middle School; Owen Chen, Harmony Middle School; Shahreen Alam, Oxford Middle School; Faith Mandago, Oxford Middle School; Afia Rahman, Harmony Middle School; Caleb Bonnema, Blue Valley Middle School; Aarush Singh, Overland Trail Middle School.

Thank you to our volunteers: Emcee: Greg Musil, [Rouse Frets White Goss Gentile Rhodes, P.C.](#); Judges: Kim Winslow, [Energry](#); India Boulton, [T-Mobile](#); and Mayor Curt Skoog. An inspirational message was provided by Chamber Chairman Cindy Rock, [C2FO](#). Also pictured are Kevin Walker, Chamber Executive Vice President & Chief Policy Officer; Dr. Tanya Merrigan, [Blue Valley School District](#); and Chamber President Tracey Osborne Oltjen.

## Chamber Board

### Board Officers:

Cindy Rock, Chair  
C2FO

Josh Beck, Chair-Elect  
MarksNelson LLC

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

Kim Winslow, 2nd Vice Chair  
Evergy

Matt Sheets, Secretary  
FNBO

Chris Wally, Treasurer  
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Joan Wells, Past Chair  
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### Board Members:

Rick Axthelm, Compass Minerals

Josh Bitterman, Goldfish Swim School

India Boulton, T-Mobile  
Sterling Cramer, OWN

Tom Davies, Security Bank of Kansas City  
David Freisner, Fortune Financial Advisors  
Tracy Garry, Empower

Hyleme George, Black & Veatch

Scott Kautzi, Strang Hall Chef Collective

Pat Kellerman, Shamrock Trading Corporation

Courtney Kounkel, Monarch Build, LLC

Kristen Leathers-Gratton, Affinis Corp

Will Mann, Zurich North America

Ryan Matthews, Kansas City National Security  
Campus

Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Blue Valley School District

Rich Muller, VanTrust Real Estate

Neelima Parasker, SnapIT Solutions, LLC

Ben Prell, MTC Holding Corporation

Dr. Alan Verrill, AdventHealth Shawnee  
Mission

Christian Weld-Brown, MBB

Jason Wright, JE Dunn Construction Company

### Ex-Officio Board:

Jim Holland, Fisher Phillips LLP

Lori Curtis Luther, City of Overland Park

Tracey Osborne Oltjen, CCE, Chamber

Mayor Curt Skoog, City of Overland Park

## Chamber staff

Tracey Osborne Oltjen, CCE, President & CEO

Courtney Cavlovic, Workforce Development  
Coordinator

Alex Cook, Director of Events & Member  
Services

David Dyer, Membership Director

Paula Fields, Director of Finance & Adminis-  
tration

Izzy Hagen, Director of Marketing

Tim Holverson, IOM, Vice President, Economic  
Development & Entrepreneurship

Stan Lawson, Communications Director

Hannah Melton, Member Services Coordinator

Libbey Tucker, CECd, Senior Vice President of  
Economic Development

Tanya Rife, Executive Assistant

Natalie Vesta, Economic Development Project  
Coordinator

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

Andrew Weisberg, Director of Talent

Tracey Osborne Oltjen, CCE

Chamber President

[@traceylosborne](https://twitter.com/traceylosborne)



## We the People . . .

### MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

#### Can you recite the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution?

If you're like me you can, while silently humming that jaunty School House Rock earworm, a favorite from my elementary school Saturday morning cartoon days. Those tunes taught us how bills became laws, and about conjunctions, adverbs, and a little math.

We could use some School House Rock now. Our friends at the U.S. Chamber Foundation share data with us that is alarming:

- 52% of Americans think democracy has failed or is in trouble
- 53% of Americans can't name all three branches of government, and
- The majority of 18-24 year olds say they would give up their right to vote over TikTok – 59%!

So we were all in when our Chamber and Chamber Foundation's leadership learned about the U.S. Chamber Foundation's collaboration with The Civic Trust to produce the National Civics Bee for middle schoolers. The U.S. Chamber Foundation's goal is to strengthen America's long-term competitiveness. Their creation of the Civic Trust and programs like the National Civics Bee

enhances understanding of the importance of democracy to national prosperity and promotes civics knowledge in our schools, businesses and communities.

