

Mayor Carl Gerlach  
2010 “State of the City” Speech  
12 Noon Tuesday, February 16, 2010  
Overland Park Convention Center

Theme: Economic Engine – High Performance

**Slide – new city logo**

**Blank slide**

Thank you, Ed.

Good afternoon and welcome.

It’s an honor to be here today.

**Slide – Chamber logo**

I would like to thank the Chamber’s Board of Directors for this opportunity to share with you the outstanding news about Overland Park.

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I also want to express my appreciation to Tracey and her staff for arranging today’s event.

**Slides – Black & Veatch; Metcalf Bank; Shawnee Mission  
Medical; Sprint**

To Black and Veatch, Metcalf Bank, Shawnee Mission Medical Center and Sprint, thank you for serving as today's corporate partners.

**Slide – list of corporate sponsors**

I also want to thank the 15 corporate sponsors.

**Slide – Outside shot of OPCC**

I want to recognize Nadine Guest, general manager of the Convention Center, and her fine staff for today's outstanding service.

(Mayor to recognize his immediate family)

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These are sobering days and I have a lot on my mind, as do many of you.

Well, I have been doing a lot of thinking lately.

When I have a lot on my mind, I go talk to an old friend, a trusted advisor, someone who keeps me going.

### **First video**

Last year, I talked about the unavoidable elephant in the room.

### **Slide – Stampeding elephants**

Well, I think this year it is a herd of stampeding elephants.

### **Slide – Chamber Council photo**

I'm here to tell you today, without hesitation, your Overland Park city and chamber leaders are looking to the future and moving forward.

We can't rely on others in Topeka to fix it.

### **Blank**

I pledge to you today that we will continue with resolve and careful thought to keep our city healthy and appealing for our families and business community.

### **Slide – tuned engine**

Overland Park has at times been described as a finely tuned engine.

## **Blank**

If you are conscientious about maintaining your vehicle, then you perform the oil change and tune ups to ensure a properly and efficiently running engine.

You invest by servicing and caring for your vehicle throughout its lifetime.

Like my friend Charlie says: It takes a lot of parts performing well to make an engine run strong.

## **Blank**

Last year, we made one of our most important economic adjustments to the engine that runs our City of Overland Park.

You can say we sort of turbo-charged our economy, getting more horsepower.

To me it was vintage Overland Park, taking the bold steps to strengthen and broaden our city's economy and appeal.

**Video – aerial of Soccer Complex (no sound)**

The supercharger that we added to Overland Park's engine was the Overland Park Soccer Complex.

When people drive by it, they look in amazement and appreciation.

A manager of a nearby restaurant volunteered information that his business experienced a 30 percent jump.

### **Slides – pics of grand opening**

Last year, we had 6 tournaments after it officially opened on September 1.

### **Slide – \$1.7 million**

We estimate that a quarter of a million visitors came to Overland Park, injecting an estimated \$1.7 million over three months into our local economy.

### **Slide – Soccer tournament**

2010 is even busier. Currently, there are 19 tournaments scheduled.

### **Blank**

This engine enhancement is also bringing Overland Park national recognition.

### **Slide – Logo for US Youth**

We are going to host the US Youth Soccer National Championships July 20 through 25.

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The nation's top players from across the country will be coming to Overland Park. Sixty teams will play for the ultimate national youth soccer championship.

### **Slide(s) – OP Hotels with room nights and \$1.5 million**

More than 5,700 room nights and nearly \$1.5 million in new revenue are projected for this tournament alone.

### **Blank**

More importantly, this puts the national spotlight square on Overland Park.

### **Slide – Logo Kansas State Cup soccer**

Last month we locked in the Kansas State Cup Championship, which is coming in June.

Over 100 teams from across the state are expected to participate in this tournament.

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We have tournaments and league play already booked through the end of November.

**Slide – ODP logo**

This includes college showcase events and the Region 2 Olympic Development Program, which brings in premier high school players most likely destined to play NCAA Division One college and possibly professional soccer.

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ODP will purchase nearly 3,100 hotel room nights over three weeks.

**Slide – Soccer complex entrance pic**

This wonderful development is not only an amenity for our citizens, but a tourist attraction that brings tax dollars into our community, which will help support important city services.

