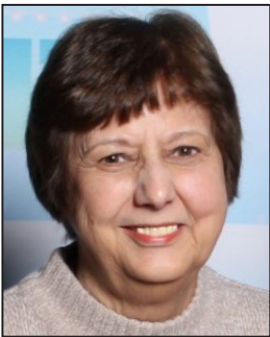




# The Record

## Comin' & Goin' Turner Style



By Sharon Hoover

The First Annual Turner Community Garden Holiday Cookie Exchange, held at the Community Gardens building, was a huge success due to Dr. Beth D'Anna, Chiropractor of Stability Wisdom. She planned and coordinated the whole affair. Each of us brought two dozen of our favorite holiday cookies and/or treats, WITH RECIPE, and a separate empty container. Dr. Beth provided a delicious meal of hot tamales, beans, rice, and veggies and cold and hot beverages. We were entertained by a disc jockey who held a karaoke contest followed by a joke contest. There were a few brave souls who did karaoke and several jokesters. Afterward we took our empty cartons and raided the cookie tables. This was the first cookie exchange I had ever been to, and I really

enjoyed myself (and filled up on cookies). I'm looking forward to next year already. Thanks Dr. Beth for a great time.

Every month the Elderbearies hold a potluck luncheon at the Turner Recreation Center. The Turner School District brings Turner High school students who have brought us treats, games or crafts to do. This month was different in that we were entertained by the Oak Grove Fifth Graders singing Christmas Songs. This brought back memories of past Christmases and made me feel a little nostalgic. One song which I had never heard of, and thought was cute was "I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas." After they finished singing and before they left, each Elderbeary received a no sew tie fleece blanket made by the kids. Calvin and I went home, cuddled up with our blankets and watched TV. We old folks enjoy seeing and interacting with the younger generation and appreciate all they do for us.

Until next time, stay safe and be kind to those around you. Happy New Year!





# Unified Government Unanimously Adopts a Community Benefits Ordinance to Enhance Impact of Development Countywide

Earlier this month, the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to adopt an ordinance to create a Community Benefits Fund to extend the benefits of new development to the broader community.

Following community input regarding concerns about the use of development incentives without a clear public benefit, this ordinance was the culmination of a community-led effort of the Mayor's Business and Economic Development Taskforce, chaired by recently retired 4th District Commissioner Harold Johnson, to find a solution.

"The Community Benefits Ordinance ("CBO") makes good on the promise made decades ago that development on the West side of Kansas City, Kansas would be leveraged in order to improve all areas of KCK, specifically East of I-635," expressed Retired 4th Dis-

trict Commissioner Harold Johnson. "It is the first piece of legislation that comes from the Business & Economic Development Taskforce that I chair, one of seven Task Forces created by Mayor Tyrone A. Garner. The CBO is a first step to systemically and tangibly provide funding for projects that otherwise might never see the light of day in three initial areas; Senior Minor Home Repair, Affordable Housing projects and Licensed Childcare projects. It was a pleasure partnering with Commissioner Davis in creating the legislation. Again, thank you to our colleagues on the Commis-

sion along with Irene Caudillo, John "J.D." Rios and Greg Kindle for working with us to bring this important ordinance into fruition!"

The Wyandotte Economic Development Council (WYEDC) was also supportive of this effort. "We are pleased to have had a role in developing this community benefits ordinance that provides a funding mechanism from new developments targeting community investments that might not otherwise receive funding," said WYEDC President Greg Kindle. "We see this ordinance as a place to start and know that it will evolve over time to help meet

the needs of the community."

The fund will receive a portion of development administrative and issuance fees from projects receiving economic development incentives starting in 2024. The fee will vary depending on the amount of incentives being requested for each project. The Community Benefits Fund will be used to support initiatives such as a senior home repair program; local affordable housing trust fund; and licensed childcare projects and programs. An advisory committee representing each Commission District will oversee the distribution of these funds.

