Better Than We Found It
New county programs make JoCo more efficient and sustainable
2020 budget aligns with community priorities

Several months of work on our Fiscal Year 2020 budget ended in August with the adoption of a $1.26 billion budget that includes $937.1 million in expenditures and reserves of $322.6 million.

When looking at that $937.1 million figure, it is important to note that less than half is available to fund many of our programs and services that fall under the county general expenditure budget. More than $246 million is earmarked for Johnson County Wastewater operations, maintenance, repair and construction finance. More than $40 million is for Johnson County Library, and more than $71 million is for our Park & Recreation District. Another $52 million of these expenditures are tied to grant funding.

The FY 2020 budget includes just over $413 million for the county taxing district general expenditure budget, which covers most of our programs and services not outlined above.

It is also important to look at how our budget reserves break down. Out of $322.7 million, nearly $170 million is for Johnson County Wastewater, and $58.9 million goes into reserve funds for Park & Recreation, our airports, our library system, and other specific uses, leaving $94.2 million for general fund reserves.

We built a 2020 budget that aligns with the priorities we heard in our 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey. The services residents ranked most important were emergency services, including MED-ACT’s response to medical emergencies, Emergency Management and Communication dispatch of 911 first responders, and the Sheriff’s Office. The county’s role in providing safety-net services to our vulnerable populations and low-income households received an 88% rate of importance. The FY 2020 budget adds 56.03 positions, including:

- Six new positions for the Mental Health Center
- Seven new positions for MED-ACT
- Additional positions in the District Attorney’s and Sheriff’s offices

It also includes funding to cover a shortfall in our Human Services’ housing program.

We maintained and even enhanced our high level of quality services and programs within the means of a stable mill levy. You can learn more about how the mill levy impacts you on page 8.

As our Community Satisfaction Survey tells us each year, Johnson County sets the standard of service delivery compared to other communities of our size. We strive to continue to not only earn your satisfaction, but to keep Johnson County a safe and healthy place where you want to live, work and raise a family.
Ways to engage with JoCo

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

Social media
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: @jocogov

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

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

Johnson County Elected Officials
Ed Eilert, Chairman
Becky Fast, 1st District
Jim Allen, 2nd District
Steve Klika, 3rd District
Janeé Hanzlick, 4th District
Michael Ashcraft, 5th District
Mike Brown, 6th District
Steve Howe, district attorney
Calvin Hayden, sheriff

Pictured above: A street located at the New Century AirCenter now has a new name to honor a famous astronaut who learned to fly there. On July 16, the new John Glenn Way street sign was unveiled at the Commemorative Air Force of America Wing. New Century AirCenter served as the Olathe Naval Air Station until about 50 years ago, and it was there that Glenn earned his military wings in 1942. Behind the sign is a Stearman trainer made by Boeing in 1940, the same model that Glenn would have used when he was learning to fly. The event coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission to the moon as well as Glenn’s birthday on July 18.
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A glimpse into what’s going on in Johnson County Government

Weather alert options added to NotifyJoCo

Now, in addition to severe thunderstorm and tornado watches and warnings, you can opt in to receive warnings for flash floods, blizzards, ice storms and winter storms.

With winter weather on the horizon, now is a great time to either register for NotifyJoCo, the county’s mass notification system, or update your preferences.

Johnson County experienced its share of severe weather and some near misses within the last few months and you never know what might be just around the corner.

Keep track of what’s going on near your home, workplace, children’s school and daycare, and more. Customize your locations and contact preferences to get alerts by phone, email or text. You can also set your preferences to stay informed about non-emergency events like public meetings, city sports events and local festivals.

Visit notifyjoco.org to register or update your preferences. If you have questions about NotifyJoCo, contact us at 913-826-5555.

AAA receives national Aging Achievement Award

The Johnson County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has received a 2019 Aging Achievement Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). The annual awards recognize aging programs throughout the nation that develop and implement cutting edge approaches to support older adults, people with disabilities, and their family caregivers.

Johnson County received the award for its in-home mental health counseling, which it provides to persons age 60 and older. In-home counseling provides mental wellness support to those who have health issues and lack access to transportation. Recent innovations in service delivery have reduced costs by $116 per session and allowed the AAA to serve four times more residents with funding provided by the Older Americans Act.

New ways to connect with Johnson County Government

JoCo Quarterly is now JoCo Monthly! Sign up for our e-newsletter at jocogov.org/subscribe.

Receive a notification when your commissioner’s webpage is updated with a weekly recap of that week’s Board actions and activities. Sign up at jocogov.org/subscribe.

Johnson County Government also launched two new podcasts this summer - JoCo on the Go, which covers a wide variety of county programs and services impacting your life, and It’s Okay if You’re Not Okay, from Johnson County Mental Health. Find both new podcasts, along with Johnson County Library’s podcast Did you hear? at jocogov.org/podcast.

quotable

“Placing the final steel beam confirms Johnson County’s commitment to keeping this vital project on schedule and on budget.”

— Chairman Ed Eilert at the August 2019 topping out ceremony signaling completion of the new county courthouse’s structural framing. (Check out page 16 for an update on the courthouse construction.)
Thanksgiving and Mental Health
Minimizing stress during the holidays

BY KEITH DAVENPORT & KRISTEN REESE

“When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude,” said writer and poet, G.K. Chesterton. During the holidays it can be hard to keep things in perspective when there is so much to do. Here are a few tips and tricks for combatting holiday stress and anxiety.

