

Obituaries

DAVID ANTHONY BLASIAR

January 18, 1941 – January 19, 2026



Born January 18, 1941, in Rawlins, Wyoming. Parents: Frank Carl Blasiar and Lois LaVivian (Burk) Blasiar. Sisters: Sharon Lee Mathews – Kansas City, Missouri; Judith Anne Henry – St. Louis, Missouri; and Barbara Lynn Fry – Springfield, Missouri. Sons: David Anthony Blasiar, Jr.; Darin Ashley Blasiar; and Daniel Allen Blasiar.

The Frank Blasiar family lived in Newton, Kansas where Dave attended public schools. He graduated from Newton High School 1959. Being the first person in the Blasiar family to attend college, he started his education at University of Wichita and Bethel College before transferring to Kansas State University where he earned the Bachelor of Science Architectural Engineering in 1965. Dave was grateful to work for his uncle Wesley Burk, Sr., in the construction business in McPherson, Kansas, when not in school. Much of Dave's success was founded on experiences with Wesley.

He was granted leave from ROTC summer camp at Fort Riley, Kansas, in 1964 to participate in his sister Sharon's wedding where he met the love of his life – Virginia Lee Jantz. Dave and Virginia were married June 6, 1965, at Grace Hill Mennonite church near Whitewater, Kansas, with several Triangle Fraternity brothers participating. Their first home, of thirteen, was in Jardine Terrace on Kansas State University campus. Upon graduation from Kansas State in August 1965, they moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where Dave was pleased to have the opportunity to work as an architect at Black & Veatch until December, at which time they moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where Dave started his active-duty responsibilities as an Army Combat Engineer at Fort Belvoir. They were fortunate to be together for his three-year overseas assignment in Germany, where he rose to the rank of Captain. Working closely together as a team in the Army set the pattern for their life together as they addressed challenges, opportunities, and adventures. First son, David, Jr., was born at the US Forces Hospital in Frankfurt, Germany. They returned to Kansas City where Dave served Black & Veatch as a structural engineer on design of water and wastewater facilities. They lived in Prairie Village and Leawood, Kansas, where sons Darin and Dan were born.

Dave took advantage of Black & Veatch incentives and the GI bill to earn the Master of Science Civil Engineering at the University of Missouri in 1973. He accepted an assignment to establish the Black & Veatch office in St. Louis where he served as project manager for a variety of clients producing award winning projects in St. Louis, Baltimore, Indianapolis, and Dallas. All three boys graduated from Parkway North High School in Creve Coeur, Missouri. They subsequently earned Bachelor of Science degrees in engineering as well as advanced degrees in engineering and other scientific disciplines.

Experience in St. Louis provided the foundation for additional responsibilities that led to living in San Diego, Las Vegas, Singapore, London, and back to Kansas City – all serving Black & Veatch clients and offices worldwide. Dave retired as chief engineer for water division of the firm in 2008. He and Virginia built the home of their dreams in south Overland Park, Kansas that includes retaining walls of his own design facilitating gardening and landscaping on a steeply sloping site. Dave established Blasiar Engineering to continue services for New York City Office of Management and Budget as well as a variety of other clients.

The boys married wonderful women. David and his wife Stephanie Wren Blasiar live in Houston, Texas. Their son Dalton is a police officer in Overland Park, Kansas. Son Colby is an engineer in St. Louis. Darin and his wife Marilyn Tanner Blasiar have twin sons, Adam and Andrew, in high school in Chesterfield, Missouri. Dan and his wife Renee Spencer Blasiar live in Town and Country, Missouri, and have a daughter, Bailey, also in high school.

Dave and Virginia are members of the Church of Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. They served as a team throughout their lives. Their success is based on a fundamental aim to cause other people to succeed. Dave's approach was to recognize a person's competencies, give them a challenging opportunity, get out of the way, and offer guidance when needed. Virginia's gentle approach is to notice when people can do something, encourage them, and coach them, as necessary.