We're proud to have been one of four Kansas chambers to host local competitions this year. Our top three finalists will represent us in the state competition hosted by the Kansas Leadership Center in Wichita and we couldn't be more proud of them. To qualify for the Bee, they submitted essays about a community problem they'd like to solve and presented it to a panel of judges. They also went through two rounds of civics questions testing their knowledge of the Constitution and how our form of government works.

These students – 6th-8th graders – addressed big issues in their essays from health care access to mental health to antisemitism. They're bright and articulate, and I look forward to seeing their success in the future. We hope you'll consider engaging in next year's National Civics Bee – as a judge or sponsor. If you're the parent of a middle schooler, watch for details on how your child can participate. For details, contact Kevin Walker at [kwalker@opchamber.org](mailto:kwalker@opchamber.org).

In the meantime, to Rishaan, Pranjal and Caleb, we're cheering for you as you head to Wichita!



# Upcoming events

## Wednesday Wake-up

**Wednesday, May 8** – 8:00-9:00 a.m.

**SnapIT Solutions**, 6900 College Boulevard, Suite 470

At this monthly networking event, make connections, develop lasting business relationships and create new opportunities, all while enjoying coffee and breakfast items.

This event is a great opportunity to see the new office space of SnapIT, a woman-owned, tech solutions company where inventors, innovators and creators design and develop products that are challenging and cutting edge.

Free for Chamber members.

To register, [click here](#).



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## Member Orientation

**Tuesday, May 21** – 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Overland Park Chamber, 9001 West 110th Street

If you are new to the Chamber or new to a business or organization that has been a member for years, this event is for you! Meet the Chamber staff working for you, connect with fellow members and learn about resources for you and your business. Be prepared to introduce yourself and the business or organization you represent. We look forward to welcoming you to the Overland Park Chamber.

Free for Chamber members.

To register, [click here](#).



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## 1 Million Cups

**Wednesday, May 22** – 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.

Free to attend, but registration is requested - [click here](#).



The 2024 Leadership Overland Park Class invites you to Run for the Roses, a May 4 fundraiser to support the children and families served by [Growing Futures Early Education Center](#).

This event includes live streaming of the horse races, live music, hors' doeuvres and specialty cocktails. Hats and derby attire are encouraged.

Space is limited, grab your tickets FAST!

For more information, [click here](#).

## OP After Hours

**Wednesday, May 15** – 4:30-6:30 p.m.

**Bourgmont Winery**, 20299 Quivira Road

Enjoy food, wine and conversation in the lovely atmosphere of Bourgmont Winery's tasting room and venue in southern Johnson County. Whether for an afternoon of wine tasting, a wedding or a private function, Bourgmont aims to create memorable experiences for you.

Free to Chamber members.

To register, [click here](#).



SERIES SPONSOR



## Ribbon cutting celebrations

**Celebrate with your fellow members!**

**May 8** – **OakStar Bank**, 5841 West 135th Street – 4:00 p.m.

**May 9** – **Panda Express**, 15890 Metcalf Avenue – 9:30 a.m.

**May 16** – **Security Bank of Kansas City**, 10300 Mastin Street – 3:00 p.m.

**May 18** – **Verlo Mattress**, 9140 Metcalf Avenue – 1:00 p.m.

**May 29** – **Alzheimer's Association**, 8001 Conser Street, Suite 240 – 4:00 p.m.

**June 7** – **Bridge Hill Eye**, 7325 West 79th Street – 4:00 p.m.

**June 20** – **KC Craft & Co** at the **Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Overland Park-West**, 8787 Reeder Road – 4:45 p.m.



