K-9 UNIT: FINDING DRUGS, ENSURING SAFETY

TWO PUBLIC SAFETY PRIORITIES:
NEW COURTHOUSE
NEW CORONER FACILITY
Public to vote on two Johnson County public safety priorities: new courthouse and coroner facility

Keeping Johnson Countians safe has long been a priority for both residents and leaders in Johnson County. A county crime lab and detention center were recently built. A new county courthouse and coroner facility are the final major projects in this ongoing effort to make and keep the community safe.

The concerns about safety within the current courthouse have been growing since 2001. Numerous studies have shown problems with the building that have become significantly worse over time. The biggest safety concerns are keeping victims and the public safe while inside the courthouse, since the accused must use the same hallways and overall space as the general public. Jurors are often in close proximity to defendants in the courtroom and during jury deliberations in rooms adjacent to where an accused individual is held. Intimidation of victims in these close quarters is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid.

The aging facility has a number of other remaining challenges, despite millions of dollars in improvements. These include the need for significant and costly structural repairs, newer technology in courtrooms to assist jurors in seeing and hearing the evidence presented, and significant changes to make the building accessible for people on crutches, using walkers or in wheelchairs.

The facility has undergone many expansions and updates over the years, but the basic layout and functionality of the building remains unsuitable for the needs of the growing population. Approximately 400,000 people come to the courthouse each year to serve on juries, get marriage licenses, finalize adoptions and other family issues, and face alleged wrongdoers. When the building was constructed in 1952, approximately 63,000 residents lived in the county. With today’s population of more than 675,000 and growth projections of 10,000 people annually, the courthouse no longer meets the public safety needs of the community.

The second public safety priority for the county is a coroner facility, which the county currently does not have. Johnson County leases space in a forensics lab in Wyandotte County. A new facility would allow the county to comply with anticipated accreditation standards.

Technology has advanced greatly in recent years, however, the leased coroner facility does not have an isolated room to prevent cross contamination of evidence, nor does it have real-time data reporting, which could help more quickly identify a public health crisis such as the spread of a contagious disease like Ebola.

Some lawsuits aren’t being conducted due to the limitations that come with the current courthouse, and this means information is missing that might come from an autopsy to help county prosecutors identify crimes such as elder abuse or trends in fatal drug usage before it becomes a significant community issue. Our residents place a high value on public safety in our community, telling us over and over in surveys that it’s one of the many reasons they live in Johnson County. Voters will be asked to determine the fate of these two public safety priorities at the polls on Nov. 8.

Ed Eilert
Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

Hannes Zacharias
County Manager


Ways to engage with JoCo
Visit jacogov.org to:
• Find your County Commissioner
• Get answers to questions
• Learn about the more than 400 services Johnson County provides to residents.

Social media
Twitter: @jocogov
Facebook: facebook.com/jocogov
Pinterest: https://pinterest.com/jocogov

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

In person
Attend a weekly Board of County Commissioners meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Thursdays on the third floor of the Administration Building, 115 S. Cherry St., Olathe, KS 66061.

Spring 2016  •  Volume 3  •  Issue 2
JoCo Magazine, a publication produced by Johnson County Government, is mailed to every resident in Johnson County, Kansas, three times per year.
Mission: JoCo Magazine is dedicated to publishing stories that inform residents about county services and finances, as well as issues that may impact the quality of life.

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Johnson County Elected Officials
Eric Schultz, Chairman
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Steven C. Kilka, District 3
Jason Osterhaus, District 4
Michael Ashcroft, District 5
John Toplikar, District 6
Stephen M. Howe, District Attorney
Frank Deming, Sheriff

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In short

Talk, Read, Play

Several cities and school districts joined Johnson County Government, Johnson County Library and United Community Services of Johnson County in April to build awareness for “Talk, Read, Play.” This campaign, created by The Family Conservancy, a local nonprofit organization, encourages parents, caregivers and teachers to talk, read and play with their children every day.

A joint news conference at Johnson County Community College’s Hiersteiner Child Development Center in April announced the united effort and launched a month-long book drive that collected books for children up to age five at four Johnson County Library branches.

Why wait in line?

Renewing the registration for your vehicle online or by mail prevents you from paying an additional $5 fee. Even if you wait until the end of the month, your printed or electronic webtags receipt serves as proof of registration for ten days following your registration expiration date. More information is available at jocogov.org.

Kudos!

The Mid-America Regional Council recognized Johnson County as a gold-level Solar Ready Community. Johnson County has made solar an easier choice in the county through installation and providing solar training as a part of our Contractor Licensing Program.

Speaking of the Contractor Licensing Program...it received the COSA 2016 Community Guardian Award. The award recognizes Johnson County’s Contractor Licensing Program for its commitment to carbon monoxide (CO) safety practices.

A brief glimpse into what’s going on at Johnson County Government

Free soil tests

Johnson County homeowners are eligible for a free soil test thanks to a grant provided by Johnson County Stormwater Management. Johnson County K-State Research and Extension offers the free tests (valued at $12 each) which analyze soil’s pH, phosphorus and potassium levels.

Bring or mail your soil sample to the Johnson County Extension office at 11811 S. Sunset Drive, Suite 1500, Olathe, KS 66061. For more information, please visit johnson.k-state.edu or call 913-715-7000.

