Special water issue

- Watering your summer landscape
- NotifyJoCo provides important info
- “Let’s get some water” infographic
- Technology helps JCW network
Summer — hot, humid and a season of changes

However, summer is no time to slow down. And Johnson County has a lot going on.

First, I would like to introduce Penny Postoak Ferguson as Johnson County’s new County Manager. On July 12, the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners voted to approve the contract for Postoak Ferguson to become the county manager.

Postoak Ferguson served as the interim county manager since January of this year. She had been the deputy county manager since 2012, after initially joining the County Managers Office as an assistant county manager in 2010. Prior to that, she has 13 years of experience in city and county management.

Over the past several months Postoak Ferguson developed the proposed 2019 county budget that includes a quarter-mill rollback. She also oversaw the progress on several county projects.

On July 12, the community gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony at the construction site of the future Johnson County Courthouse at Santa Fe and Kansas Avenue in Olathe. This event kicked off the construction phase of this project, expected to be completed late in 2020. The new county courthouse will meet the judicial needs of the community for at least 75 years. You can keep up with the progress of this project online at jocopublicsafety.org along with our social media accounts (@jocogov on FB, Twitter and Instagram).

On Aug. 5, Johnson County Library will open its first new branch since 1994 — the Monticello Branch in western Shawnee. Staff has provided an overview of the new facility on page 21 of this magazine. Residents should look forward to a user-focused library to enjoy for years to come.

This year, the county also moved forward on the Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Facility expansion. At the end of June, Johnson County Wastewater moved forward in decommissioning the facility that was built in 1955. The improvements will allow for increased wastewater treatment capacity. The construction is anticipated to be completed late in 2021. JCW has set up a website to track the project’s schedule, answer residents’ frequently asked questions and provide maps, videos and pictures of the improvements. This information is available at jcwtomahawk.com.

With summer upon us, residents have an award-winning Johnson County Park & Recreation District that offers many outdoor activities. Yelp in cooperation with Money and MSN Travel both rated Shawnee Mission Park as the best park in the state of Kansas. The park is free to visitors and boasts a network of trails, archery range and a 120-meter lake for a range of activities. The county looks forward to the opening of new facilities at Meadowbrook Park and Bill Bull Creek Park in the near future.

In the latest estimates, Johnson County now has a population of about 600,000 residents.

We are a continually growing community and your county government reviews the growing needs of the community to help us determine ways to keep up with those needs. Providing the community with proven leadership, a safe judicial facility, improved and expanded wastewater capability, and diverse learning and recreational options are just some of the ways the county government is meeting the current and future needs of the Johnson County community.

We hope you and your family have an enjoyable and safe summer.

Ed Eilert
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

On the cover: Johnson County Park & Recreation District manages parks and recreational facilities all over the county. Pictured here is the lake at Shawnee Mission Park, where residents and visitors can enjoy paddleboarding, canoeing or a good swim. Learn more online at jcprd.org.
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**Pictured above:** The county broke ground on July 12 for the new Johnson County Courthouse that will be located just north of the current building at Santa Fe and Kansas Avenue in Olathe. The Board of County Commissioners, District Attorney, Sheriffs Office, 10th Judicial District Judges and county managers participated in the day’s ceremony. Video of the event is online at jocopublicsafety.org.

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### 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

### Board of County Commissioners’ meetings:
Attend a weekly Board of County Commissioners meeting at 9:30 a.m. Thursday on the third floor of the Administration Building, 111 S. Cherry St., in Olathe or watch on your smartphone or mobile device, or online at live.jocogov.org.

### Johnson County Elected Officials

- Ed Eilert, Chairman
- Ron Shaffer, 1st District
- Jim Allen, 2nd District
- Steve Klika, 3rd District
- Jason Osterhaus, 4th District
- Michael Ashcraft, 5th District
- Mike Brown, 6th District
- Stephen M. Howe, District Attorney
- Calvin Hayden, Sheriff
In short

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

Recognition for JCPRD facilities and parks

In collaboration with Yelp, MONEY recently identified the best park in every one of the 50 states across the U.S. along with the costs for visiting each. Shawnee Mission Park, part of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District, was recognized as the top park in the state of Kansas.

MONEY then added travel costs, where available, generated from its “best in travel” database — factoring in average flight, hotel, car, and food prices, based on a three-day trip for two people.

Shawnee Mission Park is free to visit. The 1,600-acre park is the state’s most visited park with a range of amenities such as the 120-acre lake to enjoy boating, fishing or sail boarding. Visitors can try out the nature trails, the archery range or disc golf course. Dog owners can let go of the leash at one special section of the beach, while horse lovers can take a ride on the equestrian trails.

County breaks ground for new courthouse

More than 100 local leaders, judges, stakeholders and residents gathered on July 12 for the ceremonial groundbreaking of the new Johnson County Courthouse, just north of the current facility at Santa Fe and Kansas Avenue in downtown Olathe.

The seven-story courthouse will be approximately 320,000 square feet with 28 courtrooms, expandable in the future to position the judicial needs for the county for the next 75 years and more. Substantial completion of this project is scheduled for late 2020.

Visit jocopublicsafety.org for more information.

quotable

“We’re grateful to the county’s leadership for making Stepping Up a priority, allowing us to help those who experience mental illness avoid incarceration and to receive the help they deserve.”

— Tim DeWeese
Director, Johnson County Mental Health Center

JoCo named Stepping Up Innovator County

Johnson County was selected as one of seven U.S. counties recognized on May 16 as a Stepping Up Innovator County for its expertise in helping people in the criminal justice system who experience mental illness. As an Innovator County, the county’s data collection efforts will be highlighted as part of a new push from Stepping Up: A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails to help counties consistently identify and collect data on this population.

Stepping Up was launched in May 2015 by The Council of State Governments Justice Center, the National Association of Counties and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation. Since that time, more than 425 counties — including Johnson County — in 43 states, representing 40 percent of the U.S. population, have committed to the Stepping Up goal.

New, expanded bus service to Edgerton and Gardner

Transit improvements offer improved access to jobs in southern Johnson County as with a new RideKC express route serving Gardner and Edgerton businesses.

On July 2, RideKC added a new route — the #596 3-Trails – Edgerton Express — which connects the 3-Trails Transit Center in south Kansas City, Missouri, to New Century Parkway and Logistics Park Kansas City in Johnson County.