**Slide – 30,000 rooms, \$7 million (hotel)**

For this year, we are projecting about 30,000 room nights and an estimated economic impact of \$7 million to our city.

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**Slide – Mayor/soccerball**

As a former basketball player, I really love soccer NOW!

**Slide - \$36 million investment/aerial photo of soccer complex**

**Slide – OPCVB logo (new)**

This \$36 million investment by the city has been a tremendous benefit to our community.

It happened because of the support from the Overland Park Convention & Visitors Bureau and its 35 hotels, and various local and regional soccer officials.

I want to thank:

- Bill Frey and Jerry Cook with the Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau;
- Alan Blinzler, president of the Kansas Youth Soccer Association;

- Peter Vermes, technical director for the Blue Valley Soccer Club, and head coach of the Kansas City Wizards; and
- Shane Hackett, executive director of Heartland Soccer Association.

### **Blank**

You know my friend Charlie has another favorite saying: He says it's nice to have new cars in town.

### **Video – Act 2 News Cars in Town**

In the next 18 months, those new cars in town are bringing over 2,000 new jobs to Overland Park.

### **Slide – 2,350 new jobs**

Yes, you heard me right, 2,350 new jobs are coming to ease these tough economic times.

### **Blank**

Again, this is coming during a recession.

Many of those companies expect to add to their work force over the next few years, creating more jobs, boosting income, increasing spending and delivering more opportunities for local companies.

Let me tell you about these companies.

### **Slide – Black & Veatch**

There was good news in 2009 when Overland Park officially became the home of Black & Veatch's World Headquarters.

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That sounds nice. Think about it.

### **Slide – Australia, Europe and Asia**

When Black & Veatch engineers are working on projects in Australia, Europe or Asia, you can bet Overland Park will be mentioned.

### **Slide – OP Spotlight**

The international spotlight will shine upon Overland Park.

### **Blank**

Black & Veatch employs about 2,300 highly skilled professionals with an average annual salary of \$85,000.

**Slide – Hong Kong, U.S. Projects**

**Slide - BV**

Further, based on domestic and international projects for water, electricity and other jobs, Black & Veatch expects to hire more employees this year.

**Slide – hundreds of employees**

In the future, company officials plan to expand the current facility by 250,000 square feet, making room for hundreds of employees.

**Slide – pic of current building**

Before that expansion, the existing building will be renovated, incorporating the latest in environmental enhancements and sustainability.

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And better yet, company officials intend to hire locally to help support and strengthen the metropolitan economy.

That's leadership, that's commitment.

### **Slide – Black & Veatch**

Thank you Len Rodman, and all the Black & Veatch professionals.

### **Slide – Apria Healthcare/blank**

In June, Apria Healthcare announced plans to call 101,000 square feet home on the Sprint Campus for its initial 200 employees. In three to four years, Apria plans to increase its employment to as high as 550 employees.

### **Slide – 550 Employees**

### **Slide – CareCentrix**

In August, CareCentrix chose Overland Park as its home, providing an additive to the fuel that runs our economic engine.

### **Slide – 150 employees**

It will move into its office space on the Sprint Campus, bringing in 150 employees in the next two years.

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### **Slides – Prescription Solutions/Quintiles**

Immediately to the west of those two new companies are Prescription Solutions and Quintiles, two companies that came to Overland Park in 2006 and 2007, and are currently employing more than 2,500 workers.

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We might have to begin referring to 115th Street, between Metcalf and Lamar, as our growing bioscience corridor.

PAUSE

Over a span of two days in December, two nationally known companies separately announced plans to locate business operations in Overland Park.

### **Slide – J.P. Morgan logo**

J.P. Morgan signed a 10-year commitment to occupy new headquarters with 800 jobs on the Sprint Campus. It will begin moving into its offices in 2011.

### **Slide – \$44 million**

The company plans to spend \$44 million in capital investment.

### **Slide – J.P. Morgan**

I want to thank Pam Popp and J.P. Morgan for its investment in Overland Park.

### **Slide – U.S. Bank – logo**

And U.S. Bank is bringing 1,200 new jobs to Overland Park with an annual payroll of \$50 to \$60 million.

### **Slide – U.S. Bank annual payroll/blank**

Again, that's new jobs to Overland Park and the Kansas City metro area.

