

# Warnings that save lives

Think of the straight line winds that battered Garnett and Anderson County last night as a little seasonal warning — a precursor, if you will, to what may come almost any time in Kansas — and a testament to technology and early warning.

For generations, Kansans have lived under skies that can turn violent in a matter of minutes. We are the heart of Tornado Alley, where warm Gulf air collides with cold northern systems to create the perfect environment for rotating supercells. These storms can produce tornadoes capable of wiping towns off the map.

History reminds us just how deadly those storms can be.

When the F5 tornado struck Udall in 1955, the town had almost no warning. Night had fallen, television weather coverage barely existed, and the radar systems we take for granted today were still years away. Residents went to bed believing the storm had passed. Within minutes, much of the town was gone and roughly 80 people were dead.

It remains the deadliest tornado disaster in Kansas history.

Contrast that tragedy with the 2007 EF5 tornado that destroyed Greensburg. The storm was arguably just as powerful. Nearly the entire town was leveled. Yet the death toll was a fraction of what it might have been.

Why? Because modern technology gave people time.

Today's meteorologists track storms with Doppler radar capable of detecting rotation inside thunderstorms long before a tornado touches the ground. Storm chasers and spotters relay real-time observations. Computer models help forecasters predict dangerous outbreaks days in advance. Emergency alerts flash across smartphones. Sirens sound across towns and rural communities alike. They didn't see rotation in the storm that hit us last night, but that's no solace to those still without power as we go to press Wednesday afternoon.

## REVIEW COMMENTARY



DANE HICKS, REVIEW PUBLISHER

In short, nowadays people are warned. That warning time — sometimes just minutes — saves lives.

Kansas has learned this lesson the hard way. Every devastating tornado in our history has helped push improvements in forecasting, communications, and emergency management. The tragedy at Udall helped spur improvements in tornado warnings. The Andover outbreak of 1991 demonstrated the value of Doppler radar technology. Greensburg showed how modern emergency response and public awareness can reduce fatalities even in the worst disasters.

But technology only works if people respect it. Too many Americans still ignore tornado warnings or delay taking shelter. Some wait to see the funnel cloud. Others assume the storm will miss them. That gamble can be deadly.

The truth is simple: when a warning is issued, every minute matters. Move to shelter immediately — a basement, storm shelter, or interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building.

Kansas will always live with tornadoes. Geography ensures that.

But thanks to modern science, communication, and preparedness, the storms that once caught entire towns by surprise no longer have to claim the same terrible toll. ###



## The Anderson County Review's PHONE FORUM

Record your comments on the topic of your choice at (785) 448-2500. You do not need to leave your name. Comments may be published anonymously. Calls may be edited for publication or omitted.

Forgiveness is the truth. God bless.

I want to thank every fireperson that helped with the fire last Saturday in Anderson County. After two fields were burning, they stopped them right at my fence line within less than 50 feet of my house with a full tank of propane just delivered. It was an awesome job what they did and I want to tell them how much I appreciate them. They saved my house, they saved my life. Thank you very much to each and every one of you.

Attention City of Garnett. Since no one has an idea what to do with the contraptions north of the Rec Center, here's a thought: put all the pieces together end to end and make a bridge across the north lake. I'm sure the fishermen would like that. Give it some thought.

Dane I appreciated your story on the Osawatomie data center but I have a question for the powers that be in Garnett. If Osawatomie can do it, why can't we? We have a reservoir full of water out west of town, sometimes too full. We have the high tension power lines coming out of Wolf Creek right across private land in the county sort of out in that area where they're shipping power to Missouri. If these data centers are all the big deal why don't we do one in Anderson County. It sounds like that's gonna be the wave of the future. God knows we missed enough waves, let's not let this one pass by. Thank you.

# Does the Pentagon really need Alaskan Crab?

The Pentagon boasts one of the largest budgets of any department in the federal government. So, it wasn't totally shocking to learn that the agency wastefully blew through billions in taxpayer dollars to close out its 2025 fiscal year.

According to a new report by Open the Books, the Department of War (DOW) collectively spent \$93.4 billion in "use-it-or-lose-it" funds on grants and contracts in September alone. The agency's spending blitz included purchases of high-dollar food, new furniture, and other lavish items.

These "use-it-or-lose-it" funds are part of the Pentagon's annual budget that are unspent heading into the final month (September) of the fiscal year. As described by Open the Books, agency officials look to spend this surplus before the fiscal year ends or risk forfeiting the unused dollars and a potential reduction in funding the following year. (Think of that episode of *The Office* where Michael Scott has to spend the surplus before the end of the day or risk losing it in next year's budget.)