Monday through Saturday, 596 provides three morning trips from 3-Trails to Logistics Park and three afternoon trips from Logistics Park to 3-Trails. There is one morning bus from Logistics Park to 3-Trails and one afternoon trip from 3-Trails to Logistics Park. At 3-Trails Transit Center, riders can connect to several routes, including the Troost MAX.

In April 2018, RideKC expanded service on the 595 Gardner-OP Express to provide service from downtown Kansas City to the Logistics Park area.

For more information, please visit RideKC.org.
A DRUG-FREE, SURGERY-FREE TREATMENT FOR CHRONIC PAIN

WHAT PHASE ARE YOU IN?

Did you know that spinal degeneration is a leading cause of many different pain conditions like back and neck pain, neuropathy, sciatica, degenerative disc disease, herniated disc, spinal stenosis and arthritis?

Many back and neck pain sufferers struggle to find lasting relief with physical therapy, chiropractic, acupuncture, or pain management alone. Plus, many patients experience harmful side effects from medications or failed surgical procedures.

The problem is that back & neck pain are symptoms of a medical condition, not a diagnosis. Often, these symptoms are treated but the biomechanical and physiological conditions causing the pain are not.

For this reason, Renuva developed CoreCare™, a comprehensive non-surgical and drug-free approach that addresses both the symptoms and the cause of your pain.

CoreCare uses exclusive FDA approved technologies to address three areas that are key to achieving lasting pain relief:

1. CoreCare treats the source of the pain to achieve relief as fast as possible.
2. CoreCare improves structure to fight against and prevent degenerative related conditions that cause pain.
3. CoreCare restores function so the body can heal properly and fight against disease related conditions that cause pain.

Finally, You Have an Option Other than Drugs or Surgery.

So, what does CoreCare include? New research in a treatment called Photobiomodulation (PBM) is having a profound effect on patients suffering with chronic pain from low back to arthritis.

PBM Therapy has thousands of papers published on it, and been shown to aid in damaged tissue regeneration, decrease inflammation, relieve pain and boost the immune system.

Before the FDA would approve Class IV Lasers for PBM Therapy they required evidence that it was safe for use on humans. This lead to studies on safety but also numerous studies on the effectiveness of PBM therapy.

One study from Lasers in Surgery and Medicine found that 70% of back pain patients who received PBM Therapy maintained pain relief at their 1 month follow-up vs. only 28% of back pain patients who received a Lidocaine injection.

Another study by the American College of Physicians found that pain medication and steroids were limited in improving pain outcomes and treating low back pain.

For patients with chronic low back pain, ACP recommends that physicians and patients initially select non-drug therapies like multidisciplinary rehabilitation, PBM Therapy and spinal manipulation – all of which are included in Renuva’s 5-phase CoreCare treatment protocol.

Could this Non-Invasive, Natural Treatment be the Answer to Your Pain?

For a few days only, we’re running a special offer where you can find out if you are a candidate for CoreCare with PBM Therapy and receive two treatments.

What does this offer include?

Everything we normally do in our New Patient Evaluation. Just call by July 31st and here’s what you’ll get:

• An in-depth consultation about your problem where we will listen (really listen) to the details of your case.
• A complete neuromuscular examination.
• A full set of digital x-rays (if needed) to help determine the cause of your pain.
• A thorough analysis of your exam and x-ray findings. If you’re not a candidate, we promise to tell you and help you find another doctor or treatment, if possible.
• Two CoreCare that will allow you to experience this amazing treatment and learn if this could be your pain solution, like it has been for so many other patients.

Call by July 31st and you can get everything I’ve listed here for only $39. The normal price for this type of evaluation including digital x-rays is $275, so you’re saving about $200 by taking me up on this offer.

Remember what it was like before you had these problems — when you were pain free and could enjoy everything life had to offer? It can be that way again.

Don’t neglect your problem any longer – don’t wait until it’s too late and the damage is irreversible.

Call by July 31st and let us know you would like to come in for the CoreCare Evaluation.

We are located on the northeast corner of I-435 and Nall in the Corporate Medical Plaza. Right across 107th from the new Top Golf facility.

Our office address: 10787 Nall Ave., Suite 110 Overland Park, KS 66211

913.884.1152

Call by July 31st 913-884-1152 Get 2 Treatments

Includes Exam, Consultation, Digital X-Rays (if needed) & 2 Treatments

(long normally $257)
Watering your summer landscape

by DENNIS PATTON

Many people wonder how the heat or drought will impact their water bill this summer.

There are no set rules. It is often difficult to know how much or when to water because we cannot see what is happening down in the soil where the roots are developing. But here are some general guidelines that help make sure every drop counts.

**Lawns**

Lawns are one of the largest water consumers during the summer. Many people can make simple mistakes that are easily corrected, resulting in savings on the water bill while still maintaining an attractive turf. The most common mistake is mowing height. The proper mowing height improves the turf’s ability to withstand heat and drought and reduces the need for water. Low mowing height decreases the turf’s ability to fend off summer stress. The ideal mowing height for bluegrass and tall fescue is 3–3.5 inches. Zoysia should be mowed at two inches. This simple practice is key in helping reduce water usage.

Another common mistake is the improper use of an in-ground sprinkler system. In spring, many people turn the system on, then run it on a timer. This wastes both water and money. During spring, temperatures and natural rainfall are typically sufficient, allowing homeowners to withhold supplemental watering till late June.

Not watering in spring also forces the lawn to develop a more drought-resistant root system. Too much moisture at the surface creates a shallow-rooted lawn that will not tolerate summer heat and drought without wilting. When plants have to search deeper for water, they develop a stronger root system.

When the need for summer watering does arise, then supply about 1–1.5 inches of water per week in as few applications as possible. Avoid light, frequent irrigation because that creates the shallow root effect.

**Vegetables**

Vegetable gardens produce best when they have a constant and even supply of water. Stress will impact yield. The extension program recommends watering gardens with one inch of water per week. The key is to cover the bare soil with mulch. Mulch reduces soil temperatures, which encourages root development and holds in moisture. Straw, grass clippings or leaves make excellent garden mulch. Apply water at the soil surface instead of overhead to reduce disease development.

**Flowers**

Annual flowers should be treated like vegetables for best flowering. Most do best with an even supply of water. Some annuals are touted to be more heat- and drought-tolerant, but they will still need moisture to grow and flower.

Native perennial plants are truly drought tolerant, as they develop under lean conditions. If you are interested in decreasing water usage, you may want to start incorporating more into the landscape. Make sure to group the plants by their water needs.

