

Alvey Outlines WyCo's Efforts and Continued Momentum In Historic Year

In his third State of the Government Address David Alvey, Mayor/CEO of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, Kansas City, KS, provided an overview of the past year and a half, where the community is now, and where it can get to. "Our community has shown time after time that it can overcome any challenge," stated Mayor Alvey. "By working together with pride and resolve, we can achieve anything – working to ensure our community's safety and well-being, maintaining our continued growth and development, and improving overall quality of life through initiatives that make our city more beautiful, prosperous, and sustainable."

While working simultaneously to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and pull the community together following the death of George Floyd to build trust, expand community outreach efforts, and review policing policies and procedures, Wyandotte County simultaneously experienced more than \$1 billion in development growth in 2020 (the most since 1984), creating 10,000 new jobs and attracting a number of new local shopping and retail opportunities for residents.

Alvey highlighted the community's exceptional efforts and leadership in combating the pandemic following Wyandotte County's, and the state of Kansas' first death from COVID-19 in March 2020. "We committed early on to empower public health officials to study this, to find out how it spreads, what could be done to stop it, and to work to protect the public health of all people in our community," Alvey continued. Efforts included:

- Initiating a State of Emergency, and soon after a Stay-at-Home Order.
- Pulling together a collaborative of school leaders, social service providers, health officials, pastors, city administrators, public safety officials, and Mayors in Bonner Springs and Edwardsville that met daily for months to gather intelligence and make informed decisions on how to respond.
- Launch of ReStart Wyco, a working group initiative of business leaders, owners, and workers to put in place best practices, help ensure minimal economic disruption, and to educate the community early on.
- Creation of a Health Equity Task Force to ensure the COVID response takes

into account unequal health outcomes, and to address the diverse needs of all populations – becoming a model for the state's own COVID equity efforts.

He also acknowledged all those who have assisted in the response, "Special thanks to our healthcare workers, first responders, public works and public health officials, and everyone else who worked so selflessly and sacrificed so much, including their families, over the past 14 months," stated Mayor Alvey.

In the same way Wyandotte County approached COVID with clear eyes and an open mind, so too was the community's response to the death of George Floyd. Mayor Alvey immediately created a Task Force on Community and Police Relations, encouraged an evaluation and review of law enforcement policies and procedures, and community outreach and transparency efforts were expanded.

- Task Force on Community and Police Relations – co-chaired by Commissioner Harold Johnson. Hosted eight community forums on issues from Use of Force Guidelines, Community Policing, Body Cameras, Minority Hiring,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Governor Kelly Signs Several Pieces of Bipartisan Legislation into Law

"Today, I signed seven bipartisan bills that will enhance consumer protections and protect Kansas families from mistreatment and extortion," Governor Laura Kelly said. "This is the kind of success that can be achieved when we work together – not as Republicans or Democrats – but as Kansans. I want to thank my colleagues in the legislature, on both sides of the aisle, for their efforts."

House Bill 2077

Extending the Kansas closed case task force, providing for staff assistance and renaming the task force the Alvin Sykes cold case DNA task force, extending the Kansas criminal justice reform commission, limiting the commission's scope of study and adding a public defender, and authorizing the crime victims compensation board to waive application time restrictions for certain victims to receive compensation for mental health counseling and adding certain children to the definition of victim.

House Bill 2121

Increasing the criminal penalty for mistreatment of a dependent adult or elder person when the victim is a resident of an adult care home, adding definitions related to defendants who abscond from supervision in the criminal procedure code and for parole and clarifying that bond agents seeking discharge as a surety are required to return the person released on bond to the court in the county where the complaint subject to the bond was filed, requiring the department of corrections to develop guidance to be used by parole officers when responding to violations of parole and postrelease supervision and that incentivize compliant behavior, and authorizing court services officers and community corrections officers to provide a certification of identification to offenders for use to obtain a new driver's license.

House Bill 2187

Enacting the first-time home buyer savings account act.

Senate Bill 39

Senate Bill 39 changes Kansas department of agriculture division of animal health license, permit and registration renewal deadlines and allows the animal health commissioner to recover the actual cost of official calfhood vaccination tags.

