Johnson County is a local government located in northeast Kansas that was organized on Sept. 7, 1857. Johnson County Government serves a diverse and expanding population through five agencies and 34 county departments. More than 3,800 public servants are dedicated to helping Johnson County remain a safe, vibrant community.

Our leadership philosophy — what we believe about people, motivation, work, trust and creativity. This affects the way we choose to lead and manage:

“Leadership is a responsibility shared by all. We trust and empower each other to do the right thing for the right reason for the public good. Committed to our shared values, we provide excellent public service, seeking always to improve our organization and ourselves. Together we will leave our community better than we found it.”
— County Manager Hannes Zacharias

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We’re excited to present the 2015 Johnson County Annual Report, which highlights our most important projects, programs and initiatives that ensures Johnson County is a Community of Opportunity for all, now and in the future.

This is an overview of our community, a picture of our county budget and how tax dollars are spent, and a portfolio of the stories about how Johnson County serves our growing population of more than 580,000 people.

It’s easy to take life in Johnson County for granted until we stop for a moment to consider how truly fortunate we are. We live, work, learn and play in a community where nine out of ten residents rank our county as a great place to live and raise a family (that’s a 96 percent satisfaction rate compared to the national average of 83 percent). Residents take great pride in our services, awarding high rankings to our beautiful parks, our 13 library branches and our MED-ACT service, just to name a few. In addition, our county sheriff’s office helps to keep a safe community for our residents and visitors, and our residents reported a satisfaction rating of 96 percent for feeling safe in their neighborhoods, 6 percent higher than the national average.

The strong economic picture in Johnson County is another good reason to be proud of our community. We live in a county that boasts the lowest property tax (mill levy) in all of Kansas. At the same time, Johnson County enjoys a low unemployment rate (2.9 percent, which is lower than the Kansas City metro, the state and the nation). More than 31,500 jobs were created in Johnson County from 2011 to 2014, accounting for nearly half the job growth in Kansas, and, in 2015, we accounted for about 55 percent of job creation statewide.

The sound decisions, collective vision and wise investments in our parks, libraries and vital infrastructure will sustain the exceptional quality of life our residents enjoy today and for future generations.

As you can see, there are many reasons to celebrate life in Johnson County. The credit goes to our schools, businesses, local governments, community organizations and our residents who have worked hard and are dedicated to ensuring that Johnson County is such a great community.

Our overarching goal each year is to make sure that what we do truly makes a difference in our community and to serve as an open and accessible government for our residents. It is with a great deal of pride we present the 2015 Annual Report, highlighting our accomplishments, showcasing our many services and programs and celebrating another significant year of progress in our Community of Opportunity.

On behalf of all of Johnson County Government employees, we are grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve you.

Ed Eilert
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

Hannes Zacharias
County Manager
From the largest to the smallest, numbers create an interesting tale about people, places and things in Johnson County, Kansas.

It’s the most populous county in Kansas with more than 580,159 residents. Estimate based on 2015 U.S. Census Bureau

Johnson County has 4 of 10 of the largest cities in Kansas.

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>City</th>
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<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Overland Park</td>
<td>186,515</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Olathe</td>
<td>134,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Shawnee</td>
<td>65,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>Lenexa</td>
<td>52,490</td>
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Estimate based on 2015 U.S. Census Bureau

Johnson County is 477 square miles.

That’s about 302,963 acres with approximately 59% of land incorporated into city limits of the 20 cities in the county.

In case you didn’t know — Johnson County is a great place to live, learn, work and play!

Here’s Johnson County, Kansas @ a glance:

We have 181,824 residences, including single-family homes, multi-family units, condominiums, townhouses and farmsteads.

The county has 3,518 miles of city streets.

In Johnson County, there are 23 aviation facilities, including airports and heliports.

Across the county, there are 44 fire stations and 18 law enforcement stations.

The county has an extensive network of medical facilities, including numerous surgical centers, urgent care facilities and 8 hospitals.

Johnson County is home to Six great public school districts:
- Blue Valley Schools (#229),
- De Soto Schools (#232),
- Gardner-Edgerton Schools (#231),
- Olathe Public Schools (#233),
- Shawnee Mission Schools (#512) and
- Spring Hill Schools (#230).

Total enrollment for the 2015–2016 school year was more than 95,600 students.
The median household income in Johnson County is $75,015.

In the county, there are 571 farms, totaling 99,354 acres, and 52% of the farms have less than 50 acres.

The average travel time to work is 21 minutes.

There are more than 336,000 workers in Johnson County, and more than 22,000 private-sector jobs.

Low unemployment rate of 2.9%.

In a nation of 3,144 counties — including 11 others named Johnson County, there’s still only one Johnson County, Kansas.

Johnson County is home to about 1,220 restaurants and eateries.

The county is home to 10 museums and 123 historical sites.

Throughout Johnson County, there are 74 hotels, motels and extended-stay facilities.

Johnson County has 455 miles of hiking, jogging and bike trails.

Johnson County has 255 miles of bike lanes, including 159 miles of shared roadways.

Across the county, residents can enjoy 27 swimming pools, beaches and aquatic centers.

There are 298 shopping centers — including 182 strip malls!

There are more than 336,000 workers in Johnson County, and more than 22,000 private-sector jobs.

Low unemployment rate of 2.9%.

Across the county, there are 163 public school and 49 private school buildings.

In the county, there are four colleges, including Johnson County Community College which had a Fall 2015 enrollment of 19,091 with more than 10,000 full-time equivalent students.

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The county is home to 10 museums and 123 historical sites.

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The average travel time to work is 21 minutes.
Budget and Financial Planning

Without the work of the Budget and Financial Planning Department (BFP), no other county department or agency would be able to provide programs or services to the residents of Johnson County. The department crafts, implements and maintains the county’s annual operating budget.

The BFP staff spends several months working with each of the county’s departments, agencies and offices to determine budgetary needs for the upcoming year. The department works hand in hand with the county manager to build the proposed budget that ultimately is approved by the Board of County Commissioners and determines all spending and revenue for the next year. These responsibilities include maintaining the county’s Capital Improvement Plan and Capital Replacement Program.

Maintaining the county’s “Triple AAA” bond rating

BFP is responsible for issuance of the county’s debt to fund some of its capital projects. Thanks to the staff’s watchful eye on such conditions as spending and reserve levels, Johnson County Government consistently earns a “Triple AAA” bond rating.

So, when Johnson County Government issues general obligation bonds (a way to borrow money to pay for major construction or renovation projects), the county earns an AAA “stable” credit rating, the highest rating possible, from the three most important bond rating agencies: Standard & Poor’s, Moody’s Investor Services and Fitch Ratings. The ratings are important since they allow Johnson County Government to get the most competitive interest rates when issuing debt, saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

The financial landscape in 2015

Johnson County’s financial outlook entered a second year of improvement following the Great Recession. In 2015, the real property assessed value in Johnson County was up 6.78 percent over the prior year. The average sales price for homes was up 4.6 percent. Requests for permits were strong for single-family homes, multi-family housing units and new construction of office, retail and industrial buildings.

The county’s local economy also outpaced the state and the nation in 2015. The unemployment rate at the end of 2015 was 2.9 percent. This is exceptional when compared to the Kansas jobless rate of 3.5 percent, the Kansas City region rate of 3.9 percent and the national unemployment rate of 5.5 percent. At the end of 2015, Johnson County was home to more than 22,000 businesses employing more than 336,000 workers.

What’s ahead in 2016?

In 2015, BFP played an integral role in positioning Johnson County for the future with the implementation of a 3.3 mill levy increase for Johnson County Park & Recreation District (JCRPD), Johnson County Library (JCL) and Johnson County Transit, while simultaneously maintaining current county operations and keeping Johnson County at the lowest mill levy in the state.