**Trees and shrubs**

The most important time for proper watering of trees and shrubs is during their establishment phase, which can last as long as five years. During their first year after planting, they will need to be deeply soaked at least once a week. Watering shallow or more frequently can lead to overwatered plants, as the water does not have time to move through the soil.

In periods of prolonged drought, younger plants will need more care. For each year in the ground, add one week before supplemental watering. A second-year planting will need watering about every two weeks. This rule applies up to the point of every four weeks. Evergreens should receive a thorough deep root soaking about every four weeks, if it’s not provided by nature.

The next question is how much is enough water? For a first-year tree, it could be 10–30 gallons of water to slowly soak the root ball and out beyond, for a distance of several feet. For a large blue spruce, it may be difficult to supply enough water to help it make it through dry times. The key to watering is to do it deeply, thoroughly and less frequently.

A lawn sprinkler system is not meant to water trees and shrubs. Most irrigation systems water very shallow, only soaking the upper four inches of soil. Tree and shrub roots, while at the surface, are also deeper in the soil, so additional water must be applied to help ensure they survive dry periods.

If you have additional lawn watering questions, please contact the Johnson County Extension Garden Hotline at 913-715-7050 or garden.help@jocogov.org.

Trained Extension Master Gardeners can assist you.
NotifyJoCo provides important information instantly

by LORI SAND

Every once in a while, news of a boil alert, a water main break or a public health advisory regarding an area stream is issued in Johnson County. NotifyJoCo is a mass notification system that county, city and utility partners can use to communicate with residents. Registered users receive real-time messages about emergencies, as well severe weather warnings, public safety alerts, planned and unexpected road closures, missing persons, and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods. NotifyJoCo delivers what you need to know — when you need to know it.

Because this mass notification system is a partnership among Johnson County, WaterOne and participating cities, residents can also receive messages from any of the partner cities they designate, in addition to those from the county government, public water and wastewater utilities. With this one system, residents and county visitors can keep tabs on what’s going on near their homes, workplaces, children’s school and daycare, and anywhere else they choose by customizing locations.

“In 2012, the community confirmed the need for a countywide mass notification system. Together, through a unique collaborative partnership, we created NotifyJoCo,” explains Dan Robeson, emergency management coordinator. “Since its rollout in 2013, this robust system has sent out thousands of notifications, keeping our community safe and informed.”

Keeping people safe and informed during emergencies is the priority.

Emergency notifications are sent to all county residents who are in the system. If residents do not register for NotifyJoCo, local officials will still attempt to contact them through NotifyJoCo using publicly available contact information when an emergency affects their area. The accuracy of this data cannot be guaranteed so it’s important that residents register (or “sign-up”) for NotifyJoCo and provide current contact information and custom contact preferences. All personal data is protected. Public officials will only use the system for the purposes described above. WaterOne customers automatically receive emergency alerts, using NotifyJoCo as its emergency notification system. During an emergency, local media will still broadcast emergency information, but NotifyJoCo is direct communication from local officials.

Robeson reminds those who have already registered that it’s a good idea to check their account as well. “Verifying you have complete, current contact information in NotifyJoCo is a two-minute task you can do right now to ensure you will receive emergency information when it really matters.”

You decide how and where you are notified.

Various alert options are available and users can choose to receive messages at work or at home, via a phone call, text message or email. However, it is highly recommended that participants provide more than one contact preference, such as multiple phone numbers or email addresses. During an emergency, if NotifyJoCo cannot reach someone at the primary contact preference, it will roll forward to contact them at another number or email account provided until it has been confirmed that the message was received.

“Today, more than 36,000 people are signed up to receive notifications. This number has grown significantly over the years, however there are hundreds of thousands of people that could be enrolled but aren’t yet,” Robeson said. “We encourage everyone who lives, works or has interests in Johnson County to go to notifyjoco.org and create a free account.”

To sign up instantly for countywide emergency alerts, you can text NOTIFYJOCO to 888777. However creating an account online at notifyjoco.org is preferable since it allows you to select your individual preferences and sign up for multiple contact methods and locations.
Ask anyone in Johnson County about the tap water in our area, and they’ll tell you it’s good. It’s safe, clean, a great value and in our region, Johnson Countians have access to plenty of it. It’s won awards for how great it tastes. But if you find that water isn’t on your mind very often, that’s perfectly normal.

In 1957, however, water was definitely on the minds of residents in Mission. Back then, the city was served by a privately owned water company that could not keep pace with demand during the hot, dry summers. Frustrated residents took the matter into their own hands and overwhelmingly voted to buy the utility out and re-establish it as Water District No. 1 of Johnson County, a publicly controlled, nonprofit water utility. After years of sound leadership, careful planning and responsible investment, the district now known as WaterOne has grown to become the largest water utility in the state of Kansas, serving nearly 435,000 customers throughout Johnson County every day.

Not many utilities such as WaterOne exist. It is a public utility by customers and for customers, led by a democratically elected governing board. It is independent from city or county control, has no taxing authority and funds its operations entirely through service fees and the water it sells. Unlike other municipal services provided by local governments, WaterOne has one and only one job: water. This lets the district focus entirely on its mission of providing a safe, reliable, high-quality water supply with exceptional service and value.

It takes a lot of water to keep Johnson County hydrated and WaterOne produced 21.9 billion gallons of it in 2017 alone. The district collects water through riverbank intakes and collector wells along the Kansas and Missouri rivers. It is in a very rare class of water utilities with water sources on two different rivers, offering a critical level of safety and redundancy for its customers. In the event of equipment failure or river contamination emergency, WaterOne can quickly switch sources and continue operating uninterrupted.

Raw water is treated at one of its two different treatment plants. WaterOne’s state-of-the-art Wolcott Treatment plant is located in Wyandotte County and is the largest membrane water treatment facility in North America. Membrane treatment is a multi-step, ultrafiltration and cost-effective process. WaterOne’s other treatment plant is Hansen Treatment Plant, located near Lake Quivira. The district recently began upgrading Hansen Treatment Plant with cutting-edge ozone water treatment technology which offers a more robust process for removing emerging contaminants and organic compounds that affect taste and odor.

After the multi-barrier treatment process, water is pumped straight to homes, schools, churches and businesses throughout the 17 cities in WaterOne’s service area. Its distribution system is a network that consists of six water towers, 10 pump stations and reservoirs, and 2,600 miles of underground water mains covering most of Johnson County. For the safety of the public, WaterOne is responsible for maintaining ample supply and reliable water pressure at all times. Just like any buried infrastructure, water mains sometimes break due to the ever-shifting ground. However, WaterOne keeps its main-break rate lower than average by inspecting and proactively replacing aging infrastructure whenever possible. Planned main replacements are coordinated with city projects such as road and sewer construction which maximizes ratepayer dollars and helps neighborhoods avoid unnecessary excavation.