ECONOMIC

From A1

Of the \$50 million bond budget, more than \$39 million is budgeted for projects at NHS — where the district has scheduled three of six upcoming information meetings and tours.

The first of those is this weekend, Jan. 24, at the high school.

The bond is expected to cause a 4.3 mill increase in the school district mill levy, which equates to an increase of \$4.12/month for \$100,00 home or \$8.24/month for a \$200,00 home.

Documentation like a facilities assessment, architectural renderings, and lists of project costs by building can be found at www.usd373.org/bond2026.

Meetings scheduled, which the district sent public notice of the possibility of board members attending, include:

Saturday, January 24 - 10 a.m. to Noon at Newton High School, 900 W. 12th.

Tuesday, January 27 - 6 to 8 p.m. at Chisholm Middle School, 900 E. First.

Thursday, Feb. 5 - Noon to 2 p.m. at Newton Rec Center (no tours), 415 N Poplar St.

Friday, Feb. 6 - 4 to 5 p.m. at Newton Area Senior Center (no tours), 122 E 6th St

Saturday, Feb. 7 - 10 a.m. to Noon at Newton High School, 900 W. 12th.

Wednesday, Feb. 11 - 5 to 7 p.m. at Newton High School, 900 W. 12th.

READY

From A1

class of 12 Harvey County residents, one of whom successfully ran for local office in November.

“We did such a good job last time, one of them beat me in an election,” Kreie said.

“It is a really good program,” said Jason Miller, who was elected to a city commission seat in November.

Jan. 22 was under planning before the 2026 Ready to Run course series was cancelled.

Lang said organizers decided to hold the table discussion anyway, and a group of about 30 people from across the county attended to learn a bit more about economic development.

Questions included what led companies to locate in Harvey County, the you use a site selection firms what challenges there were, community reputation, the role of tax abatements and others.

“You did not try and oversell newton, and you made us more comfortable,” said Tommy Richardson, a representative of GAF.

GAF is one of the largest roof materials manufacturers in the country, and the company selected Newton for a new facility that is currently under construction.

To Mike Gerken at Hillsboro Industries, Newton became the natural choice based on location and the launch of several housing projects. Located 30 miles from the Hillsboro home base, the company was looking for a place with available labor, a training program for future employees and available housing.

“When you see what was is happening in housing down here, that was a deciding factor,” Gerken said.

As the company was looking, several housing projects started construction including a large development at Fox Ridge and smaller projects The Enclave, Harvest Point and others.

GAF was looking at not only training facilities like Brooks Trade Center but also the general availability of workers and the work ethic of the community.

“The people and culture were a factor. ... There is a Midwest work culture that is a match for what we do,” Richardson said. “The people and culture here was a deciding factor.”

GAF is constructing a \$300

The high school is slated for the construction of two storm shelters that will double as a science lab and culinary lab, a \$12.1 million project. The project list also includes renovation of about 40 percent of the interior walls of the high school, a price tag of \$3.4 million.

The high school work list also includes exterior restoration; swimming pool equipment and guttering; intruder locks to classrooms and offices; replacement of crash bars on corridor doors; automatic doors; boiler replacement; HVAC work; and roof replacement.

Dealing with end-of-usable life issues is a theme throughout the bond proposal, as nearly every building in the district will be touched by bond funds if the election is successful.

Each elementary school, Cooper Early Education Center and McKinley Administrative Center will all receive roof repair or replacement.

At the elementary school level there is a pretty standard work list, with each school seeing between \$1.6 and \$2.4 million for storm shelter upgrades, playground equipment, exterior restoration, intruder locks to classrooms, automatic door operators for security systems and roof replacement. Slate Creek's plan includes HVAC work and repair.

At Chisholm Middle School \$6.5 million will be used for restroom and storm shelter additions for each classroom wing; locker room renovations; exterior restoration work; HVAC replacement; automatic doors; and roof replacement.

The estimated increase to the school district mill levy is about 5 mills, about \$5 for every \$1,000 of assessed value of a property.