The 2016 increase of 3.3 mills breaks out as follows:

- 1.622 mills to maintain current service levels.
- A 0.75 mill levy increase implementation of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District Legacy Plan
  JCRPD’s 15-year strategic master plan will open previously acquired park land for public use, develop approximately 30 miles of new streamway trails and make improvements to existing parks.
- A 0.75 mill levy increase for implementation of the Johnson County Library Comprehensive Master Plan
  A 20-year comprehensive master plan includes building a new branch in western Shawnee, relocating the Lackman Branch in Lenexa, modernizing other branches and helping fund future improvements in southern Johnson County as the population increases.
- A 0.178 mill levy increase for expansion of paratransit options includes a new taxi voucher system, increased opportunities for seniors and those with special transportation needs and the addition of job connector routes to major Johnson County employment centers.
The FY 2015 budget $696.1 million. By strategic group, this is how county expenditures break down:

**FY 2015 Expenditures**

- **Public Safety:** $213.5 million
- **Infrastructure:** $216 million
- **Health and Human Services:** $93.7 million
- **Support Services:** $81.7 million
- **Culture & Recreation:** $71.5 million
- **Records and Taxation:** $18.6 million
- **Debt Services:** $1.1 million
- **Use of assets:** $8.2 million
- **Intergovernmental:** $59.4 million
- **Miscellaneous:** $59.9 million

**FY 2015 Revenues**

- **Property taxes:** $180 million
- **Sales and other taxes:** $99.7 million
- **Wastewater:** $97.3 million
- **Charges for services:** $92.1 million
- **Transfers:** $83.3 million
- **Use of assets:** $8.2 million
- **Carryover:** $16.2 million

County government took in revenue of $696.1 million that balances with county expenditures (below).
Johnson County Government

a high performance organization, a different kind of government

Johnson County Government has always valued public leadership and its pursuit of the highest levels of performance. In 2010, to remain consistent with those values, county leaders embarked upon a challenging journey with a commitment to making Johnson County a different kind of government and building around the principles of a High or Higher Performance Organization (HPO). Those principles have been championed for 30 years by the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service through its highly acclaimed and successful LEAD (Leading, Educating and Developing) and SEI (Senior Executive Institute) programs.

The HPO principles were previously practiced in many parts of Johnson County Government. Although they were not actively used over the last decade, they were present in a number of county departments and agencies. In early 2011, a group of county employees, at the urging of county management, began exploring ways to revive and expand upon those public leadership principles, to empower county employees and engender a culture of continuous improvement. In August 2011, county management, county officials and county agency and department directors came together to form a County Leadership Team for the purpose of learning and implementing the principles of an HPO.

Over the next two years, the county leadership team met monthly to study and practice the key concepts of high performing organizations, and all directors attended a LEAD or SEI program at the University of Virginia. A Johnson County program, aptly called LEAP (Leadership Empowers All People), was launched in 2012 to teach high performance concepts to employees throughout the organization. The LEAP program was initially presented in a full five-day course, then a three-day version was added, and all sessions are taught exclusively by Johnson County Government employees. Now, just a few years into the effort, thousands of county employees have completed the program and are living the concepts every day in their daily jobs.

As a result of the program, guiding principles were developed, including a leadership philosophy:

Leadership is a responsibility shared by all. We trust and empower each other to do the right thing for the right reason for the public good. Committed to our shared values, we provide excellent public service, seeking always to improve our organization and ourselves. Together we will leave our community better than we found it.

The county also developed a mission statement, vision statement, core values, behavioral values and operational values to help guide the county government in its day-to-day operations. Together, these guiding principles for Johnson County Government are known as our “Pillars of Performance.” More details are available online at jocogov.org/government/about-johnson-county/guiding-principles.

The HPO concept in Johnson County supports the county’s greater purpose of public service, public trust and public leadership which are values founded on the Athenian Oath and serve as a reminder to each employee of his or her role:

We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public’s sense of civic duty. Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this city not only, not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

Within county government, many examples of Pillars of Performance successes have emerged and can be found throughout the organization. Examples of PoP examples are being highlighted in a series of videos online at jocogov.org/program-overview.
Community of Caring

Johnson County offers a wide variety of services to create a community of caring among residents — services that address the wellness of body and mind along with a multitude of other services to protect quality of life for some of the most vulnerable persons in our population. Here is a glimpse at how Johnson County nurtures a Community of Caring.

Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE)  protecting the health and environment, preventing disease and promoting wellness for all who live, work and play in Johnson County — through exceptional public service.

JCDHE strives to be the innovative leader for community health and environmental protection. JCDHE hit the mark in 2015, when the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments named JCDHE the Health Department of the Year.

Last year, the department received national attention when staff completed a large-scale tuberculosis investigation at Olathe Northwest High School that included testing more than 400 students and faculty in three separate clinics. The experience resulted in the creation of “Video Directly Observed Therapy” for TB treatment — the first of its kind in the nation.

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program says Johnson County continues to be a community that offers excellent access to exercise opportunities — a program partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The annual health rankings measure vital health factors in nearly every county in the country and provide a revealing snapshot of how health is influenced on a local level.

The Outreach Nurse Program offers in-home, office or community site visits with new mothers and infants who live in Johnson County. Registered nurses provide physical and social assessments, assistance with blood pressure monitoring, infant weight checks, and education and counseling.

Two partnership efforts in 2015 increased services to clients:

- Conducted 538 phone and door-to-door, in-person interviews to complete a Community Health Assessment using a survey methodology designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in partnership with Shawnee Mission Health.
- Through the Lift Assist Program, in partnership with MED-ACT and the Human Services Department, the senior and disabled population receives additional education and information, as well as referrals to community resources.

In 2015, JCDHE:

- Coordinated the installation of 36 electric vehicles charging stations across six Park and Recreation sites, supporting KCP&L’s regional goal of installing 1,000 electric vehicle charging stations.
- Doubled the produce harvested at the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) garden to 3,175 pounds of food with an estimated retail value of $9,500.
- Worked closely with 28 child care centers to develop healthier nutrition policies.
Johnson County Human Services Department (JCHS)

providing essential human services as a safety net, targeting seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income families, in order to support independence, dignity and self-sufficiency.

Human Services serves as the county’s Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Housing Authority and Outreach Multi-Service Centers. It partners with multiple city governments, utility companies, private companies and local citizens to provide much needed resources.

The Housing Authority formed a partnership with SAFEHOME for transition from temporary supportive housing to permanent housing through the set-aside of 10 housing choice vouchers. More than $10 million in federal, state and local funding received by the Housing Authority goes back into the local economy to private landlords and contractors. Other support of the local economy is demonstrated by the increase in housing choice voucher participants who are employed. The Housing Authority has received the High Performance Rating on the Section 8 Management Assessment Program for 14 consecutive years.

The AAA is Johnson County’s Aging and Disability Resource Center for the state of Kansas, serving more than 10,000 residents with information and assistance. The AAA also prepared for the 2016 co-location of a state health and environment worker to assist with trouble shooting Medicaid eligibility issues.

In 2015, Human Services:

- JCDHE staff perform myriad preventive and regulatory services, ranging from air quality to The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- The county’s adult smoking rate continues to be low. In addition, new e-cigarette policies in Johnson County schools, cities and businesses were considered and/or adopted in 2015.
- For the last several years, the air pollution level has remained consistently lower than the state and national levels.

Provided 263,605 meals for older adults. The nutrition programs began providing breakfasts three days per week.

Assisted 2,217 county households with 114 case management services, 226 utility disconnection preventions, 13 eviction preventions, and 232 food pantry visits each month.

Help improved energy efficiencies to 140 homes across the county at an average cost of $2,376, reducing energy cost by an estimated 17–25%.

Catch-a-Ride provided 2,423 rides. Volunteers increased the Catch-a-Ride capacity by 21%. Catch-A-Ride is a volunteer transportation service that provides rides for older adults, people with disabilities and other adults who have no other means of transportation.

Senior Care Act services assisted 522 residents at an average monthly rate of $200 as opposed to $4,000 for a long term care facility.

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Johnson County Developmental Supports (JCDS)
serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by focusing on individuals’ abilities, providing choice-driven supports and advocating alongside people to live and work in our community.

Since JCDS was first established in 1972, it has grown to serve more than 500 people daily through a broad range of community-based programs and supports. As Johnson County’s Community Developmental Disabilities Organization (CDDO), JCDS provides a single point of entry for those seeking developmental disability (DD) services, eligibility determinations for services, information and referral services, and a network of more than 85 affiliate providers. The agency acquired full licensure from Kansas to provide intellectual and DD services.

JCDS has a seven-member governing board, appointed by the Johnson County Board of Commissioners, that guides the agency. Daily operations are led by an executive director with a staff of more than 300 trained professionals. Programs and services are partially funded on a contractual basis with the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services. Additional funding sources include a county tax levy, state grants, subcontract income and company contracts.

