Selecting licensed child care for your family

Johnson County turns 160 this year
County moves forward with proposed mill-levy reduction

The proposed 2018 budget draft is complete after months of diligent review and discussion by county staff and leadership. This year, we are recommending a reduction of the county’s general fund mill levy.

Current revenue projections support a strong county budget which meets the needs of our growing community and creates this opportunity to return resources back to Johnson County taxpayers. We encourage everyone to review the budget online at jocogov.org. A public hearing on the budget is set for 7 p.m. July 31 at the Johnson County Administration Building, 111 S. Cherry Street in downtown Olathe.

It’s been a busy spring and summer so far with the opening of the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center (JCAHC), ground breaking for a library and the opening of a new park. The Arts & Heritage Center at 8788 Metcalf in Overland Park is the new home for the county museum, the 1950s All-Electric House and the very popular KidScape activity area. JCAHC features a black box theater, providing an indoor location for The Theatre in the Park’s rehearsals and productions as well as space rented by the Overland Park Historical Society. The center also has classrooms supporting parks programs and studio space for the Emerging Artists Program from Johnson County Developmental Supports. The center offers new community space to rent for wedding receptions, meetings or other get-togethers. If you haven’t had a chance to see this wonderful facility, we encourage you to make time soon.

Lexington Lake Park just opened and Big Bull Creek Park will open up later this year. These facilities are long awaited by residents in western Johnson County. Big Bull Creek Park includes 2,000 acres between Gardner and Edgerton, and Lexington Lake includes 465 acres west of De Soto and north of K-10. A recent ground breaking for the much-anticipated Monticello branch library in western Shawnee brings us closer to the 2018 opening of this new addition to our library system.

This September, Johnson County Government celebrates its 160th anniversary. While the county was formed in 1855, it took two more years before county government was formed in March 1857.

We’ve come a long way since those days, but the best is yet to come. That’s where you, our residents, come in. We encourage you to connect with us and let us know your thoughts on our many new projects, our budget and anything else that’s on your mind. You can do this in many ways including by engaging with us on Facebook and Twitter, reaching out to our many programs and departments through our website, jocogov.org, signing up to receive information, joining us for a county commission meeting in person or online 9:30 a.m. each Thursday or attending one of our community meetings or events.

And be sure to stop by our county booth at the Johnson County Fair from July 31 to Aug. 5, Johnson County Old Settlers Celebration in Olathe from Sept. 7 to 9, and the Park Palooza festival on Sept. 17 at The Theatre in the Park complex at Shawnee Mission Park. We look forward to connecting with you soon. Have a great summer!

Ed Eilert
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

Hannes Zacharias
County Manager

On the cover: Residents enjoy the weekend sailing on the beautiful 120-acre lake at Johnson County Park and Recreation District’s Shawnee Mission Park, located at 7900 Renner Road.
In short

Johnson County local government turns 160

Selecting the right child care fit for your family

Managing customer satisfaction

Church and state solve problem for children

Shared services across the county

County commission sets maximum expenditure budget

Officials work to prevent an increase in opioid misuse

Ending dependence through job opportunities

Staffing the county

The Board of County Commissioners

National Police Week

Best Times Digest: Live Well Age Well coming Oct. 19

Three Questions

10 Things

Ways to engage with JoCo

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

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

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

In person
Attend a weekly Board of County Commissioners meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Thursdays on the third floor of the Administration Building, 111 S. Cherry St., Olathe, KS 66061.

Johnson County Elected Officials
Ed Eilert, Chairman
Ronald L. “Ron” Shaffer, District 1
James “Jim” P. Allen, District 2
Steven “Steve” C. Klika, District 3
Jason Osterhaus, District 4
Michael Ashcraft, District 5
Michael “Mike” Brown, District 6
Stephen M. Howe, District Attorney
Calvin H. Hayden, Sheriff

Image above: On June 10, 2017, Johnson County Park and Recreation opened the doors to the new Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center in Overland Park. The facility starts a new chapter at the former King Louie West building, now housing a KidScape interactive area, the Johnson County Museum as well as The Theatre in the Park indoor series and event space available for residents and so much more. jocoahc.com
In short

Hire licensed contractors for home repairs

As home repair projects begin to heat up this summer, Johnson County Government reminds residents to be careful about whom they hire for contracted work. Johnson County’s Contractor Licensing program provides up-to-date contractor listings and training on contractor codes.

The Contractor Licensing program is responsible for issuing and tracking 10 types of construction contractor licenses. In doing so, the program establishes and maintains minimum standards for licensing contractors and provides continuing education to enhance contractor knowledge of building codes. The program provides a list of contractors by their license type, including electrical, mechanical, plumbing, roofing, framing, pools/spas and other residential home improvements.

Online check-in reduces wait time at health clinics

During late summer, the Department of Health and Environment’s clinic waiting rooms in Olathe and Mission begin to fill up with school-age children who need immunizations.

Parents can now reduce their wait times by checking in online through the QLess widget on the department’s website or by using the QLess mobile app for Apple and Android devices. Once in the queue, the client will receive a text message updating them on their wait time. Clients can also leave the line or ask for more time as their appointment time draws near. This new way of getting in line is also available for those needing family planning and STI testing services. Visit jocogov.org/jcdhe or call 913-826-1200 to get in line now. Get the free QLess app from the Apple or Google app stores.

First Kansas Infectious Disease Conference explores bioterrorism, disease management

Nearly 200 public health, emergency response and health care leaders met May 9 and 10 at the first Kansas Infectious Disease Symposium to learn how highly infectious disease outbreaks can be contained and managed in Kansas and how biological agents are used in terrorist attacks. The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment hosted the two-day event in Overland Park so local, state and federal partners could share Kansas-specific information about planning and maintaining readiness in their jurisdictions. Keynote speakers included Dr. David Franz, Dr. Leonard Cole, Col. Randall Larsen (United States Air Force, retired) and Dr. Lee Norman.

“This event was a great opportunity to develop partnerships with public health and emergency response colleagues from around the state of Kansas and western Missouri,” said Lougene Marsh, director of the Department of Health and Environment.