Site selection can be a long process, clothed in confidentiality as the process. Hillsboro took about a year to negotiate for land on the east side of Newton. For GAF, it took years.

The GAF process was about four years long.

“I have told people that I know a woman who worked for the Greater Area Wichita Partnership who met a guy married him and had two kids,” joked Beth Shelton, director of the Harvey County Economic Development Council. “It was that long.”

“Economic Development is a long game, it is a marathon is not sprint,” said Jonathon Goering, project manager for the Greater Wichita Partnership. “It is not unusual for it take a year or two years. ... You have to stay committed, lean in, be patient and see it through.

The panel also discussed confidentiality between decision makers and companies as the process unfolds and the tax abatement process at the local level.

Ready to Run plans to bring back the candidate education program next year.

The class covers some of the basics – how to file for candidacy, leadership and why people should consider running for office.

And more importantly, what comes after the election.

“They can get two sessions on how a school district works, two sessions on how a city works and two sessions on how a county works,” Kreie said. “There is going to be one general session to discuss how municipal finance, mill levies and stuff like that works.”

The Ready to Run program is nonpartisan, with members of multiple political parties among the planners and curriculum writers.

The class does not require enrollees to run for office, even though the desire is to help create a stronger candidate pool.

Eight sessions are planned, with the opening and closing sessions covering general concepts such as elected official leadership, board decorum, general government finance, and conflict resolution.

Sessions two through seven will cover specific topics related to City Commission, County Commission, and the Board of Education. Each local government entity functions in a unique way, so attendees will have the opportunity to learn the similarities and differences of the various elected offices.

FIREWORK

From A1

who has seen action in Iraq. He goes to the basement and turns up the volume real high so that he can survive.”

She also is a dog owner, dogs she called senior citizens and require medication during the annual fireworks season.

“If you allow any firework to be shot off, they are all going to be shot off,” Hartke said. “They are not going to say ‘I’ll do that one, I can’t do this one.’”

She had just spent about 40 minutes listening to fireworks stand owner Trinity Muth discuss a proposal that would allow for the discharge of “safe and sane” fireworks starting as early as June 27 and limiting larger fireworks to three days of the season – July 2, 3 and 4.

“Safe and Sane” fireworks are ground-based items like fountains, sparklers, and snakes that don’t fly or

explode. Generally with a 10 foot limit for fountains.

Currently state statute allows sales and discharge from June 20 to July 7, but allows cities to set their own more restrictive rules. The city commission has elected to set rules every year in January.

Kathy Valentine attempted to end much of the debate by making a motion for sales and discharge for July 1 though 4, a motion she said she did not expect to really go anywhere.

“If I don’t get a second, you all at least know how I feel,” Valentine said.

The motion failed to get a second, meaning the motion did not move forward.

Leroy Koehn offered the motion to allow sales from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. June 27 through July 1, extending to midnight on July 2 through 4. Discharge of “Safe and Sane” fireworks would be allowed starting June 27. Full discharge would begin July 2.

The vote was 4-1 in favor of the motion. City staff has created an ordinance to finalize the action. That resolution will be voted on at the next meeting of the commission, Jan. 27.

“For what it is worth, I am voting for this because I think it is what works best for the community, I would love to have less fireworks,” said commissioner Jason Miller.

Muth advocated for some consistency during the meeting, recapping a petition drive from two years ago seeking the same.

The city has changed the sales and discharge dates and times on an annual basis, mostly to accommodate Independence Day falling on a different day of the week each year.

“If you have the same thing year in and year out, people will follow it. ... When you change it every year, that is when people get confused,” Muth said.

Last year it took the city commission multiple meetings to come up with the 2025 fireworks rules, settling on fireworks sales from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. June 27 through July 5 and discharge from 10 a.m. to midnight July 2 through 5.

The city issued nine permits for sales 2025.

According to Craig Dunlavy, chief of police, the police department fielded 36 complaint reports.

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