WaterOne’s award-winning treatment process is monitored by its accredited laboratory. Its tap water is held to a higher regulatory standard than even store-bought bottled water. All this effort pays off — the Kansas Rural Water Utility Association recognized WaterOne as “The Best Tasting Tap Water In Kansas” in 2018. Protecting public health and satisfying thirst is a big responsibility, but it is all part of the job. Customers consistently give WaterOne customer satisfaction ratings of more than 90 percent, and the district is proud to hold first place in the region for happy customers. So, next time you need to quench your thirst, go ahead and raise a glass of cool, delicious water straight from your tap.

WaterOne customers are encouraged to learn more about the detailed makeup of their tap water. Visit waterone.org/2018report for WaterOne’s latest water quality report.
Fires are no match for WaterOne

by JERRY KOUKOL, WATERONE

Tap water is cool, crisp and delicious — but during a fire, it can be lifesaving.

WaterOne plays a vital role in fire safety by providing reliable access to water at no public cost to taxpayers. The quality of the water infrastructure is crucial during fire emergencies, and the fire departments across the county are able to fight fires more effectively thanks to a robust distribution system.

Historically, the roles of fire departments and public water systems have been closely linked. A century ago, it was common for out-of-control fires to burn down entire neighborhoods and sometimes cities. Over time, it has become critical for communities to have access to enough water in order to quickly put out fires before they spread, and water utilities have been close partners with fire brigades ever since.

WaterOne is required by law to maintain an adequate water supply and pressure so that firefighters can respond to even the largest emergencies. The local systems were put to the test in March 2017 during an eight-alarm fire emergency at an Overland Park construction site. An estimated 3 million gallons of water were required to fight dozens of structure fires and WaterOne’s system capably handled the extra load. Residents were reassured that at no point during the emergency was there any need to restrict personal water use.

The reliability of the local water system has not gone unnoticed when it comes to measuring safety in the county. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) gives a public protection rating to cities that assesses the quality and effectiveness of their municipal fire protection. This independent rating system is used as the basis for fire insurance premiums. Ratings are based on a careful review of a city’s fire department capabilities and efforts (50 percent), the water supply system (40 percent) and the emergency communications system (10 percent). Water service is a significant factor in these ratings and many cities in Johnson County hold elite Class 1 fire protection ratings, in part because of the quality of service that WaterOne provides.

Eliminate standing water to control mosquitoes

by JENNIFER DUNLAY

Just a small amount of standing water (about one centimeter in depth) is all that is needed for a female mosquito to lay her eggs and add to the mosquito population near your home or business.

The best thing people and employers can do to control the mosquito population and ward off diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, such as West Nile Virus, is to look for standing water and dump it weekly. Female mosquitoes can lay several hundred eggs on the walls of water-filled containers. Eggs stick to containers like glue and remain attached until they are scrubbed off.

Mosquito breeding sources like bird baths, kiddie pools and flower pots are easy to spot around the home. However, mosquitoes also find open trash bins, water bowls for pets, clogged rain gutters, leaky hoses, uncovered boats, wagons and other toys in the yard to be good sources.

“If you see standing water in these items, empty and scrub them weekly, turn them over or cover them,” says Todd Rogers, environmental division director for the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment. Rogers also recommends that homeowners tightly cover water storage containers (buckets, cisterns, rain barrels) so mosquitoes cannot get inside to lay eggs. For containers without lids, use wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.

If you have a septic tank, you can repair any cracks or gaps and cover open vent or plumbing pipes. Homeowners can use wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito. You should make sure screens are on windows and doors and repair any holes in screens. You should use air conditioning when available.

Employers can decrease mosquito populations at worksites by removing, turning over, covering or storing equipment; removing debris from ditches; filling in ruts and other areas that collect standing water; and placing drain holes in containers that collect water and cannot be discarded.

If you are concerned about standing water in a right-of-way, a park or along a ditch in Johnson County, call your city’s public works department or the Department of Health and Environment at 913-715-6900.
Consider what life would be like without the collection and treatment of wastewater once it leaves your home or business. Without this service, a devastating impact would happen to public health and the environment. Water is a precious, finite resource and clean water is essential to sustaining life and peoples’ most basic sanitary needs.

Residential, industrial and commercial customers pay Johnson County Wastewater (JCW) for the safe collection, transportation and treatment of wastewater they generate. Wastewater is used water that has been affected by human use. It can include human waste, food scraps, oils, soaps and chemicals. In homes, water that drains from sinks, showers, bathtubs, toilets, washing machines and dishwashers is wastewater. Once this polluted water drains from the building, it is collected via an underground system of pipes that carries it to a treatment facility for cleaning and release into rivers and lakes where it can be used again.

The cost and benefits of cleaning wastewater

“Several factors affect the cost of cleaning wastewater including energy, chemicals, and reinvestment in the collection and treatment systems. Pollutants in wastewater must be removed to ensure the protection of public health, aquatic life and the environment before returning it to the environment,” says Lisa Davis, director of customer relations.

The treatment process eliminates disease-causing bacteria to protect the environment for human and aquatic life. It also removes other elements such as ammonia that can be harmful to fish, as well as nitrogen and phosphorus. These nutrients can cause excessive algae growth in streams, rivers and lakes.

JCW’s rates are among the lowest in the Kansas City region and have been consistently so for many years due to the county’s proactive reinvestment in the wastewater treatment system with activities such as repair, replacement and preventative maintenance. JCW’s system is a huge investment worth more than $2 billion.

As part of its ongoing strategic plan, JCW annually reviews operations and plans rate adjustments accordingly, based on changes in the economy and prices for utilities and chemicals used in the operations of wastewater facilities. After a thorough examination by an industry leader in utility rate analysis, JCW submits its proposed budget and user charge rates to the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners for approval. JCW and the board work closely to ensure that the best interests and needs of customers are being served.

How JCW charges are calculated

“Residential charges are determined by multiplying the average winter water usage (AWWU) by the rate per gallon and adding the customer service charge,” Davis explains.

AWWU avoids charging for heavier-usage in summer months that do not impact the wastewater system such as watering lawns and gardens, washing cars or filling swimming pools. An industry standard, this is the best measure to reasonably estimate the volume of wastewater a property discharges to JCW’s treatment facilities.