“The knowledge gained and the relationships established during this conference will be invaluable should a public health event happen in our state or region.”

Conference organizers received positive feedback and are in the early planning stages for the May 2018 conference. If you’re interested in speaking at next year’s conference, contact Tiffany Wallin at tiffany.wallin@jocogov.org.

quotable

“I don’t think there’s any doubt this facility will become an important part of the county and an iconic place to get together.”

— Johnson County Commission Chair Ed Eilert

Shawnee Mission Post at the June 10 opening of the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center
Johnson County, as a local government, is celebrating its 160th anniversary in September.

Johnson County, as a Kansas county, is two years older, at 162-years-old, while Kansas, as a state, is four years younger, at only 156 years of age.

**Time gaps**

All three milestones were created during the turbulent time of Bleeding Kansas from 1854 to 1861. At issue was whether Kansas would enter the union as a free state, like Nebraska, or a slave state, like Missouri.

It began when Johnson County was created as one of the original 33 counties founded by the Legislative Act of 1855 in the Territory of Kansas.

It took four conventions during the Bleeding Kansas era to decide the state constitution. Kansas was admitted into the Union as a free state on Jan. 29, 1861, becoming the 34th state in the union. The Civil War began four months later.

During that time, Johnson County Government was created in March 1857 when Kansas Territorial Gov. Robert J. Walker appointed John T. Ector, John Evans and William Fisher Jr. as members of the “county tribunal.”

The county tribunal had its first meeting on Sept. 7, 1857, in a log cabin in Gum Springs (Shawnee), the county seat designated by the Kansas Territorial Legislature two years earlier.

The tribal’s second meeting occurred Oct. 28 at which time the townships of Aubry, Lexington, Monticello, McCamish, Olathe, Santa Fe (now Oxford), Spring Hill and Shawnee were organized and special commissioners appointed to prescribe their boundaries. The county now has seven townships.

Ledger entries and other documents of the county commission meetings from the beginning into the 1880s on file at Johnson County Archives and Records Management reflect a range of expenses and decisions in setting up county government. Commissioners appointed the first assessor in 1857 and ordered the building infrastructure of roads and bridges, costing as much as $3,955 to span across two creeks, to accommodate both future population and business growth.

For most of 1858, members of the tribunal had two meeting sites since a turf war for county seat was taking place between Olathe and Gum Springs. In a March election, Olathe was first chosen as the county capital, but Territorial Governor James Denver declared the election illegal and ordered the county seat returned to Gum Springs. Olathe was chosen as the seat of the county government at a second election in October and was declared the permanent seat by territorial legislative act in 1859.

**First elections**

The first elections in Johnson County occurred in March 1858. All three appointed county commissioners — Ector, Evans and Fisher — were elected.

In fall 1859, the three county commissioners were re-elected. Also in 1859, Frederick Case commenced the erection of a stone building for commercial use on the southeast corner of the public square in downtown Olathe.

**BOCC beginnings**

The first official mention of the “Board of County Commissioners” (BOCC) occurred on April 2, 1860.

The political situation changed in the 1861 elections when all the county officers were Republican Free-Staters.

The BOCC had three elected, at-large members until Nov. 25, 1871, when the county was divided into commissioner districts by townships. The election law was changed again in 1877, allowing two county commissioners to be held over with only one commissioner being elected each year.

For eight decades, three commissioners were at the helm of county government as Johnson County continued to grow from a population of 4,364 in 1860 to 33,327 in 1940 on the eve of World War II. Following the war, the population boomed, resulting in expansion of county government to serve a steady growth in residents.

“The county commission had a lot of responsibility from the 1880s until the 1970s. The three-member commission was responsible for administering county finances, appointing county employees (even down to the ‘county weed supervisor’), and authorizing vehicle registration,” said Katie Keckeisen, curator of interpretation at Johnson County Museum.

“It wasn’t until the county commission was expanded to five members (with the help of the League of Women Voters ‘Give Me Five!’ campaign) that a county administrator was appointed, which relieved the commission of the more administrative tasks so they could focus on policymaking.”

*continued on page 21 >>*
The right fit for your family
Selecting licensed child care in Johnson County

by AMANDA KELLER

For parents-to-be, thoughtful selection of child care is one of the most critical tasks on the seemingly endless pre-baby arrival to do list.

While picking your child’s name and nursery decor can feel like monumental decisions for expectant parents, perhaps no decision carries as much weight as who will be caring for the baby when maternity/paternity leave runs out. Here are some steps to consider when beginning the process of selecting child care.

Tighter child care regulations
In 2004, 13-month-old Lexie Engelman tragically passed away as the result of an injury sustained while she was left unsupervised at a licensed family child care home in Johnson County. Determined that positive change emerge from their personal tragedy, Lexie’s parents, Kim and Bryan Engelman, became strong advocates for increasing child care provider regulations.

The Kansas Legislature passed Lexie’s Law, the first revision to the state’s child care regulations in 20 years, in 2010. It’s viewed as a landmark comprehensive state law — one other states are trying to emulate. Some key elements of Lexie’s Law include:

• Every child care provider must have and display a non-expired license.
• Licenses now expire every 12 months with the expiration printed on the license.
• Children 2.5 years or younger require “line of sight” supervision at all times.
• Parents have access to their child at any time while in care.
• Every staff member is required to complete basic classes in pediatric first aid and CPR, safe sleep practices, recognizing child abuse and neglect, and child development.

Kim Engelman now works as chief family and community engagement officer for Child Care Aware of America, a role through which she advocates for improved child care safety at the national level.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) licenses and regulates child care providers throughout the state, whereas Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) is contracted by KDHE to do state work at the county level. County employees conduct inspections, consultations and complaint visits at child care facilities and all resulting reports are sent on to KDHE. Visit KDHE’s website at kdheks.gov/bcclr to view all current state regulations.