Plan ahead. Schedule out when you’ll do your shopping and preparation. Brenda Rump, clinician at Johnson County Mental Health Center, adds, “On Sunday, give yourself a couple of hours to map out the week. Include when you are going to exercise, shop, cook, etc. Keep those appointments and remember to have fun!”

Don’t abandon healthy habits. According to the Mayo Clinic, when you overindulge, it only adds to your stress and guilt. Try to incorporate good habits into your holiday activities: have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don’t go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks; get plenty of sleep; and make time for regular physical activity each day.

Take a breather. Fifteen minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle your to-do list. Reduce stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Taking a walk, listening to soothing music, getting a massage and reading a book are all great relaxing activities.

Show gratitude. According to Amy Morin in Psychology Today, showing gratitude reduces toxic emotions such as envy, resentment and even aggression. It can also reduce stress and enhance a person’s empathy. Plus, it will get you in the Thanksgiving spirit!

It’s important to take care of yourself during the holidays. Seek out the help you need from those you confide in or a mental health professional. When you take care of yourself, you are more likely to show appreciation and return kindness to others. Isn’t that what the holidays are all about?

These and more resources on stress management are available on the Mayo Clinic website at mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle.

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- Our facility accommodates receptions and meals following a service or burial.
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Thinking about pre-arranging?
For more information, visit our websites or contact John Frownfelter at 913-451-1860.
Landlord Recruiter begins duties in voucher program

BY GERALD HAY

Pam Harris has become Johnson County’s first-ever landlord recruiter at the Department of Human Services. She is a new member of the department’s Johnson County Housing Authority/Housing Services Division which manages the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, which is commonly called “Section 8” housing.

A voucher from the HCV program subsidizes rents that are income-based for eligible residents of all ages, including applicants over the age of 62.

Retirees in Johnson County have several housing options, largely dependent on what they can afford. Many older adults choose to “age in place” in their homes. For those who don’t, the county has 138 retirement facilities, including independent living, assisted living and nursing homes. There are about a dozen apartment complexes housing low-income senior adults.

Partnering with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the facilities subsidize rents that are income-based for eligible residents over the age of 62. Rent subsidy is based on monthly income and medical expenses.

In her role as landlord recruiter, Harris works with existing and new landlords to find and expand low-income housing options for older people, residents with disabilities and other residents who are already on the HCV program. Eventually, she hopes to reach out to developers to consider future development of affordable housing options for residents requiring assistance.

“Our goal is to engage with as many landlords as possible to support their businesses by providing motivated participants who want to be good tenants by paying on a timely basis,” said Harris. “We work with vulnerable populations: seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income families who deserve housing of choice to better themselves in employment, education, and health, and we know that Johnson County landlords can assist us in this effort.”

Harris has already been successful in negotiating with the management of an apartment complex that had previously announced they would no longer accept Housing Choice Vouchers. This is particularly important given that there are so few complexes currently willing to take vouchers or that are affordable for voucher holders.

The HCV program currently has 230 active landlords with rental properties or apartment complexes serving 1,477 voucher holders. At the end of July, there was a waiting list of 600 applicants of all ages for Section 8 housing in Johnson County.

More information on the HCV program is available at jocogov.org/housing-authority.

In her new role as housing navigator, Pam Harris will work with existing and new landlords to find and expand affordable housing options in Johnson County.

“We work with vulnerable populations... who deserve housing of choice to better themselves in employment, education, and health.”

- Pam Harris, landlord recruiter

Connect with us!
Stay updated on news and events throughout Johnson County through your favorite social media platform.
What does a constant mill levy mean for property owners?

BY NICOLE BLACKWELL

The Johnson County Board of Commissioners has adopted a $1.26 billion budget for next year with an estimated mill levy of 26.013 mills, the same mill levy for the current budget.

This includes an estimated mill levy of 19.024 for the County Taxing District, 3.901 mills for the Johnson County Library taxing district and 3.088 mills for the Johnson County Park & Recreation District taxing district.

If you’re a Johnson County homeowner, what does this mean to you? And how does it affect the amount of property taxes you’ll pay in November?

The mill levy is the tax rate applied to the assessed value of property that generates revenue to fund county programs and services. One mill equals $1 on every $1,000 of a homeowner’s assessed valuation. On average, homeowners will pay about $987 in county property taxes for 2019. That’s about $82.25 per month, based on the average home value in the county, approximately $330,000. Check out the graphic below to learn about the formula used to calculate property taxes.

A constant mill levy means the county did not raise the mill levy. But, the amount of taxes you owe may increase or decrease. Here’s why:

1. Your home may be worth more or less than it was last year.
2. Another taxing body, like the state, your city or your school district, may have raised or lowered its tax rate.

The chart on page nine shows how the 2018 tax roll was allocated among all the taxing units in Johnson County. Your breakdown may look slightly different from this - for example, because the city of Olathe has its own library system, those residents don’t pay the Johnson County Library mill levy.

Over half of Johnson County tax dollars go to the local school districts and Johnson County Community College; another 16% goes to cities and townships. About 15% of the tax revenue collected is retained for the county taxing district.

To learn how the county made its 2020 budget decisions, read the letter from county leadership on page two.

How is my property tax calculated?

The market value of your property as determined by the county appraiser. This could fluctuate depending on the demand for homes in your market, among other things.

Appraised Property Value x Assessment Rate

x Mill Levy / 1000 = Property Tax Owed

All property has an assessment rate - the percentage of a property’s value that may be taxed - set by the Kansas constitution. The current rate for residential property is 11.5%.

