Features

Moving Forward: county projects underway

Appraised home values grow with housing shortage
The state of our county is strong

We are already well into another exciting year in Johnson County. A few weeks ago, we presented the State of the County address to more than 700 community leaders and residents, and shared highlights of many of the great things in our county, including a recent top excellence ranking by USA Today. Johnson County is the only county in Kansas or Missouri to be listed in its top 25 counties in the nation to live. We were ranked 23 out of more than 3,000 U.S. counties, putting us within the top 1 percent nationally.

Our county’s economic health is strong, with one of the lowest unemployment rates in decades, at 2.5 percent at the end of 2017, and lower than the state’s 3 percent, the metro’s 3.3 percent and the nation’s 3.9 percent. Since the Great Recession, our county has created nearly 48,000 new jobs, accounting for 75 percent job growth in Kansas.

We also recently received our 2018 annual community survey results from residents who rated their experiences of life and work in our community. Our county has, once again, received extremely high marks. Of those surveyed, 98 percent stated they are satisfied or extremely satisfied with our county as a place to live; 96 percent are satisfied or extremely satisfied with JoCo as a place to raise children; and 89 percent are satisfied or extremely satisfied with our county as a place to work. Our rankings range from 44 to 46 percent higher than other large communities across the U.S. Once again, residents ranked Johnson County’s libraries, parks, election office and MED-ACT as the top four county services.

Johnson County maintained a top ranking as the healthiest place to live in Kansas, according to the ninth annual County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The rankings are available online at countyhealthrankings.org. The 2018 rankings show that where you live influences how well and how long you live. Good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care including housing, education, jobs, access to healthy foods and more.

We have some exciting new projects coming to fruition this summer. A groundbreaking ceremony on April 12 marked the official beginning of construction on the Tomahawk Wastewater Treatment Facility at I-435 and Mission. Today, our county sends 60 percent of wastewater flow (from the current Tomahawk location) to Kansas City, Missouri, for treatment, but by 2021 with the opening of this facility, we will treat all of our wastewater for that site and save approximately $16 million annually.

Thanks to the support of Johnson County residents, our community will break ground this summer on a new county courthouse in downtown Olathe, one block north of the current building. The courthouse along with a new medical examiner facility, are funded by a voter-approved public safety sales tax. The new courthouse will improve the safety and security challenges of the current facility, allowing court officials to separate victims and jurors from using the same corridors as alleged perpetrators who are in custody. It will also be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Recently released designs are available online at jocogov.org/courthouse.

The Election Office will soon debut new voting machines for county voters, providing new technology, additional security and a voter verifiable paper audit trail of each voter’s ballot.

We continue to look for ways to improve our service to the community and improve the experience for our residents doing business with the county.

Have a wonderful spring!

Ed Eilert
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

Penny Postoak Ferguson
Interim County Manager

On the cover: The county, including the park & recreation district and library, have several infrastructure, recreational and public safety construction projects underway. Check out the overview of county projects on page 12.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Appraised home values grow with housing shortage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Good health is good business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Technology and Johnson County operations and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>County adds new RideKC routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>County health clinics offer confidential, affordable STD testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Johnson County receives KDOT funds to replace air traffic technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Moving forward — county projects underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Distracted driving awareness month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Collaboration ensures long-term adolescent treatment services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The “bluff” at Big Bull Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The Best Times magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Eilert delivers 2018 State of the County address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Cling on to the Take Me Home Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Three Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>10 Things you can do during Bike Month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ways to engage with JoCo

Online
Visit jocogov.org to:
• Find your county commissioner
• Get answers to questions
• Learn about more than 400 services Johnson County provides to residents.

Social media
Twitter: @jocogov
Facebook: facebook.com/jocogov
Instagram: instagram.com/jocogov

By phone
Call Center: 913-715-5000
Kansas Relay Operator: 800-766-3777

Board of County Commissioners’ meetings:
Attend a weekly Board of County Commissioners meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Thursdays on the third floor of the Administration Building, 111 S. Cherry St., in Olathe or watch on your smartphone or mobile device at live.jocogov.org

Johnson County Elected Officials
Ed Eilert, Chairman
Ron Shaffer, 1st District
Jim Allen, 2nd District
Steve Klika, 3rd District
Jason Osterhaus, 4th District
Michael Ashcraft, 5th District
Mike Brown, 6th District
Stephen M. Howe, District Attorney
Calvin H. Hayden, Sheriff

Pictured above: Board of County Commissioners Chairman Ed Eilert presented his 2018 State of the County address on March 27. The event was hosted by the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by the Johnson County Public Policy Council. The address focused on the county’s collaborative workforce development programs, economic health of the county, and upcoming county projects and strategic priorities. A script of the speech and video of the presentation are both available at jocogov.org/article/2018/03/27/9795.
**In short**

**Johnson County maintains No. 1 ranking as healthiest place to live in Kansas**

The county maintains its top ranking as the healthiest place to live in Kansas according to the ninth annual County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, released recently by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

“Johnson County is fortunate to have many of the key factors that contribute to a long and healthy life,” says Lougene Marsh, director of the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment. “However, this report is also a call to action for leaders and community members to note those areas where we can make improvements so everyone has a fair and just chance to lead the healthiest life possible.”

**Emergency management to residents:**

*Sign up for NotifyJoCo today*

Severe Weather Awareness Week was in March. Johnson County Emergency Management officials asked residents to stay alert of potential spring weather hazards — tornadoes, damaging winds, large hail and flash flooding.

The county has made it easier to sign up for emergency alerts. Anyone who lives, works or plays in Johnson County can text NOTIFYJOCO (all one word) to 888777 to begin receiving countywide alerts on their mobile device.

Other ways to sign up for NotifyJoCo alerts include:

- Go online to [notifyjoco.org](http://notifyjoco.org) and customize alerts for up to five designated locations and select your preferred communication methods (phone, text, email).
- Call 913-826-5555 to register for alerts if you don’t have access to a computer.

All county residents are encouraged to sign up for NotifyJoCo to receive emergency alerts for their preferred locations and delivery methods. For more on how to prepare for severe weather, go to ready.gov and joco72.org.

**Flu cases were highest in eight years**

Cases of flu began to spike at the end of December and continued to climb before leveling off in mid-February. The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) received a total of 6,793 flu reports through April 6.

The county’s department of health and environment shows that the number of flu cases were the highest seen in the last eight years. The county coroner also noted a rise in deaths in January due to pneumonia or influenza-like illness.