"If our babies, those struggling with housing, and seniors are taken care of, Wyandotte County will be okay. This is what the Community Benefits Ordinance seeks to do," said 8th District Commissioner Andrew Davis. "As economic development continues to take off in Wyandotte County, so will investments in these important targeted areas."

Additional information will be released as fund details and advisory board members are made available.

About the Mayor's Task Forces  
Mayor Tyrone Garner launched several task forces at the beginning of his administration in January 2021 to address some of the most pressing issues facing the Wyandotte County community, including the unhoused, arts and culture, economic development, environmental sustainability and more.

"The Mayor's task forces were created to bring the community, staff, and commission together for the greater good of Wyandotte County. The Community Benefits Fund is a great example of how this can be successful for our residents," said Mayor/ CEO Tyrone A. Garner. "Much Thanks to Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Davis for their stewardship in the development of policy."

Community members are encouraged to reach out to the Office of the Mayor if interested in volunteering for any of the task forces. More information can be found at [wycokck.org/Mayor](http://wycokck.org/Mayor)

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# Social Security Accomplishments

By Kilolo Kijakazi, Acting Commissioner of Social Security

“As we approach the end of 2023, I am reflecting on all that the Social Security Administration has accomplished, despite considerable challenges. It’s been my great privilege to lead Social Security’s approximately 60,000 employees for the past two and one-half years, and I’m so proud of the work they’ve done to fulfill our mission.

For more than 85 years, Social Security has provided income protection for retirees, adults and children with disabilities, and families who lose a wage earner. In order to pay benefits, we also issue millions of Social Security Numbers (SSN), maintain the country’s wage records, and more. The scope of what we do is enormous, and we are proud to serve the public every day. Despite our recent history of chronic underfunding, Social Security remains among the most trusted agencies in the Federal Government.

Social Security’s top priority is, and always will be, working to provide high-quality, timely customer service. Social Security employees deliver approximately \$1.4 trillion in benefits to more than 70 million people each year. Each week, our employees serve over 500,000 people in over 1,000 offices across the country.

Despite insufficient budgets, we have prioritized business, policy and technology improvements to serve you better. For visitors to our local field offices, we expanded mobile check-in and instituted an online scheduling system for people who need an appointment for a Social Security card. We also updated our check-in kiosks to make them more accessible and improve the overall check-in process.

Our redesigned website, launched in December 2022, is easier to navigate, more task-oriented, and offers more self-service options and increased digital services, making it easier for people to

apply for benefits and replacement SSN cards. Customers can start—and often complete—their SSN card requests and applications for certain benefits online, and our new Office of Transformation recently introduced an online tool that will allow customers to electronically sign and upload certain documents. These improvements allow millions of people to complete their business online quickly and securely, saving time for our customers and freeing up more time for our employees to help customers with more complex needs in person and process more cases.

Despite these efforts, the combined effect of the pandemic and

chronic underfunding have taken a toll on our employees. It has led to high attrition and backlogs. Our budget directly drives the level of service we can provide. Bottom line, we need enough well-trained employees to ensure we can meet your needs. New hires are necessary to begin to reduce growing backlogs and improve service. I am pleased that the funding we received in fiscal year (FY) 2023 allowed us to hire nearly 8,000 employees in the past year, but we must be able to maintain this staffing level. Using targeted strategies, we have also reduced the backlog of hearings to a 21-year low and began to address

the backlog of initial disability claims. With sustained and sufficient funding consistent with the President’s FY 2024 budget request, I’m confident that we can build on our progress and retain the best qualified workforce.

We continue working to improve equity and access for all customers through partnerships and policy initiatives. Our newly established Office of Native American Partnerships is piloting mobile services by sending SSA employees to health facilities in remote locations and improving video service delivery in Tribal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



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## Social Security...