This number is set by the Board of County Commissioners as part of the budget process. The BOCC voted to keep the mill levy stable for the 2020 budget year.
Where do my property taxes go?

State statute requires Johnson County Government to collect property taxes on behalf of all taxing districts in the county (cities and townships, school districts, libraries, and more). The county’s portion of the tax collected is approximately 15% for the general county budget, and the remainder is distributed to other taxing districts. Here is a current breakdown of how property taxes are divided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools*</td>
<td>56.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Kansas</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special districts***</td>
<td>2.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special assessments**</td>
<td>3.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park &amp; Recreation District</td>
<td>2.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>15.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities/townships</td>
<td>16.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes both K-12 public school districts and Johnson County Community College.
** Special assessments cover expenses such as new streets, curbs and gutters, mowing charges and sewers.
*** Special districts include funds distributed to cemeteries, drainage, fire and recreation districts in the unincorporated areas of the county.

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Contact Che’rell Bilquist at 913-715-8920 or cherell.bilquist@jocogov.org for more information about advertising opportunities.

Parental disapproval is the No. 1 reason kids say they don’t drink. Have you told them it’s wrong? Protect your kids from the serious consequences of underage drinking. Talk. It Matters.
Here’s to the next 50 years

The Johnson County Community College 50th Anniversary celebration continues throughout 2019 with guest speakers, performances and fundraisers. Celebrate and connect with us – visit jccc.edu/50 for details.

As we wrap up this milestone year, we reflect on past community support and look to future opportunities.

Thanks to your ongoing patronage and generous contributions to our scholarship fund, a college education is within reach for many students in our community.

Millions of dollars in scholarships are awarded every year. Visit jccc.edu/foundation to learn more about how you can help support the next 50 years of Cavaliers.
Poor farm had a rich history

BY GERALD HAY

It was called the Johnson County Poor Farm. The bygone farm, with crops, livestock and chickens, served as a beacon of hope, comfort and care for the county’s old, sick and indigent for a century, spanning from the middle of the Civil War to after World War II. Located at 119th Street and Ridgeview Road in Olathe, the site has since become the Johnson County Government’s Sunset Campus.

The need for “poor farms” or “poorhouses” was part of the Wyandotte Constitution, under which Kansas joined the Union as its 34th state on Jan. 29, 1861. Each county was responsible for its “resident poor,” and county commissioners were charged with providing “for those inhabitants who, by reason of age, infirmity or other misfortune, may have claims upon the sympathy and aid of society.”

According to “Johnson County, Kansas: A Pictorial History, 1825-2005” by Mindi Love, director of Johnson County Museum, the Johnson County Poor Farm was established in 1863 by county government “to provide room and board for the very old, those unable to work and those down on their luck.”

The poor farm opened with eight residents, or “inmates” as they were called back then. The inmates came and left the farm for many reasons. Handwritten ledger pages and brief log entries from the Record of Poor House 1885-1901 and 1910-1946 at Johnson County Archives, a division of the Johnson County Department of Records and Tax Administration, provide names and ages of inmates staying at the poor farm and listed some of their fates. Many were elderly or in ill health.

Deaths at the poor farm were recorded simply as “died” or “deceased.” A few notations recorded an inmate had “departed this life.”

Henry Raymond, 39, died “from amputation” on Feb. 2, 1896. Also that year, Leonard Yeager, 65, died two days after Christmas “from softening of the brain.” William Walters, 70, was sent to the poor farm on Feb. 7, 1917, because he “has no people” with a notation to call a certain funeral home when he died.

Unmarried and pregnant, Nora Heaton, 18, was sent to the poor farm on April 2, 1923. According to the log, “she gave birth to a son on date she came here.” The young mother and her newborn, Ralph Albert Heaton, left 11 days later.

The peak years of poor farms in Kansas occurred in the decades before and after the turn of the 20th century. In 1894, the county invested $14,000 (approximately $412,000 in 2019 dollars) to build a two-story, steam-heated brick building with basement and attic.

In 1904, The Olathe Mirror reported that the farm, with about half of its acreage in pasture, had approximately 80 acres under cultivation, yielding 1,300 bushels of corn, 300 bushels of oats and 25 tons of hay. The farming operation included 28 cattle, 26 hogs, a team of work horses and 300 chickens.

The number of poor farms began to dwindle in the late 1930s and 40s; only a dozen remained in operation in Kansas after World War II. The final records of the Johnson County Poor Farm end in 1946 with few inmates and little farming.

Following the demise of the poor farm, the county retained about 70 acres of the original farm to develop the Sunset Campus and sold the remaining acreage for private development to help pay for construction of the Health and Human Services Building in 1996. Since then, the county has added the Sunset Drive Office Building (2006), County Communications Center (2009), and the Criminalistics Laboratory of the Sheriff’s Office (2012). The facilities at the Sunset Campus house nine county departments.

The new Medical Examiner Facility will open at the Sunset Campus in early 2020.

Photos courtesy of Johnson County Museum.
Better Than We Found It

County employees find creative ways to conserve our financial, environmental and human resources for generations to come

BY CAITLIN FERGUSON

One of Johnson County Government’s core values is stewardship – the idea that individually and collectively, we are building a better community today and for future generations. Consequently, the county takes seriously its responsibility to protect the economic, environmental and human resources we have. Across county government, this value comes to life in the form of initiatives that make our operations more efficient, effective and sustainable. Better Than We Found It is a new campaign to share stories of good stewardship with our residents and community partners.