According to Open the Books, the DOW spent \$93.4 billion on grants and contracts in September 2025, the highest single-month spending bonanza on such items for a federal agency "[s]ince at least 2008 — and presumably in history." At least \$50.1 billion of this total was spent within the last five working days

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SHAWN FLEETWOOD - THE FEDERALIST

of September, which the group noted is "more than the annual defense budget of countries like Israel and Italy."

"These amounts only include money sent to entities outside the government, not salaries for service members and scores of other expenses," the report reads.

The Open the Books analysis goes on to document numerous wasteful spending items included in the Pentagon's September shopping spree. One of the most notable is high-dollar food.

According to the report, the agency spent \$2 million on Alaskan king crab and \$6.9 million on lobster tails. Other pricey food items included ribeye steak (\$15.1 million), salmon (\$1 million), and ice cream machines (\$124,000).

Lavish furnishings were also among the list of goods purchased by the DOW

in the last month of the 2025 fiscal year. According to Open the Books, "Since 2008, the DoD has spent an average of \$257.6 million on furniture every September — a 564% increase above the norm. In months besides September, furniture costs the military only \$38.8 million on average."

During September 2025, the Pentagon "spent \$225.6 million on furniture, the most since 2014," with almost half being labeled as "office furniture." Included in the purchases was "\$60,719 worth of chairs from the premium furniture manufacturer Herman Miller, including at least one order of their luxurious Aeron Chair for \$1,844."

Other significant end-of-year Pentagon expenses flagged in the Open the Books report are IT and telecommunications services (\$5.9 billion), Apple (\$5.3 million) and Samsung (\$4 million) devices, musical instruments (\$1.8 million), and purchases from foreign governments and foreign-owned businesses (\$6.6 billion).

In a statement accompanying the report, Open the Books CEO John Hart called the Pentagon's end-of-year spending bonanza "unacceptable." He cited a letter his organization sent to War Secretary Pete Hegseth last year on the issue and noted that reform to the process "is fully within [Hegseth's] control and is a historic opportunity to make

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# Candace Owens and her disgraceful ravings

Joe McCarthy was famously undone by the rhetorical questions at a 1954 congressional hearing: "Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"

If the same queries were directed to Candace Owens at such a forum, she'd sail on unperturbed -- since she has no idea what "decency" means. The conspiratorial podcaster has embarked on an investigative series on Erika Kirk, the widow of Charlie Kirk. In this context, "investigative series" means a loosely stitched together collection of sewerish falsehoods and innuendo smearing Erika Kirk.

Perhaps Owens can follow up with a franchise devoted to sully the reputations of the widows of assassinated husbands throughout U.S. history. Are we sure that Mary Todd Lincoln was as innocent as she seemed? Didn't Jackie Kennedy act kind of weird in Dallas? What did Ida Saxton McKinley know and when did she know it?

The narrative and commercial logic always suggested that this is where Owens was headed. It didn't make any sense to libel TPUSA as being connected to the murder of its leader and founder -- as Owens has for months now -- without implicating its new leader, Erika Kirk. And, as the shock value of her anti-TPUSA campaign wore off, Owens had to stoke outrage and interest anew

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RICH LOWRY, King Features Syndicate

with something even more perverse. And what is more demented than portraying the wife of the victim of a shocking assassination as a black widow?

Whereas most of have seen in Erika Kirk a Christian woman bearing up under an intolerable burden and stunningly forgiving the alleged murderer of her husband, Owens purports to see Clytemnestra, the mythical Greek figure who betrayed her husband Agamemnon upon his return from the Trojan War.

The title of her series is "Bride of Charlie." Get it? Like the "Bride of Frankenstein." As a so-called investigator, Candace Owens is like Perry Mason if the fictional attorney had been a schizophrenic high on crack. Her method is to pile will-o'-the-wisp connections one on top of another, often buttressed by

flagrant factual mistakes, and insist that if she's debunked, it just shows how she must be on the right track.

Her mantra is that "we don't know, but we know" -- in other words, her malicious, irrational intuitions are superior to actual knowledge backed by facts. She now says that "Erika Kirk should be dragged into a police precinct for questioning," and anyone who disagrees is "a full-blown fraud." According to Owens, "the amount of evidence that is now piling up, I would say, against Erika Kirk, is almost akin to an NBC Dateline episode."

Usually, conspiracy theories spring up around assassinations that are hard to fathom or have some ambiguity about them. It is clear that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing JFK, but it's understandable that there have been questions about the event. It is the depraved achievement of Candace Owens to make a bonkers true crime drama, with all sorts of mysteries and twists, out of an open-and-shut murder case.

Kirk's accused killer, Tyler Robinson, had a motive, left a trail of damning evidence and confessed to multiple people. To dismiss all this and call for Erika Kirk to be frogmarched into a police station is so mad it makes Owens' conviction that both the moon landing and dinosaurs are

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