Customer service and volume charges recover costs associated with capital and operating expenditures. The service charge also recovers costs associated with billing, collection, and treating storm and groundwater entering the sanitary sewer system through cracks and breaks in sanitary sewer pipes, or through improper connections such as downspouts or sump pumps.

For more information about JCW, visit their webpage, jocogov.org/wastewater. To learn more about the department’s newest capital project, the upgrade and expansion of the Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility, visit jcwtomahawk.com.
At JCCC, community is core to our mission. We know learning strengthens communities and are committed to doing just that. Youth programs, student-led services, arts and culture are just a few ways we serve Johnson County.

The 2018-19 school year will bring new experiences and opportunities to campus—all of which will build a brighter tomorrow for our students, faculty, staff and community. Learn more at jccc.edu.
Let’s get some water... 

While nature provides water through precipitation — rain and snow — many of us depend on a complex infrastructure (without even thinking about it) of pipes, pumps, equipment and people to deliver clean water to local homes and businesses, remove used water from homes and businesses, and collect and clean water to maintain our quality of life and a healthy community.

While some water from sprinklers, rain and snow is absorbed into lawns and soil, what cannot be soaked up (including water runoff from roadways), enters the local stormwater system.

The stormwater system consists of pipes, ditches and natural structures that channel water back to the natural environments.

REMEMBER: What goes down the storm sewer ends up in local streams and waterways! Do not dump any materials other than water in it, including lawn clippings, grass fertilizer, paint, grease or other substances. Introducing these items into storm sewers can have severe, negative environmental consequences.

Water is available for household use in a range of ways — drinking/tap water, use in cooking, taking baths or showers, washing clothes or dishes, and flushing the toilet. Then, it enters the next step in the cycle.

Water filters through layers of fine, granular materials or membrane filters. As smaller particles are removed, cloudiness diminishes and clear water emerges.

To protect against bacteria, chloramines are added before water flows into the distribution system so that it is clean and fresh for use.

Water is transferred to a second clarifier where CO₂ may be added, pH is balanced and remaining organic or sediment clumps are strained.

Disinfection

Filtration

Second clarifier

Ditches and natural structures

Pipes and pump systems deliver clean water to homes/businesses.

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Wastewater treatment process:
Water that is discharged into the pipe system for cleaning, typically enters the wastewater treatment process to remove waste and pollutants, and is disinfected before it is released back into a local river or stream.

Located at the beginning of the process, this treatment removes sticks, large trash, plastic items, rags and more.

The primary settling tank provides for the removal of heavy solids that sink to the bottom, as well as floating materials such as oil and grease.

In aeration tanks, air is introduced into the water where microorganisms use the remaining organic material and nutrients as their food supply.

This secondary treatment allows microorganisms to fall to the bottom of the tank for recycling back to aeration or to be removed for use in the solids treatment process.

Disinfection is part of the final treatment in wastewater plants. In some treatment plants, such as JCW-operated facilities, ultraviolet light is utilized to kill bacteria and viruses. Water passes through chambers with lamps exposing the water to high levels of ultraviolet light. Some plants use a treatment with (most frequently) chlorine and other chemicals to kill disease-causing viruses and bacteria.

Solid substances go through additional treatment processes such as thickening, dewatering or anaerobic digestion.

Digestion helps stabilize biosolids so they can be recycled for beneficial usage such as agricultural fertilizer.

After the wastewater treatment process, water can be reused in a number of ways, returning it as good or better quality than the natural water source.

Water conveyance system:
Each home/business is connected to a network of pipes and pump systems that send “used water” to a wastewater treatment facility.

Water is transferred to mixing basins where chemicals are added causing small organic particles to clump together.

Over time, particles become heavy, settle to the bottom of tanks and are strained out. To counteract calcium or magnesium, lime may be added, softening the water.

Raw water is drawn from fresh water sources to collect in pre-sedimentation holding basins.

Local source/ raw water
The county and its long-standing battle with water

by GERALD HAY

Water is everywhere in Johnson County! It is mostly good, sometimes bad.

When too much rainwater falls, flooding often occurs. When dams are built on waterways, water creates lakes. When water flows and drains from the county’s hilly terrain, it meanders through an ecosystem snaking hundreds of miles.

The lay of the land

The natural flow of water in Johnson County involves 13 watersheds, each named after main creeks, that connect north, east or south to the Kansas, Blue, Marais des Cygnes and Grand rivers. The watersheds have a combined length of approximately 190 miles that ultimately flow east to the Missouri River watershed, connecting farther east to the Mississippi River, finally flowing south to the Gulf of Mexico.

A segment of the Blue River from Missouri reaches into the southeastern corner of Johnson County. The Upper Blue River Watershed, which includes Coffee and Wolf creeks, spans approximately 19.4 miles.

The Kansas River, often called the Kaw, forms part of the county’s northern border with Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties. However, it only enters the county during times of flooding.

Johnson County has numerous large creeks, including various tributaries, streams and smaller creeks. Kill Creek is the longest at 20.6 miles. “Kill,” in this case, comes from the Dutch word “kille” meaning a body of water. The shortest is James Branch Creek, stretching just 1.2 miles.

The waterways, main creeks and major tributaries, total about 726 miles, stretching across the county, with some feeding into roughly a dozen man-made bodies of water, called lakes.

“The lakes are actually all reservoirs or ponds that were created by placing a dam across a creek or drainage area to create an impoundment,” explains Lee Kellenberger, manager of the Stormwater Management Program at the Johnson County Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. “From the day they are created, reservoirs and ponds begin to fill in with sediment that will eventually need to be cleaned out.”

The county is home to 29 dams used to create several designated “lakes” mainly for recreational/leisure purposes in city or county parks for residents to enjoy. Literally, thousands of ponds exist in the county. Some are created for livestock watering, fishing, aesthetics and even flood control.

Approximately 31,690 acres, or roughly 49.5 square miles, are located in a floodplain. That’s slightly more than 10 percent of the county’s land of 480 square miles.

Nature and its reoccurring wrath

According to the National Weather Service, the county’s annual rainfall averages 39.8 inches. The driest year was 1953 with 20.93 inches. The wettest year occurred in 1961 with 60.25 inches.

Over the county’s 163-year history, rains have been both a blessing and a curse, especially regarding the Kansas River.

Many early settlers were attracted to Johnson County because of the river and abundant water sources. Early businesses used the Kaw River and main creeks to turn waterwheels in operating grist and saw mills. Before the construction of bridges, ferries transported wagons and travelers over the river to and from this county.