What is licensed child care?
It’s critical for parents to select a licensed child care provider. Kansas state law (Statute 65-501) mandates that anyone caring for two or more unrelated children under age 16 for greater than 20 hours a week of total care must be licensed.

Therefore, any child care facility operating in the state without a license, or with one that’s expired, is operating illegally.

While being licensed can’t guarantee that tragedy will never happen at a given center or home, being licensed does provide several safeguards that give parents greater peace of mind when trusting a provider with the care of their child. To obtain a license, a child care provider must submit to a Kansas Bureau of Investigation and Department for Children and Families background check on all staff. To maintain a current license, the provider must be inspected annually by JCDHE and the fire marshal.

Selecting child care
Here are some basic steps to find a licensed child care provider that best suits your family’s needs through reputable information sources.

Start researching child care as early as possible. “We have about 30,000 child care spots in Johnson County,” explained Eldonna Chesnut, JCDHE Child Care Licensing division director. “They’re not all full, but we know there’s a huge need for quality infant care. It’s very hard to get infant spots — people get on waiting lists when they get pregnant for some facilities.”

Establish preferred parameters for child care. There are many different types of care available, with the biggest differences being how many children are in care at once and whether the children are cared for in a person’s home or a child care center. Other parameters to consider include location, child-to-adult ratio, hours care is needed and budget. As of May 2017, there were 1,014 licensed child care providers in Johnson County; nearly 700 of the providers care for children at a home and the remainder are based in a child care center or school-age program.

Contact a resource and referral agency. Resource and referral agencies serve as informational resources to parents selecting child care. The two such agencies that serve our community are Day Care Connection (913-529-1200) and The Family Conservancy (877-678-2548). Resource and referral agencies
only refer parents to licensed child care providers that are not under investigation for a serious complaint or ongoing non-compliance. These agencies can help you narrow your list of child care provider options down to your top few.

“Along with a list of referrals, parents receive a packet with good questions to ask providers, licensing guidelines they should be aware of and where to find additional information,” said The Family Conservancy’s Child Care Resource and Referral Director Katrina Minter.

**Look up the providers’ compliance history on KDHE’s website.** Once you’ve narrowed down your child care program selection to your two or three favorites, visit kdheks.gov/becrl and click on “Search for a Licensed Child Care Facility Inspection Results” to view the program’s annual inspection history. “It’s free, immediate and online. Back in 2003–2004 when we were looking for child care for Lexie, [the online portal] wasn’t available, nor did we even know that we could get inspection history and that sort of thing,” said Kim Engelman.

**Call the providers on your short list.** Call each provider on your short list to get more information and ask questions. Eliminate any providers you’re uncomfortable with, then set up appointments to visit those remaining on your list.

**Make site visits and ask more questions.** Visit the child care programs you’re considering more than once before enrolling your child, at various times and on various days of the week. This enables you to get a feel for safety, cleanliness, how the provider interacts with the children and the quality of programming. Engelman emphasizes asking questions around safety and health, how the children are supervised (both indoors and outdoors), programming, food and nutrition, and communication with parents.

**Enroll your child, then make a few more unannounced site visits.** As stipulated by Lexie’s Law, you have the right to stop by the facility where your child is at any time he or she is there. The provider is not allowed to keep a parent in an area away from where their child is, such as a lobby or foyer, while the provider retrieves the child.

“Every place the child has access to, they have access to. Parents should see everywhere their child is going to be. If the parent is denied access they should report this to us,” said Chesnut.

**Reporting concerns**
If a parent witnesses something that concerns them at any time during a visit to any child care facility in Johnson County, he or she should call Child Care Licensing at 913-477-8339.

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**WEB EXTRA**

Visit jocogov.org/jocomag for a listing of questions to ask potential providers, 38 research-based indicators of quality child care and additional parent resources.

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This advertisement is presented by Johnson County, Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, and K-State Research and Extension. **K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

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**In 1917 the Johnson County Cooperative Extension office opened its doors.**

The goal was to bring land grant university resources and knowledge directly to the citizens. Kansas State University Research and Extension has been in partnership with Johnson County government for a century. We have been providing unbiased scientific resources and serving as the bridge between university academic specialists and the public for the past 100 years.

As the cooperative extension it is our mission to serve in cooperation with our citizens — working together to apply research-based solutions to your personal needs.
Managing customer satisfaction
Records and Tax Administration focuses on continuous improvement

by AUSTIN FALLEY

Johnson County’s Records and Tax Administration (RTA) office is unique in the state of Kansas.

Of the 105 counties in the state, Johnson County is the only jurisdiction where the county clerk, the register of deeds and the county treasurer are not elected officials; in Johnson County, each position is appointed and supervised by the county manager, working together to provide land record services.

RTA explained
If you buy a house in the county, you will probably receive a bundle of documents — a mortgage, a deed, an assignment, among other items. RTA receives and reviews those document bundles to record and prepare tax rolls.

RTA serves as the land record office for all taxing authorities in Johnson County, including cities, schools, libraries, parks and fire districts, townships and cemeteries. For the 2016 tax roll, RTA processed mill levies for 62 separate taxing authorities. After RTA restructured with the 2000 county charter, the department also became the county’s call center where residents can call with any questions they may have about county services.

“The call center was just a switchboard in the past,” RTA Director John Bartolac said, “but we expanded it to be a call center where our folks are trained to have knowledge of all county offices, so they can try to provide answers rather than immediately transferring callers to another department.”

Bartolac said call center staff are able to answer about half of the inquiries they receive without needing assistance from other county office.

New technology, more customer satisfaction
RTA employees focus on delivering exceptional customer service to county residents, regularly looking at new technologies to achieve department goals. Recently, RTA has seen a flurry of activity to adopt technology to improve process efficiencies and increase customer satisfaction.

RTA is currently testing a new tax roll software and recently upgraded software for recording. The department anticipates completing a major upgrade to its archives and agenda management software by the end of the year.

Bartolac said RTA is working toward implementing a single software platform to perform each of the office’s major functions.

