

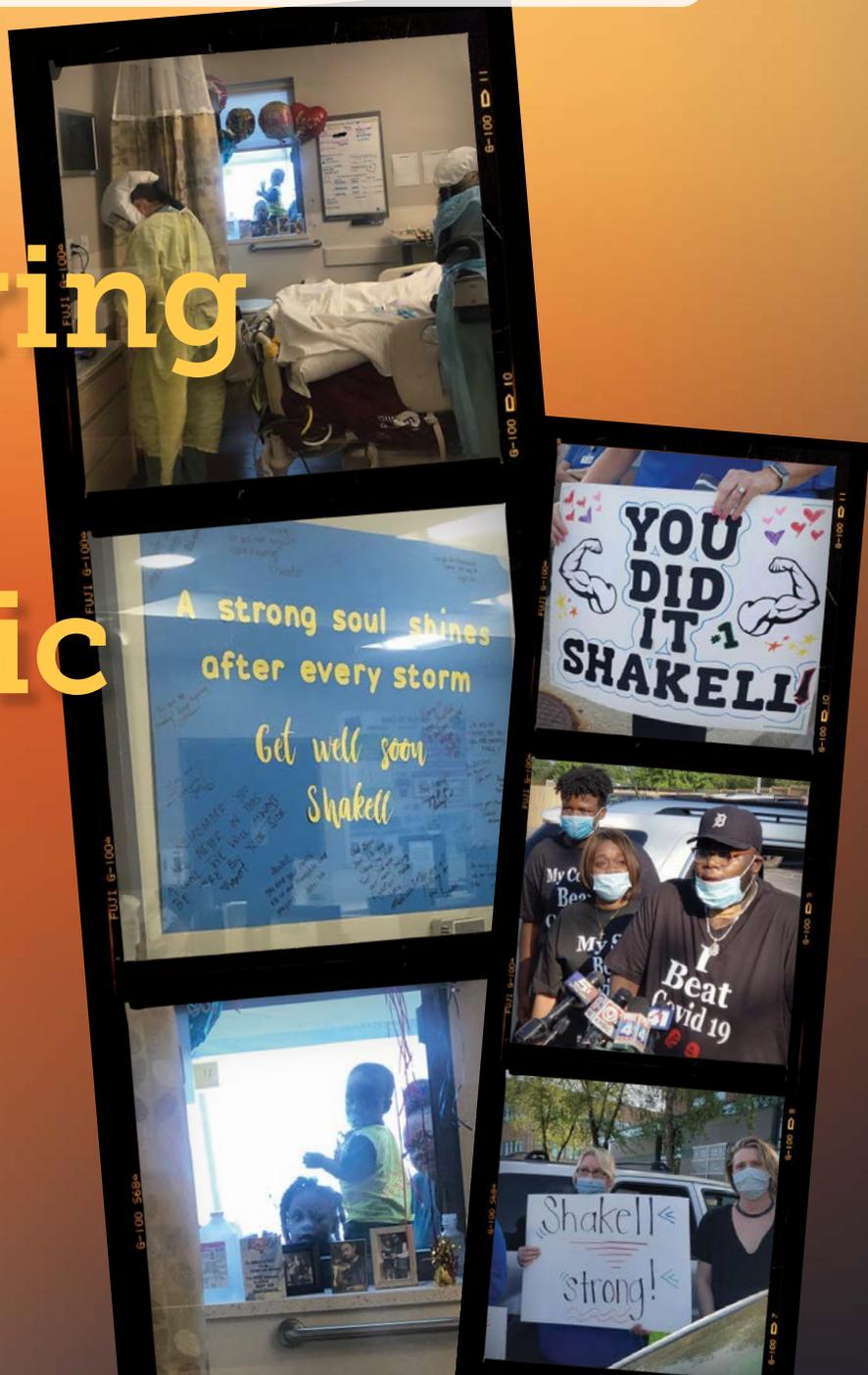
JoCo



THE JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT MAGAZINE FALL 2020

Persevering in a Pandemic

Stories of JoCo community
members and their
COVID-19 experiences





JoCo Magazine, a publication produced by Johnson County Government, is mailed to each residence and business in Johnson County, Kansas, four times per year.