“As I begin my sixth year as County Chairman, I have never been more optimistic about our future. We are fortunate to live in one of the nation’s best places to raise a family, obtain an education, earn a living and build a business.”

— Chairman Ed Eilert, State of the County address on March 22

quoteable

What does it cost to run Johnson County Government?

The Johnson County Government fiscal year 2016 budget at a glance

Fight the bite to prevent Zika, West Nile this summer

The following actions will help protect you and your family:

• Prevent mosquito bites by wearing long sleeves and pants and using an EPA-registered insect repellent.
• Mosquito-proof your home and wear insect repellent, according to the Department of Health and Environment.
• Men with a pregnant sex partner who live in or traveled to an area with Zika should use condoms, the right way, every time during all types of sex or abstain from sexual activity for the duration of the pregnancy. See a health care provider if you develop a fever, rash, red eyes or joint pain during a trip or within two weeks after traveling to a Zika infected area, or if you’ve had sexual contact with someone who has traveled to an infected area.

The proposed 2017 (FY) budget will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners on June 2. The BOCC will review the proposed budget; receive fiscal funding requests from departments and agencies, and make necessary changes before the budget is adopted on Aug. 3.


WEB EXTRA

Find definitions for the budget categories at jocogov.org/JcCoMag.
“It’s completely uncomfortable. It’s scary. It’s nothing you want to go through, especially after everything you’ve already gone through. Being nervous about him walking by you is just awful.”

This is an account from a crime victim (name omitted for privacy) whom the Johnson County Courthouse’s Office of Victim Services works to protect. The office makes sure that inmates are shackled and handcuffed at all times during transport, intimidation still occurs.

“I’ve had a number of jurors, after trial, indicate that based on the current configuration of the courthouse, they felt extremely uncomfortable having to have contact with so many dangerous individuals,” said Johnson County District Attorney Steve Howe.

In the 2016 Citizens Survey, 95 percent of participants said it was very important or important to protect the general public from criminals when inside the courthouse. That input is one of the reasons many think it’s time for a new courthouse — one of the cornerstones of a community’s public safety system.

Making a courtroom safer and more secure

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners is considering building a new courthouse across the street from the current location in downtown Olathe, pending approval of funding. The design of the new courthouse would house criminal and civil courts on separate floors and the layout of each floor would keep inmates and attackers away from jurors and crime victims.

The new courthouse would further protect the 400,000 visitors who pass through its doors each year. The current courthouse is positioned very close to the street, making it vulnerable to terrorism and other possible safety threats. A new courthouse would be built further from the street and, like other government buildings constructed after 9/11, would be constructed from blast-protective materials on the lower floors.

A decaying, overcrowded building

Built in 1952, the courthouse has gone through three additions and more than seven significant remodels. It was originally built to house most government departments, but through the decades the county has moved as many departments out as possible to ease the ongoing issue of crowded courtrooms.

“In the early 1950s, Johnson County’s population was just under 63,000. Today we’re at 750,000, and by 2025 we’ll have 700,000 residents,” said County Manager Hannes Zacharias.

“We’ve converted conference rooms into courtrooms. We’ve moved our office out of the courthouse. We can be simply out of room and knowing what a priority our residents place on public safety, the prudent thing to do is to solve the problem today.”

In addition to being overcrowded, the Johnson County Courthouse is not aging well. The structure suffers from crumbling and cracked walls and windows that can’t keep out cold air and rainwater. The building’s plumbing, heating and cooling systems need significant repairs. Outdated technology is also a serious issue.

“There’s three of our 23 courtrooms utilize modern audio visual equipment that provides judges and juries with the necessary technology to consider evidence and conduct a fair trial,” says Tim Mulcahy, director of Justice Information Management for Johnson County.

Making the courthouse accessible ADA compliant

A recent study shows that it will take millions of dollars to bring the courthouse up to basic standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This act protects individuals in wheelchairs or people who have other disabilities.

“If the vote fails, it will cost $216 million to massively renovate the existing building and build a new four-story addition necessary to bring the courthouse to 28 courtrooms. The higher price tag will not fully address:

1. Safety and security (inmate movement in the same public areas as victims, jurors and the public)
2. Crowded courtrooms, placement of jurors and inmates in close proximity and lack of private meeting space for clients and attorneys
3. Accessibility/ADA compliance

“If the difference between $218 million for a new courthouse and $216 million to renovate and add on to the current structure isn’t convincing enough, take into account the financial difference when you look ahead 20 years,” says Brad Reinhardt, director, Johnson County Facilities Management.

“When we forecast interest on debt, capital replacement costs and operating expenses for the two options, building a new courthouse will save taxpayers $161 million.”

A coroner facility for Johnson County

Johnson County is not as well-equipped as it could be to respond quickly to emerging crime trends — an important activity in providing public safety — because the county doesn’t have its own coroner facility. Many Johnson County residents may be surprised to know that all autopsies for the county are conducted at a privately-owned forensics lab in Wyandotte County.

The county isn’t able to prioritize its county’s autopsies and needs more capacity as the county continues to grow.

