County scores 74% in census sharing
A new department of aging in the future?
Kansas Legal Services to resume visits

Census 2020 extends its deadlines for participation.
County study to focus on aging needs & services.
KLS adjusts serving clients to COVID-19.
Census extends deadlines due to COVID-19

While the nation has been confronted by several major events during the first half of 2020, the U.S. Census, which takes place every ten years including this year, remains as important as ever. Here are answers to questions some might have about the status of the 2020 Census.

How has COVID-19 impacted the 2020 Census efforts?
Due to the pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau delayed deadlines for various milestones as well as temporarily closed Area Census Offices (ACO). Those started opening up again in June, including the ACO in Overland Park. Here are some of the latest changes in dates:
• The Self-Response Phase (where households respond online, by phone or by mail) was previously scheduled to end on July 31 but has been extended through Oct. 31.
• Non-Response Follow Up with households that don’t complete the census questionnaire is scheduled to take place Aug. 11 – Oct. 31.
• Counting those experiencing homelessness will take place between Sept. 22 and 24.
• Counting people in transitory locations (people staying in campgrounds, RV parks, etc.) is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 3-28.

What has been the response?
As of mid-June, the national self-response rate is 60.9%. Kansas ranks number 12 in the nation with a 64.8% response rate. There is great news about Johnson County, which has the highest participation in the state of Kansas with 74.4%. The Johnson County city of Mission Woods is the number one participating city in the state of Kansas with 86.3%

What if I can’t find my census mailer with my ID but still want to participate online?
Those who don’t have their piece of mail with their personal Census ID can still respond online to the 2020 Census. Go to my2020census.gov and select the link that says, «If you do not have a Census ID, click here.» It is located below the Census ID login field.

What if I no longer have my paper questionnaire and I don’t wish to participate online?
If you are unable to respond online, you can call 844-330-2020 and take the census over the phone. The Census Bureau is offering a callback option to better respond to requests during periods of high call volume.

When the callback option is presented, simply provide your preferred phone number and time of day for a return call, and an official census representative will call you back to collect your response to the 2020 Census.

Remember, the Census Bureau will never ask you for:
• Your full Social Security number.
• Your bank account or credit card numbers.
• Anything on behalf of a political party.
• Money or donations.

For more information, please visit 2020census.gov.
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We the people, as our Constitution begins, continue to work at being “a more perfect union.” It has been a work in endless, timeless progress since 1787.

Our nation is not perfect. Historically, our imperfections boil to the surface, resulting in positive and much-needed change.

Sixty years ago, four African American college students staged a peaceful sit-in at a segregated Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and refused to leave after being denied service. Within a few months, Woolworth’s quietly integrated its lunch counters along with other dining facilities in the South.

Fifty years ago, four students were killed, nine students were wounded when the National Guard fired into a crowd during an anti-war demonstration at Kent State University.

Fifty years ago, more than 100,000 people converged on Washington, D.C. to protest the Cambodia incursion in the Vietnam War and the Kent State shootings followed by an enough sized massive protest on Wall Street in New York City.

The Kent State shootings were investigated. No charges were ever filed.

Our involvement in the Vietnam War ended three years later.

One truth about protests, like the unrest that’s occurring over the killing of George Floyd and other African Americans, is raising awareness of social problems that need to be heard, and hopefully addressed, toward a more perfect union. Time will tell.

Most of the metro protests have been peaceful, but not all. With the largest demonstrations occurring in Kansas City, scores of Johnson County residents also gathered in peace in small protests at several cities, large and small, to add their voices and show their support against injustice, police brutality and a call for police reform.

Over the years, small nonviolent protests, such as the Greensboro sit-in, have led to big social changes, locally and nationally.

Two women, who left their mark in history come to mind.

In Johnson County, the most notable example is the 1947 South Park (now Merriam) community boycott by African American families when black students were denied access to the new all-white South Park School built to replace the dilapidated Walker Elementary School.

Corinthian Nutter, an African American teacher at the Walker School, helped to organize a student walkout and sacrificed her own job. She then home schooled the students for more than a year while the legal dispute navigated through the Kansas court system, reaching the Kansas Supreme Court two years later.

The high court ruled in June 1949 that the African American students were entitled to equal facilities. The issue of segregation per se was not part of the ruling but served as the backdrop to Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954, ruling racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.

A year later, Rosa Parks did not give up her seat on a public bus in Montgomery. She was arrested, fired from her job and received numerous deaths threats for years to follow. Called the “mother of the civil rights movement,” her refusal sparked the civil rights movement, massive protests both peaceful and violent, and led to positive changes, including passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act.

The new school at South Park admitted black students without incident when the school year began later in 1949, a few months after the court ruling. Walker School was not burned down during the boycott. It was razed since it was no longer wanted or needed.

The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower federal court ruling that bus segregation was unconstitutional a year after Parks’ lone act of defiance and determination in 1955.

They were two women whose small acts of bold disobedience left their marks in history toward a more perfect union, equality, justice and fairness to all.

Sadly, change hasn’t always happened that way.

I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s. They were years of change, death, conflict and violence. I watched TV as African Americans were beaten and humiliated in their decades-long struggle to vote and to end racial discrimination, disenfranchisement and segregation in the United States. The deaths, arson fires and violence sickened me then as it does now.

It was quite a time to experience, endure and remember.

Fifty years later, 2020 thus far has been a year of change, death, conflict and violence.

There have been deadly shootings; demands for racial justice and equality; massive protests seeking political, criminal justice and policing changes; and national and local accord and discord.

2020 has been year of global and national pandemic; a roller-coaster economy and high unemployment. It remains a year in progress with highlights that are good and bad, controversial and unquestionable.

We must speak up against racism, against judicial and economic injustices that have historically — and continue

Continued to page 5
Quest for 'a perfect union'

Continued from page 4
today - to make it impossible
to truly equalize our society.

We must speak up and
speak out, but we must do
so peacefully.

In echoing Dr. Martin
Luther King’s “dream”
for long ago, it is for all
citizens and residents to
have the right to a happy,
fulfilling and rewarding
life irrespective of their
backgrounds. It is relevant
today more than ever as we
struggle to stay positive
during these uncertain and
chaotic times.

Perhaps in 50 years, my
grandchildren, now young adults, will recall 2020 as
a milestone year for their
memories and experiences
during an historic time of
change, death, conflict and
violence.

Perhaps, there’s solace
in remembering the inspira-
tion from Alexander Pope’s
poem (An Essay on Man):

Hope springs eternal in the
human breast;
Man never is, but always to
be blessed:
The soul, uneasy and con-
fined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a
life to come.

Five decades after 1970,
life continually goes toward
the challenges and opportu-
nities in our endless, time-
less quest at “a more perfect
union.”

We, as a nation and as
a people, can hopefully
survive any problems, any
conflicts, any changes, any-
thing in the times ahead.

It’s the American way.
We did back then.
We must do it now.
Good question, good answer

By Dan Goodman

**Question:** Can you tell us about the new service the Johnson County Area Agency on Aging is offering called Administrative Case Management?

**Answer:** The primary function of the Administrative Case Management service is to assist Johnson County residents in applying for Medicaid for the specific purpose of gaining access to three Medicaid waiver programs. The three Home Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers are: HCBS for the Frail Elderly, HCBS for the Physically Disabled and HCBS for Brain Injury. The service, which began in May, is funded through a contract with the state of Kansas and the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services.