While RTA has offered electronic record filing for many years, today about 70 percent of the documents submitted to the office for recording are submitted electronically. Over the last three years, RTA recorded more than 347,000 documents, receiving an average of 9,650 documents each month to record.

“We’re very proud of the fact that our goal and our practice is to be timely and accurate with processing the public’s records,” Bartolac said.

“Accountability and accuracy are values we strive for in every aspect of our work,” Bartolac said. “Continuous improvement is also one of the core goals of Johnson County Government, and we’re mindful to increase customer satisfaction in everything we do.” 😊
People with severe chronic pain know how it can utterly disrupt one’s life. Chronic pain is cruel, making it hard to enjoy even the simplest daily activities. But it is hardly an isolated issue. Millions of Americans suffer from acute or chronic back or neck pain, arthritis and more. The effects of pain exact a tremendous toll on people’s life and even the country in terms of health care costs and lost productivity. Yet, it is an incredibly complex problem, and so many sufferers are left discouraged.

“I felt like I had tried everything, but I either felt worse or saw not much change. Moreover, people not dealing with pain are having a hard time understanding what I was going through. I felt stuck,” said Erin Sturm, a patient at Renuva Back & Pain Center in Overland Park.

This is the reality for many people. This has been enhanced by people becoming more aware of the challenge of treating chronic pain with opioids, and potential dependency.

“Often times, our patients tell us they’ve tried everything to eliminate their pain — specialized rehab, acupuncture, steroid shots, opioid pain pills and even surgery with no success. They have tried everything and often feel discouraged or frustrated,” said Dr. Michael Riley, D.C., founder and medical director at Renuva.

However, Riley said more and more physicians are revising their treatment approaches.

“As our population ages, people are demanding better pain management. The health care industry can do better than masking pain with drugs. Noninvasive treatments such as Renuva treat the source of the pain and bring lasting relief,” Riley said.

Renuva, for instance, has seen great success with their CoreCare protocol. Renuva’s signature protocol, CoreCare™, was developed to treat the underlying causes.

“We learned that this combination of technologies and methods is more effective,” said Dr. Michael Riley, D.C. “Our staff and doctors are compassionate and will take you through very specific phases of treatment that truly treat the root cause of the pain and discomfort. Their goal is to determine the cause of your pain, promote natural healing, and get you back to the active life you’re now missing.”

CoreCare sets Renuva apart from other pain management clinics, Riley said. The goal with each patient is to correct the problem and promote healing, not simply to mask the pain.

The reviews of this treatment have been favorable: 83 percent of patients reported an improvement in how their pain was affecting their ability to function and their mood (psychosocial status), according to a survey of 1,420 Renuva patients who completed Renuva’s CoreCare treatments. The PDQ was specifically developed for evaluating clinical outcomes in a population of patients with disabling musculoskeletal disorders, primarily involving the spine. The PDQ is a psychometric tool of choice for assessing pain as cited by the American Medical Association’s Guides.

Patients also reported an average 76 percent reduction in their need to use pain medication to control their pain and reported an average 70 percent reduction in their pain interfering with recreational activities and hobbies that are important to them, according to the survey.

Renuva’s goal is to understand exactly where you hurt and what is causing your pain so they can develop a treatment plan to get you back to living life again.

The Renuva Back & Pain Center in Overland Park is located on the northeast corner of I-435 and Nall in the Corporate Medical Plaza. Right across 107th from the new Top Golf facility.

10787 Nall Ave, Suite 110
Overland Park, KS 66211

By: Dave Horn
Renuva Back and Pain Centers

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Renyuva offers the treatment protocol at a low price in order to make it accessible to patients. Renuva offers private consultation at $39 through July 31st as opposed to the normal price of $257. “The $39 fee covers the cost of a thorough exam, consultation with the doctor and two treatments so you can experience CoreCare firsthand. If we need digital X-rays to get a clear idea of what’s causing your pain, those are included at no extra charge,” Riley said.

Renuva’s goal is to understand exactly where you hurt and what is causing your pain so they can develop a treat-ment plan to get you back to living life again.
Church and state solve problem for children

by LORI SAND

In 2013, employees of the Johnson County Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center, operated by the Johnson County Department of Corrections, were having difficulty placing children who were brought to the center in police protective custody.

When placement with a close relative or return to the home wasn’t possible, limited placement choices existed locally for these youth. There is a dramatic statewide shortage of licensed foster care homes and, for many reasons, the options were limited to place them in a shelter.

“These children were non-offenders in abusive or neglectful homes. They simply needed a safe and supportive environment to stay for a few days, before the judge made a determination about their placement,” said Mary Ann Pitnick, Juvenile Services Programs coordinator.

In February 2014, the dilemma came before the county’s Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board.

“One of our youth, a male teenager, who had never been in trouble, was trying to appear as normal as possible among his classmates,” Pitnick said.

The boy, however, was living with his grandparents and mother (both hoarders) in a house with no running water. He was removed from the home under police protective custody. “But we couldn’t find a foster home for him, so unfortunately, he was placed in Juvenile Detention with offenders because he had no other place to go. The goal is not to re-victimize these children, but the system had failed them.”

The stories sparked a meeting between key local players, including county staff, law enforcement, the Kansas Department of Children and Families (the state entity responsible for foster care homes), the Kansas Department of Corrections and, Tate Williams, the state director of operations for CarePortal (a subsidiary of the Global Orphan Project). The partners worked for several months toward a resolution.

CarePortal is a faith-based ministry that became responsible for making key connections between churches and faith-based communities with families and children in crisis.

“It became clear that this was an opportunity for CarePortal to connect with the faith community on their behalf,” Williams said. “The church is tasked by scripture to help those in need, so we connected to those who are tasked by law to help people in need.”

Helping those in need

Lee Jost, founding pastor of Christ the Servant Evangelical Church, was brought into the circle.

“I feel like our faith community has an affinity for orphans and widows according to scripture,” he said. “These people have a heart for helping those in need. At the very beginning, the involvement of the faith community was by design, meeting the tangible and intangible needs of those in crisis and to restore human dignity.”

