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‘BORN AND RAISED HERE’



Domingos En El Parque commemorates Columbia’s Independence Day July 20, at Sinnissippi Park in Rockford. Organizers say some residents have told them that they have been hesitant to attend such events amid immigration crackdowns across the country. SUSAN MORAN/ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR



Rockford School Board member Patricia Chavez. PROVIDED BY PATRICIA CHAVEZ

Documented or not, Rockford Latinos say many now live in fear of arrest

Jeff Kolkey  
Rockford Register Star  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Immigration enforcement across the United States targeting Latino and migrant residents have made some local U.S. citizens nervous about traveling, attending cultural events and sometimes just taking their children to school or going to church.

Rockford School Board member Patricia Chavez said she is anxious about a planned trip for a conference in September to Washington D.C. President Donald Trump has deployed National Guard soldiers to help police the city. And Chavez said there are reports of Black and Latino residents there being targeted by Immigration & Customs Enforcement and federal agents.

Chavez is making copies of her Social Security card, birth certificate and passport for her lawyer to keep — just in case she gets detained by federal agents. As a woman of color, she needs

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Pastor to purchase former hospital

Mayor voices concern over upkeep expense of Mercyhealth building

Jeff Kolkey  
Rockford Register Star  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Mercyhealth has confirmed that a local pastor and his wife have agreed to purchase the former Rockford Memorial Hospital, 2400 N. Rockton Ave.

The Rev. Melvin Brown, and his wife, the Rev. Shelia Brown, owners of Kingdom Authority Church in downtown Rockford, signed a purchase agreement for the hospital that a decade ago supported 396 hospital beds and a Level 1 trauma center on more than 7 acres.

“The Browns have spent more than 30 years ministering and providing social support for members of the Rockford community,” Mercyhealth Vice President Kara Sankey said in a written statement. “Their dedication to serving others, coupled with their vision for the building, will have a positive impact on the community.”

What plans the Browns have for the massive facility have not been announced. Melvin Brown declined to comment and said he would reveal plans for the hospital later in September during a news conference.

The Browns, Kingdom Authority Church, staff and 10 children in the church daycare won a \$360,000 judgment from the city after a jury found Rockford police officers had acted recklessly when they shot and killed Mark Anthony Barmore in August 2009 after pursuing him into the church and its House of Grace Daycare.

Plaintiffs had sought \$4 million. Each daycare child who witnessed the incident was awarded \$10,000, a daycare worker was awarded \$45,000 and Shelia Brown was awarded \$15,000. The jury declined to award Brown or his daughter damages.

The purchase agreement was first revealed on Facebook by the couple’s

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Salamone’s Italian Restaurant earns national spotlight

Abreanna Blose  
AI-assisted reporter  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Salamone’s Italian Restaurant in Cherry Valley is set to be featured on America’s Best Restaurants.

The national media and marketing company, which highlights local, independently owned restaurants, will bring its ABR Roadshow to Salamone’s on Sept. 15, according to a community

announcement. The episode will showcase popular dishes and include an on-camera interview with owners Benny and Rosalie Salamone. It will be aired on social media channels at a later date.

A family tradition

Salamone’s opened in December 1999 in a 400-square-foot garage, selling pizza for carryout and delivery. Both Benny and Rosalie come from immigrant par-

ents and grew up in family restaurants.

“It was fun trying to figure out which one of our family’s marinara sauce to use,” Rosalie said in the announcement. “We decided to combine the two and came up with our own signature sauce.”

The restaurant moved to its current location in 2006, offering a larger space and an expanded menu. It now features a full bar, catering, event space, daily specials and a game room.

In addition to pizza and a full menu of

specialty pastas, chicken, seafood, sandwiches, calzones, appetizers, soups, salads and desserts, top-selling items that may be featured on the episode include Chicken Piccata, lasagna and Paccheri Arrabbiata.

Community involvement

Salamone’s is also involved in the

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