Senate Bill 47

Enacting the Kansas taxpayer protection act requiring the signature and tax identification number of paid tax return preparers on income tax returns and authorizing actions to enjoin paid tax return preparers from engaging in certain conduct, exempting compensation attributable as a result of identity fraud, extending the dates when corporate returns are required to be filed, providing conformity with the federal return due date for returns other than corporate returns, providing a temporary withholding option for certain teleworking employees, establishing the Eisenhower foundation contribution credit and the friends of cedar crest association contribution credit, extending the time period and expanding eligibility for the single city port authority credit, extending the time period for eligibility in the loan repayment program and income tax credit related to rural opportunity zones and defining rural opportunity zone on the basis of population.

Senate Bill 60

Creating the crime of sexual extortion and requiring an offender to register under the Kansas offender registration act, prohibiting a court from requiring psychiatric or psychological examinations of an alleged victim of any crime, increasing criminal penalties for fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer when operating a stolen vehicle, committing certain driving violations or causing a collision involving another driver, defining proximate result for purposes of determining when a crime is committed partly within this state, removing the spousal exception from the crime of sexual battery and making fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer evidence of intent to commit theft of a vehicle.

Senate Bill 170

Enacting the psychology interjurisdictional compact to provide for interjurisdictional authorization to practice telepsychology and temporary in-person, face-to-face psychology and enacting the physical therapy licensure compact and authorizing criminal history record checks in the physical therapy practice act.

Sue's Sudsy Soapbox By: Sue Reich



on Maple Hill in time to go to the graveside right before the hearse got there. Got to see a few of my cousins. Hmmm, we all had white hair. Isn't that weird? We haven't seen each other very much since this pandemic so we all have changed somewhat. Mask on or mask off. We are going to wear ours for a while. No hurry and we don't want to take chances yet. A lot of people don't wear theirs, but we are still going to.

What a month this has been already. Trying to get our income tax done. Couldn't find half the stuff we needed. The hot water tank blew in the laundry room. Flooded something terrible and I couldn't get a plumber to get here before 8 p.m. Finally got a wonderful plumbing company that two fellas hurried here from Lee Summit and they were pretty meticulous and told us everything they were doing and why. We even got a nice discount. The furbabies needed their toenails cut and after we ran some stuff to our taxman, had to pick up the dogs for Bubbles and Bows to do their toenails. All I do is run, run, run. Come down this evening to clean up the flood mess, didn't want to mess with it last night. Trying to hook up some phones that I had undone to untangle a mess of wires under the computer desk. Couldn't get them back like they were supposed to be. Then the rugs in the laundry room needed washed, from the flood and dried, one of my boy dogs peed on my house slippers in my bedroom and had to wash them. Supertime was here before I knew it. Carumba! Wanted to relax and watch some news but then gooolly! Had to go down and finish the laundry room. Swept it and omgosh, what a job is coming to get rid of all those keyboards, radios, stuff and more stuff. We sure have a job to do. Like I told you before, we are not hoarders, we are keepers. lol. Was shredding all those old tax papers, (from years ago) the shredder went out so now we have to get another better one.

During delivery yesterday, was Aunt Darlene (Larson) Lovich's funeral. I didn't go because I have had enough funerals in the last one or two years but guess what, we were

Oh yeah, I had to go to the oral surgeon and had some teeth surgically removed so I sorta look like a Halloween punkin'. Soooo, I will still wear my mask, and no one will know the difference. That is just a day or two in the life of Sunflower Sue.

I see the trash has been removed from the turnaround in Morris. But I wonder how long it will stay that way. Having a time at our place. Water heater went out, flooded the laundry room. I got on the phone, finally found one that was here in an hour. They did a good job.

Lvya all and please mind your p's and q's. Take care, be kind. I realize this has been one heckofa year and it has so many people that are so sensitive over everything. Just cool it, ok? Here are a few lines in memory of my three sisters, Gayle, Carolyn and Marilyn Larson A special love flows between sisters, as joyful as a bubbling brook, as deep as a mighty river and as indomitable as a swift mountain stream. from; *Words From the Heart*.

Rosedale News

By: Sue Reich/ Edin Stryka

Rosedalians of all ages gave back to their neighborhood by organizing a pick up trash day in April and May. They went around most neighborhoods and picking up litter, cutting honeysuckle and weeds. They cleared the storm water system from litter which helps protect it and keeps the neighborhood beautiful. Picking up litter is a concrete thing that is good for community health and safety. Thank you to all the people that helped in this project. For more info on forming your organization this fall, contact: Juanise Oliver at: juanise@rosedale.com



Yes, we are hungry. Love that chicken.