Smarter data, smarter energy use

In 2015, Johnson County Government contracted with an energy consulting firm to take a bird’s eye view of energy usage data from county facilities and recommend efficiencies. The firm recommended many small changes that made a big difference in our energy consumption – things like standardizing building temperatures or minimizing the amount of time a building is occupied.

For example, like many large organizations, the county’s custodial staff cleaned the buildings at night after daytime employees were gone. The consultants encouraged the county to overlap the schedules of daytime and custodial employees in order to decrease the building’s “occupied hours” by five hours every day. During unoccupied hours, lighting is reduced to a minimum and heating/cooling temperatures are set back, so the building consumes less energy.

Changes like these added up in a big way: savings are estimated at around $1.5 million over four years.

The contract concluded on Oct. 1, but Facilities staff are still working to decrease energy consumption. In fact, Director of Facilities Brad Reinhardt plans to hire a dedicated Energy Manager, who will be tasked with maintaining the energy savings achieved to date and starting new initiatives.

“This employee will look beyond behavior modification and investigate things like the equipment in our buildings, the way we build and operate new facilities, and how we can leverage new technologies to better manage and improve upon our energy consumption,” says Reinhardt.

If you think you’re the right person for the job, visit jocogov.org/careers to learn more.

Look for these icons across county communications in the coming months to find more stories from the Better Than We Found It campaign.
Efficient trash and recycling

The county’s nearly 4,000 employees and thousands of weekly visitors generate a lot of trash. Spread that trash out across 80-plus facilities (including park buildings and libraries) and you’ve got a major trash-collecting headache.

“Until now, it’s been every building or department for itself, which led to lots of individual contracts with many different companies,” says Brian Alferman, sustainability program manager for Johnson County. “When we were a smaller organization, that made sense – it allowed us to be more flexible and adapt as things changed. But recently, we realized that we were missing an opportunity for greater efficiency.”

Two years ago, Alferman led the Green Business Program, a Department of Health and Environment program that offers free consulting to help organizations make their operations more financially and environmentally sustainable. Analyzing trash and recycling programs made up a big part of what he repeatedly recommended to outside groups, and it wasn’t long before he turned his focus internally.

The waste contract consolidation, approved by the Board of County Commissioners in May, goes into effect this fall and includes most of the county’s biggest waste generators, including parks, libraries, the detention center and several office buildings. More departments will be rolled in after their current contracts end.

Why consolidate? The reasons aren’t just financial, although the deal is expected to net a 42% cost savings (about $58,000). There are also logistical and environmental efficiencies gained by contracting with just one company for all facilities.

“When you have multiple trucks from multiple vendors rolling around, collecting from buildings that in some cases are on the same street, from an emissions standpoint that’s just not very efficient,” says Alferman.

Working with a single vendor also makes it easier to roll out another project: a cohesive recycling program with consistent signage and messaging so staff and visitors know exactly what and how to recycle across all county locations.

Interested in learning how your organization could better conserve its resources? Call 913-715-6981 to schedule a free Green Business Program consultation.

Transit reimagined

For Johnson County residents who are unable to drive or lack access to reliable transportation, transit services provide a lifeline to jobs, shopping, medical appointments and more.

But in a large and less dense area like Johnson County, it can be difficult for those needs to be met by traditional fixed route service – large buses that drive the same route based on a pre-determined schedule.

In January 2019, Johnson County introduced a pilot program known as microtransit, which follows the ride-hailing model of services like Uber and Lyft by providing transit services through an app. Users request a ride and a van comes right to their door and takes them to their destination, potentially picking up other riders along the way. The goal of microtransit is to close the gap between a person’s starting location and the nearest fixed-route bus stop.

“The pilot has been enormously successful; we think it’s been the most successful in the country,” says Josh Powers, who manages the transit program for Johnson County Government.

In addition to reducing emissions, on-demand service makes public transit a viable option for residents who face challenges in accessing existing transit stops. Increased mobility options allow people to maintain employment, see their doctor, and run errands just as easily as those residents who own a car. This important piece of the sustainability puzzle is too often left out of the conversation – when our most vulnerable populations have the ability to thrive, it benefits the whole community.

By now you’ve probably noticed that none of these stories fit neatly into just one sustainability category – energy management is both economically and environmentally friendly, as is efficient trash and recycling. Microtransit reduces emissions, expands access to fixed route service, and helps the county’s most vulnerable find independence. Where one resource is conserved, others follow. The result is a county that uses its money wisely, protects its environmental resources and improves the livelihood of its residents, leaving the county better than we found it.
Mark your calendar

Here is just a sample of some of the Johnson County events you can enjoy this fall and winter. You can find more at jocogov.org.

November 2019

**Tuesday, November 5**
General election – polls are open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Learn more at jocoelection.org.

**Monday, November 11**
County offices closed for Veterans Day. Learn more about Johnson County’s special Veterans Day event on page 21.

**Thursday, November 14**
Pie Baking 101: Each student will make an oven-ready apple pie to either bake at home or freeze for later! For ages 14 and older. Call 913-715-7000 to register.

**Tuesday, November 19**
Quilting Workshop: Learn to make easy gifts such as pillowcases and table runners. Call 913-715-7000 to register.

**November 28-29**
County offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday.

December 2019

**Wednesday, December 4**
Papercrête Works and Emerging Artists, both programs of Johnson County Developmental Supports, will sell holiday gifts in the Dance Studio at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Cookies, coffee, punch and giveaways will be provided!