# Welcome to the Chamber!

## INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

### Diverse Minds KC

Eduardo Platon, Founder & CEO  
(314) 327-9003  
hello@diversemindskc.com  
[www.diversemindskc.com](http://www.diversemindskc.com)  
*Social Service & Welfare  
Organizations, Technology*

### Kansas Fiber Networks

Jackson Layton, Enterprise  
Account Director  
10875 Benson Drive, Suite 130  
Overland Park KS 66210  
(316) 712-6030  
sales@ksfiber.net  
[www.ksfiber.net](http://www.ksfiber.net)  
*Internet Consultants, Internet  
Providers*

### Keller Williams

Diana Dodge, Real Estate  
Consultant  
6850 College Boulevard  
Overland Park KS 66211  
(913) 207-8911  
dianadodge@kw.com  
[www.dianadodgehomes.com](http://www.dianadodgehomes.com)  
*Real Estate, Real Estate - Residential*

### Magna Pest Solutions

Jason Arnold, Branch Manager  
9678 Marion Ridge Road  
Kansas City MO 64137  
(816) 594-1233  
j.arnold@Magnapest.com  
[www.Magnapest.com](http://www.Magnapest.com)  
*Pest Control Services*

### Panda Express- Metcalf

Rachel Razon, Marketing  
Coordinator  
15890 Metcalf Avenue  
Overland Park KS 66223  
(626) 799-9898  
[www.pandaexpress.com](http://www.pandaexpress.com)  
*Restaurants, Caterers*

### Pyxis Digital Labs

Danny Schumann, Co-Founder  
Overland Park KS 66213  
(913) 600-2566  
danny@pyxis.digital  
[www.pyxis.digital](http://www.pyxis.digital)  
*Internet Marketing & Advertising,  
Marketing Services*

### Staffing Kansas City

Marie Phelan  
9930 College Boulevard  
Overland Park KS 66210  
(913) 663-5627  
info@staffingkc.com  
[www.staffingkc.com](http://www.staffingkc.com)  
*Employment Agencies & Services*

### WaterWalk by Wyndham

**New EDC Investor!**  
Buffy Cooper, Director of Sales  
11200 Glenwood Street  
Overland Park KS 66211-1516  
(913) 956-0234  
[www.waterwalkoverland-park.com](http://www.waterwalkoverland-park.com)  
*Corporate Lodging, Apartments*



**Join us for an event showcasing the transformative power of building your own workforce!**

### Johnson County Community College

Capitol Federal Conference Room in the Regnier Center  
12345 College Boulevard

Whether your business is looking to grow your talent pool or implement programs for leadership development, apprenticeships provide several avenues for industry to meet their talent demands.

This program will provide greater insight into apprenticeships from a local, state, and national overview. Intermediaries across a variety of industries will offer more details on how companies can take advantage of this talent resource.

Participants also will hear firsthand from apprentices and regional intermediaries. The event is designed to provide everyone with a core understanding of how apprenticeships can help cultivate talent in business and connect you with the resources to support your workforce journey.

This event is free, but registration is requested.

**To register, [click here.](#)**

**Refer a potential Chamber member to Dave at [ddyer@opchamber.org](mailto:ddyer@opchamber.org) and receive a credit when they join!**

# Thanks for reinvesting!

## APRIL MEMBER RENEWALS

### 20-39 Years

Burnett Automotive, Inc.  
Casa de Fuentes  
Community Blood Center of  
Greater Kansas City  
Craig Sole Designs  
Enterprise Center in Johnson  
County  
High Touch of Kansas City  
Home Association Solutions LLC  
Jalapenos Mexican Restaurant

Overland Park Convention  
Center/Global Spectrum  
Saint Luke's Health System  
TransSystems  
United Way of Greater Kansas  
City

### 10-19 Years

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
Overland Park-West  
KeyBank  
LANE4 Property Group  
Mazuma Credit Union  
Oades Brothers Tire & Auto  
Object Technology Solutions Inc.

Pete's Pest Control  
The Goddard School  
The Ranch at Prairie Trace  
Titan Built, LLC

### 5-9 Years

Mickey "The Cotton Candy Man"  
Mid American Credit Union  
Mission Farms West  
Development, LLC  
New Frontier Technologies  
Occidental Management, Inc.  
Price Brothers  
REAL Property Group  
Sky Real Estate LLC - Metcalf  
Crossing

### 1-4 Years

Association Insurance Services,  
Inc.  
Built Interior Construction  
Chick-fil-A 97th & Metcalf  
CNA Insurance  
Great Plains Roofing & Sheet  
Metal  
Heartland Business Capital  
Homewood Suites  
Hyatt Place Kansas City/  
Overland Park/Metcalf  
OakStar Bank  
OWN, Inc.