In addition to the residential program, JCDS provides a variety of employment options in the local community, a retirement program, volunteer activities, behavioral health supports and assistance to young adults graduating from high school with a program designed to provide learning opportunities through internships.

Johnson County Mental Health
improving the quality of life for Johnson County residents by providing comprehensive mental health services that are of the highest possible quality and driven by the needs of the person served. Services are provided in the least intrusive manner, easily accessible to all residents and provided in collaboration with community partners.

The Johnson County Mental Health Center offers a wide range of mental health and substance abuse services to residents. It serves as a safety net for individuals with severe forms of mental illness, as well as those who are unable to afford or access care elsewhere in the community.

Despite continued funding reductions by the state, the department improved its overall financial stability in 2015. It used a consolidated medical records unit to realize a financial savings and add efficiencies. Additionally, local municipalities are working together with county government to fund the Johnson County Co-Responders Program that pairs a mental health professional with law enforcement. This program continues to grow with local police departments.

Johnson County Mental Health joined the national Stepping-Up Initiative as one of four pilot counties recognized for the critical role local and state officials play in supporting change. The National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Foundation are leading this unprecedented national initiative to help advance counties’ efforts to reduce the number of adults with mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders in jails.

At JCDS:
• A network of greater than 85 community partners provide quality services to more than 1,600 individuals.
• The residential program provides supports for more than 120 individuals at nearly 50 locations.
• Participants in the JCDS Document Destruction business shredded nearly 25,000 pounds of stored documents for the county’s Department of Records and Tax Administration.

• One in 17 Kansans live with a severe mental illness.

• Johnson County Mental Health implemented a functional family therapy program in collaboration with Juvenile Corrections within the new Youth Residential Center and established a customer care center to improve overall customer service.

• The department also developed and implemented an innovative program in collaboration with JCDS to serve individuals with mental illness and co-occurring intellectual disability.
Community of Culture

Johnson County residents are fortunate to live in a community where cultural events and opportunities abound. The county also offers a variety of cultural opportunities for those who are interested in art and fine art performances. Here's a glimpse of some of the county's offerings.

Johnson County Museum

challenging people to explore the story and heritage of Johnson County, through an exceptional venue, collections, exhibitions and programs.

Securing a new facility for the Johnson County Museum has been a strategic goal since 2006. The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center project and the funding in 2015 to advance the move of the museum.

The museum's holdings currently include more than one million photographs, 18,000 3-D artifacts and 300 cubic feet of archival material. Relocating the museum into the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center (JCAHC) facility (more information in the JCPRD section) will allow more space for an even greater number of exhibits and artifacts, to the benefit of museum patrons.

Many residents have fond memories of the King Louie ice rink, which now houses the 1950s All-Electric House, helping to preserve the house and allowing patrons easier access during inclement weather. In April 2016, the house was moved from the museum in Shawnee to its JCAHC home in Overland Park.

The museum itself will continue operating at its current location at 6305 Lackman Road in Shawnee for most of 2016.

Other highlights in 2015:

- A three-year project reached completion as the museum finalized its conversion to LED light bulbs in the museum galleries, replacing the halogen lights. This will provide more energy-efficient lighting while generating less heat in the galleries and supporting the museum's goal to improve preservation of collections on exhibit.

- The museum secured an in-kind gift from Bright Idea Signs of Overland Park for restoration services of the White Haven Motel neon sign that will be exhibited in the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center. The gift is valued at $15,000.

- The museum is undergoing many changes as the BOCC restructured the department to become a part of the Johnson County Park and Recreation District, effective January 2016.

In 2015, the Johnson County Museum:

Hosted 33,778 visitors to tour its award-winning exhibit What is Modernism? that was on view at the museum from Nov. 20, 2014 through Jan. 30, 2016.

Served 9,115 children and adults in structured programs facilitated by museum staff.

A frequent question — What are you doing with the 1950s All-Electric House?

The house was moved to the future site of the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center and will be an integral part of the museum’s new exhibitions. The new Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center (formerly the King Louie West facility) will undergo renovations in 2016 and open in Spring 2017.

Tour
Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD)

*enhancing the quality of life in Johnson County by providing high-quality parks, services and recreation programs.*

Johnson County residents place a high value on the parks and trails system in their community. According to the 2015 Johnson County Community Survey, residents rank the county’s park and recreation system tied with ambulance/emergency medical services (MED-ACT) as the most important services the county provides.

For more than 60 years, JCPRD has provided high-quality parks, park services and recreational programs to benefit the residents of Johnson County. Each year, JCPRD records more than 7 million visitors to its more than 4,800 acres of parkland and open green space, as well as nearly 1.5 million recreation participations in over 4,000 programs.

In the first year of implementation for the district’s new 15-year Legacy Plan, more than $5 million will be invested in the existing parks and facilities. The streamway trails system will be extended and the phased development of some very remarkable new park acreage will begin.

JCPRD created the Legacy Plan as a framework to provide the district with a clear vision of where it’s headed in the years to come in critical areas such as regional parks, trails and connectivity; recreation and cultural resources, connecting with nature, and stewardship. Two of the priority JCPRD projects currently underway are Big Bull Creek Park and Meadowbrook Park. Through the master plan process, the community provided input on the specific features and amenities it does and does not want in a park property.

**Two parks were dedicated in 2015:**

**Camp Branch Glade** was dedicated with a guided trail walk on National Trails Day in June. Located at 5151 W. 175th Street, the 58-acre park will eventually be connected to two future JCPRD parks — the adjacent 300-acre Camp Branch Park and Camp Branch Streamway Park.

**Stilwell Community Park** was officially opened — two weeks after Camp Branch — with a “Party in the Park” hosted by the Stilwell Community Organization. Located east of Metcalf Avenue on 207th Street, the 55-acre park will eventually become the southern trailhead for the future Camp Branch Streamway Park.

According to an economic benefits study by The Trust for Public Land, the JCPRD’s parks, trails, facilities and programs contribute more than $97 million annually to the regional economy. The study credited the district with contributing to enhanced property values; reducing stormwater and air pollutants; increasing tourism; direct-use benefits; and health care savings.

A local family enjoys the trails at the new Camp Branch Glade, pictured above.
Other arts and cultural uses
The new Johnson County Arts and Heritage Center facility will include space for multiple Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD) programs. The district will offer the community a variety of cultural enrichment opportunities, including arts, crafts, and music and dance classes in the new space.

Residents will delight in new offerings from The Theatre in the Park, which has historically only offered performances during the summer, as the JCAHC will include a 350-seat “black box” theater for use year-round, supplementing The Theatre in the Park’s summer productions at Shawnee Mission Park.

A small part of the building will be dedicated for use as a public space with a fine arts and cultural arts focus — an amenity that community members and leadership have long desired. Residents will also have an opportunity to rent this space for meetings, weddings, receptions and other special events. In addition, the county will host a permanent advance voting location within the JCAHC.

Meadowbrook Country Club and Golf Course
The district, in cooperation with the city of Prairie Village, is currently developing a master plan to convert a portion of the former Meadowbrook Country Club and Golf Course at 9101 Nall Avenue, to an approximately 82-acre park. Residents have been highly engaged in both in-person and online opportunities to offer input on this exciting project. The final draft master plan was approved by the district’s board in December 2015.

Big Bull Creek Park Master Plan
JCPRD began purchasing the land for Big Bull Creek Park, located between Edgerton and Gardner in southeast Johnson County, after voters approved acquisition funding through a special referendum in November of 1998.

The district launched the master planning process for the park that, upon completion, will be the district’s largest regional park. The park’s master plan, including more than 1,900 acres, was completed in Spring 2016, and phased development is planned to begin in 2017.

In 2016, other Legacy Plan implementation projects include the development of the Lexington Lake Park near De Soto and more than $1.3 million of trail design and development in western Olathe. Longer term projects include development of 30 miles of new streamway trails and Cedar Niles Park.