**Friday, December 6**
First performance of Theatre in the Park’s “Frozen Jr.” indoors at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center. Visit theatreinthepark.org for showtimes and tickets.

**Saturday, December 21**
Winter Solstice Celebration at Ernie Miller Nature Center. Walk trails lit by luminaries, visit live owls and gather round the campfire for toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate! Call 913-826-2800 to register.

**Wednesday, December 25**
County offices closed for Christmas Day.
Unlocking the Mind at Johnson County Library
September - November 2019

The mind can do a lot of amazing things. Libraries offer spaces, experiences and services that allow our minds to unlock, recharge, expand and engage. Books can help us trace pathways to our larger selves. We can also be motivated by the connections we make, the art we see, the speakers we listen to and by taking time for ourselves to let our minds wander. When we respond to the pressures of our lives with openness, we invite creative solutions to guide us. This fall’s programming series at Johnson County Library explores the mysterious workings of the human mind. A full list of programming is available at jocolibrary.org/our-stories/unlocking-mind.

Special programs to unlock your mind this fall include:

- Improve your body and engage your mind at events in the Live Your Healthiest Life series with Johnson County Department of Health and Environment.
- Challenge your mind for fun with game and trivia nights.
- Explore the history of mental illness treatment at a presentation by the Glore Psychiatric Museum.
- Protect your brain by learning about early Alzheimer’s detection.
- Meet filmmaker Kevin Bryce at a screening of his documentary, All These Flowers, about six people living with bipolar disorder.
- Learn about brain science with neuroscientist Dr. Kenneth Colodner, whose research on fruit flies has much to teach us about neuro-degenerative disease in humans.

Flu vaccines available at Mission and Olathe health clinics

An annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family from flu and its potentially serious complications. The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment recommends that every person six months and older get vaccinated by the end of October. New this flu season:

- Updated vaccines to better match circulating flu viruses
- Licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccines are recommended
- The nasal spray flu vaccine (LAIV) is again an option. Talk to your health care provider about the right vaccine for you.

Starting in mid-October, visit the Department of Health’s walk-in immunization clinics in Olathe (11875 S. Sunset Drive) or Mission (6000 Lamar Ave.) and get yourself and your loved ones vaccinated. Clinics offer seasonal flu shots for $30 and high dose flu shots for adults over age 65 for $50. The Olathe clinic is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Wednesday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Mission clinic is open Tuesday and Thursday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
In our Spring 2018 issue, we shared news about several major projects that were in progress or close to completion. Here are some updates on those projects and what you can look forward to seeing open in the coming months and years.

**BY MARK VAN BAALE**

### New Johnson County Courthouse
Santa Fe Street & Kansas Avenue, Olathe

**Anticipated construction completion:** Late 2020  
**Anticipated opening:** Early 2021

The new courthouse is being built across Santa Fe Street north of the existing courthouse and west of Olathe City Hall. The project is on budget and on schedule with substantial completion expected by Aug. 2020.

The courthouse is anticipated to meet Johnson County’s judicial needs for more than 75 years as the county expects to add 10,000 residents each year. Its design will also allow for the addition of more courtrooms later as needed.

Public engagement for the site of the existing courthouse and the new county square is underway. Look for the hashtag #JoCoSquare for more information.

Follow the project online and view a live stream of the construction site at jocogov.org/courthouse.

### Kill Creek Park Observation Tower
115th Street and Kill Creek Road, Olathe

**Anticipated construction completion:** Late 2019

Visitors to the observation tower will be rewarded with a beautiful view of Kill Creek Park and the surrounding Kansas prairie. An ADA compliant elevator will be available. The park is located in western Johnson County between De Soto and Olathe.

The tower is expected to be completed this fall.

Learn more at jcprd.com/KillCreekTower.
Dealing with fall leaves is a fact. But no single method for removal fits all. Leaves that blow into the streets reach bodies of water, breakdown and release harmful nutrients that degrade water quality. But these same nutrients are good for your lawn. There are options when dealing with leaves. Choose the strategy that works best for you.

**Mulch Mowing**  The best option is mulch mowing — chopping the leaves which filter down into the grass where they compost and provide nutrients. It requires more frequent mowing. Mow based on leaf depth, not grass height. Research proves a total of six inches of leaves can be returned to the lawn in one season. But not all at once. It could take six mows at an inch of leaves each to reach the six-inch maximum.

**Garden Mulch**  Shredded leaves are an excellent mulching material. They provide all the benefits of bark mulch and are free. Simply mow up the leaves and spread them around the landscape beds. It looks great, keeps the leaves out of the waste stream, and saves you money.

**Compost**  Leaves can be added to the compost pile then returned as compost to improve the soil. Proper composting requires work to keep the pile active.

**Bagging**  When all else fails, leaves can be raked into paper bags and sent to be recycled at the landfill. This should be considered a last resort. Bagging requires more energy on your part, as well as the trash hauler. But this option is superior to letting them blow into the streets and end up in our water supply.

Remember, when dealing with leaves the goal is to keep them at home. Do not rake or blow them into the streets. Keep them out of our water supply. They have a negative effect. Let’s do our part for clean water, our most precious resource.

For more healthy yard tips visit johnson.k-state.edu or call 913-715-7000.