## Let's all be more like Aaron Attebery!

We were saddened by the recent passing of Aaron Attebery, a dear friend of the Chamber.

Aaron was an integral part of our Chamber family. You may have known him from Leadership Overland Park, as a member of our Board of Directors, or with Greg Musil as half of the dynamic duo emceeding "Good Morning, Overland Park!" You may recall him as a featured speaker at the Chamber's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting in 2017. We displayed each speaker's baby picture as they took the stage and Aaron quipped that his was the only picture in color – just to make sure everyone knew how much younger he was than the other speakers.

Aaron was young. Accomplished, brilliant, innovative, selfless and passionate. Just 35 years old, but he had more than enough time to impact us deeply. His brother summed it up best at his memorial service. Be like Aaron. We'll certainly try.



Aaron Attebery

## Izzy Hagen joins Chamber team

We are pleased to welcome Izzy Hagen to the Chamber team!

Filling the newly created position of Director of Marketing, Izzy will help promote Overland Park as a premier destination for targeted industries and top talent. She'll use her creative talents to articulate our "voice of business" messaging about the business community's role in Overland Park's economic success and quality of life.

"I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to Overland Park's success and bring my passion for marketing and economic development to this dynamic role," Izzy said.

Izzy earned B.S. and Master's degrees in Technology from Pittsburg State University, which led to design and marketing roles. Most recently, she was Director of Marketing and Communications for The Don Bosco Centers.



Izzy Hagen

Click below for event details. Early bird rates until May 1!

## Leadership OP

### Educate & Elevate Scholarship



May 20 is the deadline to apply for the 2024 Leadership Overland Park Educate & Elevate Scholarship.

Created by the 2020 LOP class, the scholarship is intended to help in-need residents of Johnson County gain a professional or technical career by pursuing a degree or technical certificate. The award for 2024 is \$1,000.

For application details, [click here](#).

*Don't miss the garden party of the summer!*  
fine wine • food • artwork • live music • entertainment • fireworks

benefiting:



THE ARTS & RECREATION  
FOUNDATION  
OF OVERLAND PARK



A GARDEN SOIRÉE  
**Stems**  
SIP, SAVOR & BLOOM

at the Overland Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens

Saturday, June 22 • 7-10pm

Visit [stemssoirée.org](https://stemssoirée.org) or scan code for tickets and info!





# A commitment to community

## CORPORATE SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

**Empower** is a financial services company on a mission to empower financial freedom for all.

As the number one retirement provider recommended by financial professionals,<sup>1</sup> more than 18 million Americans<sup>2</sup> trust Empower with their financial futures every day.

Employing more than 600 associates in the Overland Park area, Empower is proud to be an active part of what makes this community special. Empower also amplifies its employees' charitable impact by matching donations, funding volunteer time, and supporting collaborative philanthropy.

For the last eight years, Empower has been a sponsor of the American Lung Association's Fight For Air Climb - Kansas City and its associates are frequently top fundraisers for this event. Additionally, Empower VETS, an internal business resource group for military veterans and those who want to support them, is an annual backer of events like Wreaths Across America at Johnson County Memorial Gardens. Empower's team also enjoys gearing up for the Kansas City Corporate Challenge and looks forward to the friendly competition with other local companies.

For more information:

[www.empower.com](http://www.empower.com) / [X](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [TikTok](#) / [LinkedIn](#)

<sup>1</sup>2022 PLANADVISER Retirement Plan Adviser Survey as of November 2022.

<sup>2</sup>As of September 30, 2023. Information refers to all retirement business of Empower Annuity Insurance Company of America (EAICA) and its subsidiaries, including Empower Retirement, LLC; Empower Life & Annuity Insurance Company of New York (ELAINY); and Empower Annuity Insurance Company (EAIC), marketed under the Empower brand. EAICA's consolidated total assets under administration (AUA) were \$1,372.7B. AUA is a non-GAAP measure and does not reflect the financial stability or strength of a company. EAICA's statutory assets total \$71.5B and liabilities total \$67.5B. ELAINY's statutory assets total \$7.2B and liabilities total \$6.8B. EAIC's statutory assets total \$88.1B and liabilities total \$87.0B.