I see the trash has been picked up. BUT---for how long? Where are those "no dumping" signs?



We Still Love Olivia

Comin' & Goin' Turner Style



By Sharon Hoover

I happened to catch the last few minutes of the 2021 Oscar Presentation program a few weeks ago. The Best Movie Award was won by "Nomadland" based on a book with the same name. Frances McDormand starred and won the Best Actress Award. I have always enjoyed her movies since I first saw her in "Fargo". I had to see this movie. It was not what I expected, to learn about the plight of senior citizens who cannot retire due to low Social Security benefits or plant shutdowns. As the credits rolled by, I noticed

(except for McDormand who played Fern and actor David Strathairn who played David) that the characters first names were the same as those of the cast members. I later learned this type of film is known as a docu-fiction. I had to read the book.

"Nomadland" by Jessica Bruder is not fictional and many characters in the movie were indeed the people depicted in the book. "From the beet fields of North Dakota to the National Forest campgrounds of California to Amazon's Camperforce program in Texas, employers have discovered a new, low-cost labor pool, made up largely of transient older Americans." These seniors are victims of the Great Recession who could no longer afford to continue pay mortgages and were forced to leave their "stick and bricks" for the open road. Tens of thousands started forming a growing community of migrant workers that live in late model RVs, travel trailers, and vans. These migrant laborers call

themselves "workampers".

Ms. Bruder spent time traveling with Linda May (Nomad) and experienced the "houseless" life in her own secondhand vehicle. Work was seasonal, nomads traveled where the jobs were and the majority were either unpleasant, bone tiring or just plain dangerous. One bright spot is an open area in Arizona that these roamers meet for two weeks in January. They share meals, pass on survival tips, and catch up since the last time they got together.

The book was eye opening for me, I never knew there were so many of us older folks that had to live in this way and I feel fortunate to have what I have. This book was written before the pandemic. I can only imagine how they have been affected and if they were able to be vaccinated. In the past they have been so creative and resilient. I pray they have not given up hope. I haven't.

Until next time, stay safe and please be kind to those around you.

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SENATE NEWS

By Sen. Pat Pettey

Veto Session Adjourns

Legislators returned Monday, May 3, for Veto session. We adjourned in the early hours of the morning on Saturday, May 8, 2021. Over this week, we addressed a number of the Governor's vetoes, lingering conference committee reports, four appointments, and a few bills on general orders.

Congratulations to Nathan Spriggs and Alicia Sanchez for their unanimous appointments to the Kansas Human Rights Commission, and to Mary Berry for her unanimous appointment to the State Banking Board!

Over the break, if you have any questions about any of the legislation we have considered, feel free to contact me by email, pat.pettey@senate.ks.gov.

Action on the Floor

One bill on general orders this week was uncontroversial enough that the House voted to concur with the Senate version: the First-Time Home Buyer Savings Account Act. Through these accounts, Kansans can contribute up to \$24,000 for an individual and \$48,000 for a married couple to a savings account for use in purchasing or building a home in Kansas. This bill was brought to the legislature by the Future Caucus, a bipartisan group of legislators under 40. Like most bills, it is an imperfect first step, and I hope that it will serve as a jumping off point to create more policy that encourages young Kansans to put down roots here. I voted YES/

There was a lengthy debate on the Senate floor on Wednesday over SCR 1611, Kansas's application to Congress to call a Convention of States to amend the U.S. Constitution. I have grave concerns about the precedent such a convention could create. The debate, however, was not around the merit of a Convention of States, but around parliamentary rules. In Article 2, Section 13, the Kansas Constitution is explicit that a two-thirds vote by the Legislature is required to make an application for Congress to call a Convention of States. The

Senate President, however, was clear that he intended to declare the resolution passed with a simple majority – or 21 votes – based on an opinion by Attorney General Derek Schmidt. This prompted the hours-long debate between Republicans, and ultimately resulted in a motion to re-refer the resolution to committee by Senator Rob Olson, which passed 21-19.