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U.S Bank expects to spend \$21 million on building improvements and to begin moving in at a new location near 127th and Metcalf, just north of Deer Creek Commons Office Park, during the second quarter of this year.

### **Slide – U.S. Bank**

Again, thank you Mark Jorgenson and U.S. Bank for choosing Overland Park.

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**Slide – Engine w/sound**

These payrolls and capital investments are another accelerant to boost our high-performance economic engine.

I want to thank all the company officials for believing in Overland Park, for investing in the local economy, and for keeping us running at a high RPM.

Doesn't that engine sound good?

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New private jobs --- Who can't support that?

**Slide – Economic Development Council Logo**

The real credit for all this good news goes to our ongoing public-private partnership with you, the business community, through the Overland Park Economic Development Council.

The professional work of Lavern Squier and his staff reflects these successes. Will all the members of the OPEDC committee and staff please stand (lead applause).

Think of us at the city, chamber and community leaders as your All Service Economic mechanics.

## **Blank**

One more note, from what I am hearing in the past week or two, inquiries by companies to the EDC office remain strong because Overland Park is an attractive place for businesses and residents.

In 2009 alone, Overland Park was recognized as:

## **Slides of info**

- Among the top 25 of America's Best Places to Move by Forbes.com;
- The top city in Kansas for startup businesses;
- In the top three of America's Best Affordable Places to Retire by BusinessWeek; and
- Number three of the 10 Best Places to Grow Up by U.S. News & World Report.

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These awards just confirm what we already know - that Overland Park is:

### **Slides of info/pics**

- Great for families;
- Economically competitive and strong;
- A top-notch learning environment with outstanding schools that prepare our students for college and the professional world;
- Rich in intellectual capital and resources that support some of the best entrepreneurial activity in the Midwest; and
- Putting itself in the driver's seat.

### **Blank**

I want to assure you today that Overland Park will continue to:

### **Slides – text**

- be attractive to employers;
- be competitive;

- pursue new businesses; and
- strive to strengthen and build our local economy by bringing quality jobs to Overland Park.

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### **Slide – pic of project**

One location rebuilding and positioning itself for the future is the Cherokee South Shopping Center at 95th and Antioch, which is undergoing construction and expects to be complete later this summer.

### **Slide – Vision Metcalf**

Cherokee South is in an area identified within the Vision Metcalf Plan.

That plan encourages mixed use redevelopment along Metcalf from I-435 south to 123<sup>rd</sup>.

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Development activity is proceeding but at a slower pace, as expected, but it is evident the developers are planning and doing their

homework so when the economy improves, they will be ready and so will we.

### **Slide – Residential market graphic**

We have started to experience a slight improvement in the residential market, which provides us some hope and optimism.

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**PAUSE**

For the past few months we have been revving up our engine for a massive highway construction project.

### **Slide – U.S. 69**

Work began last year on widening U.S. 69 from two to three lanes in each direction from 75<sup>th</sup> Street south to I-435.

### **Slide - \$82 million**

This \$82 million project is being funded by \$76 million in federal stimulus funds and Overland Park's investment of more than \$6 million.

### **Slide – 69 highway**

This first phase of widening of U.S. 69 will address ever-increasing traffic, and we continue to ask federal lawmakers for funds to support the widening from I-435 to 167th Street.

### **Slide – Pop up \$500 million**

The entire widening from 75th south to 167th Street is valued in excess of \$500 million.

### **Blank**

Back when U.S. 69 was first built, it was called the Switzer bypass. It was a connection of I-35 to U.S. 69 south.

### **Slide - rooftops**

Today, it serves neighborhoods, Oak Park Mall, Corporate Woods, 119<sup>th</sup>, 135<sup>th</sup> and 151<sup>st</sup> streets and so much more.

### **Blank**

Like this city's humble beginnings, it has grown.

That is because we had a good foundation.

## **Video – Act 3 – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

2010 is a special year for Overland Park.

Because of the great foundation past city leaders built for us, Overland Park has benefited.

On May 20, we will celebrate those successes and this great city's 50th Anniversary.

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**Slide - Map**

1960 is important to many of us because it was the year Overland Park officially became a city.

That's right, Overland Park is the youngest city in Johnson County.

**Slide – 173,719**

Today, with more than 173,000 residents, we are now the second most populous community in Kansas and second most populous in metro Kansas City.