Part of the proposed quarter-cent public safety sales tax to sunset in 10 years includes $19 million to fund Johnson County’s own coroner facility. The planned location is on the same campus as the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office Criminalistics Laboratory in Olathe, which would allow investigators from both facilities to collaborate as efficiently as possible.

A new facility would improve public safety by creating a quicker county response to emerging crime trends. It would also include a forensics pathology lab and on-site toxicology screening — capabilities the current location lacks.

“Technology in the forensics science area is allowing minute, trace DNA evidence to be located at a crime scene, so it’s important to have a coroner facility that can handle that same level of technology,” said District Attorney Steve Howe. “Our current facility does not have that capability, and that can jeopardize integrity in the criminal justice system.”

“You need an isolated room to do the autopsies and you have to make sure there is no air flowing into that room that could cause contamination,” said Dr. Robert Prosser, Johnson County’s coroner for the past 18 years. “Our current facility does not allow for that.”

Another benefit of a new coroner facility is real-time data reporting that can help the county manage potential public health issues. “A coroner facility will allow us to enhance our ability to identify emerging death or disease trends in our community,” said Lougene Marsh, director, Johnson County Department of Health and Environment.

JoCo public safety priorities: new courthouse and coroner facility

By JODY HANSON and ERIC SCHULTZ

The new courthouse minimizes long-term cost to taxpayers — $278M versus $439M over next 20 years (compared to on-going, ad-hoc approach for the existing building).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Courthouse Costs</th>
<th>Existing Courthouse and Expansion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$278 million</td>
<td>$439 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>$93 million</td>
<td>$40 million</td>
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<td>$59 million*</td>
<td>$90 million</td>
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<td>$182 million</td>
<td>$216 million</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Beginning 2021, following building completion

Interest on debt

Operating expenses

Capital Replacement

Program costs

Internet on debt

Capital costs

WEB EXTRA

For videos, photos, FAQs and additional information about the courthouse, visit jocogov.org/courthouse.
**1950s All-Electric House on the move**

Historic house gets new home inside the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center

By GERALD HAY

The historic 1950s All-Electric House, a fixture at Johnson County Museum for 22 years in Shawnee, has completed its slow move through three cities to its new perch in Overland Park.

The brown ranch house, built in 1953, was the second item of the museum’s collection to be relocated to the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center now under construction in the former King Louie building at 8788 Metcalf Avenue.

It was the second time in its history that the house has been moved. Originally located in Prairie Village, the museum attraction once served as a demonstration and model showhouse for Kansas City Power and Light Company.

**About the 1950s All-Electric House**

According to Johnson County Museum Director Mindi Love, close to 62,000 people trooped through the house in 1954, when the county’s total population was 62,783. A modern marvel at the time, this house made quite an impact, as anxious consumers checked out the latest innovations — its electric heat pump that provided air-conditioning, large-screen TV behind a slide-away seascape painting, remote controlled lighting systems and curtain openers and ubiquitous electrical sockets.

“This house was called the ‘Lazy Man’s Paradise’ when it was built. There were a lot of electrical features and gadgetry that was not typical at the time,” said Love.

The house was donated and moved in 1994 to the Johnson Country Museum complex at 6305 Lackman Road.

**Ready to roll**

Moving the 60-ton, 2,150 square foot house down sections of Lackman Road, Shawnee Mission Parkway and Metcalf Avenue was a monumental job performed by Patton House and Building Movers, Inc. and managed by McCownGordon Construction.

When loaded on steel beams and dollies, the 84-foot-by-32-foot house had a height of approximately 25 feet from ground to rooftop, requiring the raising of some power lines, temporarily removing traffic signals and trimming a few tree limbs as it passed.

A motorcade of police and utility vehicles accompanied the house during its journey. Law enforcement officers from the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office and police personnel from Overland Park, Shawnee, Merriam and Mission provided security, traffic control and public safety of many onlookers watching from curbs, business parking lots and intersections as the house slowly rolled down the roadway.

**Home sweet home**

The house survived the move to its new permanent location without any mishaps — and in half of the expected time. Initially, movers anticipated the relocation from Shawnee to Overland Park would take up to 10 hours at a speed of 3–5 mph, but the move actually took about five and a half hours. The early arrival at its new location was attributed to teamwork, fewer technical issues than expected and the ability to reach a maximum speed of 11 mph.

“Everything went smoothly. In a word, it could not have gone better,” Brad Reinhardt, director of Johnson County Facilities Management, said. “It was because of great partnerships, requiring extensive planning, coordinating the actual move, and involving all partners from the cities, law enforcement, county staff, utility crews and movers. It was outstanding teamwork from beginning to end.”

The 1950s All-Electric House is now located inside the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center, protecting it from the weather and allowing greater access for all museum visitors to tour the historic attraction. The house will serve as the cornerstone of a new signature exhibition being designed to tell the Johnson County story.

The Johnson County Museum Foundation purchased the large neon White Haven Motor Lodge sign, a Metcalf Avenue icon for more than half a century, and it became the first item of the museum’s collection to be installed inside the former King Louie building.

The museum will remain open at its current location on Lackman Road in Shawnee until Sept. 3, then it will close until the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center opens in spring/summer 2017.