**Question:** Who will provide the Administrative Case Management services?

**Answer:** Currently the Johnson County Area Agency on Aging has two administrative case managers to serve the county. Suzanne Burgin and Frankie McAfee have been hired to provide this service.

Both Suzanne and Frankie have an abundance of work experience with Kansas Medicaid; between the two of them, they have about 60 years. They are a valuable addition to the agency’s knowledge base and Administrative Case Management will be a valuable service to assist those living in Johnson County who need community-based, long-term care supports and services.

**Question:** How do you access Administrative Case Management?

**Answer:** Referrals for this assistance are triggered specifically by a functional assessment completed by eligibility and options specialists working for the Area Agency on Aging. Frail, elderly individuals age 65+, or younger individuals with long-term physical disabilities or brain injuries may qualify if their income and savings are also very limited.

If the resident is found to be functionally eligible for one of the three waivers, a referral can be made to Administrative Case Management in order to assist the resident with the application process for Kansas Medicaid.

For more information, call the AAA’s Information and Assistance line at 913-715-8861.

Dan Goodman is director of the Johnson County Area Agency on Aging.

COA requests candidates for aging leadership award

The Johnson County Commission on Aging (COA) is seeking candidates for its annual Leadership in Aging Award, which honors individuals, groups or organizations making outstanding contributions to the quality of life for older adults and their families in Johnson County.

To request a nomination form, call the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) at 913-715-8860. Forms are also located on the Human Services website: jocogov.org/hsd.

Nominations must be submitted by Wednesday, Aug. 3, to: Katy Hoffman, c/o Area Agency on Aging, 11811 S. Sunset Drive, Suite 1300, Olathe, Kansas 66061 or via e-mail to HSD-AAAWeb@jocogov.org.

Appointed by the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners, the COA is an advisory body to the AAA and advocates for senior adults in the county.

Upcoming COA meetings

The Commission on Aging will meet via Zoom videoconference on July 8 at 9 a.m. for a public hearing on the 2021 Area Plan on Aging and on Aug. 12 at 9 a.m. for business including selecting an honoree for the Peg Deaton Leadership in Aging Award.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, they will not be holding these meetings as previously scheduled at the Sunset Drive Office Building.

For more information call 913-715-8860.
Johnson County Area Agency on Aging
Paid for by Older Americans Act funding

2020 Fast Facts National Survey of Area Agencies on Aging

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are the on-the-ground organizations charged through the federal Older Americans Act with helping older adults live with independence and dignity in their homes and communities. More than 600 AAAs operate in virtually every community in the nation.

- While all AAAs serve older adults and caregivers, many AAAs also provide services and supports to other related groups.
- Serve individuals younger than 60 who have a disability, impairment or chronic illness. 78%
- Provide programming targeted at people living with dementia and their caregivers. 74%
- Serve people with dementia of all ages (including under 60). 52%
- Offer programming to support the needs of grandparents caring for grandchildren. 52%

On average, AAAs provide 27 services to help ensure older adults have the supports they need to continue living at home and in their communities for as long as possible.

To expand the reach and impact of the programs they provide, AAAs leverage formal and informal partnerships with other agencies and organizations.

Most common AAA partners

- 92% Adult Protective Services
- 88% Transportation Agencies
- 86% State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs)
- 83% Emergency Preparedness Agencies

Many AAAs work with health care partners

- 80% Medicaid
- 74% Hospitals and health care systems
- 62% Health plans

Affordable and accessible housing is essential for older adults who wish to remain in their homes and communities as they age. As a result, AAAs provide information and options for senior housing, home maintenance, transportation, & more.

Transportation connects older adults to services, necessities such as medical appointments, grocery stores and pharmacies, and social activities.

The full report will be available in summer 2020 at www.n4a.org/publications.

www.jocogov.org/thewbesttimes • 7 • July-August 2020
Even before becoming fully operational, Johnson County’s first ever Medical Examiner Facility in Olathe was busy investigating deaths related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new facility, located in the Johnson County Government Complex at 119th Street and Ridgeview Road, was completed and staffed in early June to enhance public safety services, including death investigations and threats to public health in processing death certificates.

“We have been investigating COVID-19-related deaths, as it is required by state law for these types of deaths to be reported to us. Therefore, we will continue to do so,” said Chief Medical Examiner/Coroner, Dr. Diane C. Peterson, MD. “This facility allows us to do autopsies on COVID-positive individuals as needed because of its safety features in the air handling system.”

The 32,000-square-foot facility is the result of long study by the county to understand the need for its own medical examiner facility in order to provide better resources and efficiencies to the community. Johnson County voters approved a 10-year, ¼-cent sales tax in November 2016 to build a medical examiner facility and a new courthouse which is nearing completion in downtown Olathe.

According to Dr. Peterson, public safety will be enhanced because the state-of-the-art Medical Examiner Facility will use best practices and current technology, including an imaging suite housing a CT scanner and Lodox scanner capable of providing a full body x-ray.

“Additionally, our public health teams will be able to access real-time information to identify trends or emerging diseases,” she added.

A dedication ceremony, initially scheduled in early June, has been rescheduled for Thursday, Aug. 13, with specific details currently in development. Recognizing coronavirus reopening social gathering limitations, in-person facility tours to the public will be replaced with a virtual tour.

The video tour, now under production, is anticipated to be available on the county website at jocogov.org before the ribbon-cutting event.
While a focus on meeting the needs of senior citizens is nothing new for Johnson County Government, the organization is conducting exploratory work to see if a new department of county government might meet those needs more effectively and efficiently.

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners has authorized county staff to come back to them within 60-90 days with a report on a potential new county Department of Aging Services. It would house the programs and services the county provides to aging populations, such as nutrition services, outreach and other in-home supports. Staff will also report back on the feasibility of the county to supplement the work done by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services in the regulation of senior care facilities.

“Both the current board and previous boards, along with county staff, have done an admirable job aggressively and vigorously supporting the county’s aging population,” said Deputy County Manager Maury Thompson. “However, due to the projected rapid growth of this population, coupled with the fact that they’ve experienced a disproportionate impact from COVID-19, there may be a better approach to serving the needs of this population.”

A history of meeting aging needs

Johnson County Government’s long-standing commitment to aging services goes back to the passage of the Older Americans Act of 1965. Between the passage of the Act to 1979, Johnson County was part of an organization of seven counties providing the services outlined in the Act.

In 1982, the BOCC combined aging services with other human services provided by the county, creating the Human Resources and Aging Department, later renamed the Human Services and Aging Department in 1993. The county added Housing Services to the department in 1985, providing a one-stop experience for the department’s clientele in need of housing support. Safe, affordable housing is necessary for older adults to remain living in their own homes.

The current Human Services Department today provides services in four distinct program areas; aging services (including nutrition services), housing services, outreach and accessibility services, and Community Development Block Grant Administration.

Incorporating COA’s Master Plan

As part of this process, staff will consider the recently completed Commission on Aging’s (COA) Aging Services Master Plan. It included recommendations such as building a new kitchen for the Meals-on-Wheels Program, providing additional county funding for Senior Care Act services, increasing access to mental health counseling and transportation, and ensuring Aging Services are more visible and accessible.

Meals on Wheels seeks volunteers

Are you interested in being a volunteer delivering meals on wheels?

Volunteers deliver meals to homebound aging adults once a week, once a month, or when available.