Influenza is not a reportable disease in Kansas. JCDHE relies on local healthcare providers to voluntarily report flu cases to the disease investigation team. Each week, JCDHE compiles a weekly influenza surveillance report that is posted on the department’s website.

In the county, JCDHE makes flu vaccine available through the end of April for adults and children over the age of 6 months. High-dose flu shots are available for adults over the age of 65. JCDHE clinic information and online check-in is available at jocogov.org/jcdhe.

**Quotable**

“Time after time, our residents have demonstrated their belief in — and support for — programs that will build an outstanding community.”

— Johnson County Commission Chair Ed Eilert

at the 2018 State of the County, March 27, 2018
Do You Suffer from Neuropathy?

If you suffer from any of these torturous symptoms – numbness, tingling, or sharp nerve pain – then the facts below may be the most important you have ever read.

Neuropathy affects every part of your life: walking, sitting, and even sleeping. Maybe you’ve had multiple tests, only to find out no one has any idea what you have. Maybe you’ve been put on a drug with heavy side effects.

Hi, I am Dr. Michael Riley, D.C., Founder and Clinic Director at Renuva Back & Pain Center in Overland Park. I’ve been helping people with neuropathy and nerve problems for several years now.

More than 20 million Americans suffer from peripheral neuropathy, a problem caused by damage to the nerves that supply your arms and legs. This painful condition interferes with your body’s ability to transmit messages to your muscles, skin, joints, or internal organs. If ignored or mistreated, neuropathy can lead to irreversible health conditions.

Often neuropathy is caused by a degenerating spine pressing on the nerve roots. This can happen in any of the vertebral joints from the neck all the way down to the tail bone.

What is the Single Most Important Solution to Your Neuropathy?

By using gentle techniques in our exclusive CoreCare™ treatment program, we’re able to release the pressure on the nerve. This allows the nerve to heal and the symptoms to go away. Numerous studies have shown the therapies we use can be effective in helping nerve conditions.

Our exclusive CoreCare treatments, which include Class IV Deep Tissue Laser Therapy, work to restore the body’s natural ability without painful shots, drugs or surgery.

Before the FDA would approve Class IV Lasers for Photobiomodulation (PBM) therapy they required evidence that it was safe for use on humans. This lead to studies on safety but also numerous studies of which are included in Renuva’s 5-phase CoreCare treatment protocol.

Another study from Lasers in Surgery and Medicine found that 70% of patients who received PBM therapy maintained pain relief at their one month follow-up vs. only 28% of patients who received a Lidocaine injection.

Will This Treatment Work For You?

The best way to find out if you’re a candidate for CoreCare is to come see and experience it firsthand. That’s why, for a few weeks I’m including 2 treatments with your initial visit for only $39 (normally $257).

Here is what one of our patients had to say:

“I’ve fought neuropathy for 10-12 years and it’s physically painful. After two weeks of CoreCare treatments I felt a subtle improvement and now most of the pain, if not all, has gone away. Renuva has been a wonderful experience. The staff are great and I’m always well-tended to – it’s really an amazing program.”

- Bob W., Overland Park, KS

What does this offer include?

- An in-depth consultation about your neuropathy and health where I will listen - really listen - to the details of your case.
- A complete neuromuscular examination.

* A full set of digital x-rays (if needed) to determine if a spinal problem is contributing to your pain or symptoms.
* A thorough analysis of your exam findings so we can start mapping out your plan to being pain free. If you’re not a candidate for CoreCare, I promise to tell you.
* Plus, two treatments so you can experience this amazing treatment and learn if this could be your pain solution like it has been for so many other patients.

Call by May 31st and you can get everything I’ve listed here for only $39. The normal price for this type of evaluation, including x-rays, is $257, so you’re saving near $220.

Don’t let your neuropathy get worse. Call by May 31st.

913.884.1152

We are located on the northeast corner of I-435 and Nall in the Corporate Medical Plaza. Right across 107th from the new Top Golf facility.

Our address is:

10787 Nall Ave, Suite 110
Overland Park, KS 66211

I look forward to helping.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Riley, D.C.

2 Treatments Included with Exam

Call by May 31st

$39

913-884-1152

Exam Includes: Consultation, Digital X-rays (if needed) & 2 Treatments

(joco)
Appraised home values grow with housing shortage, booming population

by AUSTIN FALLEY

Johnson County home prices continue to rise after several years of growth across the region.

In late February, the Johnson County Appraiser’s Office sent about 200,000 property owners notices of appraised value — many residents saw increases of 10 percent or more, with the average rise about 8 percent compared to 2017 values.

“People want to live here,” said County Appraiser Paul Welcome at a March town hall in Roeland Park. “Why do people want to live here in the northeast? In the northeast you’re five minutes from the Plaza, you’re 10 minutes from downtown. People want to live in your neighborhoods. And that is the current state of the market that is out there.”

Welcome and his staff partnered with the Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce to hold a series of town hall forums to talk about the increases in home values, the county’s booming population, real estate market strengths and to discuss the appeals process for residential property.

This year, northeast Johnson County is seeing 15 percent increases because of the growing demand for the many different homes in Prairie Village, Roeland Park and other northeast cities.

Real estate professionals agree that the market is particularly hot because of the short supply of homes on the market. As of the end of March 2018, fewer than 1,300 homes are currently listed for sale. Normally, about 6,000 homes are available on the market, striking a better balance between buyers and sellers.

Booming population, short housing supply

In the presentation to Prairie Village homeowners, appraiser office staff began by explaining the considerable boom in Johnson County’s population from 2005 to 2017 — 501,584 residents in 2005 that has grown to 591,172 in 2017, just 12 years later.

Monthly supply of homes in the county has been low since 2014, but is currently facing the shortest inventory in recent memory. In 2014, the supply sat at three months; this year, the inventory is at 1.5 months. Housing supply, even at its lowest, had nearly a 12 percent decrease from the 2016 supply.

Short supply is driving up prices. Just look at the average sale prices, staff pointed out. As of December 2017, there was a 5.4 percent increase from 2016 average sale prices — $306,494 in 2016 compared to $323,058 in 2017.

Jeff Ramsey, residential property valuation manager, noted in his presentation to Prairie Village residents that, for homes listed under $350,000 in February, offers were coming in at 114 percent over the list price. “Because there is such a limited market on those homes, it puts pressure on sale prices,” Ramsey said. “Sales prices go up, and we have to value based on what the sale prices in the market are.”