**WEB EXTRA** Visit jocogov.org/housemove to watch a video that shows the house move from April 12 – 13.
Two friends open the door to the local Latina community

By LORI SAND

Mary Estrada and Mary Lou Jaramillo have a lot in common. Both women are civic-minded professionals with a penchant for nonprofit work. And being of Hispanic descent, they individually noticed that many times they were the only Latina at a meeting or event in Johnson County. But it wasn’t until the long-time friends both had Johnson County addresses that they decided there might be something they could do about the seeming lack of Latina representation at business meetings.

Founding the Johnson County Latina Leadership Network

“We co-founded the Johnson County Latina Leadership Network in the hope of bringing awareness to area Hispanic women of the many opportunities there are to become actively involved in the community,” Estrada explained. “Because there are different government structures not only between Kansas City, Missouri, and Johnson County, but between Wyandotte and Johnson counties, we decided to direct our focus here.”

The Johnson County Latina Leadership Network members gather every other month in different venues. They are about 65 women currently on the group invitation distribution list, but the group’s leadership hopes to grow that number to 100.

“The portrait of the membership is quite diverse,” noted Jaramillo. “While the majority of the women are professionals, some are retired. We have attorneys, business owners, some work at nonprofits, a real estate agent, a translator, a graphic designer, a librarian, an interior designer, a principal and two women of different countries.”

“We’ve got members from Peru, Argentina and Bolivia. Why, at one meeting, we had women here from seven different countries.”

“These women are all ages and levels of education,” Jaramillo said. “But the group is for women only who live in Johnson County.”

Learning and growing together

The women’s reasons for joining the group are just as varied as their backgrounds. Some are looking for a social and cultural connection, others are interested in business networking, and some are interested in nonprofit work, civic or political issues. The friends hesitate to define the focus of the group. “It’s up to the membership,” Jaramillo said. “We don’t want to prescribe the direction.”

The Johnson County Latina Leadership Network is a non-partisan group that hears presentations from a variety of civic groups and community leaders, such as the League of Women Voters, Mainstream Coalition, County Manager Hannah Zacharias, Deputy County Manager Penny Postoak Ferguson and Mary Birch, the government relations coordinator at Lathrop & Gage L.C., who spoke about civic opportunities.

“I just think it’s important for our population to know what is out there in terms of community involvement,” Estrada said.

“Our history of working in nonprofits revealed to me that in general, many of our fellow citizens have a perception of the Hispanic population as being primarily first generation immigrants who need a lot of assistance. But we are a whole other population with so much to offer our community based on our experiences.”

The members have all found their way to the network by word-of-mouth, with a common thread running throughout the group in one way or another.

Some discovered they have been involved in the same organization, their grandchildren are in the same activities, they’ve worked in similar environments.

“It’s that surprise connection that I find exciting,” Jaramillo said.

The women are clearly energized about opening doors and sharing among the group. “We’re learning of other Hispanic women who are involved in a variety of ways. We’re meeting civic leaders, political leaders and other people of influence in our community,” said Estrada, who recently completed the Johnson County Citizens Academy program.

The group has a Facebook page, Johnson County Latina Leadership Network, where interested women may contact either Estrada or Jaramillo to get more information.

Mary Estrada (left) and Mary Lou Jaramillo (right).

Vote “yes” to serving your community

By AMANDA KELLER

The Johnson County Election Office is gearing up for two major upcoming elections — the Primary Election on Aug. 2 and the General Election Nov. 8.

Election workers needed

It takes a lot of people working together to make an election go smoothly; in our county it takes about 2,000 election workers, in addition to Election Office staff. The Election Office currently has about half the number of election workers it needs signed up to help with the quickly approaching Primary Election.

Would you consider serving your community as an election worker?

“Working the polls on Election Day is a terrific way to feel connected to the democratic process, serve the community and meet new people. It even comes with a small paycheck,” said Election Commissioner Ronnie Metsker.

Many people don’t realize that election workers receive a stipend. Each election worker receives compensation of $135, which includes $110 for working a full Election Day (typically 6 a.m. to just after 7 p.m. when the polls close) and $25 for a mandatory three-hour training session prior to Election Day.

Election workers perform a variety of tasks at the polling locations, including greeting voters, assisting them at the registration table, accompanying each voter to a voting machine, verifying voter receipt information, collecting voter cards and issuing “I Voted” stickers.

To serve as an election worker, you must meet the following qualifications:

• Resident of Johnson County, Kansas
• Registered to vote at current address
• Able to provide Social Security Card and government issued photo identification prior to assignment
• Available for the full Election Day and required training


More opportunities for young adults

Prior to this year, each polling place was only allowed one student worker who could be age 16 or 17. The recently revised law now allows up to one-third of election workers at any given polling location to be students.

Students working elections may be only 16 or 17 as long as the time they work is service hours, depending on the organization’s guidelines. Student workers must submit a letter of recommendation to qualify.

The student application is available online at http://bit.ly/jocostudentworker.

Two advance voting locations added

The Election Office is excited to offer voters two additional advance voting locations this year, bringing the total number of advance voting sites up to six.