Other highlights in 2015:
• JCPRD received a major land donation from the Arthur and Betty Verhaeghe family of Overland Park that will significantly enhance the streamway trail the district is developing along Coffee Creek in southeast Johnson County. The 42-acre tract, located at about 167th Street and Quivira Road, is slated to become a primary access point for the trail and will include a picnic shelter, a playground with a farm theme and a community garden.
• JCPRD is the only park and recreation agency in the state of Kansas, and one of only 137 agencies...
nationwide, accredited and recognized for excellence in operation and service by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. While an agency must only comply with 36 fundamental standards and 85 percent of an additional 108 standards to be accredited, JCPRD was in compliance with all 144 standards.

Public Art Enhancements

In late 2015, the BOCC authorized Johnson County’s latest public art project, titled “Tapestry” by Kansas City metal sculptor Beth Nybeck, an enhancement to the Justice Annex Building in Olathe.

The sculpture features five aluminum, plant-like sculptures — ranging from 7 to 11 feet in height — on either side of a small curved walkway to be constructed in a small courtyard near the entrance to the Justice Annex. The sculptures feature phrases and sentences with lettering cut out of the surfaces, allowing light and air to pass through the sculpture. The letters, phrases and sentences all reflect messages based on interviews by the artist of a handful of residents or visitors connected to the Justice Annex Building and to its services.

Johnson County has authorized two other public art projects in construction of its facilities since the Public Art Program began in 2007. The Public Art Commission oversees the Public Art Program and recommends art projects for final approval by the BOCC in its role as the Public Building Commission.

The first art project was completed in 2011 by New York City artist Suikang Zhao. His project was incorporated in the main lobby and other parts of the Corrections Department’s Youth and Family Services Center in Olathe.

The second project, “Adaptation,” a kinetic art structure by Kansas City artist Matthew Dehaemers, was dedicated in 2012 at the Johnson County Department of Public Works and Infrastructure complex in Olathe.

All three of the county’s art projects were funded by the Public Art Program that was established by the BOCC for certain Johnson County Government, major capital art projects. The program uses 1 percent of the budget allocated for capital improvements to fund authorized public art projects.

In 2015:

JCPRD attracted more than 7 million visitors.

Kids enrolled in JCPRD summer camps spent more than 420,000 hours in touch with nature and engaged in healthy activities.

Sculpture entitled “Tapestry” was approved by the BOCC in late 2015. It is located at the Justice Annex Building at 588 E. Santa Fe in Olathe.
Community of Learning

The excellent reputation of the community’s secondary schools and institutions of higher learning, public and private education are a point of pride and a hallmark of life in our community. Johnson County Government is a strong academic partner, offering numerous opportunities for educational support and advancement. Here are just a few examples of how Johnson County Government supported a Community of Learning in 2015.

Johnson County Library (JCL)

providing access to ideas, information, experiences and materials that support and enrich people’s lives.

According to the 2015 Johnson County Community Survey, nearly 70 percent of county residents reported visiting a Johnson County Library branch in the past year. Residents rank library services as a top-priority service the county provides.

JCL is looking forward to many exciting projects — the first of which was the anticipated re-opening of the renovated Central Resource Library in January 2016. The Central Resource Library averages more than 1,000 patrons per day, so after nine months of being closed for renovation, many patrons were anxious for the branch to reopen.

This $3.6 million renovation project, launched in March of 2015, included major facilities improvements to the 20-year-old building, such as new carpeting, improved restrooms, a new air conditioning unit, more electric outlets for patrons who bring their own devices, a 12-station training lab, more study rooms and larger conference rooms. JCL’s popular MakerSpace, which supports STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) educational initiatives, increased to 1,700 square feet — six times its previous size — with generous support from the Kauffman Foundation and Black & Veatch.

In addition, a new Friends of the Library used bookstore opened at the Central Resource Library, generating funds to support early childhood literacy and special collection purchases. The bookstore, that has a capacity for more than 8,000 titles, is one of three stores operated by the Friends of the Johnson County Library.

Other highlights in 2015:

JCL partnered with University of Kansas Edwards Campus faculty to produce a monumental return-on-investment study of Johnson County libraries to examine the dollar value of library goods and services. In addition, the Johnson County/KU team conducted broad citizen surveys to determine satisfaction with library services and willingness to support the libraries’ work in the future. The study concluded that JCL enjoys a high approval rate among citizens — even those who don’t directly use the library service — and yields a 300 percent return on the investment of public resources in circulating materials, on-site facilities and services, e-services and e-collections.
**Comprehensive Library Master Plan Implementation**

- **Monticello Branch:** additional library services are needed in the fast-growing area of western Shawnee. The library sought public input in early 2016 and the new branch is expected to open in 2018.

- **Lenexa Branch:** coordination with the city of Lenexa continues about relocation to the new Lenexa Civic Center, as a potential new home for this branch. Anticipated opening for the relocated Lenexa Branch is 2020.

- **Blue Valley Branch in Overland Park:** the growing population in southeastern Johnson County can expect planning to begin soon for expanded library services.

- **Corinth Branch:** planning will begin soon for expanded library services at the aging Corinth Branch in Prairie Village, possibly on the existing site. No timeline is in place yet for this project.

**Johnson County K-State Research and Extension**

The Johnson County K-State Research and Extension office opened in Olathe in 1917. The agency is part of a nationwide system of USDA Cooperative Extension Services and is a branch of Kansas State University. Its educators are “agents” and members of Kansas State University faculty who deliver educational information backed by scientific research from governmental entities and universities across the country. Extension services helps residents apply this information in an unbiased way, without endorsements of products or companies. Extension offers informal, non-credit classes and most of the services are free or low fee.

Extension provides leadership in the county about the spread of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer. Ash is one of the most common trees lining the beautiful streets of Johnson County, and in some parts of Overland Park around 30 percent of all street trees are ash.

More residents are recognizing the growing danger of losing an estimated 4.6 million ash trees in the region. Extension is the source for research-based, factual information to help those with ash trees make wise choices about how to spend their resources when dealing with this destructive pest. They also make recommendations about tree species that do well in the area as replacements for the ash trees. Extension has worked with homes associations, cities and individual homeowners to help address these issues.

**In addition:**

- Johnson County K-State Research and Extension Master Food volunteers have developed a program called 4-Course Living that helps individuals with disabilities discover the importance of nutrition, food safety, meal planning, grocery shopping on a budget and basic meal preparation. Adults with developmental disabilities are more likely to be obese or develop a chronic condition such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease or arthritis. This increases their health care costs, which in some cases, are supported by taxpayer dollars. A grant through ARcare funds the 4-Course Living program. All classes include a hands-on section where the students make a complete, nutritious meal to enjoy with the program volunteers.

  - Extension’s Agriculture and Community Development agent teamed up with the Olathe Latino Commission as part of a steering committee that developed and hosted the first Hispanic Entrepreneurs Expo in 2015. The event drew nearly 250 residents as they learned about resources to help them decide whether to start or grow a business. Speakers focused on marketing, business planning and finance. In addition to K-State Research and Extension, other planning partners included the Olathe Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber, the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation, El Centro, Significant Matter and several local business owners.

**In 2015, JoCo K-State Research and Extension:**

- 904 volunteers contributed 66,182 hours of work!
- This means, at the rate of $23.07 as the national value of volunteer time (Independent Sector), value of time donated to Johnson County KSU Research and Extension exceeds $1.5 million.
Community of Growth

Johnson County is a desired destination for businesses and residents, drawn to the area by its amenities, strong workforce, excellent schools and responsible leadership. As the rooftops shape the county’s panoramic vistas, many services offered by Johnson County Government are critical to help that growth flourish. Take a glance at a few examples of how Johnson County Government operated as a Community of Growth in 2015.

Johnson County Automated Information Mapping System (AIMS) providing open, efficient and enterprise access to spatial data at a reasonable cost to aid stakeholders in making more efficient and effective decisions.

AIMS is a division of the Department of Technology and Innovation in Johnson County Government. Ultimately, data-driven decisions add value to the quality of life that county stakeholders expect. To accomplish this mission, AIMS applies sound Geographic Information Systems (GIS) principles with quality spatial data and effective distribution technologies for local stakeholders.

In 2015, AIMS continued improving spatial data, information accessibility and analytical capabilities.