The bulk of the time on the floor this week was spent considering Conference Committee Reports (CCRs). As a refresher, conference committees are formed when there are differences between the Senate and the House's versions of a bill. The committees are generally made up of the chair, vice-chair, and ranking minority member of the committee in which the bill was originally worked. In theory, these 6 legislators work out those differences and bring a compromise bill to their respective chambers for consideration. Sometimes, though, these conference committees are opportunities for legislative leadership to bundle bills or replace them outright with their legislative priorities. Once these CCRs come to the Senate floor, they are not subject to amendment. Below are a few CCRs of interest that passed this week:

• **MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS SB 238** establishes certification and funding processes for certified community behavioral health clinics, and expands access to telemedicine by authorizing a licensed out-of-state physician with a telemedicine waiver issued by the Board of Healing Arts to practice telemedicine in Kansas. It also decreases the number of face-to-face hours required for licensure of social workers, counselors, therapists, and other mental health professionals. This is good legislation, and I was happy to vote in favor.

• **SPOUSAL EXEMPTION TO SEXUAL BATTERY SB 60** prohibits courts from requiring a victim of a crime to undergo a psychiatric examination in the prosecution of the crime, amends language surrounding the crime of fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer, and creates the crime of sexual extortion. It also removes the spousal exemption to the crime of sexual battery.

• **ADRIAN'S LAW HB 2158** amends several statutes regarding child welfare and establishes the Joint Committee on Child Welfare System Oversight. The Joint Comm. on Child Welfare System Oversight is legislation that Rep. Jarrod Ousley has worked on for the last three years. We hope this is an opportunity for Kansas to strengthen the child welfare system. Rep. Louis Ruiz introduced this five years ago due to the abuse of a young boy in KCK, Adrian's Law, requires visual observation of a child who is an alleged victim of abuse or neglect.

• **OPIOID TREATMENT HB 2079** consolidates the Safe at Home program – which provides substitute mailing addresses to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, or stalking – under the Attorney General's office. The bill also creates the Kansas Fights Addiction Act, which addresses the use of funds received from opioid litigation.

• **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM HB 2077** extends the Kansas Criminal Justice Reform Commission. It also includes Senator David Haley's amendment to rename the Kansas Cold Case Task Force after Alvin Sykes, a Kansas City civil rights activist who passed away in March. He was a self-taught lawyer who successfully fought to reopen civil rights-era cold cases, including the Emmett Till case, and pushed for justice in our state. You can read more about Mr. Sykes's life here.

• **DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT HB 2026** establishes a certified drug abuse treatment program for individuals who have entered into a diversion agreement, in lieu of further criminal proceedings.

• **JUNK INSURANCE SB 29** amends the law governing short-term limited duration (STLD) policies, which currently allows for policies extending to 6 or 12 months. This bill would allow these policies to last as long as 3 years. I voted NO on this bill. Our healthcare system is deeply flawed, and plans like these are superficially attractive quick fixes that lead to long-term negative consequences. These plans hurt our most vulnerable in the risk pool by increasing premiums for comprehensive coverage, and they can come back to haunt individuals who elect to use them by

capping benefits on coverage for events like heart attacks and excluding coverage for essential health benefits like maternity care.

• **PANDEMIC PROPERTY TAX HB 2313** provides for property tax reimbursements in the event of shutdowns or restrictions due to disaster emergency declarations beginning in 2022. Originally, this bill also included a property tax exemption for health clubs, but that portion was removed from the final bill. Crucially, it also extends the 20-mill statewide school finance levy, which is a large part in ensuring our state meets its constitutional obligation to fund our public schools.

The Governor has the authority to veto any bills passed during veto session. The Legislature will have the opportunity to review any vetoes when we return for Sine Die on May 26, the last official day of session.

Helping our Businesses But leaving Workers Behind

In their ongoing fight to eliminate the need for a governor, Republican legislative leadership crafted a bill last week to allow a three person board – picked by the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, and the Governor – to control up to half a billion dollars in federal COVID relief funds. Senate Bill 273 requires the state and municipalities to set aside 25% and 35% respectively of federal relief dollars to pay out claims by businesses affected by public health responses to the pandemic.

In the last round of COVID relief funding, Governor Kelly appointed a task force made up of experts, business leaders, and community leaders to make recommendations for disbursements. Those recommendations were then passed on to the State Finance Council, which includes the governor. Our businesses were hit hard by the pandemic, and they do deserve relief, as do the workers who've ensured that we've had housing, essential services, food, transportation, and childcare throughout the pandemic. Senate Democratic Leader Dinah Sykes offered two amendments to address the disproportionate risk our frontline workers have taken on over the past year.