By offering additional advance voting sites, election staff hopes to get more than half of all voters in the county to advance vote. In 2000, the county has averaged about 40 percent of voters voting in advance in presidential election years, with the most being 48 percent in 2008.

There are many advantages to advance voting, including: a shorter wait than on Election Day, picking the date and time that works best for you during a two-week window, selecting an advance voting site rather than going to your assigned polling location on Election Day.

Voting by mail-in ballot is another way to vote on your own schedule. Visit jocoelection.org for more information.
Sheriff’s K-9 Unit helps keep our community safe

By GERALD HAY

Bono, Nora and Marko are helping the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office take a bite out of crime locally. They are the four-legged members of the Sheriff’s Office’s K-9 Unit. All three — two Belgian Malinois and one German Shepherd — are used to collar illegal drug activities. Since the unit was formed a decade ago, canines have sniffed out more than $350,000 in suspected drug money and over 900 pounds of illegal drugs.

The K-9 Unit is an important part of the Sheriff’s Office in its proactive role against the war on drugs by incorporating theSheriff’s Office in its proactive role. The K-9 Unit has found numerous other small amounts of drugs over the years. The largest case involving drug money was the discovery of $335,000 by Ace about to go for a ride after working hard.

The Sheriff’s Office formed the unit because the canines’ sight and smell abilities are far greater than humans, which is especially helpful in drug searches and investigations. All three dogs are trained to detect marijuana, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine (meth).

The K-9 Unit has deployed hundreds of times over the years. Its assignments have included looking for narcotics at vehicle stops or in high school lockers. The dogs have also been used for routine drug sweeps in Johnson County’s detention centers, both adult and juvenile, and Community Corrections facilities.

Bono and Marko, both males, joined the Sheriff’s Office in mid-2015, becoming the second generation of dogs to the unit. They replaced Figo and Ace, who had eight years and nine and a half years of service respectively before retiring. Figo passed away in 2014; Ace joined him last year.

During his time with the Sheriff’s Office, Ace found a total of 785 pounds of marijuana. Figo located 126 pounds of marijuana, 28 pounds of meth and five pounds of cocaine in various searches. The K-9 Unit has found numerous other small amounts of drugs over the years.

The largest case involving drug money was the discovery of $335,000 by Ace at a traffic stop. Nora, the only female dog in the current canine trio, located approximately $30,000 in drug cash in a semi-trailer truck under the sleeper. “They hit on drug odors on the money,” Bernhardt said.

Whether detecting cash or narcotics, Bernhardt explains that a “hit,” or an alert by the dogs, can provide enough probable cause for police investigators to obtain warrants to search for evidence and make arrests.

The K-9 team (dog and handler) works eight-hour shifts. They patrol in specially equipped Sheriff’s vehicles with equipment needed to transport canines in addition to its standard patrol gear.

The canines’ ears usually perk up whenever the patrol vehicle stops, signaling they are getting out to stretch their legs or work. After spending a lot of their time in the rear of the vehicle, they are eager for every opportunity.

After completing their investigative duties, the dogs are rewarded with either a tennis ball, Kong ball or just the friendly tone of their handler’s voice. Like most dogs, they love to play and chew whenever they can.

The K-9 Unit has a stockpile of rewards on hand in a large trash bin filled with tennis balls donated by local schools.

When off-duty, the dogs are kept in outside kennels at their dog handlers’ homes. While the handlers develop close relationships with the dogs, they do not consider the dogs family pets or treat them as such.

Each canine has its own unique personality. Bono and Marko, the Belgian Malinois breed, are dogs with high energy and all work with little play. Both are friendly to their handlers and their families, but not so much with other people.

Conversely, Nora, the only German shepherd, is good natured and mild mannered almost all the time to nearly everyone. As the most people-friendly among the trio, she does most of the public appearances, such as visiting local schools. Nora joined the unit seven years ago.

“She has tons and tons of energy. She’s as wild as they come,” Turner said with a smile. “She likes to work, but she’s the biggest teddy bear. She’ll knock you over to play with her.”

The canines’ ears usually perk up whenever the patrol vehicle stops, signaling they are getting out to stretch their legs or work. After spending a lot of their time in the rear of the vehicle, they are eager for every opportunity.

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When off-duty, the dogs are kept in outside kennels at their dog handlers’ homes. While the handlers develop close relationships with the dogs, they do not consider the dogs family pets or treat them as such.

Each canine has its own unique personality. Bono and Marko, the Belgian Malinois breed, are dogs with high energy and all work with little play. Both are friendly to their handlers and their families, but not so much with other people.

Conversely, Nora, the only German shepherd, is good natured and mild mannered almost all the time to nearly everyone. As the most people-friendly among the trio, she does most of the public appearances, such as visiting local schools. Nora joined the unit seven years ago.

“She has tons and tons of energy. She’s as wild as they come,” Turner said with a smile. “She likes to work, but she’s the biggest teddy bear. She’ll knock you over to play with her.”

The canines’ ears usually perk up whenever the patrol vehicle stops, signaling they are getting out to stretch their legs or work. After spending a lot of their time in the rear of the vehicle, they are eager for every opportunity.