Mission: JoCo Magazine is dedicated to publishing stories that inform residents about county services and finances, as well as issues that may impact their quality of life.

Publishing of advertisements does not constitute agreement or endorsement by this publication or Johnson County Government.

Please submit questions or comments about the magazine by calling 913-715-0725 or emailing communications@jocogov.org.

Editor: Jody Hanson

Content contributors:

Elissa Andre	Gerald Hay
Nicole Blackwell	Brandy Hodge
Keith Davenport	Melissa Reeves
Theresa Freed	Lori Sand
Jody Hanson	Richard Smalley

For information about advertising opportunities, please contact Tim Phenicie at 913-715-8920 or tim.phenicie@jocogov.org.

JoCo Magazine:

111 S. Cherry St., Suite 3300
Olathe, KS 66061
913-715-0725
jocogov.org/jocomag



LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

After months of work made more challenging this year due to the financial impact of COVID-19, the Board of County Commissioner adopted the FY 2021 budget with a .25 mill levy reduction. The approximately \$1.25 billion budget includes \$930.0 million in expenditures and \$315.5 million in reserves. While that may sound like a large number, when you take out portions assigned to wastewater, parks, libraries, restricted funds and other designated funds, the General Fund has \$101.1 million in reserves. Reserves are important to have when the unexpected occurs, and a major factor in the Triple AAA ratings we receive from bond rating agencies year after year.

The FY 2021 budget aligns with the board’s priorities of completing major capital projects, protecting the county’s vulnerable and aging populations, and optimizing funding for transit and innovation. We also incorporated your feedback from the 2020 Community Survey. You listed maintaining the county’s highly-rated quality of life with public safety and low crime rate as a top priority. You said “making sure that necessary health and human services are available” is our No. 1 most critical role in the next 10-20 years. You chose “providing emergency medical service” as the county’s most important service for residents. We directed your taxpayer dollars to those areas.

In addition to reducing our current budget by \$25 million due to the financial impact of COVID-19, the FY 2021 budget includes \$6.6 million in reductions, including 69 eliminated or unfunded positions. We do not anticipate cuts to programs or services for our more than 615,000 residents due to these reductions.

Some residents may have questions about what the 2021 budget means for their own budgets, how property tax dollars are used, and what are some new items in next year’s budget. We have answered those questions on pages 6 and 7 of this issue.

You have had other questions and feedback on the budget, whether you have shared it on social media, by email or speaking at a BOCC meeting. We always appreciate the public’s engagement with county government.

Also in this issue we look outward and share stories (pages 12-15) to help paint the picture of how the Johnson County community is dealing every day with COVID-19. We provide updates (page 5) on the actions our leadership and staff have taken over the past few months to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We ALL need to continue to work together to protect the health and safety of our community.

Ed Eilert
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

Penny Postoak Ferguson
County Manager

On the cover: One story that emerged when talking to a JoCo Nursing ICU director was about Shakell Avery, who recovered from COVID-19 thanks to a convalescent plasma donor. Visit jocogov.org/COVID19Stories to learn how he celebrated with his medical team this summer. You’ll also find additional community COVID-19 stories.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Fall 2020 • Volume 7 • Issue 3

- 4 Time is running out to be counted in the 2020 Census
- 5 COVID-19 digest: Summer 2020 milestones
- 6 How does the 2021 budget impact my property taxes?
- 7 FY 2021 budget includes funding for new AAA program
- 8 JoCo celebrates 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- 11 Increasing cultural competency in mental health
- 12 Pandemic Perspectives: How COVID-19 is affecting lives across JoCo
- 16 Major projects update
- 18 Fall into virtual opportunities for fun and learning
- 18 Utility Assistance Program for low-income residents
- 19 JoCo History: Johnson County's Derby Champ
- 20 Roles and authority during a public health pandemic
- 21 What to watch for in Q4
- 22 Three questions for public health officials
- 23 Ten things to know before the general election