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**Medical Examiner Facility**
Sunset Campus at 119th Street and Ridgeview Road, Olathe

**Anticipated construction completion:** Early 2020

**Anticipated opening:** Mid 2020

The new medical examiner facility is located on the Johnson County Government campus at 119th and Ridgeview. The project is on budget and the facility is anticipated to be open for business in mid 2020. The facility will provide better resources and efficiency for performing autopsies and death investigations. Additionally, real-time information about public health issues like flu and pneumonia deaths will allow for more timely prevention and intervention efforts. Learn more at jocogov.org/medical-examiner-facility.

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**Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility**
Mission Road and Lee Boulevard, Leawood

**Anticipated construction completion:** Early 2022

The Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility expansion project is on budget and on time. The project is a little over 30% complete. The majority of work in progress includes earthwork, buried pipes and electrical utilities, piers and concrete structures. Over the next six months more walls will be raised over the entire site.

The expanded facility will be able to treat 100% of its wastewater flow, rather than sending 60% of it to Kansas City, Missouri for treatment, and will comply with new water quality regulations. The facility is expected to save wastewater ratepayers over $16 million per year. Learn more and check out 360-degree drone images at jewtomahawk.com.
The right talent, right now
Empowering people with disabilities

BY MELISSA REEVES

“I work hard,” said Donna Wear. “When I get to work, I go right to my office and start working.”

Wear works at The Wingate Agency of Farmers Insurance in Lenexa, and she receives services through Johnson County Developmental Supports (JCDS). Wear is one of the millions of workers with disabilities in the U.S.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), a designation that grew from a 1945 congressional declaration making the first week of October “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” NDEAM is led by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, and it helps bring to the forefront issues related to disability employment and facilitates celebrations of the contributions people with disabilities make to the workforce.

While NDEAM is celebrated around the country, it also has local champions who have made disability employment their life’s work. JCDS is a county government agency that is the largest provider of services in the county for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. A developmental disability is a chronic disabling condition present before age 22 due to physical and/or mental impairments such as intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism or Down syndrome.

As JCDS has grown through the years, the focus of supports has moved significantly toward employment first. The unemployment rate in the U.S. for people with disabilities is twice the rate of those without a disability.

JCDS employment services include End-Dependence Kansas (EDK), a five-year initiative funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education; Project SEARCH, a national internship program facilitated through the agency; and traditional employment, provided through Vocational Rehabilitation services from the Kansas Department of Children and Families. There are additional supported employment opportunities, such as through Papercrete Works, Emerging Artists, onsite work services and supported community employment.

“Employers who partner with JCDS to hire our qualified job seekers are often the leaders in their industry,” said Jessa Molina, business account manager for EDK. “They value having a diverse workforce and see firsthand the benefits of hiring through JCDS. We strive to keep growing our partnerships and connecting with many great companies.”

If your business is interested in partnering with JCDS, please contact Molina at 316-807-5385. To learn more about the JCDS employment programs, visit us online at work.jcds.org.

Learn more about disability employment in Episode 11 of JoCo On the Go, available wherever you listen to podcasts.

IT'S OKAY IF YOU'RE
A mental health podcast with personality

Interested in learning about mental health? Download the latest episode of It’s Okay if You’re not Okay, Johnson County Mental Health Center’s official mental health podcast with personality. Keith, Kate and Renee bring mental health conversations to your home in ways that will make you laugh, cry and change the way you see the world.

“This is the podcast we all need to listen to,” says one listener in a review on Apple Podcasts. “It’s real on all levels and gives a healthy dose of mental wellness!” It’s Okay if You’re not Okay is available on all your favorite podcasting apps and at jocogov.org/podcast.
Knee pain can be difficult and miserable at times. It affects your quality of life, making it difficult to walk, stand, or even get a full night of sleep. It can prevent you from doing the activities you enjoy and living the life you love.

If you’re suffering from knee pain, a gentle, non-surgical and drug-free treatment called CoreCare™ may reduce your pain and help restore normal function to your knees. CoreCare has helped many knee pain patients get back to activities they enjoy!

We see hundreds of patients with knee pain each year who have tried medications, joint injections and want to avoid knee surgery. In many cases, these other treatments have not provided lasting relief for patients because the knee pain is the result of another biomechanical or physiological condition.

CoreCare addresses the cause of your pain and works to relieve knee pain and promote healing through a five-phase treatment approach. CoreCare includes FDA cleared technologies like Class IV Lasers for Photobiomodulation (PBM) therapy which are widely used by top professional athletes, sports teams, and trainers.

This therapy is scientifically proven to reduce pain and inflammation, accelerate the healing process, repair damaged tissue, and increase range of motion.

In addition to CoreCare, patients with knee joint pain or osteoarthritis may be a candidate for a CoreCare Regenerative Knee Brace which is the first to address patella-femoral issues. Many knee pain patients say they experience immediate relief (before they even walk out of the clinic) and that it’s one of the lightest and most comfortable knee braces they’ve worn.

We understand how difficult it can be to choose a treatment program and we know you’ve probably tried a lot of different treatments, and many or all of these haven’t worked for you.

We want to make it easy for you to see if CoreCare may be the right option.

For a few days, we invite you to make an appointment for only $39. This includes a consultation, exam and x-rays if needed. If you’re not a candidate for CoreCare we promise to tell you and help you find an alternative option, if possible.

During your appointment we will go through a complete case evaluation with either Dr. Matthew Metcalf, D.C., or Dr. Paul Hoyal, D.C., to understand your knee pain and explain the CoreCare treatment in detail. You will also have time to ask questions about your condition and any concerns you may have.

You owe it to yourself to determine if CoreCare might be the solution you’ve been looking for. Don’t neglect your problem any longer – don’t wait until it’s too late.