The partners discussed how some of the stringent criteria for foster homes were a barrier, and they reviewed state laws and regulations. They ultimately found a potential legal solution that referred to placing youth in “appropriate” homes while in police protective custody.

That discovery led to a plan to find “appropriate” homes that would not be bound by the state’s restrictive foster care licensing process. Once that happened, everything else seemed to fall into place.

The county agreed to run background checks on the applicants; KVC Health Systems agreed to conduct inspections of the homes with reduced criteria but still ensuring the safety of the youth. CarePortal and The Global Orphan Project lead the initiative and developed an online application process. The organization also sought volunteer families from the faith community. A new initiative, the Protective Homes Program, was born.

Since the first pilot training with families from Colonial Presbyterian and Christ Community churches in Olathe and Westside Family Church in Lenexa in September 2014, 38 active families have been trained to serve as protective home providers within a community of ten other churches: Church of the Ascension, Cross Pointe Church, Fellowship Bible Church, Foundry Church of Kansas City, Grace Church of Overland Park, Heartland Community Church, Olathe Bible Church and Westside Family Church.

The approval process is simple, beginning with a criminal background check on everyone who lives in the home over age 10. There is a home inspection and an eight-hour training session, with trauma training as a key component.
Empathy in their heart

Hannah Mabie is the coordinator of foster and adoptive care at Colonial Presbyterian Church, as well as a licensed social worker. “These kiddos are going through a tremendously painful experience, being removed from their homes, no matter what the situation is. While our participating families are dealing with these situations from a place of empathy in their heart,” Mabie said. “It’s important that they are equipped so they can responsibly focus on the needs of the child.”

The Garlich family of Olathe is one that opened its home and hearts to these vulnerable children. The family has hosted a total of 19 children since completing the process in September 2014. Alli Garlich and her husband decided to become involved once their youngest of three sons reached school age.

“Our boys accept and connect with these kids, and for the short period of time they are with us, that child is a part of our family,” Garlich said. “And not only are they a part of our family, but our family, friends, neighbors and church community rally around them as well, going above and beyond to make them feel safe and supported.”

The Protective Homes Program is so successful that it is the recipient of a 2017 National Association of Counties Achievement Award and state officials are hoping to replicate the program in other communities.

Did you know?

The JO is now RideKC

To provide improved regional transportation for our residents, the county partnered with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA). Now, Johnson County transit services are part of RideKC. “The JO” and its logos are currently being phased out so that riders will only see RideKC on buses and transit stops across the county and the metro.

The regional effort greatly increases efficiencies that save Johnson County approximately a half million dollars annually and allow the county to work on improving service to get riders where they need and want to go.

As part of RideKC, county transit has added new local routes and reduced fares for local suburban commuter express routes and the popular K-10 Connection service that links residents to Johnson County Community College and the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

With 1.3 million miles of service annually, RideKC connects residents within Johnson County and the Greater Kansas City metro.

Visit ridekc.org for more information.

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Shared services across the county keep local government running smoothly

Six county departments provide the shared administrative services that put Johnson County Government in motion — gears that keep the county machine up and running, managing the business of exceptional county services.

In this issue, we’ll take a closer look at Human Resources, Facilities Management, Technology and Innovation, Budget and Financial Planning, Records and Tax Administration, and Treasury and Financial Management.

Budget & Financial Planning develops, implements and administers the county’s annual operating budget, Capital Improvement Program and issuance of county debt.

The county’s five-year Capital Improvement Program, totaling approximately $1 billion, is developed by BFP with assistance from other county departments. Year after year, BFP estimates the county’s major revenue sources within 2 or 3 percent of actual amounts.

Treasury and Financial Management provides financial reporting; bills, collects and distributes tax monies; administers vehicle and title registration and maintains procurement, risk management and county insurance programs.

TFM’s investment portfolio averages a daily balance of $526 million, with peaks in excess of $1 billion each December. The county carries $950 million in property insurance coverage.

Records and Tax Administration combines the duties of the register of deeds, county clerk, and archives and records management.

RTA records and indexes all land record documents; and creates, maintains and calculates the annual tax roll. For the 2016 tax roll, RTA processed mill levies for 62 separate taxing authorities including cities, townships, fire districts and cemeteries. RTA currently maintains more than 209,700 real estate parcels.
Human Resources Department

Human Resources manages hiring across the county’s departments and agencies.

The county has approximately 3,800 full-time employees. To keep county departments and agencies properly staffed, HR recruited and hired roughly 500-600 people in the past year.

Department of Technology and Innovation

Department of Technology and Innovation maintains the county’s technology infrastructure and manages digital government initiatives.

DTI supports nearly every county department by providing underlying infrastructure, computer applications and technical support.

Facilities Management Department

Facilities Management is responsible for more than 2.25 million square feet of county buildings, managing everything from new construction projects to structures more than 100 years old.

Facilities Management plays a significant role in the project management of future facilities. It is currently stewarding the new courthouse project.

Key:
- $ 2017 departmental budget
- 20 Number of full-time employees

Records and Tax Administration

Records and Tax Administration combines the duties of the register, county clerk, and records management. It indexes all land records, creates, maintains and calculates the annual tax roll.

For the 2016 tax roll, RTA processed mill levies for 62 separate taxing authorities including cities, townships, fire districts and cemeteries. RTA currently maintains more than 209,700 real estate parcels.
County commission sets maximum expenditure budget

Includes planned quarter-mill levy roll back

by AUSTIN FALLEY

On June 8, the Board of County Commissioners authorized the publication of the proposed fiscal year 2018 maximum budget, totaling $1.06 billion, composed of $822.8 million in expenditures and $242 million in reserves.

The FY 2018 proposed budget includes the potential to roll back the mill levy by a quarter mill. After the maximum expenditure budget is set, FY 2018 budgeted expenditures can be decreased, but not increased.

In April, County Manager Hannes Zacharias proposed next year’s budget with the potential to roll back the mill levy.