**Blank**

Remember when I talked about the soccer complex and Black & Veatch?

Well, we are also a city gaining more recognition nationally and internationally.

### **Slide – City leaders, founders**

In our 50 years, Overland Park leaders, past and present, have quietly and astutely gone about creating an unrivaled community of understated excellence.

### **Slides – Old photo; OP Commerce**

We have continued to adapt and revamp our city. We went from a bedroom community of exporting jobs to a thriving center of commerce, where we import jobs.

### **Slide – May 20**

I want you to save the date of May 20 when we will have a communitywide luncheon celebration at the New Theatre Restaurant.

### **Slide – New Theatre**

At your table is a list of those numerous events where the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is being celebrated.

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### **Slides – Pics of Jazz in the Woods; Fourth of July; downtown OP fall festival**

Committee members are hard at work, soliciting donations and planning many events to supplement existing activities like Jazz in the Woods, the Fourth of July celebration, the annual Downtown Overland Park Fall Festival and more.

## **Blank**

I want to recognize a 20-member committee of citizen volunteers who are working on various 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities including a list of 50 fun things to do in Overland Park.

### **Slides – Diamond, Gold and Silver 50<sup>th</sup> Anni. Sponsors**

All these activities would not be possible without community support from some very outstanding companies and individuals.

I want to recognize:

- Diamond Sponsor – Black & Veatch
- Gold Sponsor – Sprint

- Silver Sponsors –
  - Doubletree Hotel;
  - Firebaugh Construction;
  - The Heavy Constructors Association;
  - Menorah Medical Center and Overland Park Regional Medical Center.

**Slide – Other supporters**

There are truly many other companies and individuals who have made a commitment to help celebrate this special moment in the city's history.

**Slide – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Logo/celebrate**

I want to thank each of them and the city council for the support.  
(Lead applause).

**Slide – map with city boundaries**

In 1960, when residents voted to approve the incorporation of Overland Park, the city's southern boundary was 107<sup>th</sup> Street.

To help put that into perspective, if we had maintained that boundary, I-435, Corporate Woods and south would not be in the city of Overland Park today.

### **Blank**

But city leaders did not quietly sit by.

There was desire to have a vibrant community, one that people wanted to live in, build in, do business in and call home.

### **Slide - Photos**

From community parades, farmers' markets, summertime concert series, fall festivals, and much more, Overland Park began as a community looking to grow and prosper.

Today, we continue to support those same virtues, building a community that families can call home, where jobs are, and where all can enjoy leisure activities and more.

### **Blank**

Yet, our task is not done as we work to keep our engine strong.

### **Fourth Video**

## **Slide – Three logos**

There are many things we have done here and done right .... and we continue to invest.

Last year, we completed a branding project of Overland Park involving the city, the Economic Development Council, and Convention and Visitors Bureau.

## **Blank**

What we discovered reinforces what I am saying today:

- While other communities are satisfied to ride the winds of change, Overland Park harnesses the wind and puts it to work thanks to the hard work of many people.

## **Slide – Pics of all mayors and logos**

We have:

## **Slides - pics**

- Corporate Woods,
- the Convention Center,

- beautiful shopping centers,
- Johnson County Community College,
- the KU Edwards Campus,
- historic downtown Overland Park,
- the Nerman Museum of Art,
- the Deanna Rose Children's Farmstead, and soon,
- the American Museum of Natural History.

## **Blank**

The most important part of this branding was finding out how people perceive Overland Park from unique perspectives.

Based on the responses we continue to hear –

## **Slide – new logo with tagline**

Overland Park, Kansas, Above and Beyond. By Design.

## **Blank**

Our economy has not been without its occasional misses and misfires.

### **Slide – Positions cut**

Since the beginning of 2009, Overland Park has reduced its work force by nearly 90 full-time equivalent positions.

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The number of full-time positions in 2010 is the same as in 2001.

In fact, we have added 47 positions in police and fire while decreasing staffing in other departments – making critical business decisions for the future based on our community priorities.

Other efforts include freezing salaries for all employees in 2010, and many other cost-cutting measures similar to what your business may already have done.

### **Slide - \$70 million**

Overland Park solved a \$70 million deficit.