Appraisals and tax rates

The amount of taxes residents pay depends on the budgets set by their governing bodies — state lawmakers, county commissioners, city elected officials and district school boards. State law requires the county collect property taxes on behalf of all taxing districts in the county and distribute the appropriate funds to each district.

“Your school boards set your school mill levy and your cities set their rate,” County Appraiser Paul Welcome said. “Each taxing district sets its own mill levy.”

Property appraisals are governed strictly under state law and are meant to assess the fair market value of your home to sell in a competitive market. The appraisal method is established by Kansas statute to determine a property owner’s share of the taxes that support schools, roads, health and human services, police and fire protection.

“If you don’t think the comparables in your neighborhood reflect the value of your home,” Jeff Ramsey, residential property valuation manager, said, “bring us those addresses when you appeal. If they are fair-value, open-market sales, we can take a look at that.”

About 55 percent of your tax bill goes to fund K-12 education — around 16 percent goes to your city, 15 to the county, with levies to fund parks, libraries, fire districts and other critical public services. Johnson County has historically had the lowest mill levy rate in the state and continues to have the lowest county taxing district in Kansas.

For questions about the appraisal process, contact the appraiser’s office at 913-715-9000. Questions about property taxes can be routed to the records and tax administration office at 913-715-0775.
Good health is good business

by BARBARA MITCHELL and LORI SAND

WorkWell KS, a statewide initiative that provides leadership and resources for businesses and organizations to support worksite health, was recently rolled out to the 65 employees at Redemption Plus in Lenexa. The company’s wellness crusader, Julie Annett, partnered with the Chronic Disease Risk Reduction (CDRR) team from Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) on the initiative.

Redemption Plus is a direct, wholesale importer of toys and incentive merchandise for kids. The company’s primary focus was to become a tobacco-free campus, a goal that was achieved Jan. 1, 2018. The company has been proactive in establishing a non-smoking culture.

“As more research about the harmful effects of second- and third-hand smoke becomes available, it just made sense that in 2018 we should become a complete smoke-free campus,” Annett said. “We did a lot of preparation in 2017 to get ready to move to smoke free by first screening all new employees for nonsmokers. We provide a tobacco cessation program for those who still use tobacco.

We made this decision based on the fact that most of our employees are nonsmokers and the need to ensure the health and well-being of the greater percentage of employees and help out the remaining users of tobacco products.”

Last fall, the county’s CDRR team hosted Redemption Plus staff during a week-long health fair centered on healthy eating and nutrition. Because weight gain is often a concern for smokers once they quit, JCDHE’s dietitian taught a healthy snacking class, making two healthy snacks on site and discussing how to avoid gaining weight once someone quits smoking.

Redemption Plus’s commitment to employee health is evident. Employees have access to an onsite fitness center and may work with a trainer or take fitness classes. A chef prepares healthy breakfasts along with an option for a weekly take home healthy dinner. A room for children is available for those who come to work with a parent or caregiver on the occasional snow or sick day. The company also welcomes pets at work and encourages staff to walk around the building during breaks through “step challenges.” These are just a few of the innovative health incentives the company offers.

Not surprisingly, Redemption Plus was recently nominated as one of the healthiest employers during the Kansas City Business Journal’s Healthiest Employer Recognition breakfast.

In addition, Annett, on behalf of Redemption Plus, was accepted in WorkWell KS’s recognition program that acknowledges worksites that have established a foundation for on-site wellness and implemented strategies to address healthy food and beverages, tobacco, physical activity and well-being. Qualified worksites may choose incentives from a number of items that support a healthy worksite environment. Annett chose a bike rack to support more employees riding their bikes to work.

If you or your organization is interested in wellness changes, contact Health Educator Jill Raiford at 913-477-8437.

The county partnership with Redemption Plus is yielding measurable results. Pictured here, r to l: Jill Raiford, health educator, JCDHE; Micheline Krueger, health educator, JCDHE; and Julie Annett, wellness crusader, Redemption Plus.
Technology and Johnson County operations and programs

by CHRIS DEPUSOIR and SHARON WATSON

Technological advances that are being implemented throughout county government are helping to ensure better quality services for residents and improve efficiencies in county operations.

These advances are part of a strategic priority for the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners: development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to protect, support, integrate and use county government’s data and online systems to serve and inform county residents.

Cybersecurity

The county, like all businesses and governments, must defend its data systems daily from cyber attacks and continually enhance security to protect its data. Changes were made several years ago to greatly improve these efforts including hiring experts to assist and identify any gaps or risks. The county’s in-house security team has been expanded to ensure county data is better protected than ever.

“Cybersecurity efforts are never complete nor are governments and businesses invulnerable, but these critical efforts to protect data are ongoing and constantly being modified as needed to address new risks,” said Michael Aldridge, chief information officer. “The county is vigilant in this area and takes a multi-layered approach to security.”

In recent years, the county has implemented additional systems, structure, policies and plans and developed additional teams focused on cyber security efforts.

“Cybersecurity is a journey, not a destination; something that is simply never complete, and we must continually adjust how we approach it to stay ahead of those who are trying to do harm to our organization and our data,” said Aldridge.

Mobile-responsive technology

Johnson County is also working to enhance customer service to residents with improved capabilities for mobile devices. This effort includes making the county’s website, jocogov.org, mobile-responsive providing service through phones, tablets and desktop devices. An additional focus is development of a mobile application that would complement the new website, and allow a more custom experience for residents.

As part of ongoing efforts to improve user experience and access, county residents may now watch live Board of County Commission meetings online using both Android phones and
iPhones. Access to the BOCC meetings is available at live.jocogov.org. Residents can view recordings of previous meetings and a live stream of BOCC meetings when the board is in session.

**Enhanced technology in Johnson County Government**

The following are examples of some key technological applications recently developed and implemented across county government to improve residents’ interactions and improve efficiencies.

**Emergency Management and Communications**

In collaboration with county stormwater management division, AIMS, legal, county manager’s office and other partners, Johnson County Emergency Management developed a new online disaster impact collection tool at jocogov.org/disaster to collect damage information from the public. Having this damage information will enhance future planning and mitigation efforts. Also, individuals in the county can text 9-1-1. The Emergency Communications Center was the first in the region to receive text-to-911. Call 9-1-1 if you can, text if you can’t.

**District Attorney’s Office**

Electronic forms and capabilities are helping the Johnson County District Attorney’s Office improve services. The DA has automated protection from abuse forms to help reduce the time for victims to obtain these orders. In addition, the office started obtaining search warrants electronically, reducing the amount of time needed to receive these court orders.