Pictured above: The new Johnson County Courthouse reached two artistic milestones this summer. (Left) The building's public art, "Open Prairies," was installed. The work by artist Benjamin Ball was installed in the vestibule leading to the lobby and features 5,400 individual strands of enamel-painted ball chain. (Right) Crews moved the "Goddess of Justice" statue from the current courthouse, where she stood since 1997, to her new home. Her history with the county goes back to the 19th century. She stood on the roof of the south entrance of Johnson County's first permanent courthouse constructed in 1892.

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 bocmeetings.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

In short

A glimpse into what's going on in Johnson County Government



Make a difference by volunteering

The Johnson County Area Agency on Aging Nutrition Program provides home-delivered meals to over 550 homebound older adults daily. The home-delivered meals program has a pressing need for new volunteers who can dedicate one hour once a week, once a month, or substitute when available. Our volunteers deliver noon meals Monday through Friday. With just one hour, you will not only deliver a nutritious meal but also brighten someone's day. Call 913-715-8895 today.

Time is running out to be counted in the 2020 Census

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to finish counting everyone in the nation by Sept. 30.

Census workers knocking on doors

This summer, census workers began visiting households that had not yet responded by mail, phone or online. Census workers are trained on social distancing and other health and safety protocols. The Census Bureau hires workers to visit neighborhoods in their own communities.

Johnson County will only receive its correct share of \$675 billion in federal funds if everyone is counted, once and in the right place. According to the GW Institute of Public Policy "Counting for Dollars 2020" report, Kansas receives more than \$6 billion each year based on data received from the 2010 Census.

For those who have not yet been counted, please visit 2020census.gov or call 1-844-330-2020.

Shape
your future
START HERE >

United States®
Census
2020



Meadowbrook Park is an award winner

The Johnson County Park & Recreation District's Meadowbrook Park in Prairie Village recently won the Kansas City Business Journal's Capstone Award.

This annual award, which is now in its 15th year, honors "those companies that have been involved in real estate development projects and transactions that enhance the Kansas City area."

JCPRD opened Meadowbrook Park and Clubhouse in late June 2019. The 80-acre park, its clubhouse, and other amenities, present a great opportunity to introduce JCPRD programs and events in an area of the county that has long been underserved.

quotable

"Our ability to maintain top-tier financial ratings while we navigate this global pandemic speaks to our responsible fiscal management and resilient local economy. Retaining our Triple AAA ratings allows us to continue saving taxpayer dollars."

— Ed Eilert, chairman of the Johnson County Board of Commissioners

In late July, Johnson County Government received the top AAA bond ratings with stable outlook from all three major rating agencies: Standard & Poor's, Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investors Service as part of a bond sale to help fund construction of the Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant and refund existing debt at lower interest cost.



COVID-19 digest: Summer 2020 milestones

BY JODY HANSON

Throughout the summer, the county increased COVID-19 testing capacity, monitored community data and educated the public. In addition, the county's elected officials, county leaders and frontline staff tackled issues such as a mask mandate, the disbursement of CARES Act funding, distributing Personal Protective Equipment to the community, providing guidance for workplaces in various industries and developing gating criteria to help school districts make decisions about how to reopen for the Fall 2020 semester.

Helping schools make data-based decisions

Between May and August, Johnson County Department of Health and Environment staff worked closely with the county's six public school districts to provide public health recommendations for K-12 schools to help families and districts make decisions about how to start school. JCDHE based those recommendations on our community's data on COVID-19 cases, along with expert analysis from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Children's Mercy Hospital.