- AIMS updated planimetric data (building footprints, edge of pavement and vegetation outlines) to reflect features visible on current aerial orthophotography.
- AIMS partnered with local chambers of commerce to identify and promote economic development opportunities in Johnson County, resulting in 12 new data layers each themed more than 10-15 geographies for over 150 new views of additional data layers now available in Online Mapping.
- Location Maps and Information, an easy-to-use tool on the landing page of the county website, continued to grow in use and popularity. A new feature is the “plat chip” for platted properties. This “chip” is the portion of the scanned plat that is specifically related to the parcel of interest. Often times this “chip” provides information regarding building line setbacks and easements making it faster and easier to access information.
- Upgrades to My Resource Connection, an application that connects individuals needing assistance with resources, were completed that enables more data to be integrated and allows sharing of client information between additional authorized county organizations.
- In addition to data and application updates, AIMS participated in initiatives supporting improvement of parcel boundary accuracy and supporting next generation 9-1-1 dispatch preparations.

Use of the AIMS online services exceeded 20 percent annual growth. Online mapping averages more than 50,000 hits per day and 2,500 sessions per day. Annual myAIMS subscription service logins exceeded 100,000 in 2015.
In 2015, property values were up and property sales remained strong. The activity in new construction was sustained. Consequently, property development/redevelopment continued to spur economic growth and development, as indicated by the number of active Industrial Revenue Bonds, Neighborhood Redevelopment Areas and Tax Increment Financing districts.

- The Appraiser’s Office has an updated, robust website with more content for residents to access regarding real estate values. In 2015, information was included on real estate sale prices and information used as comps when valuing property.
- Appraised value changes for 2016 indicate an increase of 93 percent of residential real property and 74.6 percent of commercial real property.

**Johnson County Airport Commission (JCAC)**

*developing and operating a system of air transportation facilities that serve the aviation needs of the region, contribute to the economic vitality and quality of life in Johnson County and integrate with the National Plan for Integrated Airports Systems.*

JCAC operates two air transportation facilities (one in Olathe, one in Gardner) to meet the aviation needs of the region, a water distribution facility, a short-line railroad and a business park that is home to 65 multinational corporations’ facilities. Interest continues to grow in the southwest Johnson County location due to the proximity of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway’s Logistics Park Kansas City intermodal facility in Edgerton.

**In addition:**
- The JCAC is completely self-sufficient, receiving no funding from the county’s General Fund.
- The economic impact of both JCAC airports and the business park is $2.1 billion for Johnson County and the Kansas City region.

**Office of the County Appraiser**

*in accordance with the county’s mission and values, the Appraiser’s Office establishes fair values of real and personal property that meet compliance standards established by the state.*

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**In 2015, the Office of the County Appraiser:**

- Experienced a 2.4% increase in aircraft operations — a total of 101,261 operations between both airports.
- Performed a $2 million upgrade to the JCAC water distribution system.
- Purchased another locomotive for the JCAC rail services.
- Shows total taxable reappraisal growth grew from 4.35 percent in 2014 to 5.15 percent* in 2015.
- Commercial Value re-appraisal grew from 4.14 percent in 2014 to 4.67 percent in 2015*.

*Values from October in each year.
Johnson County Planning, Development and Codes
ensuring coordinated, efficient and safe development for current and future county residents and businesses by providing professional long-range planning; policy and demographic analysis; development plan reviews; zoning and building code enforcement; and construction contractor licensing, education and monitoring.

Within the unincorporated area, rezoning, platting, building permitting and other development-related applications have returned to levels seen prior to “the Great Recession” for residential and nonresidential development. A continued increase in nonresidential development is anticipated — particularly at the New Century AirCenter along with the continued expansion of the nearby BNSF intermodal facility.

For the past three years, the Building Codes Division provided support to the city of Edgerton, including plan reviews and field inspections for six intermodal distribution centers, totaling nearly four million square feet.

The county’s Contractor Licensing Division, established in 2001 with nine local participating jurisdictions and a budget of $80,000, now has a total of 17 participating jurisdictions and a self-funded budget that in 2015, for the first time, exceeded $1 million. Since its inception more than 30 years ago, the Planning Division has processed more than 3,200 zoning and subdivision applications.

• The department initiated establishment of the Southwest Johnson County Coordinating Committee, an ad-hoc group of local and state agencies created to help coordinate development and ensure safe transportation in response to the new BNSF intermodal facility in Edgerton.

• The Codes Division conducted more than 5,350 building inspections and more than 400 fire safety inspections in 2015.

• The Contractor Licensing Division licensed more than 3,400 building contractor companies. The division has been recognized by the International Codes Council as the largest provider of building code education in the United States for its provision of more than 180 classes and distribution in excess of 7,000 building code books and manuals for contractors, architects, engineers and building inspectors.

• The Contractor Licensing Program was chosen as the International Code Council’s first accredited “Preferred Provider Program” and was awarded the “Community Educator and Life Guardian Award” by the Carbon Monoxide Safety Association. (pictured bottom left)
Johnson County Public Works and Infrastructure
planning, developing and implementing the county’s policies, goals and objectives, and providing services that emphasize public service and good stewardship.

The department oversees the annual County Assistance Road System (CARS) program with final review and approval by the Board of County Commissioners. The CARS program was established in 1983 with a goal to construct and maintain major local transportation corridors in partnership with the cities of Johnson County.

The 2015 CARS program totaled almost $13.3 million for 23 new projects in 11 cities, including Edgerton, Fairway, Gardner, Leawood, Lenexa, Olathe, Overland Park, Merriam, Prairie Village, Roeland Park and Shawnee. Funding for the projects ranged from $18,000 to slightly more than $2.8 million.

Projects on the CARS to-do list included widening of some two-lane roadways to four-lane arterial standards, major maintenance and improvements of existing roadways, such as asphalt overlays, curb repairs, storm sewers, sidewalk improvements including ADA-compliant ramps, pavement markings, turn lanes, traffic lights and traffic loops.

Each year, the cities submit a five-year road improvement plan to the county. Using a scoring system, the county annually selects projects, allocates funds and pays up to 50 percent of the project’s construction and inspection costs. Under CARS, cities are responsible for design, right-of-way and utility relocation costs.

In 2015, Public Works also completed key bridge construction projects at 199th Street east of Clare Road, Mission Road north of 175th Street, and 143rd Street east of Edgerton Road.

Johnson County Transit

A two-year interlocal cooperation agreement for transit management and administration between Johnson County and the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) began in February, with 2015 as its transition year. The agreement saved the county $400,000–$500,000, mainly through staff reductions from 11 full-time employees to one. This agreement with KCATA is key to the development of a bistate, regional public transit system.

To further this regional transit connection, Johnson County adopted the new regional brand and logo of “RideKC” that represents the vision for transit Greater Kansas City and is one identity under which all transit services and information can be found. In 2015, several new buses were added and display the RideKC branding. The brand will become more visible as vehicles are added to the fleet.

A $3 day pass went into effect on May 1, 2015, and is accepted region-wide, on all local routes, including those in Johnson County.
Paratransit improvements

The county will better serve seniors and riders with disabilities through greater flexibility of Special Edition, a shared ride program providing affordable curb-to-curb transportation for eligible residents who are 65 or older, disabled or meet income requirements.

Starting in January 2016, Special Edition users were no longer limited to medical appointments if they wished to take the service to parts of Wyandotte or Jackson counties.

Special Edition users also have a new option to purchase affordable taxi vouchers good for trips up to 15 miles each way. These changes greatly increase the flexibility of the Special Edition program to the benefit of its participants by allowing them to schedule trips directly with taxi providers.

Improvement for transportation to work, school and places of commerce

In an effort to create better regional transit connections between residents, employers, retail outlets and major educational institutions, several positive changes are happening to bus service in Johnson County this year. Changes include:

- Improved service linking the Mission Transit Center and existing routes with the KU Medical Center area in Kansas City, Kansas.
- Expanded service into Mission, providing a new link to KU Medical Center.
- Better east-west connections on 95th Street from the state line into Lenexa.
- Improved service in the 75th Street/Metcalf Avenue area to connect Oak Park Mall, Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Johnson County Community College, KU-Edwards Campus and Prairiefire.

Implementation of these transit route improvements is expected in fall 2016.

Johnson County Wastewater (JCW)
protecting our environment, serving our customers, and enhancing our communities.

JCW is responsible for the safe collection, transportation and treatment of wastewater generated by residential, industrial and commercial customers. JCW’s role is to ensure that local streams, rivers and lakes are free from disease-causing bacteria and viruses that are harmful to aquatic life and public health.