The rich soil of the river’s West Bottoms, prime agricultural land in northern Johnson County, was famous for its potato, melon, tomato, squash and corn crops.

The infamous wrath of the Kaw River has been felt periodically with damaging floods dating as far back as 1844, more than a decade before this county was created, and again in 1903, 1935, 1943 and 1951.

According to the Johnson County Museum, the 1903 flood left 78 families homeless in northern Johnson County and washed out the bridge at De Soto. The flood was a factor in William Strang’s plan to develop flood-free land when he came to Johnson County in 1905 and platted what was to become Overland Park on high ground near 79th Street and Metcalf Avenue. He also founded the Missouri and Kansas Interurban Railway from Olathe to Kansas City, Missouri, until 1940, nicknamed the “Strang Line.”

The flooding in 1935 impacted much of the county, not just along the Kaw. According to the museum, more than 200 motorists were stranded in Gardner; Bull Creek overflowed and was running a mile wide at Edgerton; Turkey Creek flooded much of Merriam with as much as 10 feet of water, washing out the Frisco railroad tracks both east and west of town. Rising water damaged 80 bridges.

The Kansas River became really mean in the historic flood of 1951. De Soto and the small river towns of Wilder and Holliday were hit hard. De Soto recovered. Wilder and Holliday didn’t, with floodwaters reaching second-story windows, sweeping away homes and buildings, and leaving farm fields under 22 feet of water.
Since 1951, huge flood control projects along the Kansas River Valley have largely tamed the river, but flooding, especially after extremely heavy rains, still occurs in Johnson County waterways. In 1977, the Mission Shopping Center was damaged with flooding from Turkey and Brush creeks. In 1984, southern Overland Park and Leawood were flooded by Indian Creek.

Most recently, heavy rain a year ago caused flash flooding again along Indian Creek in Overland Park and along Tomahawk Creek in Leawood. According to the National Weather Service, Indian Creek at State Line in Kansas City had a crest of 27 feet, breaking the previous record by almost 2 feet. Tomahawk Creek at Roe Avenue in Leawood reached a record level of 20.81 feet, more than a foot above the previous record.

County storm management

Trying to manage nature’s deluges remains a work in progress started when the Kansas Legislature authorized a 1/10-cent sales tax in 1988 to fund stormwater projects in the state. Johnson County was the only county to implement the tax.

A sales tax was authorized in 1991 by the county commission, leading to the creation of the Stormwater Management Program (SMP) with oversight by an advisory council.

The SMP annually provides 75 percent of funding for the design and construction of stormwater and capital improvement projects in Johnson County in partnership with the county municipalities. In 2018, the Stormwater Management Program is providing almost $14.8 for capital improvement projects in Shawnee,

Leawood (2), Prairie Village (2), Olathe (3), Overland Park and Gardner. Over its 27-year history, the SMP has provided more than $270 million in funding for more than 200 projects to mitigate flooding risks and to establish and maintain a countywide flood warning system.

Choose your lawn

It all starts with a soil test!

If you crave that spring green, fertilize this September.

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

Start your lawn off right!
JoCo Residents, get one FREE soil test.

Learn more at johnson.k-state.edu
or call 913.715.7000

K-State Research and Extension
In partnership together

Funding provided by the Johnson County Stormwater Management Program. Limit one per Johnson County household.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Beat the fall rush!

Check the map of dams in Johnson County at jocogov.org/jocomag
Map provided by Johnson County AIMS.
What’s your watershed?

by ADELE WILCOXEN and HEATHER SCHMIDT

At all times, you’re in a watershed whether you’re in Johnson County or somewhere else.

What is a watershed

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, a watershed is the area of land where all of the water that falls in it and drains off of it goes to a common outlet. It is an area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet such as the outflow of a reservoir, mouth of a bay or any point along a stream channel. “Watershed” is sometimes used interchangeably with “drainage basin” or “catchment.” Ridges and hills that separate two watersheds are called the drainage divide. A watershed consists of surface water — lakes, streams, reservoirs, and wetlands — and all the underlying ground water. Watersheds are important because the streamflow and the water quality of a river are affected by things, human-induced or not, happening in the land area “above” the river-outflow point.

What starts in a watershed doesn’t always stay

A range of factors determine how much water flows into a stream including precipitation, slope of the land, soil characteristics and saturation. The makeup of the environment affects whether water soaks into the soil or not.

And not all water that enters a watershed flows back out. Water can return to the atmosphere through evaporation. Also, plants absorb water through their root systems and return water to the air and atmosphere through a process called transpiration. In this way, plants and vegetation slow water runoff movement and helps soak water back into soil.

Reservoirs and dams can store water and, as a result, increase the amount of water that evaporates. The control of water through reservoirs and dams has a significant effect on stream and river flow patterns. Learn more about watersheds online at water.usgs.gov/edu/watershed.html.

Check out the virtual rain gauge!

Johnson County supports a countywide rain gage system. Residents can go online and check the rain gage closest to their house to read rainfall amounts. Cities and emergency managers use this information to close roads that are prone to flooding during heavy rain falls.

Fight the bite!

by JENNIFER DUNLAY

Mosquitoes and ticks are out in force and can transmit serious diseases to humans, like West Nile Virus, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis, and Lyme Disease.

There are simple ways you can reduce your risk of mosquito and tick bites:

Wear insect repellant. The best insect repellents contain DEET and should be applied to adults and children older than 2 months before going outdoors. If you are using sunscreen, apply the sunscreen first and insect repellent second. Reapply insect repellent every few hours, depending on the product and strength you choose.

Walk in the center of trails.

Ticks live in grassy, brushy or wooded areas — or on animals. When you’re out enjoying the county’s many parks and trails, walk in the center of trails and avoid wooded, brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. After you come indoors, check your clothing and body for ticks and shower within two hours to wash off unattached ticks. Carefully examine pets, coats and daypacks for ticks too.

Wear long sleeves, pants, socks and shoes. Mornings, late afternoons and evenings are peak mosquito times. Cover your exposed skin with clothing and spray clothing with DEET, permethrin or another EPA-registered repellent to give yourself extra protection.
Financial Assistance
Protecting our environment takes time and a concerted effort. Johnson County offers up to $500 worth of free supplies to bootstrap your plans for going green.

Waste Reduction
Our Certified Partners have cut their operating costs through efforts such as eliminating paper and going digital, replacing disposables at the coffee maker with reusables, and reducing trash pickup days.