**Department of Corrections**

Corrections is using the county’s information management system to create a program that emails substance use providers a message to identify a person as eligible for grant assistance. This simplifies the verification process.

**Johnson County Mental Health**

In 2017, the county’s mental health department started providing psychiatry services through telemedicine, providing psychiatric care through telecommunication technology and offering a simple, easy-to-use platform to connect clients with mental health providers. Appointments are facilitated by a nursing assistant in a private office.

**Johnson County MED-ACT**

MED-ACT is using the Deccan “Move-Up-Module” along with the emergency communication center’s computer-aided dispatch system to help predict call locations and facilitate more timely responses. This helps to achieve MED-ACT’s benchmark response times of 90 percent of calls in 10 minutes or less. The current rate of response is 93 percent of calls in less than average response time of six minutes.

**Department of Health and Environment**

Johnson County Department of Health and Environment uses technology to centralize the entry point for all lab reports and medical records received in its offices. Records are sorted into an electronic file attached to the patient record. Staff is able to visually review the patient record at any point, with provider orders being electronically and permanently added to the record. In January 2018, the Johnson County WIC (Women, Infant and Children) program implemented electronic benefit cards. The cards allow client anonymity and use the same readers at the grocery stores as debit or credit cards.

DHE also uses technology to reduce client wait time by implementing the QLess widget or smartphone app that allows clients to check in online for services and join a virtual queue. Once “in line,” the client receives a text message updating their wait time. Clients can also leave the line or ask for more time as their appointment time draws near.

**Department of Human Resources**

The county’s human resources department now offers online classes, so attendees spend less time away from their jobs for training. One example is required harassment awareness training that all employees must attend every two years. Since launching the online training in August 2017, 1,565 employees have completed the online course, equaling 1,617 additional man-hours devoted to delivery of front-line services (eliminated travel time to class and streamlined content), while meeting the needs of the organization, ensuring employee understanding of obligations and access to resources regarding workplace behavior.

**Countywide resources**

MyResource Connection is a portal providing access to a range a county services and was created through collaboration among many county departments. The most searched resources include affordable rental housing, child support assistance and community clinics and mental health resources.
Southwest Johnson County has seen incredible job growth since the 2013 completion of the Logistics Park Kansas City (LPKC) intermodal facility in Edgerton, Kansas. As jobs at LPKC have come on line, the Board of County Commissioners has made reliable and accessible transportation to the area a strategic priority for county government.

On April 2, the county implemented a new, reverse commute service to provide job access to businesses at New Century AirCenter and LPKC through its partnership with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) and the regionally coordinated RideKC transit system. The service builds on the existing 595 Gardner-OP express route. Additionally, three of the six trips from Johnson County to downtown Kansas City, Missouri, will begin at LPKC.

Existing commuter service from the TradeNet Park & Ride and the Oak Park Mall Park & Ride will continue, and will feature one new northbound trip and two new southbound trips. In addition to the new weekday service, the expanded 595 Gardner/Overland Park Express route will offer Saturday transit service — a first for the county. The 595 provides two morning trips from Kansas City, Missouri, and one morning trip from Kansas City, Kansas, to LPKC, as well as one morning trip from LPKC to downtown Kansas City, Missouri.

This expanded transit service seeks to improve access to jobs in southern Johnson County, and will provide connections to Crown Center, Union Station, downtown Gardner, New Century Parkway and AirCenter as well as the LPKC.

The impact of the route will advance again this summer when RideKC adds a new route that connects the Three Trails Transit Center in southern Kansas City, Missouri, with LPKC. This will be a southern connection in a corridor that has never been served by either Johnson County or the KCATA. This route, which is largely funded by a KDOT grant, will begin service on July 2 and operate Monday through Saturday.

Visit RideKC.org for route and schedule information or contact the Regional Call Center at 816-221-0660, weekdays from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Last month, Johnson County was named the healthiest county in Kansas. However, the county has room to improve on its number of sexually transmitted disease (STD) cases.

According to the Kansas Department of Health & Environment’s STI Report January–December 2017, the county had the second highest number of reported chlamydia cases, the third highest number of reported early syphilis cases and the fourth highest number of reported gonorrhea cases in the state. Although chlamydia is typically the most frequently reported STD in Johnson County, the number of gonorrhea infections has outpaced chlamydia and syphilis for the past three years.

Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) Director Lougene Marsh says this trend is concerning as gonorrhea has progressively developed resistance to the antibiotic drugs prescribed to treat it. Marsh also suspects adolescents and young adults may delay care because of concerns about confidentiality.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that youth ages 15-24 make up just over one quarter of the sexually active population, but account for half of the 20 million new sexually transmitted infections that occur in the U.S. each year. The risk of getting infected can be reduced with consistent and correct use of latex condoms, abstinence or being in a monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner.

“If you’re sexually active, talk with your doctor or one of our nurses about whether you should be tested for STDs,” says Marsh. “Getting tested is a simple, yet important, step in protecting your health and the health of your partner — no different than getting your cholesterol or blood pressure checked.”

Marsh says healthcare providers can do their part to improve these numbers by assessing their patients’ STD risk, providing risk-reduction counseling and screening patients who are at risk of contracting STDs.

JCDHE provides confidential, affordable testing and treatment to anyone with an STD and their partner regardless of income or parental consent at its walk-in clinics in Olathe (11875 S. Sunset Dr.) and Mission (6000 Lamar Ave.) No appointment is needed for the JCDHE clinic, however, online check-in is available at jocogov.org/jcdhe.
Johnson County receives KDOT funds to replace air traffic technology

Johnson County Government received grant funding from the Kansas Department of Transportation to modernize equipment at New Century AirCenter Control Tower.

The funding — totaling $148,680 — will finance most of the project’s total cost of $165,200. With KDOT’s grant, the county will replace New Century AirCenter’s control tower voice switching system and backup radio transceiver. The voice switch is the primary interface of the radios, telephone and data lines between the tower, aircraft in the air and on the ground, Kansas City Approach/Departure Control at Kansas City International Airport, and Kansas City Center Controllers.

“We are grateful for this important partnership with the Kansas Department of Transportation Division of Aviation to replace this crucial piece of infrastructure in the New Century AirCenter tower,” said acting assistant county manager Aaron Otto. “New Century is the third busiest towered airport in Kansas and this modernization will provide more reliable services to the airport’s pilots.”