“Current revenue projections support a strong county budget,” Zacharias said. “Our proposal meets the needs of a growing community and adequately compensates staff. The budget adheres to the board’s direction to maintain a constant mill levy and creates a potential opportunity to return resources back to the taxpayers of Johnson County.”

Budget nuts and bolts

Total estimated revenue from ad valorem taxes is $250.8 million, comprising $189.6 million for the county taxing district; $31 million for libraries; and $30 million for park and recreation.

Released in April, Johnson County’s proposed budget maintains existing services and general fund reserves, supports employee health care increases and meets growing service demands.

The budget adheres to the board’s direction to maintain a constant mill levy and creates a potential opportunity to return resources back to the taxpayers of Johnson County.

— County Manager Hannes Zacharias

The total estimated county mill levy is 26.607 mills — a constant mill levy when compared to FY 2017.

mills for the library district and 3.102 mills for the park and recreation district.

Since the local economy and revenue projections held steady, and the state budget finalized without negative impact to the county, the FY 2018 budget provides sufficient funding to allow county leadership to roll the mill levy back and reduce property taxes.

The proposal holds the county’s current taxing levy steady at 19.59 mills — still the lowest mill levy in Kansas, with 3.915 mills for the library district and 3.102 mills for the park and recreation district.

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners adopted the county’s FY 2018 proposed budget in June. Included in FY 2018 is a roll back of the county’s mill levy. To find your county commissioner, take a look at page 21 of this magazine.

Capital Improvement Program

The 2018 budget proposal includes a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) totaling more than $159 million, including:

- $77.4 million for wastewater’s capital projects.
- $15 million for the Stormwater Management Program.
- $14.9 million for the County Assistance Road System (CARS) program.
- $14.8 million for Park and Recreation District’s capital projects.

The budget proposal funds a maximum 3,950.72 of full-time-equivalent employees, including an increase of 63.73 FTEs from the FY 2017 budget. The budget also allocates funds for a 3 percent merit increase pool for employees who meet performance goals.

The county commission authorized two changes from the county manager’s FY 2018 proposed budget, allocating $164,000 for advance voting postcards and $380,510 for the gubernatorial election, fully funding the election office’s requests for additional resources.

“While Johnson County’s economy is strong and growing, both caution and optimism are in order,” Zacharias said. “The nation’s economy is currently enjoying the fourth-longest period of economic recovery in U.S. history, and a slow-down is likely imminent. The extent to which an economic downturn may affect Johnson County is difficult to predict. We stand ready, however, to continue to provide the necessary services our residents expect and deserve.”

What’s next

- On June 15, assessed valuation estimates were made available for the FY 2018 proposed budget.
- The FY 2018 proposed budget will be published in The Kansas City Star in July.
- The public hearing on the FY 2018 proposed budget is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, July 31.
You always said tomorrow. Tomorrow would be the day you got your career on track. That you put yourself in position to succeed. But plenty of tomorrows have come and gone. So how do you turn tomorrow into today? It starts with a place that has more technology, more resources and more seasoned faculty to help get you where you want to go. It starts at JCCC. www.jccc.edu
County officials work to prevent increase in opioid misuse, heroin use
by AUSTIN FALLEY

In June, the Board of County Commissioners participated in a study session about opioid and heroin drug filings with the county’s criminal justice coordinator.

The session was part of the county’s effort to intervene in what is becoming a national health crisis — opioid misuse and heroin use.

“County first responders and members of the medical community are seeing concerns related to opioids increasing,” said Criminal Justice Coordinator Robert Sullivan. “If we wait for the problem to reach the criminal justice system, it will be too late.”

Sullivan presented 17 years of court filing data — 2000 to 2016 — from Johnson County. Since 2012, opioid court filings have been trending downward. Based on county data, opioid filings decreased by 37 percent from 2015 to 2016 while marijuana and stimulant filings increased, with methamphetamine accounting for 70 percent of all stimulant filings.

Even though criminal justice data does not suggest a growing trend of opioid and heroin misuse locally, Sullivan reinforced in his presentation that the county should focus on proactive steps to educate the public about the issue.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the state of Kansas experiences statistically lower overdose deaths per 100,000 residents compared to the national rate (11.8 in the state; 16.3 nationally). Missouri overdoses per 100,000 are statistically higher than the national rate at 17.9.

Misuse prevention

“Community collaboration is key in preventing substance misuse,” said Lougene Marsh, director of Health and Environment. “Johnson County is best served by effective partnerships with local law enforcement, educators, medical professionals, parents

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Get a Healthy Lawn and Protect Our Water Quality

A lush lawn doesn’t mean high maintenance. If you crave that spring green, cut out the unnecessary work — fertilize this September.

• September fertilization is critical to your lawn’s health
• Right time / Right product / Right amount / Right application method
• Applying just the right kind and amount of fertilizer saves you money and protects our water quality
• Get one free soil test and a personalized recommendation for your lawn from a university expert

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
A 34-year-old Merriam woman named Danielle benefited from a sweet deal to try out a job at a donut shop. Danielle, who has a developmental disability, secured a temporary work experience with Daylight Donuts in Lenexa with the assistance of Johnson County Developmental Supports. Danielle’s roles include greeting customers, putting orders together and keeping the cooler stocked. “I’m happy to be working,” Danielle said.

End-Dependence Kansas

JCDS, a county agency that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, helped Danielle secure this opportunity through a $1.2 million grant from Kansas Rehabilitation Services called End-Dependence Kansas. With this grant, JCDS aims to find jobs for 120 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities over a five-year period.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for an employer who has thought about hiring someone with a disability but has hesitated,” said Kim Perry, JCDS community employment team leader. “Through the EDK program, an employer can make a four- to six-week hire, and the grant will pay for wages and liability insurance. Employers can give someone with a disability a chance to learn valuable and transferable work skills with virtually no risk.”

EDK employers also benefit from employment specialists who provide on-site job coaching. JCDS Employment Specialist Jessa Molina helped Danielle find and apply for the Daylight Donuts job and worked with her at the job to help her learn the job tasks. Eventually, Molina scaled back her hours until Danielle could do the job without a coach.