In 2015, the department completed three new public sewer projects:

- Blue River No. 15, Contract 3 opens 68 acres for development at roughly 171st Street and Switzer Road.
- Blue River No. 21 is located between Mission and State Line roads from 175th to 195th streets. It covers approximately 1,300 acres, 900 of which are owned by developers.
- Blue River 25 Contract 2 is comprised of approximately 80 acres in south Overland Park, north of the arboretum. The development plan includes 129 residential single-family lots and a Blue Valley School District elementary school. The project was completed ahead of schedule and within budget.
These new areas will be developed primarily as single-family homes. Development and home building is good for the county because it provides construction jobs and generates sales-tax revenue from building materials and furnishings, and increases the county’s real estate tax base.

In May 2015, the Mill Creek Regional Effluent Tunnel in western Shawnee was put into service. All treated wastewater uses gravity to flow from the plant through the 10,000-foot tunnel to the discharge location on the Kansas River. Previously, effluent had been pumped to the discharge location. The tunnel was sized to treat all flows from the watershed.

In 2015, JCW:

- **The county realizes a beneficial reuse of the processed solids material (biosolids) from wastewater treatment. More than two-thirds of the solid material JCW produces is reused for its fertilizer value. This is a good alternative for local farmers compared to the purchase of chemically manufactured fertilizers. The Environmental Protection Agency regulates and restricts the use of farmland and/or crops harvested where biosolids are applied.**

- **Two Platinum Awards: The Mill Creek Regional Plant for eight years of permit compliance, and The Blue River Main Plant for nine years of permit compliance.**

- **Three Gold Awards for treatment works that have achieved 100 percent compliance with the NPDES permit for 2014: New Century AirCenter Plant, Tomahawk Creek Plant and Douglas L. Smith Middle Basin Plant.**

- **One Silver Award: the Myron K. Nelson Plant for having no more than five NPDES permit violations.**

**did you know**

- **Had a 99.89 percent compliance rate with regard to NPDES discharge violations. Of a possible 2,724 violations, the department recorded three violations for the year.**

- **Saw an increase in all customer classes, most notably single-family accounts are up by 3,000 since 2012.**

- **Issued 21 percent more permits than in 2012 — for a total of 1,348.**

- **Treated 18.47 billion gallons of wastewater.**
Community of Heritage

Johnson County has a rich heritage in its 160-year history. The preservation of that history and sharing the treasures with our community is a priority for Johnson County Government, for the sake of providing an enriching educational experience.

Historically, Johnson County will always be older than the state of Kansas.

Johnson County turned 160 years old in 2015 as one of the original 33 counties founded on August 25 by the Legislative Act of 1855 in the Territory of Kansas. The counties were formed six years before statehood was granted to Kansas on Jan. 29, 1861, when President James Buchanan signed a bill allowing Kansas to enter the Union as the nation’s 34th state. The first counties spanned the eastern portion of Kansas from just west of Council Grove. The state now has 105 counties.

Johnson County was named in honor of the Reverend Thomas Johnson, a Methodist minister who in 1829 established a mission in Fairway among the Shawnee Indians and other tribes. Johnson County was officially organized on Sept. 7, 1857.

The 160th milestone was part of a dual event on Sept. 20 with the Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD) that celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2015. The celebration took place at The Theatre in the Park complex in Shawnee Mission Park.

The Johnson County Museum (see the Community of Culture section) and the county’s Department of Records and Tax Administration both play key roles in the preservation and archives of important records and artifacts pertaining to the county’s rich 160 year history.

Johnson County Department of Records and Tax Administration (RTA)

Established in 2005, the Johnson County RTA is responsible for the duties of the county clerk, Register of Deeds and Archives, and Records Management. RTA records and indexes all land records and related documents; creates and maintains the tax roll, determines mill levies and calculates annual ad valorem taxes for all taxing authorities in Johnson County; provides retention, destruction and archival processes for county records; and manages the county call center.

The Archives and Records Management Center, in the county’s Operations Center, retains various county records dating from 1857. Johnson County follows the record retention and destruction schedule established by the Kansas State Historical Society. It stores an estimated 51 million pages of historical documents, more than 5,400 ledgers, scores of old township maps, and some hand-written public records and tax rolls dating back to the founding of the county in 1857.

The RTA Archives Division, in cooperation with the Department of Technology and Innovation, continues to implement processes for electronic record storage and retention. To date, 17 county departments have reduced or eliminated hard copy storage by using electronic storage options. Electronic record storage drastically reduces space requirements and destruction costs.
Community of Involvement

One reason that Johnson County is a premier community where people want to work, live and raise a family is that our residents consistently step forward and offer their help to deliver the hundreds of programs and services provided to residents each year. The county government’s workforce of 3,800 employees simply could not function as successfully without the thousands of people who volunteer their time and talents to a board, commission or program. Another way to be involved in the community is to vote, whether on a political race, retaining a judge, a sales tax or a school bond issue.

As the saying goes, “Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.” These are just a few examples of how people are “doing more” to make Johnson County a Community of Involvement.

Volunteering

More than a dozen county departments, agencies and offices rely heavily on volunteers. The county offers a wide variety of different volunteer opportunities that appeal to many different interests and skill sets. It can honestly be said that there is something for everyone.

- Volunteers for the Department of Corrections offer guidance, support and mentorship for juvenile and adult clients.
- District Court Services has volunteer opportunities for pre-teens and teens who volunteer for Youth Court, participating in the roles of attorneys, judges, juries and truancy panel members who listen to cases and sentence their peers.
- Volunteers grow and harvest produce in the Department of Health and Environment’s two WIC Community Gardens, deliver Meals On Wheels to homebound senior residents, shelve books at the Johnson County Library’s 13 branches, assist with Johnson County Park and Recreation District camps or Johnson County K-State Extension programs, and so much more.

Volunteer opportunities are available in several county departments, agencies and programs, including:

- Corrections
- Court Services
- District Attorney’s Office
- Developmental Supports
- Emergency Management
- Health and Environment
- Human Services
- Johnson County KSU Research and Extension
- Libraries
- Park and Recreation District
Serving on boards and commissions

Appointments (by the BOCC) to boards and commissions offer another way for the public to play an important role in county government. These board and commission volunteers, appointed by the commissioner who represents their district, perform a variety of functions, depending on the type of body they join.

Volunteers on governing bodies exercise general control over the operation of specific county agencies, such as evaluating the agency’s executive director and establishing administrative policies. Other advisory panels, committees and task forces provide advice and recommendations to the BOCC.

Vacancies on the various appointed boards and commissions open up on a regular basis, so interested residents may check the status of these terms frequently in order to stay informed.

Looking ahead:

The BOCC established a new advisory panel in 2016, the Johnson County Food Policy Council, that will help increase access to healthy foods for residents throughout the county and work with partners across the region to represent all stages of the food system — from growing and production to distribution and food service. The council will first prioritize parts of Olathe, Overland Park and Edgerton that are already identified by the coalition as food deserts, a geographic area where affordable and nutritious food is hard to obtain, particularly for those without access to an automobile.

Voting and Elections workers

The election process offers many ways for Johnson County residents to stay engaged with the community. Currently more than 370,000 people ages 18 and older are registered to vote in Johnson County. Each time a Johnson County resident votes in an election, whether by mail-in ballot or at a polling place, he or she is displaying a commitment to community involvement.

The Johnson County Election Office manages elections for 1,900 elected positions in more than 540 voting districts, but could not do so without the thousands of people who dedicate their time working at the polls on election days. These engaged citizens supplement the Election Office’s 16-member staff and help keep the democratic process alive in our county. You can learn more at jocoelection.org.

Did you know?

- In 2015, **11,966 people** volunteered a combined **267,000 hours**.

  Industry experts value one hour of volunteer time as being worth $23.07, meaning that in 2015, the time contributed by Johnson County Government volunteers is valued at more than **$6 million**.

- In 2015, the county starting planning efforts for a **Citizens Academy Program** that launched in Spring 2016. Citizens Academy is a series of weekly learning experiences — including tours, discussions, lectures and hands-on activities — for residents and those who work in Johnson County. More information is available at jocogov.org/citizensacademy.