Meals are delivered 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m., Monday - Friday

If you are interested or want additional information, please call Brandy Hodge at 913-715-8859, e-mail Brandy.Hodge@jocogov.org or see our web page about Volunteer Opportunities.
Plan now for fall vegetables

By Dennis Patton

In times of crisis, Americans return to their agrarian roots. World War II brought us Victory Gardens and the economic downturn of 2008 saw an uptick in homegrown vegetables. The COVID-19 pandemic caused shortages of cleaning supplies and toilet paper, but also left garden center shelves bare of vegetable seeds and transplants.

With a stay-at-home order in place to combat the spread of the disease, the spring season was a blur. Planting the spring garden and enjoying the bounty in many ways seems like a distant memory. Personally, I feel like I have been living in a dream for much of spring, or maybe I should say a nightmare.

Now that summer has arrived, it is a great time to think about a fall vegetable garden. Imagine the taste of fresh lettuce, spinach or other crops ripe for the picking on a crisp autumn day. This dream can surely happen with a little planning.

Fall is an excellent time for gardening and is frequently overlooked. We have lost interest in gardening under the summer heat. Crops planted during the departing summer conditions ripen under cooler temperatures, making the bounty often better than spring-planted vegetables.

The cool-season salad vegetables as well as cucumbers, summer squash or green beans are best adapted to fall. The first frost will damage some crops, but others will continue to thrive in the cool weather. In fact, a light frost can improve the flavor of some vegetables.

The timing of when to plant is influenced by how long it takes for the crop to develop and its ability to withstand a freeze. Transplants of broccoli, cauliflower or cabbage are planted in early August. Carrots and beets are planted from early- to mid-August. Lettuce, spinach, radishes and turnips are planted in early September.

Fall gardening does have challenges as heat and dry weather make it difficult to establish the plantings. The use of transplants is one way to overcome the weather as they grow quicker than seeds. Help the seeds germinate and develop roots in the summer by planting them slightly deeper than recommended for spring planting to keep them cool and moist.

By planting seeds a little thicker, this also helps to ensure a good stand. Thick plantings can be thinned out for proper spacing. Place a thin layer of mulch over the seed row to reduce the chance of seeds washing out and soil compaction from watering. The mulch will also help conserve moisture under the late summer sun.

Water regularly as the garden establishes. A light appli-
Early into the pandemic, Johnson County leadership and staff at the Department of Budget and Financial Management began projecting how COVID-19 would impact the county’s various revenue sources and quickly arrived at plans to reduce expenditures.

On April 2, County Manager Penny Postoak Ferguson and Budget Director Scott Neufeld presented the Board of County Commissioners an estimated $18 million to $38 million range in revenue loss due to COVID-19. By mid-May, leadership had more information, and projected a revenue loss of approximately $24 million for the 2020 budget year.

“Impacted revenue sources include reduced collections of property and sales tax, a decrease in investment income due to the interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve, and anticipated reductions in mortgage recording fees and Motor Vehicles taxes and fees,” Neufeld said.

Cutting expenditures

Johnson County Government took immediate action early in the pandemic in reaction to the projected revenue loss. The county implemented a hiring freeze except for essential positions, ceased nonessential spending, and utilized tools such as furloughs, reductions in overtime and deferring capital projects. The result is expenditure cuts of approximately $25 million.

“In addition to quick action in reducing our spending, I challenged our department heads to apply a renewed emphasis on analyzing the services we provide and how we provide them to ensure we are doing so with greater levels of effectiveness and efficiency,” Postoak Ferguson said. adding innovations that department heads find are expected to positively impact both the current and future budget years.

The county manager will present her proposed FY 2021 budget to the BOCC on July 9 in the board’s hearing room located on the third floor of the Johnson County Administration Building in downtown Olathe. A public hearing will take place on Aug. 12 in the hearing room.

By state law, the county must approve its next year’s fiscal budget by the end of August.

To see the complete calendar for the 2021 budget process, please visit jocogov.org.

BOCC meetings return to hearing room

The Board of County Commissioners has resumed meeting in the hearing room after conducting past meetings for a few weeks by video-conferencing.

The board meets at 9:30 a.m. every Thursday. The hearing room is located on the third floor of the Johnson County Administration Building in downtown Olathe.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, social distancing will be observed, and limited seating will be available in the hearing room, with additional limited seating in the adjacent lobby with audio available.

Public comments will be accepted. Persons wishing to speak during Public comments will need to sign in by 9:25 a.m. before the meeting begins and will be called upon to speak in the order in which they signed up. Anyone wishing to speak to a specific item on the business agenda will need to sign in before that item is read into the record.

Persons who may need assistance, the use of a sign language or oral interpreter, or who require special accommodations, should contact 913-715-0430, at least two business days prior to the meeting.

A live broadcast is available at boccmeetings.jocogov.org and on Facebook Live. Agenda information is available at boccmeetings.jocogov.org/onbaseagendaonline.
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Pandemic advice: Wear masks

Taking steps to protect yourself from exposure to this novel coronavirus is as important as ever. The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment continues to remind everyone to take steps to stop the spread of germs like COVID-19. These include:

- Practice physical distancing as defined by the CDC (6 feet of distance from others).
- Avoid large groups.
- Wear a cloth face covering when in a community setting, especially in situations where you may be near people. These settings include grocery stores and pharmacies. These face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Additional information regarding Johnson County’s response, cases, COVID-19 testing, recommendations and reopening plans to the coronavirus is available at jocogov.org/coronavirus.

County parks add bike hubs

Through a new partnership with Johnson County Park & Recreation District, RideKC Bike now are available in several parks and facilities throughout Johnson County.

The new system features a pedal bike model, the first of its kind, that operates in a hybrid “dockless” format.

Bikes are located at hubs in each park, including Shawnee Mission Park, Meadowbrook Park, Heritage Park, Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center, Mid-America West Sports Complex, and Mid-America Sports Complex.

The district also plans bike hubs at Mill Creek Streamway Park (at Lenexa’s Craig Crossing access point) and Arthur and Betty Verhaeghe Park.

The parks-based system allows users to scan a bike to check it out, ride it safely and then return it to any authorized hub location.

Every bike has both a cable lock that wraps around a fixed object and a wheel lock that automatically closes through the rear wheel, ensuring responsible parking.

The first ride for new users is free; after that, bikes are one dollar to unlock and 10 cents per minute.

For more information, visit jcprd.com/bikes.
Exhibit details past challenges

As our community joins together in the fight against COVID-19, the Johnson County Museum is seeking to inspire the community through its new temporary exhibit titled “Rising to the Challenge: Suburban Strength in Difficult Times.”

The exhibit is filled with stories of our community rallying together in the face of economic hardship, natural disasters, war and health crises. Time and time again, Johnson Countians have met crises with personal sacrifice, innovation and adaptation, strength and resilience, preparation and awareness, and reflection and remembrance.

“In the midst of these challenging times, the Johnson County Museum is uniquely positioned to share stories to inspire our community, and to inspire them to rise to the challenge again,” said Museum Director Mary McMurray.

“Our collection is filled with stories of personal sacrifice, working together, and overcoming the challenge at hand. The COVID-19 pandemic provides a new opportunity to learn about these stories and to be inspired by them.”

The exhibit is unique for the museum. It was developed over the course of the past few months, with staff working from home, limited hours in the office and meeting virtually.

“Just because the museum was closed to the public does not mean that the staff was idle. We were crafting an exhibit, and on an accelerated timeline!” said Andrew Gustafson, curator of interpretation.