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Citizen satisfaction in Johnson County

Johnson County recently received the results of its citizens engagement survey completed by more than 1,500 residents (more than 220 from each of the county’s six districts). The survey shows the highest satisfaction with the county since 2009. Johnson County continues to have above-average satisfaction levels compared to peer communities across the country (exceeding populations of 250,000 residents). Here is a snapshot of a few recent results:

- **Perception of Johnson County as A PLACE TO LIVE**: 97%
- **OVERALL FEELING OF SAFETY in Johnson County**: 91%
- **QUALITY OF LIFE in Johnson County**: 94%

Of respondents said it is very important or important to protect the general public from criminals when inside the courthouse. 87% said it was very important or important that a new, improved courthouse should have improved security for victims. 85% said it was very important or important that a new courthouse should have improved security for jurors.

See jocogov.org/JoCoMag for full survey results and jocogov.org/courthouse for more information about the courthouse project.

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JoCo Appraiser’s Office documenting all properties

By LORI SAND

When Johnson County homeowners receive their property tax assessments next November, they can be assured that the appraisal of their property is based upon the most accurate information available. Kansas law requires counties to update property information every six years.

The Johnson County Appraiser’s Office has hired Tyler Technologies, Inc. to capture detailed, high-resolution street level photographs of every property in the county’s exterior. The photographs are taken from public right-of-way whenever possible. The images are used to create land record information that is a part of the appraisal process and are instrumental in maintaining accurate data on every parcel in the county.

“Correct up-to-date property information is crucial to ensuring fair and equitable property values as well as making the appraisal process more efficient,” said Johnson County Appraiser Paul Welcome. “This project will provide high-quality photos of every house, commercial building, gazebo — every structure with value — on approximately 187,000 parcels of land.”

The information gathered will improve the overall quality of the county’s real estate data and will save taxpayers money by making the property tax administration process more efficient. Other agencies will also benefit from the imagery; for example, the photos will be available for emergency management recovery in the event that reports need to be filed for state and federal assistance. The information will also be used to verify property addresses to identify homes for fire, police and medical emergency response.

Tyler Technologies, Inc. began the project in early January and is expected to complete the project in the fall. Photos cannot be taken when trees are covered with leaves, as they obstruct the view of many structures. The customized white vans are clearly marked with signs indicating they are conducting an imaging and address verification project for Johnson County. All imaging crew members have photo identification badges that must be visible at all times. Local law enforcement are aware of the van descriptions and their locations.

The Johnson County Appraiser’s Office posts the areas completed and in progress at jocogov.org/countypropertyphotoproject so residents can see if the vans are in their area. Anyone with questions may call the county Appraiser’s Office at 913-715-9000.

ENJOY a leisurely landscape?

Native plants can:
- Reduce the need for mowing, fertilizers and pesticides.
- Require less water = saving you money on water bills = and reduce erosion.
- Improve air quality and promote pollination.
- Reduce pollution in local streams and rivers.

Learn more at marc.org/water

Van with crew taking photos of Johnson County properties.
At work with the Board of County Commissioners by AMANDA KELLER

Among its many duties, the Board of County Commissioners is, ex officio, the Board of Election Canvassers. As such, it is required to review, or “canvass,” and certify the results of elections conducted in the county.

While unofficial election results are made public as soon as results are available, the Election Day results are not considered official until the canvass takes place the Monday following a given election.

During the canvass meeting, the Board of Canvassers determines the validity of any provisional or challenged ballots. Provisional ballots include situations when a voter’s registration is in question or when records indicate the voter was already sent an advance ballot. Provisional ballots are sealed in special envelopes at the polls and must be individually researched and verified at the Election Office prior to presenting them to the Board of Canvassers.

Following the processing of the valid ballots, the Board of Canvassers certifies the official vote summary as the final official election results. Canvass meetings occur at the Election Office (2101 E. Kansas City Rd., Olathe) and are open to the public. The 2016 primary election canvass will take place Aug. 8 at 9 a.m. and the fall general election canvass will occur Nov. 14 at 9 a.m.

Suffering From SCIATICA PAIN?

A Breakthrough FDA-Approved Non-Surgical, Drug-Free Pain Treatment Is Here!

By Dr. Michael Green, D.C. Sciatica is often characterized by one or a combination of the following symptoms:

- Constant pain in one side of the buttock or leg
- Pain worse when sitting
- Pain that is often described as burning, tingling or searing (vs. a dull ache)
- Weakness, numbness or difficulty moving the leg or foot
- A sharp pain that may make it difficult to stand up or to walk

Specific sciatica symptoms can be different in location and severity, depending upon the cause of the sciatica.

Non-Surgical Treatments

The goals of non-surgical Sciatica treatment are to relieve pain and any neurological symptoms caused by a compressed nerve root by treating the cause. Now, there is a proven non-surgical treatment for Sciatica: CoreCare™ by Renova.

With our Sciatica Evaluation, we can diagnose the problem and set up a treatment plan to correct it. For most patients, Sciatica pain will heal within a few weeks.

For a limited time, we are offering our Sciatica Evaluation for only $39! In this Evaluation, you will receive:

- An in-depth consultation about your Sciatica.
- A complete nerve, muscle and spinal exam, including a full set of digital x-rays
- If needed, to diagnose the cause of your Sciatica.
- A thorough analysis of your exam and x-ray findings so I can show you how to fix the problem.
- I’ll answer all your questions about our treatment programs.