The Johnson County Commission approved a contract with Wolen LLC to complete the system replacements at New Century AirCenter — which will now be funded on a 90/10 funding split KDOT/Airport Funds through the KDOT grant.

“Aviation safety is a critical piece of Kansas’ economy. Johnson County airports deliver 25 percent of Kansas towered-airport operations — producing over $212 million in economic impact and 1,152 Kansas jobs. We are very happy to partner with Johnson County to increase flight safety for this part of the state aviation system,” said Bob Brock, KDOT director of aviation.
MOVING FORWARD — county projects underway

by CHRIS DEPUSOIR

One of the Johnson County’s Board of County Commissioners’ current strategic priorities is to efficiently and effectively complete and advance existing projects approved by county voters and the county commission.

In 2018, this county will continue to see changes as planning efforts for county projects move forward, park facilities including trails, a beach house, clubhouses, rest areas and playgrounds become available and a new county library opens. Following are some of those county projects — a few of which will be open to the public in a matter of weeks.

**Johnson County Courthouse**

Olathe  
Construction completion: late 2020  
Anticipated opening: mid-2021

County leadership and staff have made progress in advancing the building of a new county courthouse since local voters approved the funding for the project in November 2016. The design-build team recently released renderings of the 28-courtroom facility that will be located directly north of the existing courthouse on Santa Fe in Olathe. A groundbreaking for the facility is expected later this summer. The new facility is designed to address public safety concerns along with accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance while meeting the county’s judicial needs for at least the next 75 years.

Follow the project online at [jocogov.org/courthouse](http://jocogov.org/courthouse).

**Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility**

Leawood  
Anticipated completion: late 2021

The Tomahawk Wastewater Treatment Facility expansion project progressed with design in 2017. The current facility treats about 40 percent of the wastewater from parts of Leawood, Olathe, Overland Park and Prairie Village — 7 million gallons per day; the other 60 percent is sent to Kansas City, Missouri, for treatment. The renovated facility will be able to treat 100 percent of its wastewater flow, control costs long-term and comply with new water quality regulations. The new facility is expected to save wastewater ratepayers an estimated $700 million over 35 years.

Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2018 with heavy concrete work starting in 2019.

[jcwtomahawk.com](http://jcwtomahawk.com)

**Meadowbrook Park**

Prairie Village  
Anticipated opening: late summer 2018

As part of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District’s Park Legacy Plan, Meadowbrook Park was conceptualized to address green space and recreational needs of northeast county residents. It is an 80-acre component of a mixed-used development on the site of the former Meadowbrook Country Club. The park portion of the development includes a destination playground, nature play area, hilltop multipurpose lawn, large pavilion shelter, three fish-stocked ponds, senior outdoor fitness area, and walking and hiking trails. The 10,000-square-foot clubhouse includes rentable event space, a multipurpose classroom, an early childhood development space and more.

[jcprd.com/276/Meadowbrook-Park-Master-Plan](http://jcprd.com/276/Meadowbrook-Park-Master-Plan)
Monticello Branch Library
Western Shawnee Anticipated opening: August 2018

With community goals such as access to meeting spaces and technology, Johnson County Library, as part of its Comprehensive Library Master Plan, will open its newest branch location in just a few months.

Extensive community input and planning sessions guided the design and amenities of the long-anticipated Monticello branch. The Monticello branch includes a drive-up holds pick-up window, multiple meeting rooms, collaborative tech spaces, large study rooms and much more. The building’s interior will be bright, modern colors and textures as seen in the animation on the Johnson County Library webpage. jocolibrary.org/locations/monticello

Shawnee Mission Park Beach House
Shawnee Facility opening: Memorial Weekend 2018

The beach house “Tidal” at Shawnee Mission Park is slated to open in time for the holiday that kicks off the summer for many county residents. The old beach house was demolished early last year and construction was completed in October 2017. The beach house is ADA accessible and was recognized with a 2017 American Institute of Architects KC Concept: Citation Award. jcprd.com/263/SMP-Beach-House-Project

Lenexa Library at City Center
Lenexa Anticipated opening: third quarter of 2019

Johnson County Library is relocating its existing Lackman branch to the Lenexa City Center development. Members of the Johnson County Library Board of Directors and the county commission ceremonially broke ground on the new branch in November 2017. The Lenexa branch will have approximately 40,000 square-feet of space over two levels. The innovative floor plan allows for rearrangement as local needs and population change.

jocolibrary.org/locations/Lenexa

Medical Examiner Facility
Olathe Anticipated opening: early 2020

As part of the public safety sales tax initiative approved on the November 2016 ballot, the county is moving forward with constructing a medical examiner facility, formerly referred to as a coroner facility. The medical examiner facility will be located across from the county’s Criminalistics Laboratory on Sunset Drive in Olathe. When opened, a board-certified forensic pathologist will lead operations. Groundbreaking for the building is expected later this year with construction to be completed by end of 2019.

jocogov.org/dept/county-manager-office/county-projects

Big Bull Creek Park
Near Gardner and Edgerton Anticipated opening: summer 2018

The go-ahead for Big Bull Creek Park was authorized in late 2015. This 2,000-acre park will offer recreational amenities unmatched in the Kansas City region. The Sunflower entry of the park is the gateway to the Discovery Nature Playground, open play lawns; a paved, three-quarter mile loop trail; two picnic shelters; prairie restoration area; restrooms and park kiosks. Farther south, the park boasts a group camping area with camp pads, parking, restroom facilities, open green space and a picnic shelter.

jcprd.com/271/Big-Bull-Creek-Park-Master-Plan

jocogov.org/dept/county-manager-office/county-projects
Distracted driving is any activity that could divert your attention away from the primary task of driving. BEFORE you get behind the wheel, make a plan to be distraction free. Put the phone away, buckle up and obey all posted traffic signs.

78% of all distracted drivers are distracted because they have been texting while driving.

22.8% of young adults 18-25, drive under the influence of alcohol.

In Johnson County in 2016, there were 12,273 crashes. Of those, 29 were fatal, and 2,639 had major injuries. The highest number of crashes in the state according to KDOT statistics.

Crashing at 40 MPH with no seatbelt is like jumping off a 12 story building.

85% of all teen fatalities in Kansas are not buckled up.