In addition to highlighting past examples of community resiliency, the exhibit also connects to the museum’s recently launched collecting initiative, “Collecting COVID-19.” Artifacts already collected are part of the exhibit. There is a call for the public to submit stories and ideas for documents, photographs and objects at jcprd.com/collecting.

“Rising to the Challenge: Suburban Strength in Difficult Times” will be on display in the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center’s Cultural Commons. During the museum’s reopening first phase, guests are asked to pre-register for museum experiences.

To learn more about the phased reopening plans and to register for a guided museum experience, including a look at the “Rising to the Challenge” exhibit, visit jcprd.com/1477/Museum-Reopening.

The Johnson County Museum, a department of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District, is located within the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center, 8788 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park.

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Voters can mail in ballots in elections

Applying for mail-in voting in advance in the 2020 Primary Election is now underway.

Since 1996, any registered voter who completed an application for a mail-in ballot has voting that way, but for the first time ever, the Johnson County Election Office has mailed out mail-in ballot applications to all active registered voters.

The mailing of ballot applications was geared to encourage residents to vote in advance by mail to reduce the number of in-person voters on election day (Aug. 4). This was done considering the COVID-19 pandemic and current health and safety recommendations regarding mass gatherings, social distancing and other safeguards for election workers and voters.

“We mailed advance voting applications to approximately 370,000 voters. We’ve processed 18,000 applications so far (early June) with many more waiting to be processed,” said Nathan Carter, elections office administrator.

In 2016, almost 17,000 people voted by mail in Johnson County. Applications are also available at vob.jocoelection.org, at the Election Office and at Johnson County libraries.

According to Carter, mail-in ballots are not more prone to voter fraud. Voters requesting mail-in ballots need to provide their Kansas driver’s license identification number and sign their application. Election staff then verifies the information before ballots are sent.

The same information and signature are required for in-person voting at polling locations.

The deadline to apply to receive a ballot by mail for the August primary election is 5 p.m. July 28.

Ballots may be returned by mail or hand-delivered to the Election Office or a polling location. For a mailed ballot to count, the return envelope must be postmarked on or before the date of the election (Aug. 4) and received by Aug. 7.

There is a drop box available at the front entrance of the Election Office.

Ballots cannot be faxed.

Mail-in ballots are not provisional ballots. All advance ballots are the first to be counted on election night, including votes cast early in person or by mail. Provisional ballots that are received on Election Day are counted next to tabulate final official election results.

A separate mail-in ballot application must be submitted by voters for the general election on Nov. 3 unless the voter qualifies for permanently sick/disabled status.

More information is available on the Johnson County Election Office’s website at jocoelection.org.
Election advice in pandemic: Vote early!

By Gerald Hay

A total of 10 Johnson County Election Commissioners have been appointed at the helm of the Johnson County Election Office since it was created 66 years ago.

Connie Schmidt has filled that important role twice. She was 7th Election Commissioner from 1995-2004. She is now the 10th Election Commissioner and will oversee the 2020 elections.

As a member of her election office team, Fred Sherman was appointed Deputy Election Security Commissioner. He will succeed Schmidt no later than Jan. 5, 2021, as Johnson County’s 11th Election Commissioner.

Both Schmidt and Sherman were named to their duties on Feb. 21 by Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab, whose office manages state and local elections. By law, the Secretary of State appoints election commissioners in Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wyandotte counties.

They landed in their roles on the eve of rapid changes in 2020 elections from the COVID-19 pandemic with local and state efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Working with state and county health experts, they developed action plans and measures to safeguard voting at local polling locations in August and November elections.

Their main advice to Johnson County residents is this: Vote early.

“Due to COVID-19, we will definitely set a record for number of mail-in ballots sent to voters in an August primary election. We will continue to open the seven satellite in-person voting locations 14 days prior to election day,” she said.

Closing of registration books on July 14

The voter registration books for the August elections close July 14.

The county plans to have 172 poll sites for the primary elections on Aug. 4. The county will not use nursing homes as voting locations as it has in previous years.

Concerns about the coronavirus have thinned the stable of election workers, most of whom are aging adults, but many remain for 2020. The Election Commissioner believes her office will have enough poll workers in August but will need more for the November elections.

“We always are looking for election workers,” Schmidt said. “They’re the hands and hearts of our elections. They are good people.”

According to Sherman, poll workers will be trained in small groups and will include hands-on operation of voting equipment and on health and safety guidelines in the pandemic. Poll workers will wear face masks at election locations for self-protection and have hand sanitizer for their use and others.

As of early June, the county has 427,696 registered voters eligible to cast ballots in the August and November elections. In the 2016 presidential elections, the county had slightly more than 400,000 registered voters with almost 300,000 votes being counted.

“Primary elections are more complex with more candidates on ballots, but traditionally far fewer voters,” Schmidt said. “General elections, on the other hand, have fewer candidates on ballots, but far, far more voters.”

The 2020 presidential election, including local state general elections, is set on Nov. 3.

Schmidt’s main encouragement is for residents to vote in advance and avoid traditional crowds and often long lines on election day. These factors increase possible close encounters with other voters during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
“Voting is so important,” Schmidt said. “I hope everyone decides to vote because every vote counts.”

With an election career spanning more than 25 years, Schmidt returned to the election office after a 15-year absence when she managed her own election consulting business, which has local, state and federal entities as clients.

A Johnson County native, the Election Commissioner first voted in the early 1970s on the old lever voting machines in her hometown of Merriam. Her career in local government began in 1974 as an employee at Merriam City Hall.

“In those days, we did late night voter registration prior to every election at City Hall. Residents had to appear in person to register to vote and a Deputy Registrar (her job) had to sign their voter registration application,” Schmidt said. “Everything was entirely paper-based for voter registration and all in-person only.”

Over the years, Schmidt became Assistant City Clerk then City Clerk. Her career changed in 1995 when she took “a leap” in applying for the county job of Election Commissioner. She was hired and appointed by then Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh.

“It quickly became my dream job – and still is – 25 years later,” she said with a smile.

**Voting for Eugene McCarthy at age 12**

A Lawrence native and a University of Kansas graduate, Sherman says his first “real job” was a planning technician at the city of Olathe.

He left Johnson County in 1990 to attend graduate school at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, received a Master of City Planning degree in 1992. Sherman returned to Olathe the following year where he still resides.

Most of his professional career has been working for several local governments in various positions in the planning zoning, and community development departments. For the past eight years, he was the Chief Administrative Officer/City Clerk for the city of Westwood.

“My first-time voting - for real - was in 1982 at age 18, in the Kansas gubernatorial election cycle,” he said. “That was not, however, my first intrigue into the public election process.”

That intrigue was in 1976 when Sherman was a 12-year-old boy in Lawrence who showed an interest in the national voting process in a presidential election year with the Republican National Convention occurring at Kemper Arena in Kansas City.

He and his mother, Nell, were pictured and featured in the Lawrence Journal-World story on Nov. 3, 1976, as they watched election result returns being tallied at the Douglas County Courthouse in downtown Lawrence on election night.

“The article notes I was one of few who voted for Eugene McCarthy in my junior high school mock presidential election that year,” Sherman said with a laugh.
In-person voting: By touch or on paper

In-person Johnson County voters at seven advance voting locations and at polling sites on the 2020 primary election day (Aug. 4) will find several differences.

Voters will have two options: Vote on touch-screen machines or ask for a paper ballot.

The changes are because of safeguards to protect election workers and voters in the coronavirus pandemic and new voting equipment, adding a new final step, for voters in casting their ballots.