“Daylight Donuts has been so supportive of Danielle, and she loves working here,” Molina said. “She has picked up some good work skills and her confidence has grown.”

In addition to temporary work experiences, employers may offer company tours, informational interviews or job shadowing opportunities. If an employer does want to make a temporary hire, JCDS will connect businesses with individuals based on their skills and interests.

“For questions about the program, please contact Kim Perry, program manager, at 913-826-2340. You may also contact Amy Fair, business account manager, at 913-826-2223 or Jessa Molina, employment specialist, at 913-826-2359.”

Ending dependence through job opportunities

by JODY HANSON
Staffing the county is no small task

by LORI SAND

With a total turnover rate of slightly more than 13 percent in 2016, the Human Resources Department partnered with Johnson County leaders to hire between 500 and 600 employees.

As the third largest employer in the county, Mary Biere, human resources manager, says that departments use many recruiting methods to staff the county’s 30-plus departments and agencies.

So how does HR market the variety of jobs they need to fill?

“We typically post all of our positions on jocogov.org,” Biere said. “And we frequently cross-post on CareerBuilder.”

This year, Human Resources has also taken to featuring positions on the county’s Facebook and Twitter accounts, and the Sheriff’s Office earlier this year hosted an online career fair on Facebook to recruit for often difficult to fill deputy positions.

For some of the specialized or executive level positions, the county will advertise with an associated professional organization, Biere said.

“We cast as broad a net as we can so we reach a diverse candidate pool,” Biere said.

Goals for the county’s Human Resources Department in the coming year include streamlining the application process and examining outreach efforts to ensure they reflect county needs.

Biere said there are positions that are difficult to fill in specialized areas, such as nursing, civil engineering and information technology.

“While there seems to be a smaller pool to draw from when looking for people with those particular skill sets, it’s also true we face a great deal of competition from private-sector employers.”

There are also a few unique positions including forensic scientists in the Sheriff’s Office and epidemiologists in the Department of Health and Environment. And who would think that the county would hire people with interior design backgrounds? However, those positions are valuable in Facilities Management as the county renovates and constructs new spaces.

“I’m very proud of the county’s staff,” Biere said. “We have top-notch professionals throughout the organization who care about the quality of services we offer and are always looking for ways to improve.”

Consider a career with the Sheriff’s Office

by LORI SAND

If you’re searching for more than just a job, consider the challenge and opportunity of joining the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office. As the fastest growing law enforcement agency in the county, the Sheriff’s Office offers a full range of public safety duties, with career development opportunities for professional growth and advancement.

The Johnson County Sheriff’s Office is making a focused effort in active recruiting, with a goal of being fully staffed by the end of 2017. Last fall, the shortfall was 60 positions; to date, 37 positions have been filled.

Since January, staff from the Sheriff’s Office have visited approximately 50 schools, either through career fair or classroom visits. Those efforts netted about 153 student contacts and they are already prepping for the fall career fair schedule.

“We hope to visit even more classrooms so we can speak to students about law enforcement and the career opportunities with the Sheriff’s Office,” said Master Deputy Rick Howell.

The office is hiring deputy sheriffs and civilian specialists and offers an excellent compensation and benefits package including health, dental, vision, life insurance, vacation and sick leave, short-term disability, Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, 457(b) deferred compensation, 401(a) supplemental retirement and more.

The Johnson County Sheriff’s Office was established in 1861 and has grown from a one-man office to a highly skilled and advanced law enforcement agency. The Sheriff’s Office presently has more than 500 sworn officers and a support staff of approximately 150 employees.
Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art • Johnson County Community College • nermanmuseum.org

Tours • Children’s art classes • Volunteering • Always FREE admission
The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners

The legislative powers of Johnson County Government are vested in a seven-member Board of County Commissioners that exercises its authority to ensure the general health, safety and welfare of the public.

The board is composed of an at-large chairman and one representative from each of the six districts in the county.

Chairman Ed Eilert
913-715-0500

Ronald “Ron” Shaffer
1st district
913-715-0431

James “Jim” P. Allen
Vice chair,
2nd district
913-715-0432

Steven “Steve” C. Klika
3rd district
913-715-0433

Jason Osterhaus
4th district
913-715-0434

Michael Ashcraft
5th district
913-715-0435

Michael “Mike” Brown
6th district
913-715-0436

2017 National Police Week in Washington, D.C.

by CLAIRE CANAAN

On May 11, a 19-member delegation from the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office, led by Sheriff Calvin Hayden along with two representatives from the Motor Unit and the Honor Guard traveled to Washington, D.C., to honor Master Deputy Brandon Collins and law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in 2016. Approximately 30,000 men and women from departments across the U.S. and abroad attended the week-long event at the nation’s capital.

The Motor Unit took part in numerous escorts during the week, including escorting a trip for the children of the fallen officers to the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Together, the unit logged more than 700 miles in five days.

The family of Master Deputy Collins and the delegates attended several events including a candlelight vigil held at the National Mall and a memorial service held on the front lawn of the U.S. Capitol building where attendees heard speeches from President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence as they honored fallen officers.
Live Well Age Well coming on Oct. 19

by GERALD HAY

Johnson County’s annual extravaganza for the 50-plus population is urging senior adults to Live Well Age Well at the upcoming 2017 expo from noon to 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 19.

Formerly called Senior Fest, the event will take place in the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center, 8788 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park. The new Arts & Heritage Center is managed by Johnson County Park and Recreation District with its 50-Plus department responsible for the coordination of the popular event for senior adults for the past six years.

The expo is free and open to the public. No registration is required.

Although still in the final planning stages, Live Well Age Well will feature informational booths from Johnson County Government, businesses, exhibitors, organizations and other vendors serving the senior population. Activities will also include educational sessions, free health screenings, prizes and bingo.

Live Well Age Well is serving as the debut of Operation Red File in Johnson County. This program is already taking place in several counties in Kansas. Operation Red File is designed to help seniors keep their critical health information accessible if needed in an emergency. Participants in Operation Red File receive a large, red, magnetic folder that they can place on their refrigerator for instant access, where first responders will know to look for it.