MED-ACT Education department has distracted driving programming available at no charge to the public. Contact 913-715-1981 to set up a time for our Grave Mistakes: Distracted Driving program to come to your school district, church youth group or business.
Collaboration ensures long-term adolescent treatment services

by LORI SAND

Johnson County’s Mental Health Center and Department of Corrections have partnered to leverage existing resources and ensure sustainability of adolescent drug and alcohol treatment services. As a result of state legislative changes, the Department of Corrections’ Youth Residential Center II (Foundations) program ceased operations in July 2016. In order to use the vacated beds and space, Mental Health’s Adolescent Center for Treatment program—which has provided substance use disorder treatment to teens for more than 25 years — moved to the Youth and Family Services Center in Olathe.

This collaboration increased capacity at the Adolescent Center for Treatment (ACT), reduced the waiting list for services and ensured the long-term viability of adolescent treatment services in the county.

ACT is a 30-bed residential facility for adolescents experiencing problems because of substance use disorder. The treatment philosophy at ACT is centered around the belief that chemical dependence is a primary disease that is progressive, chronic and if, left untreated, potentially fatal. The philosophy of the Mental Health Center is that all clients have the ability to learn, change and grow.

“The program is designed to help youths dealing with problems associated with their substance use disorder and to develop a better understanding of the consequences of continued use of alcohol and other drugs,” said ACT program manager Kevin Kufeldt. “The child gets a chance to make new choices, improve life-coping skills and learn how to avoid drug use.”

Eligibility:

• 12 to 18 years old
• Alcohol and drug assessment indicates need for residential treatment
• Capable of self-care, not major medical or psychiatric care
• Voluntary participation

Clients are housed in semi-private rooms where staff are on-call 24/7. Staff includes clinicians, case managers, certified teachers, a nurse, direct care staff and access to medical services. Program staff is composed of licensed clinicians and youth care advisors and provides teens with a safe, trauma informed environment to begin their recovery.

Youth care advisors are corrections staff who play an interactive role and help support the youths’ goals. “These staff members serve as positive role models and mentors to our clients,” said Ted Jester, director of juvenile services.

ACT’s treatment goals:

• Identify the benefits of a clean and sober lifestyle
• Improve family relationships, academic performance and legal issues impacted by substance use
• Address co-occurring mental health concerns
• Develop an individualized recovery plan

The residential program is intended for a 28-day stay. Any variance in the length of stay is based upon a review of individual needs and progress in treatment by the clinical staff. The ACT is a co-ed facility and is closely supervised by staff 24/7. Common areas and hallways are equipped with video surveillance cameras to ensure the security and safety of teens during their stay.

During the course of treatment, teens receive information about the psychological and physiological effects and health risks of alcohol/drug use. They participate in individual, group and family counseling, as well as 12-step education/meetings and attend relapse and recovery counseling groups.

“Studies show that family involvement has increased the likelihood of continued success in recovery upon returning to their home environment,” Kufeldt said.

The ACT family program is designed to help participating family members understand more about substance use disorders and how to support recovery.

During their stay, the teens participate in educational pursuits, Monday through Friday, when school is in session. Those who have not graduated or obtained their GED are enrolled through the Olathe School District. Upon discharge, the grades or credits are transferred to the school designated by the child’s parent or guardian.

The clients also participate in a variety of fitness and recreational activities, including yoga, bowling, volleyball and basketball.

ACT also implements Positive Behavior Support (PBS), a set of research-based strategies to increase the quality of life for clients and decrease problem behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person’s environment.

Upon completion of residential treatment, clients are encouraged to establish a strong network of support resources to assist them during the challenging days, weeks and months ahead.

For further information, to make a referral or schedule a confidential assessment, contact ACT at 913-826-4200.
The ‘bluff’ at Big Bull Creek

by GERALD HAY

The historic Battle of Bull Creek in Johnson County wasn’t much of a battle.

It was more likely the historic “bluff” at Bull Creek that occurred 162 years ago.

With the upcoming opening phase one of Big Bull Creek Park, the exact location of the Battle of Bull Creek remains elusive in relation to the new park located in the southwest corner of Johnson County between Gardner and Edgerton.

According to Johnson County Museum, the Battle of Bull Creek took place on or near the property of Richard McCamish, located just east of the Lanesfield Historic Site, 18745 South Dillie Road, Edgerton, and maybe a half mile from the northern-most edge of Big Bull Creek Park.

The pre-Civil War “battle” occurred less than a year after the county was created Aug. 25 by the Legislative Act of 1855 in the then Kansas Territory.

Heading into 1856, the Kansas Territory was in the thick of what became known as “Bleeding Kansas” from 1854-1861. The issue was whether Kansas would be admitted to the Union as a free state or as a slave state, like neighboring Missouri.

The Battle of Bull Creek occurred on Sept. 1, 1856, when roughly 1,600 pro-slavery fighters were staying on McCamish land. According to the museum, McCamish operated a dry goods store and hotel for Santa Fe Trail traders near the Bull Creek crossing. He was well known as a Southern sympathizer.

The skirmish involved a confrontation of a few hundred men in a volunteer militia commanded by James Henry Lane — a veteran in the Mexican-American War; a new settler living outside of Lawrence in 1855; and a leader and advocate of the free state movement.

Although his militia was hugely outnumbered at the Battle of Bull Creek, Lane was a skilled tactician. From a distance, he positioned his men for a military deception.

Lane marched his troops around in a circle over the hill so the bushwhackers believed a large army was about to attack.

Legend of the battle claims Lane and his men chased the bushwhackers off without firing a shot, no bloodshed and no casualties on either side. The Missourians retreated 30 miles to Westport before stopping. McCamish fled the scene as well.

In 1858, the town of Lanesfield was established by William Gans and named in honor of Lane’s victory at the Battle of Bull Creek and his anti-slavery leadership.

Kansas entered the Union as the 34th state, a free state, on Jan. 29, 1861.

Lane was elected one of the first U.S. senators from Kansas. Soon after the Civil War began on April 12, the safety of the nation’s capital and President Abraham Lincoln seemed vulnerable to a possible takeover by southern sympathizers. There was no Secret Service at the time or large military presence at the start of the war to protect the president and the city.

Lane was appointed a brigadier general and on April 14 formed the “Frontier Guard,” a volunteer militia of approximately 120 Kansas men. The unit protected the White House and President Lincoln until May 3 when Union troops arrived to safeguard Washington, D.C. Following the end of the war in 1865, Lane was re-elected to the U.S. Senate. He died a year later at age 52.

In 1870, the new town of Martinsburg, renamed Edgerton in 1871, was created with the arrival of the railroad. While Edgerton continued to grow and prosper as a railroad town, Lanesfield vanished as a frontier community.