“As we’ve navigated the impact of COVID-19 on this year’s elections, our top priority has been protecting our voters and election workers,” said Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt.

Election workers will wear a mask, sit behind a plexiglass guard to help separate them from voters and sanitize voting machines after use.

Most, if not all, polling places will have markings on the floor, like those in many local businesses, to keep voters 6 feet apart.

Johnson County voters are also strongly encouraged to wear a face mask.

The first stop for in-person voters will be at the check-in table where they will be asked to provide their driver’s license or other authorized proof of identification for verification with a PollPad.

Providing driver’s license

PollPads, used since 2016, scan the voter’s driver’s license or valid documentation which automatically calls up the individual’s information for their electronic signature. That process ensures voters are at the right polling location by their address and they receive the correct ballot by verifying their party affiliation, both on registration and by voice.

Proof of citizenship is not currently required in Kansas to register to vote, pending ongoing legal challenges to a state law passed in 2013 and a federal court injunction blocking the law, ruling it unconstitutional. That injunction recently was upheld by a federal appeals court. The state has indicated it plans to appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The check-in process has changed with fewer physical interactions between voters and election workers in the wake of the pandemic. Voters, not election workers, will place their driver’s license on the scanning tray of the PollPad.

Voters also will pick up a stylus pen provided for their electronic signature. They will keep the pen to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Johnson County residents can vote either at the touch-screen machines, purchased two years ago, or ask for paper ballots. Polling sites will have separate voting booths for voters requesting paper ballots. New ballot scanning and vote tabulating equipment, just acquired in May, can scan and retain both types of ballots.

The touchscreen machines provide a printed ballot, allowing the voter to see a record of their votes on paper. In the 2018 and 2019 elections, voters then re-inserted their ballot into the machine for tabulation to cast their vote. The machine retained the ballot for security. The process also allowed the county to maintain paper records of every vote.

That final step is changing in the 2020 elections with the addition of the new ballot scanning and vote tabulating equipment. Both the ballot-scanning equipment and current touchscreen voting machines are manufactured by Election Systems & Software.

Accumulating all ballots in one machine

Each voting location will have at least one ballot-scanning/vote tabulating machine to centralize the accumulation of all ballots at that polling site. Voters will scan/insert their ballots into these machines as the final step in casting their vote.

The ballot scanning and vote tabulating equipment retains the ballot for security. The process also allows the county to maintain paper records of every vote.

None of Johnson County’s voting machines are connected to the Internet, eliminating risks/concerns about possible hacking or manipulation to ensure election security.

The Election Office plans to deploy 780 touchscreen voting machines and 210 ballot scanners at 170 in-person voting locations on Aug. 4.

The full inventory of 1,860 voting machines and 240 ballot scanners will be available for in-person voting locations in the Presidential/General Election on Nov. 3.

More information is available on the Johnson County Election Office’s website at jocoelection.org.
Bingo’s back! A resumed season of themed bingo games is being kicked off the first of July by the 50 Plus Department of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District. Five bingo sessions will be presented at four locations through mid-August.

The first of this season’s bingo sessions begins at 9 a.m., all following sessions begin at 1:30 p.m. on varying days of the week and will feature a dozen games of bingo, as well as food, prizes and fun. Bingo prizes include gift certificates to local restaurants and businesses.

For Johnson County residents, the cost for each two-hour program is $5 per person in advance, or $6 on the day of the event. For nonresidents, the cost is $6 in advance, or $7 on the day of the event. Cost of admission covers food (or snacks) and staff time to administer the bingo program. No additional charge for bingo.

“Breakfast Bingo” is the theme of the first bingo session which will take place outdoors at 9 a.m. Wednesday, July 1, at the Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse Grand Pavilion, 9101 Nall, Prairie Village.

Other summer 50 Plus Bingo programs, all starting at 1:30 p.m., include:
- “Lucky 7” on Tuesday, July 7, Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse.
- “Ice Cream Sundae” on Thursday, July 23, Roeland Park Community Center, 4850 Rosewood Drive.
- “Shark Week” on Wednesday, Aug. 5, Matt Ross Community Center, 8101 Marty St., Overland Park.
- “Olympic” on Friday, Aug. 14, Mill Creek Activity Center, 6518 Vista, Shawnee.

Accommodations are being made at all events to provide for social distancing, which may result in smaller groups and inability to accept walk-up registrations. Food choices and food service style, and new bingo cards that allow for proper disinfection between use are other event details being adapted to provide a healthy and clean environment for bingo participants and staff.

For more information or to register, call 913-831-3359.

All JCPRD program information is subject to change based on current recommendations from local health departments as it relates to COVID 19. Please check the district’s website at JCPRD.com for the latest information about program cancellations and/or facility closures.
KLS resumes local visits in July

By Thomas L. Lasley

During these trying times of COVID-19, perhaps it would be good to remind our aging population about Kansas Legal Services, Inc. (KLS) and what it can do for seniors through the Johnson County Area Agency on Aging Program (AAA).

First, KLS is open! We are meeting with Johnson County clients at our Kansas City, Kansas office at 400 State Ave., Suite 1015. You need to call our offices at 913-621-0200 to complete an application and set an appointment. For the safety of our staff and our clients, we are strictly following COVID-19 healthcare guidelines and social distancing.

Before an applicant is permitted into our offices, we will take your temperature, you must complete and sign a COVID-19 health questionnaire, you must wear a mask and social distancing will be observed.

In July, KLS will resume its monthly site visits at various designated community centers and AAA offices throughout Johnson County.

Kansas Legal Services is a statewide, non-profit law firm, and through its AAA program, it is devoted to helping seniors, 60 years old and older, to meet their basic needs by providing various types of important, free legal services. In recent years, KLS has served nearly 20,000 persons annually in all 105 Kansas counties, through 11 legal services offices and two mediation offices across the state.

The KLS law office that services the Johnson County AAA is in Kansas City, Kansas. The statewide KLS headquarters is in Topeka. An aging adult can apply for legal assistance either by calling the Central Intake office at 1-800-723-6953 or by completing a KLS application online on the KLS website at kansaslegalservices.org. More detailed information about KLS and its services can also be obtained on the website.

KLS works in conjunction with Johnson County AAA by providing legal advice and services at no cost for aging adults who are: (1) 60 years of age and older; (2) who reside in Kansas and (3) who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. These are the only qualifying factors to receive free legal services from KLS. There is no income test nor any asset test to qualify. However, it is important to note that KLS services are subject to availability of funding. Priority is given to the most vulnerable elderly population who is in the greatest social and economic need.

For convenience purposes to aging adults, KLS makes multiple monthly site visits to meet with qualified individuals at the following three locations in Johnson County:

(1) Olathe: On the second Thursday of every other month, an attorney or paralegal from KLS makes a site visit to the Johnson County AAA, at offices located in the Sunset Building, at 11811 S. Sunset Dr., Olathe. Our next visit to that site is now scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 9. You must call in advance, 913-715-8860, to schedule an appointment.

(2) Roeland Park: On the second Thursday of every other month, a KLS representative visits the Roeland Park Community Center, 4850 Rosewood, Roeland Park. The next visit is now scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 13. To make an appointment, call 913-830-3160.

(3) Overland Park/Prairie Village: On the third Wednesday of every month, an attorney or paralegal from KLS usually makes the AAA site visit to the Matt Ross Community Center, 8101 Marty, Overland Park, but due to COVID-19, the community center is currently operating under abbreviated hours. So for the time being, beginning July 15, KLS will be conducting its monthly site visit at the Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse, 9101 Nall, Prairie Village. Visit will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with appointments being made in advance by calling 913-826-2832.