Join our Partners and become a
Certified Green Business
Heat stress and older adults
Signs to watch for and precautions to take

by BARBARA MITCHELL

Senior adults (aged 65 years and older) are more prone to heat stress than younger people because they do not adjust well to sudden changes in temperature and are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat. As one becomes older, the sweat glands do not work as they should to cool the body. Prescription medicines can also impair the body’s ability to regulate its temperature or inhibit perspiration. Instances where older adults forget to turn on their air conditioner or choose not to in order to save money have also occurred.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature. The temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures can rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs and symptoms of heat stroke vary but may include the following:
- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion may include:
- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Skin may be cool and moist
- Pulse rate may be fast and weak
- Breathing may be fast and shallow

Follow these tips to prevent heat-related stress:
- Drink lots of cool, nonalcoholic fluids. Try to avoid extremely cold liquids because they can cause cramps.
- Make sure the home air conditioner is turned on.
- Rest
- Take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath.
- If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment. If air conditioning is not available at home, consider visiting an air-conditioned shopping mall or public library to cool off.
- Wear lightweight clothing.
- If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day.
- Do not engage in strenuous activities.

Check on older adult relatives or neighbors to help protect them from heat-related stress by visiting or calling at least twice a day and watching for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

If signs of severe heat stress are observed, it may be a life-threatening emergency. You should ask someone to call for immediate medical assistance.

Begin to cool the affected person by:
- Getting the person to a shady area or into an air conditioned area as soon as possible.
- Cool the person rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immersion in a tub of cool water; place them in a cool shower; spray them with cool water from a garden hose; sponge them with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap them in a cool, wet sheet and fan vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101°–102°F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.
If you spot a large truck outside your home branded “Johnson County Wastewater,” don’t worry — it’s part of an award-winning program designed to maintain the county’s sewer lines.

Johnson County Wastewater (JCW) owns and operates 2,200 miles of sanitary sewers and six treatment plants that treat a total of 50 million gallons of wastewater per day. As JCW’s collection system continues to age, its staff have focused efforts to grow investments in maintenance, repair and rehabilitation, all aimed to keep JCW customers satisfied with their service and reduce the risk of expensive emergency repairs.

In 2013, JCW began to develop and execute the Gravity Sewer Asset Management Program that establishes a clear, practical and strategic path forward to take care of the wastewater infrastructure in the most cost-efficient manner.

“Our system was performing well, but we wanted to look for ways to improve operations and keep our costs down,” said JCW’s Chief Engineer Aaron Witt.

“For us, asset management is a way to really understand which assets we have, how they function and try to maximize the lifespan of those assets while maintaining our levels of service,” said JCW Asset Manager Patrick Beane.

This effort enables JCW to forecast maintenance, system inspection, system renewal investment needs and determine where to focus limited resources.

JCW uses a computerized management system that houses information on all 2,200 miles of pipe, 60,000 manholes and more than 5,000 assets at its treatment facilities. The information is used in many different ways — from projecting long-term budgets to making day-to-day decisions about maintaining the wastewater system.

One way the data is used is through the video inspection of the sewer system. The information from inspections is downloaded into the management system and sophisticated algorithms process the data and suggest next steps that could range from cleaning or repairing the pipe to re-inspecting the pipe in 10 years. This automation has saved staff time in processing the data and has allowed them to focus on other important work.

The management system also allows staff to focus preventative maintenance on the right assets, achieving 100 percent compliance with its maintenance strategy. This is accomplished with the same staffing levels, despite the ever-increasing number of sewers needed to support the considerable population growth in Johnson County.

**Award-winning treatment programs**

JCW has been recognized for its strong commitment to clean water and a healthy, sustainable environment.

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) annually recognizes agencies for excellence in wastewater treatment and outstanding environmental compliance.

NACWA’s Peak Performance Awards include silver, gold, and platinum levels. The Silver Awards are presented to facilities with no more than five permit violations per calendar year; Gold Awards for facilities with 100 percent compliance with permits for the entire calendar year; and Platinum Awards for facilities with 100 percent compliance over a consecutive five year period.

In 2017, all six JCW treatment facilities received awards — two Gold Awards and four Platinum Awards. This was the highest number of platinum awards the department has ever earned.
A brand new branch of the Johnson County Library is opening and you’re invited to check it out.

The Monticello branch stands elegantly at 22435 W. 66th St. in Shawnee and is the first new branch location in the county since 1994. The design for the Monticello branch benefited from extensive public input and deep analysis of evolving needs for library services in the 21st century. Scott Sime, project coordinator for the library system, said comments from residents have consistently centered around needs for meeting space, a robust children’s area and availability of diverse technology for public use.

“We have not built a ‘brand new’ library building since the 1990s, so it has been a good opportunity for us to really think through what a library in the 21st century can be,” said Sime.

The Clark Enersen Partners of Lincoln, Nebraska, are the project architects and local firm McCownGordon Construction contributed to bringing the building to life. The two-story, 30,000-plus square-foot building features floor-to-ceiling glass along three sides designed to let in lots of natural light and to be stylishly visible to those driving by on Shawnee Mission Parkway. Total project cost was $18.1 million.

The library and county identified a site in 2010 and the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System made a generous donation of adjoining land to provide adequate parking.

The building’s interior incorporates flexible spaces and design strategies so it can adapt to future uses and public needs without needing to physically expand. The first-floor features a dramatic central stair, self-checkout stations, new books and materials as well as a large area for children’s materials and programming. Lots of cozy seating is available along the windows. Study rooms, an area for DVDs, magazines and other media and a large meeting room that seats up to 100 people are also available.

The second floor boasts adult fiction and nonfiction areas, teen materials, public computers including Mac workstations, one conference room and several additional study rooms. An ecologically sensitive green roof adjoins a terrace with ample outdoor seating.

The new building opens for business Sunday, Aug. 5, 2018, 1–5 p.m. All regular library services will be available for patrons’ use starting at that time.
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

Ron Shaffer
1st District
913-715-0431

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

Steve Klika
3rd District
913-715-0433

Jason Osterhaus
4th District
913-715-0434

Michael Ashcraft
5th District
913-715-0435

Mike Brown
6th District
913-715-0436

County commission districts

Adolescent vaccines provide protection from whooping cough, meningitis and HPV cancers

by JENNIFER DUNLAY

School immunizations don’t end when a child starts kindergarten. The state of Kansas requires children in grades 7-12 to receive a single dose of Tdap, the vaccine that prevents tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). Schools require proof of receiving this required immunization before a child can attend school. Whooping cough is highly contagious and can last for many weeks, causing preteens and teens to miss school and other activities. The disease can be deadly for babies who are too young to be immunized and get whooping cough from an older sibling. There were 36 confirmed/probable cases of whooping cough in Johnson County in 2017.