Call 913-828-0148 by October 31st to schedule your appointment. Tell the receptionist you’d like to come in for the $39 CoreCare Evaluation.

CoreCare is available in two locations in the Kansas City area:

Elevate Life
9237 N Oak Trafficway
Kansas City, MO 64155

Renuva Back and Pain Centers
4400 College Blvd., STE 150
Overland Park, KS 66211

Two Treatments Included with Exam $39
Call by October 31st
913-828-0148

EXAM INCLUDES: Consultation, Digital X-Rays (if needed) and Two Treatments (Valued at $257)
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

**Becky Fast**  
1st District  
913-715-0431

**Janeé Hanzlick**  
4th District  
913-715-0434

**Jim Allen**  
Vice chair, 2nd District  
913-715-0432

**Michael Ashcraft**  
5th District  
913-715-0435

**Steve Klika**  
3rd District  
913-715-0433

**Mike Brown**  
6th District  
913-715-0436

What is a vote canvass?

When you watch the election results from Johnson County on television on Election Night, have you ever noticed that they are labeled “unofficial results” and wondered what that meant? Johnson County election results aren’t official until they are certified by the Board of Election Canvassers. Due to Kansas state statute, the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners serves as the county’s Board of Election Canvassers.

The board is required to “canvass” or review and then certify, the primary, general and special election results for national, state, county, city, township and school district races, as well as votes on ballot questions.

At a vote canvass, the Johnson County Election Commissioner will present ballots that were cast by voters as provisional ballots, for various reasons. The board will hear recommendations on which votes should be counted and which should not, and then vote for or against those recommendations. The board will then call a recess so the Election Office can finalize its vote count. The board then reconvenes to certify the final election results. It is at that point the election results become official.

The Election Commissioner is the recording officer of the Board of Election Canvassers and is responsible for maintaining permanent records of its proceedings, orders and judgments.

“You might think an election ends on Election Day, but it’s really only the halfway point,” said Election Commissioner Ronnie Metsker. “There’s a lot of work for our office to do between Election Day and the election canvass to help the Board of County Canvassers ensure every possible vote is counted in Johnson County.”

Vote canvasses take place at the Johnson County Election Office (2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe). The date for each canvass is published in the Saturday Olathe News section of The Kansas City Star along with other legal notices and on the Election Office website. The meetings are open to the public.

The next election is the General Election on Nov. 5. For more information please visit [jocoelection.org](http://jocoelection.org).
What to watch for in 4Q 2019
What should Johnson County residents be watching for as 2019 draws to a close? Here are a few things to keep on your radar.

Veterans Day event to honor women veterans

The 2019 Johnson County Veterans Day Observance, honoring all local veterans from all wars, is inviting local women veterans and women who have served in the military as special guests for public recognition at 11 a.m. Monday, Nov. 11, at Veterans Memorial Park located at Harrison Street and Dennis Avenue in Olathe.

According to the U.S. Defense Department, women veterans, totaling slightly more than 1.6 million, represented approximately 10% of the estimated 18.2 million veterans in 2017. Women have served their country through all periods of U.S. history. They were disguised as male soldiers during the American Revolution and Civil War. They served as nurses in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. They were, and still are, serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Johnson County’s annual Veterans Day observance began in 1987. Each year, the event salutes specific groups of veterans and others as special guests. Women veterans were selected this year as guests of honor.

Traditional activities at the annual celebration include:

- Speeches honoring all veterans
- Patriotic music and songs by local students
- Presentation of colors
- Placement of memorial wreaths by local veteran organizations
- Playing of “Echo Taps”
- Rifle salute

More details of the Veterans Day observance will be available on jocogov.org as the event is finalized.

General Election scheduled for Tuesday, November 5

Mark your calendar to participate in Election Day on November 5! Polling locations will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Your polling location
Polling places are subject to change with each election, so make sure to verify your polling location before you vote. Find your polling place and view a sample ballot online at voter.jocoelection.org.

Getting ready to vote
When you are ready to research topics and candidates, Johnson County Library can connect you to resources that will help you make informed decisions. These resources are nonpartisan and designed to provide accurate and objective information about candidates. These resources include: Ballotpedia.org, Vote411.org, and VoteSmart.org. Remember to bring your government-issued ID with you when you vote.

Advance voting options
Johnson County will offer seven advance voting locations for those unable to vote on Election Day; mail-in ballots are also available upon request. Visit jocoelection.org/advance-voting for more information.
Three Questions for three Facilities project managers of Johnson County Government

BY LORI SAND

**Danni Livingston**  Director of Planning + Design + Construction (PDC)

I manage architects and interior designers in constructing high performance/efficient buildings and maintaining the design intent for the county facilities, while collaborating with departments, agencies and other entities.

**What do you do?** In addition to my role in PDC, I’m the project executive for the new Johnson County Courthouse and subject matter historian. The goal is that the county courthouse will be nationally recognized and endure for 100+ years.

**What do you like most about your job?** I work with great people in both the organization and community who have similar goals, such as continual improvement while striving for excellence. In my 25 years with the county, there have always been many opportunities to improve and those opportunities keep coming. It’s exciting to see ideas executed and make a difference. That is my reward.

**How does the work you do affect the lives of Johnson County residents?** The Facilities department has built high performance/efficient buildings and established many programs to minimize future investment. That has always been my goal as well. Many times, good design does not need to cost a lot. My hope is for residents to be proud of Johnson County when visiting their facilities.