**2015 activities with boards and commissions:**

In 2015, **282 volunteers** served on **more than 30 boards and commissions**.

The five governing boards exercise general control over the operation of specific county agencies: the Airport Commission, the Park and Recreation District Commission, the Library Board of Directors, the Mental Health Center Board of Directors and the Developmental Supports Board of Directors.

**2015 by the numbers:**

- **64,731** people registered to vote
- **9 elections** with the help of **1,035 election workers**
- **152,140** voters
Community of Protection

A sense of safety and security is prevalent among the residents of Johnson County. That is due in large part to the protective services provided by Johnson County Government. Not only do law enforcement and Court Services provide protection in the traditional sense, but emergency services and communications are there in times of crisis while protecting of individual rights. The following are just a few examples of how Johnson County Government operated as a Community of Protection in 2015.

Johnson County District Attorney’s Office

Protecting the safety of the public through a fair application of the law through earning and maintaining public trust, exhibiting personal integrity and professionalism and advocating for victims’ rights.

In 2015, the Johnson County District Attorney’s Office began the state’s first Veterans Treatment Court in collaboration with Johnson County Courts, Court Services, Johnson County Mental Health, the Veterans Administration and the Johnson County Bar Association.

In 2015, the DA’s Office noted these trends in Johnson County:

- For the second consecutive year, there were no domestic violence homicides.
- The DA’s Office is seeing a continued growth in identify theft and various fraud type cases.

- John Robinson Sr. was found guilty in 2002 by a Johnson County District Court jury of three murders and received the death sentence for two of them. In 2015, the death penalty conviction was upheld by the Kansas Supreme Court.
- In 2015, the DA began administration of the lethality assessment to those individuals obtaining protection from abuse orders.
- The DA obtained a grant to fund a “Changing Lives Through Literature” program for low-level offenders.

In response to a request from the DA, the school districts have increased the number of truancy referrals to this office.

Frazier Glenn Miller Jr. was sentenced to death for three murders: two victims were shot to death at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and the third victim was killed at Village Shalom, a Jewish retirement community, both located in Overland Park.
Johnson County Court Services

*carrying out the orders of the court by working with clients and families to make our community a safer and better place to live.*

In 2015, Court Services, in partnership with the District Court, District Attorney’s Office, Johnson County Mental Health, Johnson County Sheriff’s Office and other community-based agencies prepared for the first Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) in the state of Kansas. VTC allows clients with military backgrounds expanded opportunities for diversionary programs and more wraparound services within the Veterans Administration. The VTC program launched on Jan. 13, 2016.

In 2015, the Evening Reporting Center (ERC) completed its first full year of operation. The ERC opened in June 2014 as an alternative to incarceration for juvenile offenders who are in violation of court-ordered supervision. The ERC operates out of the Millcreek Center from 3:30–8:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. The ERC is staffed by Court Services, but the program’s success is dependent on partnerships with both county and community agencies, including Johnson County Department of Corrections, Johnson County Mental Health, the Olathe School District, Gillis Center and the local faith-based community.

Nationwide, ERCs are used as a best-practice model as part of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, aimed at avoiding unnecessary detention, including detention for technical violations of probation. Johnson County’s ERC is the first in the state of Kansas and has successfully diverted many youths from unnecessary stays in the local detention facility.

Other 2015 highlights:

- In February 2015, a reception was held at Court Services to celebrate local school-aged children and their art teachers who participated in an art contest for the domestic courts. Winning entries were placed in mediation rooms at Court Services to remind parents to stay focused on their children during the mediation process. Each domestic judge also selected a piece of art to display in either the courtroom or judge’s chambers. As part of this outreach program, a judge and a court services officer were asked to speak at local elementary schools about the role of a judge and the Judicial Branch of government.

- The Courts’ Help Center (HC) is the first self-help center in the state. The HC assists pro se litigants (persons representing themselves) in family court matters. The Kansas Bar Association legal services and Kansas legal services are also hosted within the HC. In 2015, the HC served upward of 4,100 individuals and families — more than 350 each month.

- In 2015, as part of a collaboration with the Johnson County Department of Corrections, a Resource Navigator (RN) was stationed in the HC to help provide wraparound services to individuals and families who come to the court, take referrals from judges when he or she identifies additional services, aside from the judiciary, that may assist individuals and families. The RN interviews individuals and families, and routes them to community services, sets meetings, and checks with clients to ensure that services were obtained.
In 2015, the adult corrections staff began an updated fidelity management system to ensure that they are using evidence-based supervision techniques according to the evidence-based model. It was implemented in response to the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) fidelity audit, completed in 2014. While Johnson County received a rating of “Highly Effective” in regards to the fidelity work being performed, the management system was recommended as a way to track the work being done. The fidelity management system has been tied into the KDOC comprehensive plan for state fiscal year 2016.

A new mentoring program at the Adult Residential Center matches upstanding community citizens with adult offenders who are leaving the center and going back into the community. The mentors help offenders adjust to the community and provides advice. This follows the successful KDOC model and has yielded low recidivism rates.

The Adult Residential Center received excellent reports on its first audit for compliance with Prison Rape Elimination Act standards. The outside auditor was very complimentary of the facility’s policies and the overall treatment of clients.

Emergency Communications Center (ECC)

The ECC implemented a new Emergency Medical Dispatching protocol, the Medical Priority Dispatch System, and staff was certified through the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch. The implementation also included the integration of a comprehensive quality assurance program.

Other 2015 highlights:

The ECC made technology enhancements, including a CAD interface between the Tritech Fire/EMS Computer Aided Dispatch system and the Intergraph Computer Aided Dispatch system used by law enforcement. In addition, the center and the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office were the first to deploy Text to 9-1-1 technology in the nine-county Kansas City region.

Other 2015 highlights:

• The Emergency Management Division started a new Community Preparedness Initiative in 2015, focused on strengthening the culture of disaster preparedness in Johnson County, specifically, engaging five groups in the community — schools, businesses, large
venues, community organizations and vulnerable populations. By partnering with these groups in a more structured way, the initiative aims to:

- Strengthen relationships between emergency management and the business community.
- Increase awareness regarding preparedness levels and the specific needs of businesses.
- Verify resources currently available or initiatives already underway.

**Emergency Medical Services (MED-ACT)**

*ensuring medical emergencies in Johnson County have the best possible outcome.*

Area hospitals joined all of the Johnson County fire departments, MED-ACT and the Emergency Communications Center in support of the Medical Director Program, a patient-centered, coordinated system for the delivery of emergency medical services. Fire agencies, the paramedic transport provider, the 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center and hospitals all work together to guide pre-hospital patient care to positively impact patient outcomes. Patients now experience a seamless continuum of pre-hospital care.

MED-ACT began transporting patients in mental health or substance abuse crisis to Rainbow Services Inc. (RSI) instead of the local emergency departments. Rainbow Services, Inc. is a state-funded collaboration among the Heartland Regional Alcohol and Drug Assessment Center, Wyandot Center and Johnson County Mental Health Center. Since March 2015, 30 patients have been transported to RSI.

**Other 2015 highlights:**

- In 2014, Johnson County’s HeartSafe program was initiated by MED-ACT, fire departments, hospitals and school districts to improve cardiac arrest survival rates. In June 2015, this organization achieved its goal of training more than 25,000 residents in CPR in one year. By the end of 2015, more than 35,800 residents had been trained. This effort, along with 9-1-1 dispatcher-assisted CPR instructions, helped increase the citizen-initiated CPR rate in Johnson County to 48 percent, compared to a national average of 39 percent. This kind of bystander CPR is shown to double or triple a cardiac arrest victim’s chances of survival. The importance of bystander CPR was celebrated in the first “HeartSafe Heroes” event where cardiac arrest survivors and their families were reunited with the dispatchers, bystanders and EMS providers who resuscitated them.

- In 2015, a joint training approach was implemented for more than 1,000 EMS, fire and law enforcement personnel in preparation for response to an active shooter event. Additionally, more than 800 fire/EMS providers trained on a monthly basis to improve emergency medical response. This collaborative approach is a more efficient way to provide necessary training to responders, allowing pooling of instructor, equipment and technology resources.

**MED-ACT** is the primary ambulance transport provider for the EMS system and is a county agency. Because MED-ACT is housed in fire stations, there is often confusion about who operates MED-ACT.