In addition, the meningococcal, human papillomavirus (HPV) and influenza vaccines are also recommended for adolescents and teens. These vaccines protect students from serious diseases like meningitis, flu and several HPV cancers. Although not required for school entry in Kansas, these vaccines are highly recommended by the Department of Health and Environment, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment’s two immunization clinics in Olathe (11875 S. Sunset Dr.) and Mission (6000 Lamar Ave.) offer all of these childhood vaccines on a walk-in basis. Most insurance plans cover these immunizations in full. You can check your health benefit plan to confirm coverage. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines for children under age 18 who are uninsured. Cash, check or credit card are also accepted. Clinics are open late on Wednesdays until 6:30 p.m. Visit jocogov.org/dhe for hours and directions.

Follow Johnson County Department of Health and Environment on social media.

@JOCOHealth @jocohealthdept
Three Questions for three employees of Johnson County Government

by LORI SAND

I consult with local business and organizations to address solid waste reduction and manage the Green Business Program. I also regulate the residential waste haulers. I’ve been employed by the county for six months.

Brian Alferman
Environmental health specialist,
Dept. of Health and Environment

My primary responsibility is to help cities and the county comply with stormwater quality regulations. I oversee programs that educate our residents on what stormwater pollution is and what they can do to keep stormwater runoff clean. I’ve been employed by the county for 11 years.

Heather Schmidt
Water quality specialist, Johnson County Public Works

I manage sewer projects for new development and the low-pressure sewer program. Many projects I work on involve transitioning properties from a deteriorating septic system to JCW sewer. I’ve been employed by the county for six years.

Shannon Mathes
Project manager, Johnson County Wastewater

What do you like most about your job?

I love working with people who truly want to make positive changes in their organizations but just need a little guidance on how to do it. Working with people who want to work with me on an issue I care about gets me out of bed every day.

I like that there is a lot of variety in what I do and that I get to work with many different groups of people from school kids to city engineers and elected officials — it keeps things interesting!

I really enjoy being able to work on a project from inception to completion. I like working with the customers in the development areas and supporting the design and construction efforts to make a project a success.

Why do you like working for Johnson County?

After working as a consultant on projects all over the country, it’s exciting to put that experience to work in my own backyard on issues that positively impact my friends, family and neighbors. I’m proud that the county I live in supports the kind of work I do.

I like working for Johnson County because I work with a really great group of people who are dedicated to public service.

I enjoy the coworkers that I get to be around every day. We have chosen to work in public service and at the core we want to help people. Working for wastewater is not the most glamorous job there is, but I like working here knowing that the service we provide is a fundamental necessity for the health of our communities.

How does water affect your job?

Since I work in waste reduction, one of the issues I consistently deal with is plastic water bottles. Water is great for you, but single-use plastic bottles are a completely avoidable solid waste problem. Carry your own bottle and keep it full of our tasty tap water!

My job is all about water — the purpose of my position is to help to protect the streams and lakes in Johnson County from pollution.

Every day we work on projects to support the proper conveyance and treatment of wastewater within our sewer district. These projects benefit our ratepayers and help reduce water pollution in our lakes and streams.

Correction: From the Spring 2018 issue, Tara Lewis is a project manager with Facilities Management.
10 things you can do to protect local water

- **1. Mulch mow your lawn.** This nourishes your lawn by leaving grass clipping on the lawn. Don’t blow grass into the street or gutters where it can end up in the storm sewer.

- **2. Sweep fertilizer pellets back onto your lawn.** Don’t leave on hard surfaces where they can wash away into the storm sewer system.

- **3. Only water should go in the storm drain.** Don’t dump anything else down the drains.

- **4. Grab a bag before walking your dog to clean up your pet’s waste and dispose of it at home.**

- **5. Apply the correct amount of product to your lawn.** Your grass and vegetation act like a sponge and keep the chemicals from reaching water.

- **6. This fall, don’t blow your leaves into the street or gutters — or your neighbor’s lawn. Mow your leaves with your grass when possible to provide nourishment for your lawn.**

- **7. If you have a pond, instead of mowing to the water’s edge, leave a five-foot buffer that will help filter water.**

- **8. Excess fertilizers that wash into water supplies can cause algae to grow.**

- **9. Wash your car at a local car wash.** These facilities are designed to properly drain the water used there.

- **10. Direct downspouts from your gutters back onto your lawn.** This keeps water away from paved surfaces where they can wash foreign items into the storm sewers.

Ten facts about water? Well, one key fact — what residents and visitors do every day can affect the community and environment. If something is on the ground, it can end up in local water sources. Leaves and grass clippings break down and release compounds such as nitrates and phosphorus. These can harm fish and increase costs for treating drinking water.

Johnson County K-State Extension helped put together 10 things that residents can do (or should know) to protect one of the community’s most precious resources — water.

Follow Johnson County K-State Extension on social:

- Facebook: @JohnsonCountyKStateResearchAndExtension
- Twitter: @JoCoKsExtension
Save the date — JCDHE needs you!

Every three years the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) joins with nonprofit hospitals and other community partners to conduct a Community Health Assessment.

The purpose of the survey is to identify factors that affect the health of county residents. JCDHE needs at least 150 volunteers on Saturday, Sept. 8, 2018, to go to preselected neighborhoods to survey residents about their health and the health of the community.

Volunteers will start the day at 8 a.m. with training on the survey; then, travel in pairs to neighborhoods to conduct the surveys until approximately 4 or 5 p.m.

Each survey takes about 10 minutes.

Please help
This is a great way to help the community, enjoy a nice walk, get a t-shirt and meet new people. Volunteers will be eligible to win a gift card for their participation.

To sign up to volunteer, go online to:
surveymonkey.com/r/CHAVolunteer2018

Questions?
If you have questions, please contact:
Barbara Mitchell at JCDHE
e-mail: barbara.mitchell@jocogov.org
phone: 913-477-8364

Don’t get surprised with a high water bill! Give your sprinkler a check-up.

Learn more: WATERONE.ORG/SMARTWATERING

TURN AROUND DON’T DROWN

According to FEMA, six inches is enough water to make you lose control of your vehicle.

People tend to underestimate the force and power of water, especially when it’s moving.