As a final, lasting tribute, Lane County was named in the honor of General/Senator Lane when the county in western Kansas was created in 1886.

The last remnant of Lane’s namesake as a bygone community is the limestone, one-room Lanesfield School House, a historic site managed by Johnson County Museum. The school, which was built in 1869 and closed in 1963, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

The Lanesfield Historic Site features seven interpretive panels, including information about Bleeding Kansas, the Battle of Bull Creek and Lane as general and senator.

The historic site is open from 1 to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday or by appointment Monday through Thursday by calling 913-715-2570 (requires one week notice). Admission is free during public hours and $2 per person for non-public hour tours.
What do YOU do for fun?

My JCPRD Activities Catalog
The catalog not only has a new look, but a new mission - to point you to our newly updated and improved website as your primary source of information about our programs, events, and all things JCPRD.

JCPRD Summer Camp Guide
Fine & performing arts, nature, science, leadership, and more... over 60 awesome camp choices for kids ages three to 18.

JCPKD.com
Check out the new site, sign up for our mailing list, register, explore, and so much more!

Pick up your Summer Camp Guide and the new May - August My JCPRD Activities catalog at any JCPRD facility or Johnson County Library.
Johnson County Government produces The Best Times, a bimonthly publication that is mailed without charge to county residents who are 60 years and older. The publication aims to provide articles that inform, challenge, support, entertain and persuade older county residents.

In September 1982, The Best Times began as a pilot program funded through a grant from the Older Americans Act and the state of Kansas. Later, The Best Times, at the time a newspaper, became a regular publication by the county’s Human Services Department. It is currently published monthly by the county’s Public Information Office; it pre-dates this publication, JoCo Magazine, by more than a decade.

The publication contains a wealth of information for the county’s older adult population along with their families and caregivers.

In each magazine, award-winning writer Gerald Hay provides a column entitled “The Editor’s View.” The publication provides social information — a calendar of classes and events at local community centers, libraries and other facilities. In just the past year, The Best Times has also provided articles on a range of topics such as:

- Veterans Treatment Court, a program that can place veterans in treatment and court supervision as an alternative to jail.
- Tips for preventing falls, strategies to help maintain older adults’ quality of life.
- Granny Flats, housing options for multiple generations of families to share property.
- Heat stress and older adults staying safe during hot summer weather.
- Korean War Veterans honored in November 2017 ceremony with Ambassador for Peace medals presented by representatives from the Republic of Korea.
- Protecting yourself or loved ones from elder abuse and elder abuse hotline information.
- And much more.

Current and previous issues of The Best Times are available online at jocogov.org/thebesttimes.

Subscriptions are available for $20 annually (to cover printing and mailing costs) for those who do not qualify to receive the magazine (ages 59 or younger). If you are interested in receiving The Best Times by mail, please call 913-715-8930.
At JCCC, we have a national reputation for a reason. Smaller class sizes, more resources and a thriving campus culture set us apart. Our competitive tuition rates and extracurricular experiences transcend the norm. All of this and more allows us to create one-of-a-kind educational experiences that put tomorrow within reach.

Discover all that makes JCCC a household name. Visit jccc.edu today.
Eilert delivers 2018 State of the County address

by AUSTIN FALLEY

Chairman Ed Eilert’s message during the March 27 State of the County address was clear — the state of Johnson County is strong and its future is bright. He highlighted that USA Today recently ranked Johnson County, Kansas, as the 23rd best county in the nation to live — that’s in the top 1 percent of the nation’s more than 3,000 counties.

His speech, delivered at the Ritz Charles in Overland Park, focused on job growth, the county’s commitment to entrepreneurship, and the educational and training opportunities available locally. Eilert provided updates on new and ongoing county capital and infrastructure projects including new parks and libraries, a new courthouse, medical examiner facility and wastewater treatment facility, along with recent achievements.

Eilert highlighted advancement opportunities available at area high schools and Johnson County Community College and through entities such as Workforce Partnership, the Enterprise Center of Johnson County and the Women’s Business Center. “The opportunities to train or retrain are available here at home,” he said. “You can gain a marketable skill in Johnson County.”

The address also recognized the important work done by the county’s Human Services Department, Developmental Supports and Mental Health Center to serve vulnerable populations. In 2017, the Mental Health Center’s 24/7 crisis line received more than 21,000 calls, responding to crises and helping at-risk residents.

His remarks closed with reaffirmation of the importance of educational opportunities to enhance and maintain communities and as a pathway to success.

“The history of our community shows that progress has never been optional,” Eilert said. “Time after time, our residents have demonstrated their belief in — and support for — programs that will build an outstanding community. Let me assure you that the state of our country is strong and our future is bright.”

To view the state of the county address, go online to jocogov.org/article/2018/03/27/9795.
Take Me Home is a free service proudly offered to county residents by the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office. The Take Me Home program, established in 2011, is a database maintained by the Communications Division. It is only accessible to law enforcement personnel and includes a picture, disability information, physical description, emergency contact information and a map of enrolled individuals.

Any child or adult who may have difficulty communicating due to a developmental or cognitive disability (especially in situations of elopement, becoming lost or in an emergency), can enroll in the Take Me Home program. Some residents have a risk for wandering, including, for example, people with disabilities such as Alzheimer’s, autism, dementia, Down syndrome, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and more.

The Sheriff’s Office recently ramped up the promotion of this free program to Johnson County citizens. Deputy Dylan Hurt, administrator for the Take Me Home program, increased outreach to special interest groups such as Alzheimer’s Association, Autism Society of the Heartland and the Down Syndrome Guild to bring more awareness to wandering and prevention. Deputy Hurt has also implemented an online registration option and recently introduced free window clings that families and caregivers of special needs persons in Johnson County can pick up to display on cars and homes. These clings were designed to alert first responders that the individual they are contacting could be non-verbal due to disability.

It is the hope of the Sheriff’s Office that these can provide peace of mind to families and minimize the stress involved in an emergency situation by better preparing first responders when they interact with a loved one or client.

For more information on the Take Me Home program, please visit jocosheriff.org, under “How Do I...” select “Sign Up for the Take Me Home program.” To pick up a free window cling, please visit one of these four locations:
- Communications Division: 11880 S. Sunset Dr., Olathe, KS
- Johnson County Justice Annex: 588 E. Santa Fe St., Olathe, KS
- Johnson County Courthouse: 100 N. Kansas Ave., Olathe, KS
- Sheriff’s Office Operations Building: 27747 W. 159th St., New Century, KS

Storm drains lead directly to creeks and streams

Clean water starts at home

Compost yard waste or dispose using curbside service. Don’t dump in ditches or waterways.