One Veto Sustained

The Legislature attempted to override a number of the X vetoes issued by Governor Kelly. When the governor vetoes a bill, it returns to its chamber of origin for consideration for override. In the Senate, 27 YES votes are required to override the governor's veto. In the House, that number is 84.

• **SB 55** bans trans girls and women from participating in elementary, high school, and collegiate level sports on girls' and women's teams. I have previously shared my opposition to this bill, which sends a message to trans youth in our state that they are not welcome in the same way as their peers. The Senate failed to override the governor's veto of this bill on a vote of 26-14. I voted to sustain the governor's veto.

• **SB 50** blows a \$307.7 million hole in our state general fund that will undo much of the progress we have made to accelerate out of the pandemic through record economic development. Kansas families and communities can't afford another round of devastating cuts to our roads and bridges, and our schools, especially as they are trying to recover from COVID-19. We've been down this road before; we cannot return to the failed policies that undermined our state's foundation, which will make our communities less attractive to business, encourage more of our talented young people to leave, and hurt funding for our most vulnerable Kansans. The House overrode this veto 84-39. The Senate overrode it 30-10. I voted to sustain/override the governor's veto.

• **HB 2058** allows reciprocity to recognize out-of-state licenses to carry a concealed handgun. It also lowers the age to receive a concealed carry license from 21 to 18. Between 2009 and 2018, the gun death rate in Kansas has increased by 37%. Firearms are the number two leading cause of death for children and teens in Kansas. In an average year, 31 children and teens die by gun in Kansas and 49% of these deaths are suicides. This legislation puts our teenagers, families, and communities in danger. The House overrode this veto 84-39. The Senate overrode it 31-8. I voted to sustain/

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Petty...

...from page 4

override the governor's veto.

• **HB 2332** blocks the ability of the Secretary of State, the executive, or the judicial branch from altering any election regulations even in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. It also contains many provisions regarding the logistics of mailing applications for advance ballots that are unclear, vague, and have not been vetted thoroughly. The House overrode this veto 86-37. The Senate overrode it 28-12. I voted to sustain the governor's veto.

• **HB 2183** criminalizes – with a felony penalty – helping elderly and disabled Kansans return their advance ballots. In the floor debate on the initial bill and on the veto override, Republican Senators claimed this bill is necessary to address voter fraud in our state, which our Republican Secretary of State has unequivocally said did not happen. The House overrode this veto 85-38. The Senate overrode it 28-12. I voted to sustain the governor's veto.

• **HB 2166** creates a number of new distinctive license plates, which allow Kansas drivers to support select organizations financially and visually on their vehicle. This bill creates Braden's Hope for Childhood Cancer, Proud Educator, Delta Sigma Theta, and Alpha Kappa Alpha plates. It also creates the Gadsden flag plate, with funds benefitting the Kansas Rifle Association. Taxpayers from the Free State should not be subsidizing divisive iconography that glorifies a man who advocated for and profited from the slave trade. The Gadsden flag is antithetical to our founding principles, and it has no place on official Kansas plates. The House overrode this veto 86-37. The Senate overrode it 28-12. I voted to sustain the governor's veto.

Two bills vetoed by the governor were not challenged:

• **HB 2039**, which requires students to pass an American civics test and financial literacy curriculum in order to graduate with a high school diploma

• **HB 2089**, which requires the State Board of Education to establish curriculum

guidelines for a standardized firearm safety education program based on the NRA's Eddie Eagle Gunsafe program, which school districts could then choose to adopt.

Education Funding

Late on Thursday night, the conference committee on HB 2134 came to a compromise on this year's school funding package. It – combined with the 20-mill levy passed in HB 2313 – fully funds our schools, which came at the price of some policy pieces that I do not love.

One of the pieces that made it into this bill that I have vocally opposed in the past is the Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program. The original intent of this program was to help low-income children who qualify for free lunch and attend one of the 100 lowest performing public elementary schools in the state. Champions of this voucher-style program wanted to expand eligibility to reduced lunch students from kindergarten to 12th grade. The compromise reached by this conference committee limits the program to free and reduced lunch in grades K-8.

It is unfortunate that not all of my colleagues believe that fully funding our schools is the baseline, but rather a negotiating chip for their agenda to privatize our schools. I am glad that we were able to take this from a Frankenstein voucher package to something more reasonable, but I remain disappointed that the Legislature has not yet learned that our state should not play games with public education.