COVID-19 healthcare guidelines and social distancing will be observed at all three Johnson County sites. Masks are required. Appointees are asked to bring their own mask because KLS only has a limited supply. When you call to make your appointment, also be sure to confirm the location and times for your appointment, because in this uncertain world of COVID-19, events are frequently subject to change.

The appointments are with qualifying seniors and last 30 minutes each. These meetings fill up quickly, and are often totally booked months in advance, so the sooner an appointment is made, the better chance one will have in being able to meet with a KLS attorney or paralegal. It is important that you do not simply walk in expecting or hoping to get a meeting. Appointments are required.

Before any advice is given at any of these meetings, the senior citizen is asked to complete a KLS application, with the assistance of the KLS adviser. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss with applicants their specific legal concerns, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following areas:

Continued to page 21
Virtual programs set in July

The 50 Plus Department of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District will host fun and interesting virtual programs via Zoom in July, including:
• “Travel Trivia” on July 8.
• “History of JCPRD Parks” on July 9.
• “Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader” on July 16.
• “Scattergories” on July 22.
• “Aging Mastery: Rightsizing Your Life” on July 23.
• “Family Feud” on July 29.

RSVP to Mallory at mallory.ozier@jocogov.org to participate in any of the programs listed above or call 913-826-2975.

Additional educational presentations featuring JCPRD’s horticulturist and biologist that will focus on tree care and native plants are also being planned.

For information on all current and future virtual and in person programs offered by JCPRD’s 50 Plus Program, sign up to receive our enewsletter, visit jcpd.com/enewsletters.

KLS resumes visits to Johnson County in July

Continued from page 20

• Applicant’s estate planning needs and how best to avoid probate, including a discussion of and preparation of simple estate planning documents, such as: A Last Will & Testament, A Living Will, A Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare and Financial Purposes, and a Transfer on Death Deed. If documents are prepared, then through a separate follow-up appointment the documents can be executed in the presence of a KLS attorney or paralegal, all done during the site visit.
• Applicant’s issues regarding adult abuse, healthcare, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, collections, guardianships and conservatorships, landlord/tenant, simple real estate matters, bankruptcies and IRS and state tax debts.

During these difficult times of COVID-19, the KLS staff looks forward to working with Kansas aging adults, especially those in the Johnson County AAA service area. KLS feels it provides a valuable free service to the community.

If you need these AAA services, please apply as soon as possible.

Thomas L. Lasley is an attorney for Kansas Legal Services. He has more than 40 years of experience in the areas of elder law and estate planning.
Two surveys of Johnson County residents before and during the COVID-19 pandemic produced high marks for the county’s quality of life and overall satisfaction with county government.

Those were among the results in the 2020 Community Survey shared with the Johnson County Board of Commissioners. The first survey involved a random sample of 1,527 Johnson County households by ETC Institute. The Olathe firm has conducted the county’s community survey since 2005.

During the month of May, a second survey was composed of follow-up questions to those in the initial survey. The second survey was conducted to gauge any change in ratings of county services and community perceptions in the ongoing pandemic. During the second round, respondents were asked about half of the questions.

According to Chris Tatham, president and chief executive officer of ETC, Johnson County continued to have a “very high” overall satisfaction rating in the 2020 Community Survey, and that “the COVID-19 pandemic did not change satisfaction with county services.”

- Quality of life in the county at 93%, a rating of 21% above the national average and 23% more than the large community average.
- Overall image of the county at 92%, a rating 31% above the national average and 29% above the large community average.
- Public safety services at 92% compared to a national average of 74% and a large community average of 64%.
- The overall quality of county services was 81% as opposed to a national average of only 48% and large community average of 42%.

As in the previous surveys, respondents were asked to rate the quality of life in Johnson County. Highlights from the 2020 survey included:

- 97% were satisfied with Johnson County as a place to live. The national rate was 71%. The rate for large communities was 51%.
- 95% were satisfied with Johnson County as a place to raise children with a national rate of 70% and large community rate of 52%.
- 91% were satisfied with Johnson County as a place to work. The national rate was 54% and large communities’ rating was 45%.

With an increasing population of aging adults, 72% were satisfied in the February survey with Johnson County as a place to retire compared to a national rate of 56% and large community rate of 46%.

The 2020 Community Survey is available at jocogov.org/sites/default/files/documents/CMO/Community%20Survey%202020.pdf.
Johnson County, cities and United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) have launched a community-wide housing study.

Community input on the county’s housing market is being gathered through a variety of avenues, including a resident survey. This survey provides an opportunity for residents who live and work in Johnson County to share their thoughts.

Housing is a priority health equity issue according to the Johnson County Health Equity Network (HEN), a multi-sector collaborative convened by UCS. Studies show that 50% of what contributes to health outcomes of residents can be attributed to the local physical environment and socio-economic circumstances.

Where residents live determines which resources and opportunities they can access, including quality jobs that pay living wages, good schools, parks, libraries, grocery stores and public transportation that are vital to their health and well-being. Local surroundings shape the lifestyle choices that impact long-term health of residents.

In Johnson County, aging adults, 65 years and older, are the fastest growing age group. Housing needs of the aging population are a critical component for city and county planning.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) partners with UCS and the HEN on the issue of housing.

“We know that remaining in one’s own home and community is very important to most people as they age,” said AARP Kansas State Director Dr. Maren Turner. “That’s why we’re encouraging Johnson County residents to respond to the survey and let us know whether the current housing climate in their community will allow them to do that, and, if not, what the barriers are.”

The survey will collect information about residents’ experiences with housing as well as their opinions about the status of housing in the county and which housing options are important to residents.

Findings from the survey will be released as part of the 2020 Johnson County Housing Market Study and will be used to draft a 10-year outlook on housing that local officials can use to make policy decisions in the future.

The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. Responses will be collected through the end of July. You can participate in the survey online or complete a paper version of the survey and return it by mail. Follow this link to learn more about the survey and to take the survey online: ucsjoco.org/health-equity-network/.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about how you can participate in other housing study activities, please contact Kristy Baughman, UCS, at 913-438-4764.

Survey focuses on housing needs
Overnight Fishing Saturdays during July are being planned by the Johnson County Park and Recreation District for July 11 at Lexington Lake Park, July 18 at Heritage Park, and July 25 at Shawnee Mission Park.

After 11 p.m. on these respective dates, each park will be open only for fishing and park police officers will be on duty throughout the night. Fishing will be allowed from the bank or from watercraft. Park safety officials note state law requires a white light be on at all times on boats on the water after sunset.

Before fishing in district waters, anglers age 16 and older will need to have a valid Kansas fishing license, a Johnson County Park and Recreation District fishing permit, and all appropriate boat tags, if applicable. All persons, regardless of age or residency, must also possess a JCPRD trout permit if fishing for trout.

Additional Overnight Fishing Saturdays are planned for Aug. 8 at Kill Creek Park; Aug. 15 at Shawnee Mission Park; and Sept. 12 at Lexington Lake Park.

Shawnee Mission Park is located at 7900 Renner Road, Shawnee and Lenexa. Heritage Park is located at 16050 Pflumm Road, Olathe. Kill Creek Park is located at 11670 Homestead Lane, Olathe. Lexington Lake Park is located at 8850 Sunflower Road, north of Kansas 10 Highway near the Lexington Avenue exit in De Soto.