Check car for leaks. Recycle motor oil. Never pour it on the ground or into a storm drain.

Reduce pesticides use. Most issues resolve themselves.

Direct downspouts onto lawns and away from paved surfaces.

Direct mower clippings back onto the lawn, keeping them off paved surfaces.

Follow directions on product labels. Sweep chemicals off driveways, sidewalks, and roads so they don’t get into storm drains.

Pick up after your pet. Don’t let pet waste wash into storm drains.

Never put anything into storm drains... only rain goes down the drain!

for more information contact johnson.k-state.edu | 913.715.7000

Art concept originally created by Tennessee State University’s WaterWorks program and funded in part with Tennessee Dept. of Ag, Nonpoint Source Program, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
Three Questions for three employees of Johnson County Government

Kris Hoffman has been with the county for 34 years. He ensures that building systems operate properly and provides customer service to user departments while being a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars.

I like that every day is different. I am able to be creative with a lot of different people who collaborate to achieve end results. However, I get a lot of credit for work others do.

Johnson County gave me an opportunity that I was looking for as a young man. Their investment in me has created a trust that goes beyond monetary gains. They let me be me.

What do you like most about your job?

My favorite part of my job is creating and designing solutions to solve space and work flow issues. I really enjoy space planning, figuring out the puzzle to make everything fit and work to meet my client’s needs. A project is most rewarding when the solution is not only aesthetically pleasing but also allows the users to be more efficient and productive in how they work.

Why do you like working for Johnson County?

I enjoy processing financials, but my favorite part of the job is working with other county staff both in my department and others.

The best part of working for a county government is the job stability and benefits.

If you could have any other job in the county, what would it be?

Honestly, I think I would have been a good park ranger. I love nature and animals!

I actually really like being a part of the Facilities’ Planning, Design and Construction team because of the collaborative nature of this group and the dynamic with how we all work together. I don’t think I would choose another job in the county because I really like where I’m at!

I really can’t think of another position that I would prefer. I like what I do and the people I work with every day.

Tara Lewis has been with the county for six months. She provides project planning and management for any interior projects for the buildings she manages, including furniture reconfigurations, new furniture, fixture and finish selections, existing building remodels, and new construction.

My favorite part of my job is creating and designing solutions to solve space and work flow issues. I really enjoy space planning, figuring out the puzzle to make everything fit and work to meet my client’s needs. A project is most rewarding when the solution is not only aesthetically pleasing but also allows the users to be more efficient and productive in how they work.

I really enjoy the team that I’m working with. Everyone is willing to help when I have questions (and I’m still pretty new, so there are a lot of questions!) but it’s also fun to be around.

Why do you like working for Johnson County?

I enjoy processing financials, but my favorite part of the job is working with other county staff both in my department and others.

The best part of working for a county government is the job stability and benefits.

If you could have any other job in the county, what would it be?

Honestly, I think I would have been a good park ranger. I love nature and animals!

I actually really like being a part of the Facilities’ Planning, Design and Construction team because of the collaborative nature of this group and the dynamic with how we all work together. I don’t think I would choose another job in the county because I really like where I’m at!

I really can’t think of another position that I would prefer. I like what I do and the people I work with every day.

Cathy Luckey provides administrative support and has been with the county for 25 years. She processes accounts payables and receivables, assigns safety training to staff, backs up in the mailroom and performs miscellaneous administrative duties.

I enjoy processing financials, but my favorite part of the job is working with other county staff both in my department and others.

The best part of working for a county government is the job stability and benefits.

If you could have any other job in the county, what would it be?

Honestly, I think I would have been a good park ranger. I love nature and animals!

I really can’t think of another position that I would prefer. I like what I do and the people I work with every day.
May is National Bike Month. It’s a great time to get out, enjoy the improving weather and get some exercise by yourself or with your family, neighbors or friends. So strap on your safety helmet and check your tire pressure because here are 10 biking ideas.

1. Enjoy Johnson County Park & Recreation District streamway trails with your family or friends, including Kill Creek Streamway Park in Olathe that consists of two separate segments of paved, shared-use trail totaling a little less than seven miles.

2. In Johnson County, there are more than 412 miles of hiking, jogging and bike trails for residents to enjoy!

3. Get the group together to traverse the 3.5 mile trail at Coffee Creek Streamway Park in Overland Park that runs from Heritage Park east to 169th Street and Switzer Road.

4. National Bike to School Day is Wednesday, May 9. Check with your child’s school to see if they have any biking activities planned.

5. And for adults and parents, National Bike to Work Day is Friday, May 18. Hit the road to the office — on two wheels.


   Fixed-route RideKC buses can carry your bike, allowing you to get across Johnson County and to other parts of the metro for work or play. Visit ridekc.org/rider-guide/bike-n-bus for more information.

7. Attend BikeWalkKC’s Women-Only Confident City Cycling course in May. Register online at bikewalkkc.org/events

8. Leave the car in the garage. Take a short ride to your local store — two miles or less — either bike or walk to the location.

9. The ability to walk and bicycle safely is an important life skill. Any time you encourage your children to walk and bike you should also include safety information. In order for children to adopt new skills, be sure you provide them with supervised practice time and repeat the important safety messages.

10. Visit Walk Bike to School on Facebook at facebook.com/walkbiketoschoolday
Where do my property taxes go?

State statute requires Johnson County Government to collect property taxes on behalf of all taxing districts in the county (cities and townships, school districts, libraries, Park & Recreation District, the state of Kansas and more). The county’s portion of the tax collected is approximately 15 percent for the general county budget, and the remainder is distributed to other taxing districts.

For the 2018 fiscal year, the county reduced its mill levy by one-quarter mill.

Here is a current breakdown of how property taxes are divided among taxing districts:

- **School districts**: 56.4%
- **Cities/townships**: 16.3%
- **County**: 15.2%
- **Special districts**: 2.3%
- **Libraries**: 2.5%
- **Park & Recreation District**: 2.5%
- **State of Kansas**: 1.2%
- **Special assessments**: 3.6%

* Special assessments cover expenses such as new streets, curbs and gutters, mowing charges and sewers.

** Special districts include funds distributed to cemeteries, drainage, fire and recreation districts in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Join Johnson County on social media:
- facebook.com/jocogov
- youtube — jocogov
- twitter.com/jocogov
- instagram.com/jocogov