Budget

Before the pandemic hit, our state was on the road to recovery from years of self-inflicted economic devastation as a result of the failed Brownback/Colyer tax experiment. Just as we were starting to see the benefits of sound, fiscally responsible policies, COVID-19 swept in with its own financial repercussions. The budget we passed this session is a reflection of that, and unfortunately has some echoes of past harm we've done to ourselves.

The good:

• Fully funds K-12 schools, including making a full KPERs payment for teachers as well as providing continued funding of the mental health pilot project.

• **Higher Education:** Our state universities received a \$53 million bump in order to address federal maintenance of efforts requirements in place under federal relief packages. \$15 million will go toward staff, \$28 million to scholarships and grants, and \$9.3 million to community colleges and technical schools.

• **Judicial Pay:** Judges and judicial staff will receive raises, which will make our state more competitive with regard to judicial retention and staff recruitment, which will help with caseloads.

• **Mental Health:** The budget adds \$2.7 million for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic funding and staffing.

The bad:

• **Tax cuts for giant multinational corporations:** Because the Legislature overrode Governor Kelly's veto of SB 50, the budget includes hundreds of millions of dollars in tax giveaways to giant multinational corporations, which by and large have zero income in Kansas.

• **No raises for state employees:** Governor Kelly and the House Appropriations committee proposed a 2.5% increase in pay for state employees. Senate negotiators rejected this provision, arguing that workers received additional compensation through federal stimulus checks.

• **Contact tracing and vaccine passports:** In a proviso attached to funding to build a new Kansas Department of Health and Environment lab in Topeka, budget negotiators added in restrictions on contact tracing. This, combined with another proviso banning vaccine passports, limits the tools our state has available to track and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The ugly:

• **No Medicaid Expansion:** Yet again, the Legislature has failed to provide 160k+ Kansans with access to affordable healthcare by expanding Medicaid. The American Rescue Plan passed by Congress in March provides an expanded incentive program that would bring in over \$460 million to Kansas. Our failure to expand Medicaid has always been short-sighted; it's morally indefensible and fiscally irresponsible that we have failed yet again this year.

Medical Marijuana

You have probably heard by now that the Kansas House

had a historic vote last Thursday. On a vote of 79-42, the House took the first step in legalizing medical marijuana in Kansas.

My colleagues and I received many supportive messages in the wake of this vote. However, in the early hours of Saturday morning, after the Senate

had passed a budget and controversial tax bill, Senate President Ty Masterson ruled SB 158 "materially changed" and referred it to the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs. With the legislative session effectively over, the bill will likely remain there until January 2022.

Alvey Historic Year...

...from page 1

Complaint Processes, etc. Presented to the UG Commission for review, and shared multiple learnings. On-going.

• Highlighted the importance of Community Policing to building trust, addressing misperceptions, and working with youth from a young age

• Learned that officers are trained in conflict resolution, and de-escalation, and receive Crisis Intervention Training

• Today every officer in the KCK Police Department now has body-worn cameras, working to protect residents and officers themselves

"Despite a number of challenges, Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS achieved historic development in 2020, with nearly \$1 billion in new investments, the most since 1984 and 25% of new investment across the entire state of Kansas," stated Mayor Alvey. "This investment brings nearly 10,000 new job opportunities for our residents, broadens our tax base that funds the services our residents want and deserve, and creates more homeownership opportunities and wealth building for all." The development include new retail and shopping, such as a new Aldi's, a second Menard's store, the Merc Co-op, as well as development projects like the new Urban Outfitter's that will provide 2,000 new jobs, and which was just named one of the Top 10 of development projects nationwide in terms of Jobs Created for 2020.

In an effort to build sustainable neighborhoods, the community must also continue to attract new residents, including to traditional neighborhoods east of I-635. The Unified Government is working to reduce barriers to new construction, making acquisition of land bank properties easier such as waiving hookup fees for sewers, and strategies to streamline the building de-

sign and permitting process. "We enjoy an abundance of affordable and developable land, we celebrate a diversity of cultures, and we can boast of unmatched accessibility," stated Alvey. "Median house values have increased, homes are being rehabbed at a record pace, and more and more people are looking for opportunities in our community."

Providing access to lenders for families that need a bit more help to qualify for mortgages, and ensuring that what is built is energy efficient will provide savings and allow families to build wealth for themselves is also important. "All these simple moves working together can encourage new housing that is beautiful, more affordable, more sustainable, and will attract and retain residents who can be proud of their homes and neighborhoods, not just for this generation, but for generations to come." As such, Alvey is proposing a target of adding 1,000 new units of housing east of I-635 in the next five years. "We have the momentum, we have the location, we have vibrant neighborhoods, and we have the land," stated Mayor Alvey.