Cardiac arrest survival rates in Johnson County are among the best in the country. These rates can be further improved as more citizens learn to perform CPR and how to operate public Automated External Defibrillators. EMS joined the Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES) to draw national comparison of cardiac arrest survival rates for patients found in a shockable rhythm. In 2015, the Johnson County survival rate was 41 percent compared to 26 percent among all CARES participants nationally.
Johnson County Sheriff’s Office

serving the people of Johnson County with the foundational principles of service, justice and fundamental fairness.

2015 was the start of several new initiatives in the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office. In April, a Take Me Home patrol car was outfitted in support of community members impacted by autism and Alzheimer’s disease. The Sheriff’s Take Me Home program was launched in 2011 and is designed for those individuals who have trouble communicating due to developmental or cognitive disabilities.

The office’s first Kids Handgun Safety Awareness class was offered in June 2015. During the next six months, the class was offered three more times. About 100 youths completed the course and were taught the proper response to unsecured firearms and the basic fundamentals of firearm safety.

Classes in bully prevention, teen handgun safety and awareness, and women empowerment and self-defense were also conducted.

Other 2015 highlights:

- Canines Bono and Marko joined the Sheriff’s Office as deputies in May 2015. The K-9s and their handlers completed a six-week training at Vohne Liche Kennels in Denver, Indiana. Both canines are dual purpose dogs, having been trained in both narcotics detection and tracking. Bono and Marko joined Nora in the K-9 Unit.

- The Sheriff’s Office is one of four sites to host the kickoff of the national Stepping Up Initiative, focused on reducing the number of mentally ill persons in jails. The other sites are in Washington, D.C., Miami-Dade County, Florida and Sacramento, California. The initiative calls on local governments to look at their existing resources for the mentally ill and develop policies that could reduce incarceration. The effort concludes with a national summit in 2016 and the possibility of federal and private grants for selected areas. The initiative is sponsored by the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Foundation.

Communications division:

- **83,873** 9-1-1 emergency calls
- **152,782** administrative/non-emergency calls — 100% of calls answered in 10 seconds or less.

Patrol division:

- **10,436** calls for service (initiated through emergency or non-emergency line, not by officers)
- **34,062** self-initiated activity (motorist assists, area checks, business checks, pedestrian checks, etc.)
Community of Resource Management

Johnson County Government understands that resources are limited and that everyone needs to play a role in protecting the planet. Whether it’s creating a way for residents to manage resources wisely or taking strides to be better stewards of resources, Johnson County Government is prioritizing to help protect air quality, reduce waste, safeguard our natural waterways and save energy. These strategies guide the methods and materials used to build, renovate and operate county buildings as well as the services, programs and information provided to the residents and businesses in the community.

In addition, county government constantly considers time, a valuable resource, and works to ensure the way employees work and the public processes are efficient and effective. With these guides, here are a few examples of how Johnson County Government operated as a Community of Resource Management in 2015.

Reducing waste in homes, businesses and schools

The Department of Health and Environment

The county’s Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility in Mission allows residents to safely dispose of unwanted household products that should not be thrown away or poured down any drain such as paint, cleaning products, vehicle batteries, motor oil and pool chemicals — just to name a few. The HHW program recycles, repurposes or safely disposes of these common items.

New in 2015, the HHW program began selling reblended latex paint in January. The paint had previously been given away for free, at a cost to the county for the buckets. In the first year, the program grossed $26,775.

Also in 2015, the HHW program received a grant from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for a drum crusher used to compress empty one-gallon paint cans, making them viable for recycling. Thousands of cans previously thrown in the trash are now being recycled.

The Environmental Division also partners with schools, businesses and places of worship in Johnson County on the Certified Green Program, providing free consultation and technical assistance to help increase recycling, improve energy efficiency and decrease waste. In 2015, the program certified seven businesses and started composting programs at several school cafeterias, providing resources such as bins and signs.
Protecting our waterways: Stormwater Management Program

Each year, Stormwater Management Program (SMP) provides funding for stormwater improvements and capital projects in Johnson County and partners with all cities of the county and other cities in the Kansas City region as part of the regional stormwater system. Johnson County’s Public Works Department oversees the program with final review and approval each year by the BOCC.

Funding for SMP totaled slightly more than $18.6 million in 2015. Nearly $16 million went toward 11 design/construction projects to continue flood mitigation efforts in Merriam, Shawnee, Olathe and Overland Park. Funding for the projects ranged from $4.2 million to $376,444.

Another $2 million was allocated to supplementary projects/efforts to support existing countywide initiatives, including:
- Water quality education in partnership with local public school districts and schools.
- Continued operation and maintenance of the rain and stream gauging system.
- Maintenance of the flood-warning network.
- HHW grant program to promote the proper disposal of hazardous waste and, in turn, reduce illegal dumping into streams and storm sewer systems.

Cutting down time in line: Motor Vehicles

Motor Vehicle Title and Registration is one of the many services conducted by the Treasury and Financial Management Department. In 2015, as an effort to reduce time spent in line at the Olathe and Mission Motor Vehicles offices, the county implemented a $5 per vehicle fee for registration renewals. The result was a seven percent increase in registration renewals submitted by mail or through the online portal, helping to create a more efficient Motor Vehicles operation.

Being good stewards of the environment

Environmentally friendly construction has been a commitment of Johnson County Government since 2004 when it created its first Sustainability Committee. Since then, the county has constructed another LEED Platinum and five Gold Certified buildings, expanded its fleet of alternative fuel and Compressed Natural Gas vehicles and made strides toward ambitious waste reduction goals.

Johnson County Government renewed its commitment to manage county resources as efficiently as possible in 2015 with a new energy conservation policy adopted by the BOCC on July 1. The resolution created an official commitment to “conserve energy and natural resources while exercising sound financial management” and authorized County Manager Hannes Zacharias to develop and implement energy-saving strategies and guidelines.

As part of that effort, in 2015, Johnson County Government entered a five-year agreement with Cenergistic, Inc., a firm specializing in behavioral-based energy management. This program is estimated to save the county approximately $500,000 per year in utility costs.

The Motor Vehicle Title and Registration keeps quite busy!

In 2015, Johnson County Department of Motor Vehicle employees processed more than:
- 450,000 registration renewals
- 119,000 original title transactions
- 115,000 miscellaneous transactions (such as personalized plates and disabled temporary and permanent placards)

- The HHW program diverted 100,000 pounds of products through its FREE store that returns usable, quality products to the community for continued use.
- The HHW program partners with several local community organizations to distribute products that are still in good condition, such as Johnson County food pantries (household cleaners), animal shelters (bleach and rubbing alcohol), local parks departments (fertilizers and herbicides), police departments, churches, schools (paint) and individuals.
- A 1/10-cent sales tax authorized by the Kansas Legislature in 1988 and approved by the BOCC funds stormwater projects.
- The BOCC created the Stormwater Management Advisory Council in the early 1990s to help coordinate stormwater efforts and advises the BOCC on stormwater management related issues.
Johnson County Board of County Commissioners

Back row, L to R:

James “Jim” P. Allen
Second district
Office: 715-0432

Ronald “Ron” Shaffer
First district
Office: 715-0431

Steven “Steve” C. Klika
Vice chair and third district
Office: 715-0433

John Toplikar
Sixth District
Office: 715-0436

Front row, L to R:

Jason Osterhaus
Fourth district
Office: 715-0434

Chairman Ed Eilert
Office: 715-0500

Michael Ashcraft
Fifth district
Office: 715-0435

Find your county commissioner online at jocogov.org/dept/board-county-commissioners/home

Sheriff and District Attorney

Frank Denning
Sheriff
Office: 715-5505
Fax: 715-5806

Steve Howe
District Attorney
Office: 715-3000
Fax: 715-3040

County managers

Hannes Zacharias
County Manager
Office: 715-0731

Penny Postoak Ferguson
Deputy County Manager
Office: 715-0733

Maury Thompson
Assistant County Manager
Office: 715-0734

Joe Waters
Assistant County Manager
Office: 715-0725
### County phone numbers

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<tr>
<td>Johnson County Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas Relay Operator</td>
<td>800-766-3777</td>
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<td>Johnson County Administration Building</td>
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<td>Budget and Financial Planning</td>
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<td>Treasury and Financial Management Office</td>
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