Sitting - I have tried chiropractic, massage therapy, injections or surgery may not have worked for you in the past as they don’t treat the cause of the pain.

For more information or to schedule a consultation, call us at 913-815-8608 by May 31st to take advantage of this special offer.

Let us know you’d like to come in for the Sciatica Evaluation. We can get started with your initial consultation, examination and digital x-rays as soon as there’s an opening in the schedule.

Call us at 913-815-8608 by May 31st between the hours of 8am and 5pm Monday through Friday to schedule an appointment.

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Two Treatments Included with Exam

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Pain ADVERTISEMENT DR. MICHAEL GREEN, D.C., CLINIC DIRECTOR

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Renuva Back & Pain Centers

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When you call 9-1-1 to have a Johnson County MED-ACT ambulance respond to your house for an emergency, it’s common to be in a stressful state of mind, making it difficult to remember facts and figures, as well as medications you or a family member are taking or a list of allergies. There’s a way you can prepare for such an emergency situation in advance by filling out a File of Life for every member of your household.

Available for download at jocogov.org/medact, the File of Life form includes areas to write down important, even life-saving, information such as:

- Emergency contacts
- Medical conditions
- Allergies
- Prescription medications
- Preferred hospitals
- Allergies
- Prescription medications
- Preferred hospitals

“We recommend you fill out this medical-history document for everyone in the home and keep it somewhere easy to access, such as on your refrigerator,” says Angela Fera, Johnson County MED-ACT public information officer. “The more a paramedic knows about your current health situation, the better he or she can treat you, armed with important and life-saving knowledge.”

For more information on the File of Life or other Johnson County MED-ACT education programs, please call 913-715-1950 or visit jocogov.org/medact.

Tips for avoiding scams

By GERALD HAY

P.T. Barnum has long been quoted as once saying: “There’s a sucker born every minute.” Whether or not he actually said that remains in dispute decades later, but attempts to be swindled by a con artist, sharpie, smoothie or flimflammer remains timeless.

Scams come in many forms throughout the year in Johnson County. They have one thing in common — the demand for money. It is the job of the Sheriff’s Office and the Johnson County District Attorney’s Office to help protect older adults who appear as easy marks for a variety of illegal schemes.

Lt. Douglas Bedford of the Investigations Division at the Sheriff’s Office offers a hint: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is just that — too good to be true.

Door-to-door solicitation scams

As the weather turns warmer, the District Attorney’s Office and Sheriff’s Office routinely see an increase in scam artists and opportunity seekers attempting to take advantage of local residents. Home repair scams increase during the warm spring and summer months, particularly regarding tree trimming, driveway paving and roofing jobs.

“Residents are advised to be cautious about individuals who come to their door offering services, particularly when those services are being offered at some discount or special rate,” Assistant District Attorney Emilie Burdette said. “Affirmatively contacting local, reputable businesses for needed services cuts down on the risk of being taken advantage of by transient, unlicensed and unscrupulous contractors.”

Bogus door-to-door solicitations for the sale of items such as magazines and cleaning products or for charitable donations also become more frequent during this time of year.

“The District Attorney’s Office has taken action against several organizations purporting to raise funds for local charities, sports teams or other organizations when in fact the individuals have no ties to the area and no intention of providing the donations to the represented organizations,” Burdette said.

“Residents are encouraged to place ‘no soliciting’ signs at their residences and to report any suspicious door-to-door sales activity to the DA’s Consumer Protection Division at 913-715-3003.”

In addition, residents can obtain valuable information from:

- Scam Detector iPhone app provides more than 500 of the most popular scams in the world, see scam-detector.com.
- Johnson County District Attorney’s Office, Consumer Protection Unit, da.jocogov.org.
- Better Business Bureau of Kansas City, bbb.org/kansascity.
- Kansas Attorney General’s Office, ag ks.gov/file-a-complaint.

IRS impersonation scams

The Sheriff’s Office has also received multiple reports of scam phone calls from subjects identifying themselves as members of the Internal Revenue Service. Aggressive and threatening phone calls by bogus IRS agents are part of the annual “Dirty Dozen” list by the IRS of 2016 tax scams with con scam artists threatening police arrest, court action, deportation, license revocation and other actions.

Residents are advised that if they received a call from someone claiming to be from the IRS, they should go to treasury.gov/tigta and click on the red “IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting” button. You will answer a series of questions that will help direct you to the correct IRS investigator.

Residentst may also report fraud to the Sheriff’s Dispatch at 913-782-0720.

For more information on consumer protection and scams, see scam-detector.com.

Spring 2016

Johnson County Clin-Trials (J CCT) is looking for healthy adults ages 18-80, to participate in a research study.

Qualified participants may receive up to $2,000 for time and travel.

This study requires 5 overnight stays and 1 outpatient visit.

(913) 825-4400
WWW.JCCT.COM
Native American heritage is all around us in JoCo

By GERALD HAY

Reminders of the Native American legacy are abundant in Johnson County. School districts and buildings, streets, neighborhoods and cities are adorned with dozens of tribal names, Indian words and famous chiefs or their spouses. 

