



1977-1986

## The eighth decade of the

# Kansas City District

### World Events

#### 1977

The U.S. faces a high trade deficit, primarily because of oil imports and the falling value of the dollar.

The EPA is held by the Supreme Court to have the authority to establish industry-wide standards to control discharge of pollutants into waterways.

Pres. Carter asks the American people to join a campaign for energy conservation, which he calls the “moral equivalent of war.”

#### 1978

The nation’s economic woes continue with inflation at 8 percent and concern over the trade deficit and availability of energy.

The Love Canal area of Niagara Falls, N.Y., considered to be environmentally unfit for human habitation, is declared a “disaster area.”

#### 1979

The nation’s attention is focused on Iran, where a wave of revolutionary unrest toppled the regime of the Shah and installed a fundamentalist Islamic dictatorship.

Islamic revolutionaries seize the U.S. embassy in Teheran, and Pres. Carter threatens military action to free the hostages.

A nuclear near-disaster occurs at Three Mile Island, near Harrisburg, Pa.

The SALT 2 strategic arms limitation treaty is signed by the U.S. and U.S.S.R.

A new energy conservation program is proposed by Pres. Carter to limit oil imports, reduce oil use by utilities and shift to other forms of fuel.

#### 1980

Inflation reaches 12.4 percent by year’s end, marking the second successive year of double-digit inflation.

Mount St. Helens in southwestern Washington state erupts, and the COE provides emergency assistance and performs recovery operations.

Congress enacts the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, commonly known as the Superfund Act.

#### 1981

The economy continues to falter, with the inflation rate soaring to 14 percent.

The year’s brightest news concerns the introduction of a personal computer by IBM, a development that is to turn it into a major change force in a few short years.

Pres. Ronald Reagan calls for cuts of \$41 billion in the budget former Pres. Carter had submitted, but he calls for an increase of \$5 billion in defense spending.

The DOD creates a new military command to protect U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf.

A hotel disaster in Kansas City kills 111 people, and the Kansas City District Chief of Engineers is selected to serve on an investigation team.

#### 1982

Attempts by the U.S. to bring peace to the Middle East are fruitless, but Pres. Reagan commits U.S. Marines as a peacekeeping force in Beirut, Lebanon.

IBM introduces a computer almost twice as powerful as its predecessor.

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# Kansas City District

- Storms and floods strike the Midwest, particularly Missouri, and the Kansas City District provide emergency response.

## 1983

- The worst drought since 1936 devastates the South and Midwest.
- Disaster strikes the U.S. peacemaking effort in Lebanon when the U.S. embassy is bombed and terrorists blow up U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut.
- In Central America, the U.S. sends military aid to the anti-Sandinista, anticommunist “freedom fighters” in Nicaragua and to the government of El Salvador in its long and bloody civil war, and the U.S. invades the Caribbean island of Grenada.
- Discovery of dioxin, a carcinogenic chemical, in the soil around Times Beach, Mo., leads the government to offer to buy property from willing sellers.

## 1984

- The Deficit Reduction Act, raising taxes and cutting spending through 1987, is signed by Pres. Reagan.
- Development of the long-awaited megabit memory chip is announced by Bell Laboratories.
- The World Court declares it has jurisdiction in a case brought by Nicaragua to have the U.S. declared an aggressor nation; the U.S. states it will not be bound by a decision of the court and the next year withdraws from its proceedings.

## 1985

- For the first time since WWI, the U.S. becomes a debtor nation, owing more to other countries than is owed to it.
- A nuclear energy accord is signed by Pres. Reagan and Li Xiannian, president of the People’s Republic of China, authorizing U.S. sale of nonmilitary nuclear technology to China.
- Sanctions against South Africa are announced by Pres. Reagan to protest that country’s policy of apartheid.
- The U.S. government reports that at least 6,928 accidents involving toxic chemicals had occurred in the past five years.

## 1986

- Computers using the megabit memory chip, capable of storing more than 1 million bits of electronic data, are being manufactured for the first time.
- The space shuttle Challenger explodes after liftoff at Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- Pres. Reagan announces that U.S. strategic arms policy will no longer be bound by the terms of the unratified SALT II arms agreement.
- The first outdoor test of genetically engineered plants is begun, opening the possibility of creating high-yield crops that would reduce farmers’ dependence on toxic chemicals.
- The “Iran-Contra” affair is revealed when a Lebanese magazine reports that the U.S. had been secretly selling arms to Iran in hopes of securing the release of hostages held in Lebanon, and it was revealed that some of the arms money had been diverted to the Nicaraguan rebels, known as Contras.
- Congress passes a federal budget for fiscal 1987 that cuts Pres. Reagan’s request for defense spending by \$28 billion and still has a deficit of \$142.6 billion.