





## **Mid America Bank Pledges \$100,000 Gift to Support Peaslee Promise Campaign, Designated to Cindy Yulich Endowment Fund**

Mid America Bank has pledged a \$100,000 gift in support of the Peaslee Promise Campaign, a \$10 million endowment initiative led by the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center (Peaslee Tech) to expand access to debt-free career and technical education for Douglas County residents. The gift is designated to the Cindy Yulich Endowment Fund, a named fund within the Peaslee Promise Endowment Fund.



Launched in May 2025, the Peaslee Promise Campaign seeks to establish a permanent endowment to provide tuition support for high school juniors and seniors from 12 partner school districts, as well as adult learners from low-income households. The endowment, managed by the Douglas County Community Foundation, will ensure long-term affordability for students while strengthening Peaslee Tech's financial sustainability.

"The Peaslee Promise offers a tremendous opportunity to Douglas County residents to build great careers without incurring debt," said Dave Hill, CEO of Mid America Bank. "We're just really proud to be a small part of this great goal."

Mid America Bank chose to designate its gift to the Cindy Yulich Endowment Fund in recognition of Yulich's decades-long impact on the banking industry and her extraordinary service to the Lawrence and Douglas County community.

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## **Visiting Nurses Association names Melinda Ward as the new CEO.**

Melinda Ward returned to VNA in the role of Chief Executive Officer. Melinda previously served as VNA's Director of Operational Excellence from June 2022 to December 2023. She has over 15 years of leadership experience across Home Health, Hospice, and private duty. Since Melinda started, she and the rest of the VNA team have been busy working on the necessary changes to navigate VNA through these challenging times toward a positive, sustainable future.

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## **The Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center is pleased to announce the official appointment of Dr. Kirsten Watkins as Chief Executive Officer (CEO).**

Dr. Watkins joined BNC in August 2021 and has more than 20 years of experience in behavioral health care. As a licensed clinical psychologist, she has dedicated her career to supporting individuals and families navigating complex behavioral health challenges.

Dr. Watkins has served as Interim CEO for the past eight months while continuing in her role as Clinical Director, guiding the community mental health center with steady and thoughtful leadership during a period of transition. Her appointment as CEO reflects the Board's confidence in her vision and leadership and ensures continued stability as BNC advances its commitment to accessible, compassionate, and high-quality behavioral health care for individuals and families across Douglas County.

"We are extremely excited to be able to plan for the long-term future of Bert Nash with Dr. Watkins as CEO. In her eight months as interim CEO she demonstrated the ability to lead with determination and strength despite any outside obstacles that were thrown in her way," said Matthew Herbert, Chair of the BNC Board of Directors. "As a board we feel very confident that we have found the right person for the job."

Founded in 1950, BNC has been led by just three CEOs over its 75-year history. Dr. Watkins now becomes the organization's fourth CEO.

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“Lawrence Business Magazine is the authentic resource for diverse perspectives and relevant topics mixed in with community entertainment. We are all fortunate to have a professional publication that represents the unique qualities of Lawrence and Douglas County.”

▲ Beth Easter, Market President - Lawrence & Topeka, INTRUST Bank

“There is a new gold standard for articulate, informative, unbiased and entertaining periodicals, and its name is the *Lawrence Business Magazine*. Each diverse issue brings long anticipated clarity to the people of Lawrence and Douglas County. For those of us looking for a better understanding of our past, our present and where we will be in the future, The LBM is mandatory reading.”

▲ Derek Kwan, Executive Director, YOUR Lied Center

“The Chamber has been a big fan of the *Lawrence Business Magazine* since its inception 13 years ago. Businesses throughout Lawrence and Douglas County share their stories with consumers through meaningful and entertaining articles. The photography shows the diversity and vibrancy we are all so proud of in Lawrence. The magazine’s mission of “Making a Positive Impact” reflects the vitality of our community.”

▲ Bonnie Lowe, President/CEO, The Chamber of Lawrence

“Whenever Peaslee Tech is mentioned in the *Lawrence Business Magazine*, and anytime we are guests on The Lawrence Business Magazine Radio Show, we get so much positive feedback from their readers and listeners. They boost the awareness we need to help create careers for those in the trade industry and provide businesses with qualified workers.”

▲ Dr. Kevin Kelley, Chief Executive Officer, Peaslee Tech

“Express Professionals started advertising in the *Lawrence Business Magazine* over ten years ago. This was one of the best advertising moves we have made. It is continuous exposure to all our clients and potential clients we need to get in front of. The team at LBM is top notch to work with. Thanks LBM for being a great asset to the Lawrence community!”

▲ Kate Chinn, Owner, Express Employment Professionals

“The *Lawrence Business Magazine* is not only a quality publication, Steve and Ann truly support our business & endeavors. And with the FOUNDATION AWARDS - they do a terrific job. The *Lawrence Business Magazine* FOUNDATION AWARDS make businesses realize the importance of their own growth in our community.”

▲ Kathy Pine, Owner, Pine Landscape Center

“It is a great place to showcase Emprise Bank and support local businesses. At the *Lawrence Business Magazine*, they go the extra mile.”

▲ Cynthia Yulich, Community Bank President, Emprise Bank

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