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communities. We've also worked with the Biden-Harris Administration and other agencies to promote Economic Impact Payments, the Affordable Connectivity Program, and Child Tax Credits, so our customers could learn about and benefit from these programs without affecting their Social Security benefits or Supplemental Security Income payments.

To make it easier for people seeking benefits from Social Security to obtain legal representation, we increased our representative fees for the first time in 13 years and conducted outreach to the unrepresented to help them prepare for hearings. We are simplifying our disability redetermination and overpayment notices so they're shorter, easier to understand, and less burdensome for our customers. We also made significant progress toward simplifying our rules around in-kind support and maintenance and past relevant work, in order to reduce burdens on both applicants and employees. We developed Social Security's first comprehensive Limited English Proficiency policy to help customers with little or no understanding of English access our information and services. Further, we regularly meet with advocates, experts, and other external stakeholders to listen and gather feedback on our efforts to continuously improve.

Social Security remains a trusted program and agency, one that the public increasingly relies on. We've added at least 8 million more beneficiaries in the past 10 years alone. It's imperative that we can sustain and support our workforce, improve our customers' experience, communicate clearly with the public, and hone our policies and procedures to provide the service the public expects and deserves. With sufficient and sustained financial support from Congress, Social Security can continue to build on our accomplishments in 2024 and many years to come."

# Governor Kelly Announces Business Investment in Kansas Tops \$18 Billion

## 65,000 Jobs Created and Retained Since Start of Kelly Administration

TOPEKA—Governor Laura Kelly recently announced Kansas has reached yet another significant economic development milestone. Since the start of the Kelly administration in 2019, Kansas has attracted more than \$18 billion in private-sector investment, resulting in over 1,000 new economic development projects and more than 65,000 jobs created or retained.

"Our laser-sharp focus on making Kansas a good investment for businesses is delivering prosperity and creating jobs in communities across the state," Governor Laura Kelly said. "This milestone shows that our fiscally responsible approach to growing the economy is working – and that this unprecedented surge of business activity continues to rise."

According to numbers released last week from the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, for the second quarter of 2023, Kansas had the second-strongest growth in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the country, at 7.4%.

Some of the larger companies driving that growth either through relocation or expansion include national and global A-list brands such as: Amazon, Chick-fil-A, Dot's Pretzels, FedEx, Garmin, Goodyear, Heartland Coca-Cola, Hill's Pet Nutrition, Hilmar Cheese, Hostess, Honeywell, Keebler, Kubota, Merck, Michelin, Newell Rubbermaid, Old Dominion, Panasonic, Russell Stover, Schwan's, Textron Aviation, Tyson Meats, Urban Outfitters, and Walmart.

"It isn't just corporate America that recognizes all of the natural attributes Kansas possesses," Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of Commerce David Toland said. "Small businesses also benefit from the ideal location, transportation networks, quality of life, and highly trained workforce. The Kelly Administration continues

pursuing – and landing – companies of all sizes in order to deliver high-quality jobs that can keep our young people in Kansas and attract new workers to the state."

The Kansas Framework for Growth – the state's economic development strategic plan – guides the Department of Commerce as it seeks new opportunities:

- \* Around the globe via trade missions and overseas representatives
- \* Across the country by working with site selectors and developers
- \* In every Kansas community by partnering with local businesses and leaders

The Kelly Administration's approach is bearing fruit, with projects landing in 85 of the state's 105 counties thus far.

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The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the largest and oldest Hispanic and Latino civil rights organization in the United States.[2] It was established on February 17, 1929, in Corpus Christi, Texas, largely by Hispanics returning from World War I who sought to end ethnic discrimination against Latinos in the United States. The goal of LULAC is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of Hispanic people in the United States. LULAC uses nationwide councils and group community organizations to achieve all these goals. LULAC has about 132,000 members in the United States.

Council 11085 has LULAC members in the counties of Douglas, Johnson and Wyandotte (Kansas) – Clay and Jackson (Missouri).

Join us at the monthly Zoom meetings – the second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m.

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