"JCDHE and school districts will continue to work closely together to monitor community and school conditions and make amendments to the recommendations as necessary," said JCDHE director Dr. Sanmi Areola.

Masks go from strongly encouraged to mandated

On June 26, the region's public health directors, including JCDHE director Dr. Sanmi Areola, issued a joint statement urging residents to wear a face covering in public to help slow the spread of the disease.

On June 29, Governor Laura Kelly announced that beginning at 12:01 a.m., on Friday, July 3, "every Kansan in a public space must wear a mask."

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners called a special meeting for July 2 to consider if it wanted to support the Kansas Governor Executive Order on masks. After more than two and half hours of discussion and public comment, the board voted to support the mask requirement.

Overseeing millions of dollars in COVID-19 funding for reimbursement and community investment

Responsible for the oversight and distribution of more than \$126 million in federal and state Coronavirus Relief Fund allocations, our County Manager's Office created and began implementing a three-phase allocation plan.

- **Phase 1:** reimbursement to local governments and other taxing jurisdictions for COVID-19 related expenses.
- **Phase 2:** investing in community efforts related to mental health, aging, housing, workforce development/small business support and digital access.
- **Phase 3:** covers administrative/audit costs and contingency funds.

Getting PPE to those who needed it

Since the onset of the pandemic, Johnson County Government took responsibility...in the form of funding and distribution... to ensure masks, gowns, and other crucial PPE made it to the priority health care and public safety workers who needed it the most.

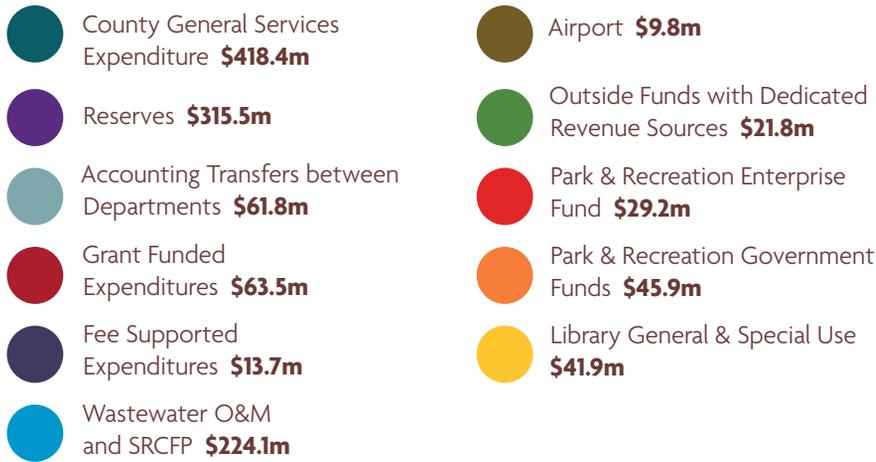
In June, the state of Kansas provided Johnson County with a new non-medical PPE stockpile meant for schools, businesses and faith-based organization. The county's Emergency Management division took on this new task, securing and staffing a new warehouse to distribute the PPE to members of the community.

Providing guidance to operate workplaces safely

JCDHE and the Public Information Office teamed up to provide guidance documents, letter templates and various types of signs, all in an effort to help local businesses and organizations minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread for their employees and customers. All of these items are available at jocogov.org/coronavirus. 🌞