Mayor Alvey concluded his remarks talking about the past, and the future. "I believe our community has become a symbol of a communities' capacity to honestly take on challenges and to use the challenge to craft a better future," Alvey offered. "Consider the Rock Island Bridge, a relic from our days as a Cowtown. It carried freight trains across the Kaw from the stock yards to the slaughter-houses. It has not been used for decades. If things move forward as planned, it will soon be a bridge to nature, a bridge between our past and our future, a bridge among all people who will come down to enjoy the trails and the entertainment and the river itself. This is what KCK is about at our best: take a good look at who we are and take on the challenge and move to a better future."

Guest Editorials

Seven Months After The November Election and Trump Continues "The Big Lie!"

By Tom Valverde

The former president and his allies are maintaining the lie about a rigged or stolen election. House Minority representative, Kevin McCarthy treads a fine line as he desperately needs the support of

former president Trump. He hopes to replace Nancy Pelosi as the House Majority leader, after the midterm Elections. Recently, McCarthy was at the White House rose garden and said, "I don't think anyone is questioning the legitimacy

of the Presidential Election, I think that is all over with!" McCarthy must think that we are all fools. The following week, Trump puts out a statement written on stationery with the header which reads, "Save America." Trump's outrageous

statement was, "Our country is being destroyed both inside and out, the Presidential Election of 2020 will go down as the crime of the century!" Trump stays true to himself and he definitely resides in an alternative reality. And after 60 dismissed court cases, all for lack of any supporting evidence of a rigged Election.

Sadly, it is his steadfast followers who are now viewed as a potential terrorist threat all because Trump has gone on for months about the Election he lost. Even Republican House members have maintained that Trump is the true victor, without any reason or a shred of evidence. These House members actually voted out Rep. Liz Cheney, because she doesn't support the "big lie." Ms. Cheney said, "We cannot both embrace the "big lie" and embrace the Constitution." She was questioned whether it would just be better to move on and forget about January 6th. Ms. Cheney replied, "Trump's rhetoric is an on-going threat and silence is not an option." Not only Trump's words, but those of some of his staunch supporters in the House, that work to continue the "Big Lie. Congressman Andrew Clyde said, "There was an undisciplined mob," but he argued that "to call it an insurrection, in my opinion, is a bold-faced lie." Clyde continues, "Watching TV footage of those who entered the Capitol and walked through Statuary Hall, showed people in an orderly fashion, staying between the stanchions and ropes taking pictures." "If you didn't know the footage was from January 6, you would actually think it was a normal tourist visit." There are pictures of Clyde where he is seen placing a barricade on the door of the House chamber with the help of staff to protect him from the tourists. He remained safely behind the barricade until after 3:00 on that afternoon.

Millions of Americans saw the insurrection live, as it was happening and yet he thinks that everyone will forget and believe his gross misinformation. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi responded to Clyde's remarks, "Well, I don't know a normal day around here where people are threatening to hang the Vice-president of the United States or shoot the Speaker."

"It was beyond denial, it fell into the range of sick!" Representative Ted Lieu, (D-CA) gave his thoughts on the Republican turn around, as to what did happen on January 6. He said, "It's very clear, that you're having this massive brainwashing, within the Republican party. One of the reasons we held the Impeachment trial was not only to hold the former president accountable, but also to make sure we preserve for the historical record, what exactly happened on January 6. What led up to it and what happened afterwards." "And thank goodness, we did that because you now see multiple Republicans that are trying to have a totally alternative view of history, that they are putting on the American people.

Joining Liz Cheney in her support of the Biden victory and against the white-washing of the events of January 6, is Congressman Adam Kinzinger, (R-IL). He spoke about the current state of the GOP, and said, "This party is really sick and needs help. And if we're not going to stand up and put it on the line, this party is not going to be around in the future." Reasonable people are left waiting for some semblance of respect for law and order. We expect that the members of Congress to fully and consistently support their Oaths of Office to always support the United States Constitution. It's long past due for the Trump alternative circus to leave the governing of the Country to those who hold office today. Trump had four years that we somehow survived, he needs to return to a factual reality. The New York state Attorney General may help Trump and all of his supporters to return to a common reality, once he is made to face justice in court.