For more information about the overnight fishing program, call Visitor Services at 913-888-4713.
By Elissa Andre

For many in our community, Johnson County Library is a home away from home.

In 2019, we saw more than 40,000 visitors each week across our 14 branches—that’s more than the capacity of Kauffman Stadium! We are thrilled that with our reopening we get to see our patron’s faces again, but we know COVID-19 will still be with us. That’s why we are taking several precautions to ensure we can safely deliver the services you love.

All our locations are now open, and you are not only able to pick up holds, but also browse our collection and checkout using our contactless self-check machines. Computers are available for one hour per day per guest and are arranged to maintain proper social distancing. You can ask brief questions at our reference desks, which are equipped with plexiglass shields to minimize direct contact between staff and patrons.

We strongly encourage both patrons and library staff to wear masks for the safety of everyone in our buildings, and we ask that visitors practice physical distancing of at least 6 feet. Floor markers indicate where you should stand to maintain proper distancing, and extra hand sanitizer and cleaning wipes are available for use.

And while we know our libraries are a great place to sit and relax for a few hours with a good book, we’ve removed our lounge furniture for now to help limit the number of visitors in our buildings at any given time.

While visiting our buildings, you can also take advantage of these services:

• Item returns at all branches.
• Self-service printing and faxing at select locations.
• New library card applications.

A full list of services offered and safety precautions we’re taking is listed in our Reopening FAQ on jocolibrary.org.

If you aren’t ready to visit us in person, that’s okay too! You can still send any items from our collection to our drive-thrus at the Blue Valley, Lenexa City Center or Monticello branches by placing holds online or calling us at 913-826-4600. We are currently exploring ways to offer contactless holds pick up at all our branches across Johnson County, and we’ll be sure to let our patrons know when additional library services, like study, meeting and conference rooms are available and in-person events are being held.

With your Johnson County Library card, you also have access to thousands of eResources, including magazines, newspapers, books and movies. You can start using our comprehensive eLibrary, which is available 24/7, by visiting jocolibrary.org/elibrary and logging in with your username and PIN.

Our collection of eMags from RBdigital has been expanded from 300 to more than 3,500 magazines, all available instantly. Explore a wide range of popular newsstand favorites to hard-to-find specialty publications for adults and kids. Catch up on business, celebrities, fashion, health, hobbies, home improvement, science and more from the U.S. and around the world – in English and multiple other languages.

For the newspaper readers out there, the library has you covered with eNewspapers. Access national and regional newspapers like the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, The Kansas City Star, Shawnee Mission Post and more. Many offer current and past issues with additional online content. Flip through the pages of your favorite newspaper while enjoying the convenience of online access.

Whether you’ve visiting us in person or online, we look forward to helping you find what you need at the library! 

Elissa Andre is external communication manager at Johnson County Library.

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Some tips to shop safely at local farmers markets

By Crystal Futrell

As summer comes into full bloom and fears about the pandemic subside, one can almost hear the county breathe a mask-filtered sigh of relief. But, staying cautiously alert while resuming “normal” activities is still advised, especially in locales that tend to attract a crowd — like local farmers markets.

Discoveries are still being made about the mechanics of the COVID-19 virus, but one assured assessment has been that the primary method of transition is through close person-to-person interaction. Unfortunately, this interaction is one of the charms folks love most about shopping at farmers markets. For this season, at least, it is a charm worth resisting for the sake of one another’s health — and for the sake of the markets.

While markets were deemed essential businesses during the lockdown since they were sources of food, not all markets chose to operate, and those that did made drastic adjustments to manage the spread of infection.

To protect both ourselves and the communal organizations and traditions we love, farmers market attendees should keep these tips in mind:

- Maintain at least 6 feet distance between yourself and others.
- Call the market ahead of time to see which vendors and items will be available.
- Make a list of items you need to limit your exposure.
- Avoid touching your face and cellphone while at the market and before washing your hands at home.
- Look for and follow entrance and movement guidelines established by the markets.

- Be aware that some markets have a special shopping hour for aging adults.
- Choose items with your eyes, not your hands.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water when you get home.
- Wash your produce with water only before consuming.
- Avoid using cash, if possible.
- Resist the temptation to socialize.

Also, don’t forget to look for these food safety tips, too:

- Fresh produce should be displayed off the ground/floor and be clean, look fresh and have no cuts or nicks.
- Cut or peeled produce should be displayed on/surrounded by ice and look fresh and cold.
- Meats and cheeses should be displayed on ice or stored in a cooler.
- Eggs should be uncracked and in a clean carton displayed on ice or stored in a cooler.
- Milk must be pasteurized (Kansas regulation), and the vendor should be able to confirm this.
- Juice and cider that has been pasteurized is the safest to consume.
- Vendors preparing hot foods should be using a food thermometer.
- Vendors should be washing their hands regularly, especially if they’re preparing foods/samples.
- Booths should be clean, and vendors should exhibit good hygiene (clean clothes and hands, no nose wiping, etc.).

Crystal Futrell is the health and food safety agent at the Johnson County K-State Research and Extension Office.

Crystal Futrell is the health and food safety agent at the Johnson County K-State Research and Extension Office.
Exercise programs enhance health

By Michelle Alexander

For many years, the 50 Plus Program of Johnson County Park & Recreation District (JCPRD) has been offering weekly drop-in opportunities for chair-based exercise programs at a variety of facilities across the county.

The program recently took the steps necessary to become an evidence-based program (EBP). So, what is an EBP?

The National Council on Aging explains that EBPs offer proven ways to promote health and prevent disease among aging adults. EBPs are based on the rigorous study of interventions and model programs carried out with multiple populations in a variety of settings, making them more likely to produce positive changes or outcomes for people who participate. EBPs work!

The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP) is just one of the chosen EBPs by JCPRD’s 50 Plus Program. It is a low-impact, recreational exercise program that also incorporates a brief educational component. Key activities in each 60-minute class include joint check/warm-up, range of motion/stretching, strengthening, cardiovascular endurance and joint check/cool down. Balance and coordination activities, relaxation and breathing activities, and health education are additional components incorporated throughout.

The proven outcomes for participants include self-confidence, muscle strength, coordination, functional ability and improved mobility with reduced fatigue, pain and stiffness. Instructors hold general fitness certification, are certified in first aid, CPR and by the AFEP.

All AFEP programs offered by JCPRD are expected to resume the week of July 6. Classes include:

- Mondays and Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the new Merriam Community Center, 6040 Slater St.
- Tuesday and Thursday at 10:15 a.m. at the New Century Fieldhouse, 551 New Century Parkway near Gardner.
- Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:30 a.m. at the Roeland Park Community Center, 4850 Rosewood Drive.
- Wednesday at 1 p.m. and Friday at 10:45 a.m. at the Matt Ross Community Center, 8101 Marty St., Overland Park.

Tai Chi also option

Tai Chi for Arthritis is another EBP offered by 50 Plus. The program will take place on Mondays with an intermediate session at 1 p.m. and a beginner session at 2 p.m. at the Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse, 9101 Nall Ave., Prairie Village. It is easy, enjoyable and safe for people with arthritis to learn. Both the Arthritis Foundation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Prevention in America support the program.

All programs are $3 per person per class, regardless of residency, and can be paid at time of attendance. No class fees will be collected the week of July 6-10 to encourage individuals to try a variety of classes and locations to determine if they are a good fit.

Accommodations are being made to all classes to provide for social distancing and disinfection of any and all equipment prior to and following each class. For more information, please contact the 50 Plus Department at 913-826-2975.