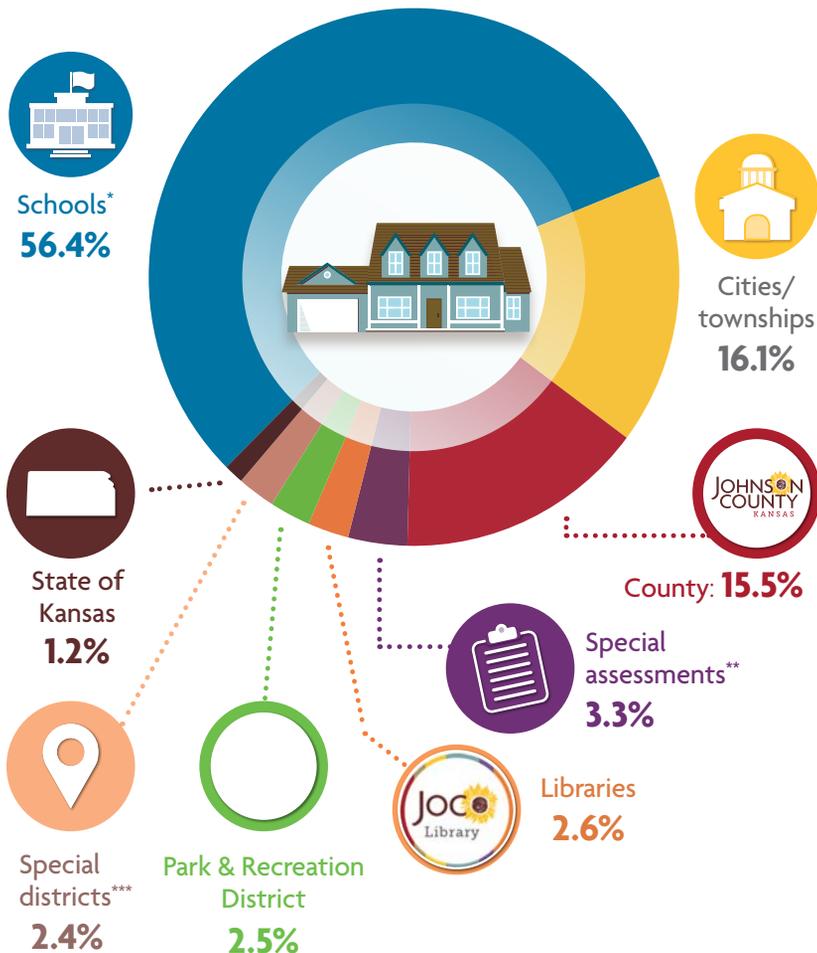
Budget Basics

FY 2021 budget breakdown



Where do my property taxes go?

State statute requires Johnson County Government to collect property taxes for ALL taxing districts (see below). We keep our portion...approximately 15% of all we collect...and distribute the rest as follows:



How does the FY 2021 budget impact my property taxes?

Our annual budget relies on several revenue sources, one of which is property taxes (also referred to as ad valorem.) For the 2021 budget, just over \$288 million, or 31%, of our budgeted revenue comes from property taxes. What will change for residential property values next year?



2020

Avg. residential property value = \$330,000
Avg. monthly tax payment = \$82.25



2021

Avg. residential property value = \$346,000
Avg. monthly tax payment = \$85.50
(\$3.25 more per month in 2021)

* 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.

the Best Times Digest

FY 2021 budget includes funding for new AAA program

BY GERALD HAY

One of the top priorities of Johnson County Government is to enhance aging services to meet increasing demands from a growing older population.

In its approval of the FY 2021 budget, the Board of County Commissioners added \$250,000 for an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) program to serve more aging adults with plans to provide a matching amount in 2022.

According to Dan Goodman, AAA director at the Department of Human Services, his agency requested a \$500,000 investment over a two-year funding cycle. The funding will serve an additional 216 older county residents through the new local program modeled after the state's Senior Care Act (SCA) program.

"That funding included \$410,000 for services and the remaining would cover the cost and benefits for one new full-

"The funding approved for 2021 will serve between 70 – 80 new clients each year with the remainder of the 216 new clients coming with the additional funding proposed in 2022."

Dan Goodman, Area Agency on Aging Director,
Department of Human Resources

time employee in 2021 to assist with the added service demands," Goodman said.

The board overwhelmingly supported the proposal to fund the \$250,000 in the FY 2021 budget.

According to the AAA director, a large majority of older adults prefer to stay in their home as long as possible if not avoid institutional care altogether.