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INT-LTR-WF-3159541-0224



Empower employees participated in the American Lung Association's Fight For Air Climb Kansas City.

# Vote for us!

The Overland Park Chamber was nominated in the Chamber of Commerce category in the Best of Johnson County 2024 presented by the [Johnson County Post](#).

You can vote for us here: <https://bit.ly/4b4AFwQ>



City Council Member Drew Mitrison and County Commissioner Janee' Hanzlick joined the Chamber to help Scott & Nicole Roth celebrate a ribbon cutting for [Beyond Martial Arts](#), 8910 West 95th Street.

The Roths became owners of this location one year ago and have enjoyed becoming a part of the Overland Park community and appreciate the support of area businesses and families.

For more info: (913) 766-6070 or [click here](#).



Chamber President Tracey Osborne Oltjen and the Chamber helped Jay Green, Office Leader; and his team celebrate a ribbon cutting for the new offices of the employee-owned engineering firm of [OWN, Inc.](#), at 8455 College Boulevard.

With a presence in Kansas City since 2017, OWN (formerly Anderson Engineering) found Overland Park to be the perfect location when it was looking to further establish its reputation and new brand within the area and grow its workforce. With ample amenities, a convenient location, and a supportive business community, the OWNers are thrilled to be in Overland Park and thoroughly enjoy their new location. For more info: (816) 777-0400 or [click here](#).



**Sponsorships available!**



## 2024 Golf Tournament

August 12, 2024

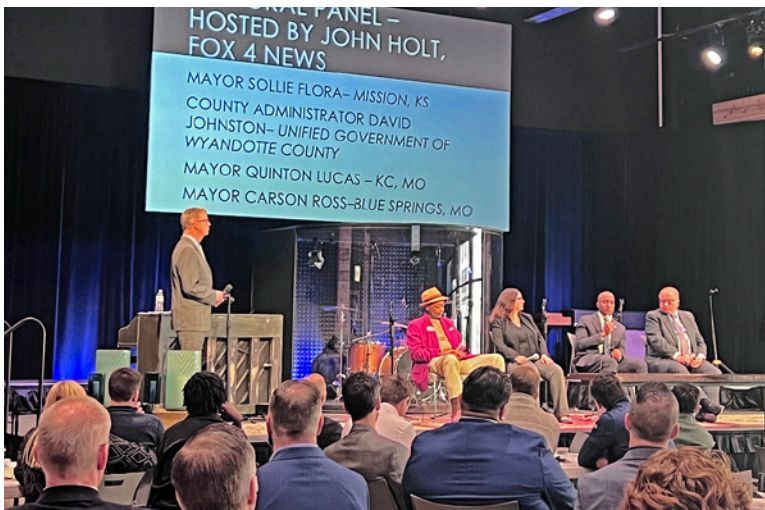
For complete details, contact Alex at [acook@opchamber.org](mailto:acook@opchamber.org) or (913) 766-7603.



City Council Member Jim Kite and Chamber President Tracey Osborne Oltjen helped Tom Lally, President & CEO; and his team celebrate a ribbon cutting for the new [Hillcrest Transitional Housing](#) Thrift Store at 12202 College Boulevard.

Hillcrest's thrift stores provide nearly 50% of the funding for Hillcrest's mission to move clients from homelessness to self-sufficiency.

For more info: (913) 808-5360 or [click here](#).



A panel of mayors from throughout the region answered questions from John Holt, FOX 4 News, during the regionalism session for our Leadership Overland Park (LOP) class last month. That session and another one focused on Johnson County government were joint sessions with the leadership programs of other Johnson County chambers.

**2024 Presenting Sponsor:**



## Driving Economic Success

### Building Permits – March 2024

	New Commercial	Institutional, Schools, etc.	Other Commercial	Total
Count	-	2	41	43
Sq. Ft.	-	132,234	5,486	137,720
Value	-	\$27,487,273	\$16,010,176	\$43,497,449

– City of Overland Park

### Unemployment

	Mar. 2024	Feb. 2024	Mar. 2023
Overland Park	2.8%	3.0%	2.6%
Johnson County	2.8%	2.9%	2.6%
KC Metro MSA	3.0%	3.2%	2.8%
State of Kansas	3.0%	3.2%	2.9%

(These percentages are not seasonally adjusted)  
– Kansas Labor Information Center (KLIC)  
– U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



The Chamber hosted the most recent graduating cohort for [Hiring Our Heroes](#) (HOH), a U.S. Chamber initiative, that provides 12-week fellowships for transitioning service members to gain hands-on experience in the civilian workforce.