All program information is subject to change, based on current recommendations from local health departments as it relates to COVID-19. Please check the district’s website at JCPRD.com for the latest information about program cancellations and/or facility closures.

Michelle Alexander is department manager for Johnson County Park & Recreation's 50th Plus Program.
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Ladies, want to expand your horizons? Try out our Art Club in Olathe on Thursday mornings.Realism colored pencil/graphite instruction. No experience needed. E-mail Carol for details, carol.rondinelli@sbcglobal.net.

**July-August classifieds**


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Estate and Downsizing sales, conducted by the experienced volunteers of Shawnee Mission LaSertoma, who support nursing students at Johnson County Community College and the Johnson County Christmas Bureau. Mary. 913-484-5544.

The classified ad rate in The Best Times is $55 for the first 20 words and $0.75 for each additional word. Advertising rates and advertising deadlines are subject to change without notice.

Payment for classified ads and business card ads must be paid in advance by the invoice due date prior to ad publication.

Classified ad requests are not accepted after the third day of the month preceding the publication. For more information on the classified ad or business card ad process, contact Tim Phenicie.

Email: tim.phenicie@jocogov.org
Call: 913-715-8920

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How do I get rid of all these machines & tools?
If you have a basement or garage full of woodworking tools, why not let me price and sell them while freeing up some space and putting cash in your hands. With over 24 years’ experience in appraising and selling woodworking machinery & tools, I can make life easier. Call or email Mike at 913-375-5750, mbcobb5@gmail.com.

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Don’t know where to start? Retired Overland Park Realtor will pay cash for your home. No inspections, appraisals or closing costs. Leave furniture behind. Broken basements ok. Linda Mathiesen. 913-642-5055.

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July-August classifieds

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July calendar

Due to the COVID-19 and preventative actions, please check websites or call ahead of time for the latest information about program/class/events cancellations and/or facility closures.

July

Monday Movies. 12:15 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. 7/6-“Fractured;” 7/13-“The Rainmaker;” 7/20-“Sarah’s Key;” 7/27-“The Two Popes.” Lunch at 11:30 a.m. for a $3 donation. Call 913-888-6141 between 9-10 a.m. 24 hours in advance for lunch reservations.

July 9

Celebrate America Bingo. 1:30-3:30 p.m. $3. Merriam Community Center. Snacks & drinks provided. Lunch Bunch. 11:15 a.m. Transportation departs from Lenexa Senior Center at 10:40 a.m. Transportation $5 & cost of your own meal. “Hayward’s”-10901 W. 75th St., Shawnee. Reservations required by calling 913-477-7100.

July 10

Family Fun Night-Kansas Cowboys. 6-8 p.m. Stagecoach rides are $3/person 3 & up, some activities require extra fees. Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farm. Agility Class. 10 a.m. $49. Meadowbrook Clubhouse (tentatively unless moved to zoom) To register call 913-715-7000.

July 11

So Now What? Retirement. 10 a.m. $3/$4 nonresident. Meadowbrook Clubhouse (tentatively unless moved to zoom) To register call 913-715-7000.

July 14


July 16

Dispelling the Myths about Palliative Care. 10 a.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Family Fun Night-Wonderful Womanen. 6-8 p.m. Stagecoach rides are $3/person ages 3 & up, some activities require extra fees. Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farm. Susan B. Anthony Comes to Kansas. 7 p.m. Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farm. Parental discretion advised.

July 17


July 19

Classical Stretch. 3-3:50 p.m. $8/$9. Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse.

July 22

Basic Breads. 6-8 p.m. Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse. Register at 913-826-2975.

July 23

Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body. 10 a.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Please register by calling 913-477-7100.

July 24

50 & Beyond Bingo "We’ve Missed You!" 1:30 p.m. $2 (SPJCC members) $4 (non-members). Sylvester Powell.

July 28


July 29

Solving the Medicare Puzzle. 6:30 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Call 913-477-7100 to reserve a spot.

July 30

Ice Cream Social. 12:15 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Space is limited. Reserve your spot by calling 913-477-7100.


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Due to the COVID-19 and preventative actions, please check websites or call ahead of time for the latest information about program/class/events cancellations and/or facility closures.

August

Monday Movies. 12:15 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. 8/3—“The Pelican Brief;” 8/10—“The Bachelors;” 8/17—“It Takes Two;” 8/24—“Where the Heart Is;” 8/31—“People’s Choice. Lunch at 11:30 a.m. for a $3 donation. Call 913-888-6141 between 9-10 a.m. 24 hours in advance for lunch reservations. Free popcorn & beverage served.

Wednesdays. Silver Screen Matinee. 1 p.m. Merriam Community Center. Popcorn provided second & fourth Wednesday.

August 5

Bingo: Shark Week. 1:30-3:30 pm. $5/$6. Matt Ross.

August 6

Wellness Seminar: Health Benefits of Essential Oils. 10 a.m. Lenexa Senior Center. To register call 913-477-7100.

Aging Mastery Program. 5:30-7:00 p.m. $49/$53. Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse.

August 11


August 12

Birthday Entertainment. 12:15 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Lunch at 11:30 a.m. for a $3 donation. Call 913-888-6141 between 9-10 a.m. 24 hours in advance for lunch reservations.

August 13

Lunch Bunch. 11:15 a.m. Transportation departs from Lenexa Senior Center at 10:40 a.m. Transportation $5 & cost of your own meal. "Red Door Grill"-11851 Roe, Leawood. Reservations required by calling 913-477-7100.

Watermelon Bingo. 1:30-3:30 p.m. $3. Merriam Community Center. Snacks & drinks provided.

August 14

Olympics Bingo. 1:30-3:30 p.m. $5/$6. Mill Creek Activity.

August 15

August 15 (register by July 15) New Theatre—"Freaky Friday: The Musical." The price includes a buffet lunch & the show. Meet at New Theatre at 11:15 a.m. or reserve transportation for $5 from Lenexa Senior Center at 10:45 a.m. Lunch served at noon–show time is 1:15 p.m. Tickets may be picked up at the Lenexa Senior Center anytime M-F, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. or at New Theatre box office on the day of the show. Register by calling 913-477-7100. Registration closes July 15.

August 18

How to Maximize Your Social Security. 6:30 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Please register for this informative & valuable seminar by calling 913-477-7100.

August 20

Lenexa Luau. 12:15 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Lunch at 11:30 a.m. for a $3 donation. Call 913-888-6141 between 9-10 a.m. 24 hours in advance for lunch reservations.

Special Event: Rock N Roll Dinner. 5:30pm-7:30 pm. $16/$18. Roeland Park.

August 21

50 & Beyond Bingo "Dog Days of Summer." 1:30 p.m. $2 (SPJCC members) $4 (non-members). Sylvester Powell.

August 22

August 22 (register by July 15) Grand O’ Opry. Depart from Lenexa Senior Center at 2:30 p.m. Return 10 p.m. $75 includes motor-coach transportation, lunch, & show. Lunch buffet at K & M BBQ in Spring Hill before headin’ to the country show. Register by July 15 at 913-477-7100.

August 24

Technology: Selling Online. 5-7 p.m. $19/$21. Roeland Park.

August 25

50 & Beyond Matinee. "Overcomer." 12:30 p.m. $1 (SPJCC members) $2 (non-members). Sylvester Powell.

August 26

Solving the Medicare Puzzle. 6:30 p.m. Lenexa Senior Center. Call 913-477-7100 to reserve a spot.
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