"Programs like Senior Care Act and the new local program allow for more older adults to do just that," he said.

"The funding approved for 2021 will serve between 70-80 new clients each year with the remainder of the 216 new clients coming with the additional funding proposed in 2022."

The local program will be developed to begin in January 2021. Although it will be modeled like the existing Senior Care Act program, the local program may be further tailored to better meet the needs of Johnson County residents.

Like the Senior Care Act program, the Johnson County program will use a sliding fee scale which means clients will pay for a portion of the services that they receive based on their income and assets. Services will include homemaker, attendant care, case management, assessment, home health and respite care.

Over the past nine years, the Johnson County AAA has demonstrated that clients stay on Senior Care Act services for an average of 24 months or 2.07 years. Of the older adults who choose to enter a nursing facility care, most will spend down their remaining financial resources within two years.

Goodman points out there is "a significant difference"

between the annual cost for SCA (\$2,400) and the annual cost for a nursing facility bed (\$72,087).

"The cost avoidance to the Kansas taxpayer per client served by SCA is \$69,687 per client, per year," he said. 🌻



CHAMPSS participant Sandi Braden (center) enjoys a meal at a Hy-Vee store.

What else did the BOCC add to the proposed 2021 budget?

\$36,500 for enhanced voucher assistance in the Corrections Department to help clients reduce criminal justice debt and better access transportation and community-based interventions.

\$70,268 for a warrant assistant in the District Attorney's Office to relieve the workload based on caseload levels.

\$75,000 for a systems administrator with regards to security.



Johnson County celebrates 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act

BY MELISSA REEVES

In the past 60 years, several pieces of landmark legislation fundamentally changed how we operate as a nation. Legislation such as The Civil Rights Act, The Voting Rights Act, and Title IX all changed the trajectory of our country and the experience of the people who live here. Therefore, it is surprising, given the great strides we made as a nation in the 20th century in terms of civil rights, that it took until the final decade to pass The Americans with Disabilities Act. But as Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

This summer marked the 30th anniversary of this landmark legislation and is cause for celebration and reflection given its positive impact on our lives and community.

The ADA was signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George H. W. Bush, and outlawed discrimination against people with disabilities. The

ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination in public and private settings, in employment matters, and in other areas.

De Linda Brite works for Johnson County Mental Health Center as a case manager for Deaf Adult Services. She was born Deaf and has been in the human services field with the Deaf, hard of hearing and DeafBlind community for about 30 years.

“[The ADA] has impacted me immensely,” said Brite. “...If it wasn’t for this law, I would not have had this opportunity to gain all those years of experiences in human services (and two college degrees), and I would most likely not be working with Johnson County Mental Health. I would not have had an interpreter in the delivery room signing ‘It’s a GIRL!’ moments after I gave birth. I would not be able to order a pizza delivery on my own. I would not be able to sit in my recliner and watch a favorite

TV show with captions, and I would not be able to call my mother through a videophone to wish her a Happy Mother’s Day.”

The ADA is a framework to prevent and penalize discrimination, but it is

not all encompassing of efforts that can be made to ensure people with disabilities are fully included. Johnson County incorporates diversity and inclusion into all aspects of serving the public.

Johnson County Developmental Supports (JCDS) provides services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. JCDS’s employment

specialists ensure the people they serve can access jobs that match their skills and interests. This includes helping employers navigate and provide reasonable accommodations, as required by the ADA. JCDS offers free training for employers interested in learning more about hiring people with disabilities.

“Having a job coach, provided by JCDS, to support the employee with any initial training is the most common accommodation we request,” said Amy Fair, Community Employment Team



De Linda Brite, Deaf Adult Services case manager for Johnson County Mental Health Center, (left) is signing the word “vote” in a conversation with a client about voting in person or by mail this November.