### **Slide - Gerlach**

The prospects for a speedy and vibrant recovery are about as good as my making it to the finals of American Idol. (It's my dance moves that are holding me back).

## **Blank**

I want to assure you we are not **just reacting** to this economic downturn.

Over two years ago in January of 2008, we anticipated a downturn and took steps to ensure our financial future.

We began to re-engineer government back then thanks to the City Council and City Manager John Nachbar and his staff members.

Throughout the first decade of this century, Overland Park has been **proactive** and fiscally responsible, streamlining operations and implementing significant cost-saving efforts.

From 2003 through 2009, actions by the state reduced our revenue by nearly \$15 million.

## **Slide - \$1 million equal to**

Another way of stating it, each \$1 million of lost state revenue is equivalent to 12 new police officers, their cars and equipment.

## **Blank**

Now all eyes are on Topeka, looking for leadership as the Governor and the Legislature grapple with one of the state's worst financial crises.

A number of us mayors in Johnson County have teamed up to work together and communicate on common issues.

Now city leaders from across the state must do the same.

### **Slide – Individual pics of three mayors**

In late January, Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer, Unified Government of Wyandotte County Mayor Joe Reardon and I all testified together before the Kansas House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Ways and Means Committee about our challenges.

Just as three of us have come together to understand our distinctive issues, we asked our lawmakers to believe there is value in working toward understanding each others' communities, developing trust, and working in unison to resolve differences through dialogue and determination.

We came united, not divided.

## **Blank**

We value what all communities – large and small – bring to the state’s rich history and promising future.

We asked and encouraged state lawmakers to partner with us to address the revenue shortfalls in Kansas.

All Kansas communities are suffering. We’re all struggling to provide services that maintain the quality of life our residents and businesses want and expect.

## **Slide – Kansas-engine**

Cities all across Kansas are the pistons powering the state’s economic engine.

## **Blank**

Lower revenue brought about by state action is a fact of life that local units of government – counties and cities - have been adjusting to and will continue to do so for years.

Communities and state leaders need to work together to bring about good paying jobs by striving to attract international and national corporations and jobs.

We need to make our cities destinations. We need to ensure the attributes so vital to cities including service, public safety and education.

### **Blank**

Taxes collected on the sale of gasoline and liquor by the drink locally are sent to Topeka for statewide distribution to municipalities.

### **Slide – Alcohol and Motor fuel graphic**

Before the state legislature reconvened last month, there were comments made about cities possibly losing more revenue from the alcohol tax and motor fuel tax.

Annually, Overland Park receives \$3 million from the alcohol tax.

We use the money to fund operations, build and maintain your parks and recreation, and drug and alcohol prevention programs for youth and adults.

Motor fuel revenue is used to pay for new roads and maintenance of your streets.

### **Slide – Lose \$9 million per year**

If both are taken away, Overland Park will stand to lose an additional \$9 million per year.

Overland Park has clearly demonstrated throughout its history a fiscal prudence that has been beneficial to our taxpayers.

### **Blank**

#### **Slide – Home, \$256, what you get for it**

If you own a \$250,000 home you will pay only \$256 in property tax to the city to fund such services as police and fire protection, road improvements and construction, parks facilities, maintenance of streets and traffic lighting, and snow removal.

### **Blank**

For those same services, the city spends about \$2,000 per household.

The difference between \$256 and \$2,000 primarily comes from sales tax.

As my mechanic often says - Quality service comes with a price.

The reason Overland Park does so well is because we continue to support the three-legged stool:

### **Slides**

- education,
- public safety, and
- strong economy.

### **Blank**

We should never forget what residents and leaders wanted and pursued 50 years ago.

### **Slide – text “dreams”**

We should not let go of the memories of those who dared to pursue dreams of building an appealing community; dreams of attracting businesses; dreams of vibrant commerce and dreams of Overland Park above and beyond.

### **Blank**

Those dreams became what Overland Park is today.

We have outstanding, nationally ranked and recognized schools, students and teachers.

We have highly effective and responsive public safety operations.

And we have community and chamber leadership that listens, responds and plans for the future.

Overland Park is still home to brilliant minds, innovative people and entrepreneurs constantly seeking and achieving success.

### **Slide**

I believe we've already begun our travel on the road to recovery.

### **Closing video**

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