Passings...

By: Sue Reich

Richard Lee Singleton, age 60, passed away May 5, 2021. Harmon High School graduate, class of 1979.

Rep. Tim Ryan Shouts to Reality Avoiding Republicans on the Floor of the House!

By Tom Valverde

The House had voted on a bill to create a 9/11 type of commission to look into the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Lawmakers were there that day to certify the Electoral College votes, an activity that is mandated by the U.S. Constitution, when an out of control, pro-Trump mob descended into the Halls of Congress. Clearly an attempt at a coup, with violence, police officers maimed, severely beaten, and some dead as a direct result of their protecting members of Congress.* After the House vote to approve the formation of a commission, Representative Tim Ryan (D-OH), gave a speech in which he shouted at the top of his lungs, to those House members who chose to live in the former president's alternative reality. Ryan waved his arms all about as he was exasperated with the lack of bipartisanship to deal with this important issue. These are his short but very loud comments: "I want to thank the gentleman from New York and the other Republicans who are supporting this and thank them for their bipartisanship." "To the other 90% of our friends on the other side of the aisle... "Holy cow!" "Incoherence!" "No idea of what you are talking about!" "Benghazi!" "You guys chased the former Secretary of State all over the country and spent millions of dollars!" "We have people, scaling the Capitol, hitting the Capitol Police with lead pipes, across the head, and we can't get bipartisanship. What else has to happen in this country?!" "Cops!" "This is a slap in the face to every rank-and-file cop in the United States!" "If we're going to take on China, if we are going to rebuild the country, if we're going to reverse climate change, we need two Political Parties in this country that are both living in reality, and you ain't one of them!" "I yield back

the balance of my time." Rep. Tim Ryan.

Congressman Ryan's thoughts are also reflected in a letter to Congress, drafted by members of the U.S. Capitol Police. Here, they expressed profound disappointment in Senator Mitch McConnell and House minority leader Kevin McCarthy, for opposing a commission to investigate the insurrection of January 6. Their letter to Congress tells of how the officers experienced hours of physical trauma that has affected their mental health. "Any member of Congress who minimizes the events of January 6 is making a privileged assumption. The letter disapproves of the words and actions of Republican Members that have white washed over the true facts of their own experience on January 6, "It is inconceivable that some of the members we protect would downplay the events of January 6" their letter declared. *I read many comments on YouTube, that questioned the need for such a commission. Most said it was all a big waste of taxpayer dollars and a waste of time. Some said that what happened on January 6, wasn't that big a deal!

Why don't they have a commission to look into Black Lives Matter? They are ignorant of the fact that city riots are not under the jurisdiction of Congress or that when the pro-Trump rioters crashed into the Capitol, that they had breached protected Federal ground and thus had violated both Federal and city law. Many even questioned whether an Insurrection had occurred, since Biden was elected after all their efforts to overturn the Election! Trump has completely brainwashed his cult followers, and also many Republican Members of Congress. It's necessary then, to reiterate the known facts of the Capitol attack, to educate the indoctrinated who are all

among us.

Congressman Ryan is a passionate leader and he is inspiring to all who wish to see the United States move ahead as a united Country, with shared visions of an improved USA. And above all else, he is a man who puts the common good of the Country above party affiliation. The importance of this commission cannot be overstated. Critically important is the growing concern about domestic terrorism which the Department of Homeland Security had earlier confirmed. Ms. Katie Bennet, *New York Times* justice department reporter said on MSNBC'S Brian Williams news program, "One of the reasons why domestic terrorism continues to hang over our heads, is because it is fueled, according to the intelligence agencies, by misinformation, particularly misinformation about the election, and whether or not, Joe Biden legitimately won the election. The idea of the commission actually speaks directly to the growing threat, the mounting threat, the on-going threat of domestic extremism. We saw in testimony, last week, former deputy Attorney General, acting AG under the Trump administration, Jeff Rosen, testify before Congress that there was, no fraud that would have overturned the results of the election. We saw Attorney General Merrick Garland testify that this was an on-going threat in large part, because of disinformation, because of misinformation around the Election. We saw also the head of the Department of Homeland Security testify that domestic terrorism was a growing threat.. So you see these things coming together and they're really closely tied, so the inability for Congress to act and try to come up with a cogent narrative for the public, is going to continue to fuel domestic extremism."

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