Recruiting and retaining veteran talent to Overland Park is an essential part of the Chamber's Opportunity NOW long-range plan to continue to build the skilled talent pool. Transitioning servicemembers offer unparalleled skills and qualities. The Chamber partners with the regional HOH program based at Ft. Leavenworth.

This newsletter is distributed monthly by the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, 9001 W. 110th Street, Suite 150, Overland Park, KS 66210.

(913) 491-3600 | Fax: (913) 491-0393

[opcc@opchamber.org](mailto:opcc@opchamber.org) | [www.opchamber.org](http://www.opchamber.org)



## Corporate Partners



## Corporate Sponsors

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[Johnson County Community College](#)

[Kansas Gas Service](#)

[McCownGordon Construction](#)

[Spencer Fane LLP](#)

[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](mailto:tosborne@opchamber.org).

# Road closure planned for 119th Street

As part of 69Express project improvements, a long-term closure is planned for 119th Street at U.S. 69. Scheduled to begin in August 2024, 119th Street will be closed for 60 days and ramps will be closed for 60 to 120 days beginning in July.

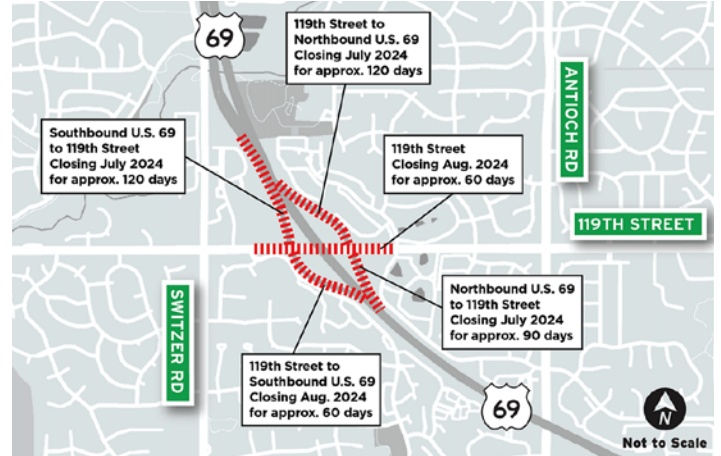
The closure of 119th Street at U.S. 69 will accelerate the reconstruction of 119th Street, interchange ramps and U.S. 69 bridges over 119th Street. The 119th Street closure will be from Grant Street on the west to Farley/Three Lakes Parkway on the east.

Detours will be marked, and digital signs will notify drivers

prior to the closure. Visit [69Express.com](http://69Express.com) for additional information closer to the closure date. Dates are subject to change.

If you have questions, you may

contact [info@69Express.org](mailto:info@69Express.org) or call (816) 805-2445. Follow the project for updates on social media or sign up for text alerts and receive notifications for closures.



## CELEBRATING WITH OUR MEMBERS



Kansas Representative Dan Osman and City Council Member Inas Younis joined the Chamber to help Melody Page, Practice Manager; and her team celebrate a ribbon cutting for [UrgentVet](#), 13712 Metcalf Avenue.

UrgentVet fills the gap between your regular veterinarian and the emergency room. It provides quick, convenient, affordable care 365 days a year with night, weekend and holiday hours. Save your spot online or just walk in.

For more info: (913) 348-7070 or [click here](#).



Representative Dan Osman and City Council Member Inas Younis joined the Chamber to help owner Pam Suarez and her team celebrate a ribbon cutting for [BODYBAR Pilates](#), 13340 Metcalf Avenue!

BODYBAR builds a community of people who love, respect, encourage and motivate one another to be strong, healthy and happy.

For more info: (913) 907-0904 or [click here](#).