**Janice Phillips**  Construction Implementation Manager

As a registered architect and certified ADA coordinator, I oversee needs assessment, budget development, management and implementation processes for county construction projects. Currently, I am the project manager for the Johnson County Medical Examiner Building. I’m also responsible for the county’s Capital Replacement programs with a varying annual budget of approximately $3,500,000.

**What do you do?** I’m a problem solver: I observe, ask questions, make assessments, develop and recommend solutions, and communicate throughout the process with all major stakeholders.

**What do you like most about your job?** People. I truly enjoy meeting people in the organization, getting to know them as individuals and learning how they and their departments operate to serve the community.

**How does the work you do affect the lives of Johnson County residents?** We ensure county facilities are in the best possible condition for departments to effectively deliver services to residents. We consider not only the physical aspects of the built environment, but also how those physical elements can enhance the experience for both the community and the county’s employees.

**Juan Lopez-Tamez**  Library Architectural Project Manager

I oversee the design and construction of beautiful libraries that provide a full range of information resources needed to live, learn, govern and work in our community. I also support the planning, design, construction and facilities management of all library branches, including Capital Projects.

**What do you do?** Our team is responsible for maintaining library facilities in the best possible way. As an architect, I co-lead the design and construction of new projects, help my team improve and implement new ideas and strategize to make projects more efficient, less costly to our taxpayers and overall, satisfy the community’s needs.

**What do you like most about your job?** I love being able to work on the core team for new design of buildings that bring all genders, ages and races together in one place. In our buildings, we all learn about our past, current events and what the future holds.

**How does the work you do affect the lives of Johnson County residents?** I like to think that our work brings smiles and joy to our patrons and provides places of enormous potential for diverse activities. Johnson County libraries become the cultural, social, educational, and economic heart of our communities. I love to see children, teenagers and adults all enjoying the facilities we provide.
10 things you can do to make Johnson County more sustainable

Inspired by all that the county is doing to make JoCo more sustainable? Small changes in your daily routine add up to big differences in energy use, environmental protection and more. Read on to find out what you can do to promote sustainability in your everyday life.

1. Recycle right
Keep materials out of the landfill by only recycling things that are clean of other waste and not mixed with non-recyclables. Learn what can and can’t go in your bins at jocogov.org/recycle.

2. Take hazardous waste to the HHW facility
Corrosive, toxic or flammable materials present a hazard to you and the environment and must be disposed of carefully. Johnson County’s Household Hazardous Waste facility accepts many kinds of materials and will dispose of them safely on your behalf. Schedule a drop-off at jocogov.org/hhw-dropoff.

3. “Grass-cycle” your lawn
Grass clippings and leaves help your lawn retain moisture and return up to 25% of their nutrients back to the soil, saving you money on fertilizing. A mulching mower allows you to mow right over leaves – no more raking in the fall!

4. Keep fats, oils and grease out of sink drains
When fats, oils and grease (FOG) from your home kitchen are poured down the drain, they cool and solidify on the walls of sewer pipes, restricting or clogging wastewater flow. FOG should be collected in an empty container (like a tin can) and disposed of in your trash.

5. Ride your bike instead of driving
Biking is great exercise and better for the environment than driving. Learn more about biking for transportation at the Central Resource Library’s partner programs with BikeWalkKC. Visit jocolibrary.org/bikewalkkc for details.

6. Put gas in your car at night
Cars are one of the leading causes of ground-level ozone, which produces smog in urban areas and leads to the air quality alerts common in the summer months. You can help improve our air quality by fueling up your car at night instead of in the morning, when cooler temperatures allow ozone from gasoline to dissipate.

7. Contain the rain and landscape with native plants
Protect waterways from pollution and excess runoff by implementing sustainable landscape solutions. Native plants have deep root systems that absorb and filter pollutants from stormwater before it reaches waterways. Rain gardens and rain barrels capture rain where it lands, reducing the need for watering. Visit containtherainjoco.com to learn how you could receive a partial reimbursement for sustainable landscape projects!

8. Make your home more energy efficient
Small changes in your thermostat can add up to a big difference in your energy consumption and save you money on utilities. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends 68 degrees in the winter and 78 degrees in the summer when you’re home and awake; adjust by 7-10 degrees when you’re asleep or away. Invest in a programmable “smart thermostat” and it will do all of the changing for you.

9. Minimize food waste
Up to 40% of food produced in the United States is never eaten. When food goes to waste, the environmental and financial resources used to grow and transport that food are wasted too. Visit savethefood.com for resources to help your family waste less and save money.

10. Volunteer
Sustainability is not just about financial and environmental resources - you can support the human resources in our county too by volunteering! Johnson County volunteers shelf library books, grow food in our WIC community garden, help residents with disabilities, and more. Visit jocogov.org/volunteer to learn more and sign up.
Using the Library

Your Johnson County Library card is your ticket to materials, services, technology and more! Getting a Library card is open to anyone. Do you know everything your Library card offers you?

- Books, music, movies and video games (check out 2-3 weeks)
- Free meeting room reservations (reserve online)
- Free Wi-Fi, public computers, Black & Veatch MakerSpace
- eBooks and eAudiobooks (check out 3 weeks)

News, databases and eResources like Rosetta Stone, Wall Street Journal, Brainfuse

Drop by any Johnson County Library location to apply for a card or visit jocolibrary.org to sign up for an eCard.

See you at the Library!

Call 913.826.4600  Text 913.667.7523  ask@answers.jocolibrary.org

/jocolibrary  @jocolibrary