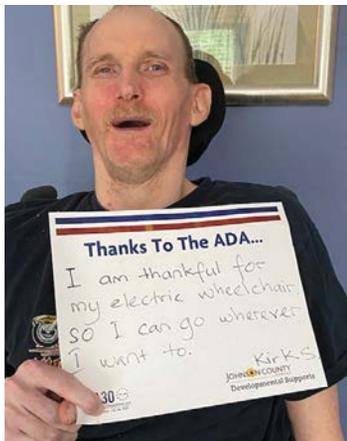
The ADA was signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George H. W. Bush, and outlawed discrimination against people with disabilities. The ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination in public and private settings, in employment matters, and in other areas.





Leader for JCDS. “Other common requests are a list of tasks to follow, a digital clock and a schedule that accommodates available transportation options.”

The impacts of the ADA have affected everyone in our country. Our industries, economy, and communities thrive when all people have access to employment, voting, and are fully integrated without barriers. We have seen how making our country more accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities has had a positive effect. But more progress is needed.



Kirk receives services from JCDS and uses an electric wheelchair. Thanks to accessible infrastructure such as curb cuts and accessible parking spots, he's able to get around and enjoy the world.

“There are still issues that we, people with disabilities, are still fighting for,” said Brite. “Not too long ago, a friend of mine, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, was thrown out of his wheelchair, onto a sidewalk somewhere in the metro area of KC because there were cracks or ‘potholes’ on the sidewalk where one of his wheels got caught. He ended up having some stitches on his face. I was with someone recently, in the ER, and we had to fight for his rights to an interpreter. It’s been 30 years, but there’s a lot of work that needs to be done. We’re not done yet.”

To strengthen the ADA, advocates encourage communities to increase enforcement, and to ensure upkeep of the infrastructure, such as maintaining ramps and curb cuts.

“I would like to see that all cities/counties would step up, spend more time and attention to accessibility around their properties,” said Brite. “Investing more in maintenance and upkeep of our accessibilities and be firm with violations and fines. All across this country, ADA has gotten neglected so badly that thousands of complaints have been filed with Dept. of Justice, after we have tried advocating for ourselves, year after year.”

But even though there is still work to be done, the ADA has had an indelible impact. This year, as we celebrate three decades of this landmark legislation, let us not forget how lives have been changed and doors opened for millions of Americans.

“The ADA is our pathway to freedom, our bridge to equality and our beacon of hope,” said Brite. “When we celebrate, we educate the community at large that the word ‘dis’ are being removed and to show that we do have the ability. We just need to repair the bridge and replace the lightbulb.” 🌞

Fall 2020

Johnson County Funeral Chapel & Memorial Gardens

11200 Metcalf Ave. • Overland Park, KS 66210 • 913-451-1860 • www.JohnsonCountyChapel.com

Overland Park Funeral Chapel

8201 Metcalf Ave. • Overland Park, KS 66204 • 913-648-6224 • www.OverlandParkChapel.com

Funeral services, casket and vault starting at \$6975.00

- Serving the community since 1963 with quality services and pricing to meet the needs of every family.
- Our facility has the only indoor mausoleum in the Johnson County community with options of burial crypts and cremation niches attached to the funeral home.
- Our funeral directors have a combined experience of 115 years in serving families.
- Our facility accommodates receptions and meals following a service or burial.
- We can also arrange and conduct funeral and cremation services that are burying in another cemetery.
- Unlike many other area funeral homes, we have a price guarantee for our pre-arranged funeral and cremation plans.

Thinking about pre-arranging?

For more information, visit our websites
or call 913-451-1860.



JOHNSON COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

YOUR
TOMORROW
STARTS HERE.™

YOUR GENEROSITY BUILDS BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

The JCCC Foundation awarded more than \$1.3 million in student scholarships last year. Still, only 1 in 4 requests for financial support was granted.

Consider the numbers: A Johnson County resident taking 12 credit hours will need \$1,728 for tuition and books—that's a full semester for less than \$2,000. Yet it's an investment that's out of reach for many.