City names with Native American roots
The most popular tribal name in Johnson County is Shawnee, as the county was created on reservation land once belonging to the Shawnee tribe.

The city of Shawnee had three name changes in its history, beginning with Gum Springs then later Shawneetown and finally shortened to Shawnee in honor of the Indian tribe.

Chief Charles Bluejacket, a historically important Shawnee Indian chief, Methodist minister, prosperous farmer and land owner, served as the official interpreter in treaty negotiations between the tribe and the federal government.

In Shawnee’s Herman Laird Park, a life-size bronze statue depicting Bluejacket with two of his 23 children memorializes the historic figure. The Shawnee Indian Cemetery, also known as Bluejacket Cemetery, is located near 95th Terrace and Nieman Road. The city of Shawnee also has Bluejacket Street, which touches parts of Lenexa and various stretches of Overland Park, along with Bluejacket-Flint Elementary School.

Another statue honors the namesake of Lenexa. The city’s name is derived from the name Shawnee Chief Thomas Blackhoof’s wife, who was officially recorded in census records as Na-Nex-Se and Len-Ag-See. There’s a statue of the city’s namesake outside Lenexa City Hall. A small park in her name can be found at 83rd Terrace and Lackman Road. Black Hoof Park is located at 9053 Monticello Road (research reveals both Blackhoof and Black Hoof as the spelling of the chief’s name).

Olathe, too, has a historic connection to Native Americans, derived from a Shawnee word understood to mean “beautiful.” The city’s history includes Chief Black Bob, a chief of the Hathawekela division of the Shawnee tribe and head of the Black Bob Reservation, or Black Bob Reserve. Black Bob Park, Black Bob Road and Black Bob Elementary School all honor him.

Native Americans have left their mark in other words, deeds and history. The word “Indian” is used in several school names, along with a few streets and subdivisions. For instance, Indian Creek snakes through part of Johnson County. 

Native American history in Johnson County
The legacy started in the 1820s and 1830s when several Native American tribes were relocated to the designated “Indian Territory” west of the newly-formed state of Missouri. The Shawnee tribe of Ohio and Missouri joined the migration in 1825 with a treaty setting aside 1.6 million acres in what would become Eastern Kansas, including Johnson County and stretching to Topeka.

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The Act in 1854, opening up the new territories for settlement after a wind people” or “people of the wind.”

The Shawnee’s long history in Johnson County
Shawnee left Kansas for new land in the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), while others took an offer of 200 acres to each Shawnee “man, woman and child” and built their homes in Johnson County among the new white settlers.

Shawnee Indian Chief Charles Tucker and his wife, Mary, were among the members of his tribe to remain and farm in Johnson County, accepting the lifestyle of new settlers.

While Bluejacket, Tucker and other chiefs accepted changes encouraged by missionaries and allotment treaties, Chief Black

Protecting our most precious resource

By DENNIS PATTON

Have you ever stopped to think about grass clippings once they’re cut? Yes, they can be a pain. But did you know about their effect on the water we drink?

Establishing themselves along the banks of the Kansas River and nearby creeks, including Bull and Mill creeks, the Shawnees were skillful traders, hunters and farmers. They also produced the first newspaper in the Indian Territory and in Kansas before statehood.

The first printing press was established by Baptist missionary Jotham Meeker and used an alphabet for the Shawnee language and built their homes in Johnson County 

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The county collects common household chemicals for safe disposal from residents for free. Drop off your items by making an appointment at jocogov.org.

1. **Latex paint.** The program recycles thousands of gallons of latex paint every year. Re-blended, quality paint is available to purchase at discount prices in five gallon buckets.

2. **Automotive products,** such as antifreeze, motor oil, brake fluid, batteries and gasoline are all recycled.

3. **Stain, varnish and wood sealer.** All woodworking products are collected and either used as an industrial fuel or distributed through the FREE store, where residents can shop at no cost.

4. **Lawn and garden products** such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and even banned pesticides such as DDT and Chlordane are safely disposed and kept out of our environment.

5. **Aerosol cans.** Whether it’s paint, cleaners or pesticides, all aerosol cans are collected for recycling.

6. **Flammable liquids** such as paint thinner, acetone and other solvents, are bulked by county staff and sent to be used as a fuel source.

7. **Cleaning products,** whether they’re for your kitchen counters, bathroom or even cleaning concrete, can be reused.

8. **Compact fluorescent light bulbs** (the spiral ones) and tubes are safely recycled.

9. **Electronic waste.** Second Saturdays ONLY, you can make an appointment to recycle any electronic item with a power cord or battery (fees apply for televisions only).

10. **Caulk, adhesive, grout, wallpaper remover, joint compound, tires, pool chemicals, propane cylinders and more!** Visit jocogov.org for a complete list of accepted items.

Resident can shop for all these items at the **FREE store!** Products only slightly used and in good condition are redistributed to the public free of charge. No appointment is necessary to shop.

**WEB EXTRA**

For a video and more information about the Household Hazardous Waste program, visit jocogov.org/JoCoMag.
Did You Know?
One out of every four college-bound Johnson County seniors attend JCCC.

Call 913-498-9360 or visit jccc.edu/college-bound to learn more.