The annual expo for seniors began in 1984 as Celebrate Age at Mission Mall and was coordinated by the Johnson County Department of Human Services. That name and site continued through 1999.

In 2000, the event was renamed Senior Quest and moved to the Shawnee Civic Center until 2002 and then relocated to the Overland Park Convention Center through 2010.

The Park and Recreation District began coordination of the event in 2011, calling it Senior Fest and moving the location to the Ritz Charles Conference Center, Overland Park, for the next five years.

More information about Live Well Age Well is available by calling 913-826-3032 or visiting www.jcprd.com/special_events/livewellagewell.cfm.

Johnson County turns 160 — cont.

That change in the structure of county government occurred in the 1980s.

Johnson County moved from a county commission, with all responsibility for policy making and administration of county government, to a county commission-administrator form of government in 1982. The BOCC remained the policymakers with an appointed person overseeing administrative functions as the county administrator.

The BOCC then expanded from three to five district commissioners with a county population of more than 270,000. The initial decision to expand the board was approved by voters in the April 1979 elections.

Home Rule Charter

In 2000, voters approved the county’s Home Rule Charter, the first of its kind in the state of Kansas. The charter added two members to the BOCC, including a sixth district commissioner and an elected at-large chairman to serve a Census Bureau headcount of 451,086 for Johnson County.

The Home Rule Charter also changed the administration of county government to a county commission-manager with a name change from county administrator to county manager being approved by the BOCC in December 2001.

The two new positions (district commissioner and chairman) were filled in the 2002 elections with the winners taking office in 2003. Since 1857, Johnson County Government has had 130 commissioners serving on various governing bodies, including the seven members of the current board. BOCC elections have been nonpartisan under the charter.

For most of its 160-year history, the chairmanship of the BOCC was routinely chosen each year by the board, usually serving one-year terms. Under the charter, voters have chosen a publicly elected, at-large chairman to head county government.

Change remains constant in Johnson County as a community as well. Currently, the Census Bureau estimates the county population at more than 580,000 residents.

The rest is the present and the future, perhaps history in the making. Only time will tell. ✡
THREE Questions for three employees of Johnson County’s Human Service Department

Kay Lowe has been a multi-service center manager with Johnson County Human Services for 22 years.

What is your job in the Human Services Department?
As a multi-service center manager, I assist residents with human services such as utility assistance, help completing forms, or information and referral. If funds/donations are available, we can also provide rent assistance. The one thing we do not do is give money to people. All services are based on income (200 percent above the federal poverty level) and need.

In the past year, what changes or conditions have most affected the clients you serve?
Many changes impact my clients. Budget cuts in funding for many programs have, and continue to, impact their day-to-day lives. Access to programs that were at one time available and have been discontinued, or have limited funds, make a big difference to the clients I work with.

If you could do anything for a day, what would it be?
I’m inclined to say something like be president or something else with great responsibility, but honestly, a day off to do nothing. That would be a great day for me!

Brigette McIntire, an eligibility and options specialist, has been with the Human Services Department for seven years.

What is your job in the Human Services Department?
As an eligibility and options specialist with the Area Agency on Aging, I visit with county residents to educate them about resources available to help them remain safe and healthy in the community. My job is to make home visits to residents 60 years old and older to set up Meals on Wheels or other in-home services such as housekeeping, bath aids and respite services. I also meet with individuals who are considering placement in nursing facilities to do the pre-admission screening/CARE assessment required by the state of Kansas.

In the past year, what changes or conditions have most affected the clients you serve?
The state of Kansas budget created significant cuts to state funding at the Area Agency on Aging last year, causing a decrease in the services we can provide to our clients and making a waiting list for some services necessary. Unfortunately, changes in federal funding and laws may be on the horizon. These would further negatively impact residents in the areas of Medicare and Medicaid services.

If you could do anything for a day, what would it be?
I love learning about local history so I think it would be fun to drive around Johnson County with a group who has lived here their whole life and hear about how it used to be, how it’s changed, and hear their personal stories. I can’t wait to visit the museum at the new Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center.
DTI provides information management and technology services for Johnson County Government. The department maintains technological infrastructures, and identifies, analyzes, supervises and coordinates e-government initiatives and programs.

The department has provided some tips regarding passwords, phishing, password security, child safety and credit card security. Including:

**MANAGE YOUR PASSWORDS**

A digital app on your computer, smartphone or other mobile device should at least have these features, a password for the application, encrypt the passwords and allow you to sync password across devices.

**PHISHING**

Phishing is an attempt to gain information about you or install software to monitor your activity or create attacks. Look for misspelled words or poor sentences.

**Don't open attachments from people you don't know.** Hover over links in emails to see if the actual URL points to somewhere other than the email shows. Delete the email without opening any attachments to avoid possible infection of your computer.

**PASSWORD SECURITY**

Password strength is important but doesn't mean a password should be difficult to remember. You can use words or phrases that are easy to remember, such as “Dog5 R Fuzzy”. Use actual spaces; they can be used as special characters in most computer systems.

**CREDIT CARD SECURITY**

Mobile payments systems make scanning your credit card into someone else’s phone easier than ever. Pay attention when someone else is handling your card.

**If you have to hand over your card to someone in order to pay for an item or service, keep an eye on your card.** It’s easy for someone to “double swipe” your card and capture its information for later use. Keep an eye on your statements for unauthorized charges.

**Use caution when using your card at gas stations or outdoor ATMs. Thieves can install “skimmers” that fit in these machines and capture your card information.** Most outdoor card devices have a tamper tape installed. If missing or damaged, don’t use that machine. And notify the bank or gas station so they can validate their security.

**IDENTITY THEFT**

Scammers are calling trying to get your information or just a recording of your voice saying “YES”. If you receive a call from an unknown or anonymous number (on caller ID it will not show the name) avoid giving them information or saying “YES.” They use the word “YES” to sign you up for things you don’t want and the other information to use your identity for fraudulent charges.
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