Our Foundation puts every dollar to work. Your donation—100%—goes toward helping students.

Visit jccc.edu/foundation to find out how you can make a difference.

JOHNSON COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENT CENTER



Increasing cultural competency in mental health

BY KEITH DAVENPORT

Organizations around the country observe each July as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Mental Health Awareness Month, which was recognized in 2008 to bring awareness to the unique struggles the BIPOC community faces regarding mental illness.

This year, Johnson County Mental Health Center (JCMHC) joined Mental Health America and the National Alliance on Mental Illness, two leading national organizations in the field, in raising awareness about two significant trends related to the mental health of Black Americans.

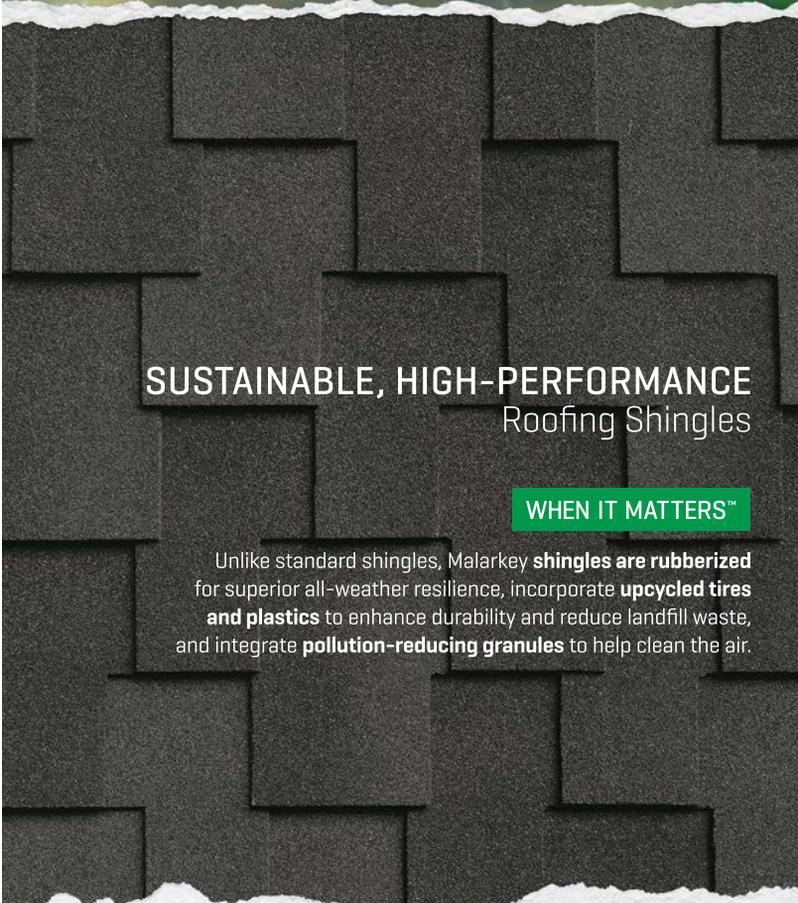


First, Black and African American teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide than are white teenagers (9.8 percent v. 6.1 percent). Understanding this trend, informs strategies in our community to consider the root causes of this statistical difference and give attention to those causes to ensure that number decreases.

Secondly, the historical Black and African American experience in America has and continues to be characterized by trauma and violence more often than for their white counterparts, which impacts the emotional and mental health of both youth and adults. Trauma tends to have lasting effects on a person’s wellbeing. Although race-based traumatic stress is not considered a mental health disorder, prolonged or severe incidents of racism can lead to symptoms like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This relationship between racism and mental wellbeing is why racism is considered a significant mental health issue locally and nationally.

If you or someone you care for is experiencing a mental health emergency, please call our 24/7 crisis line at **913-268-0156**. 🌻

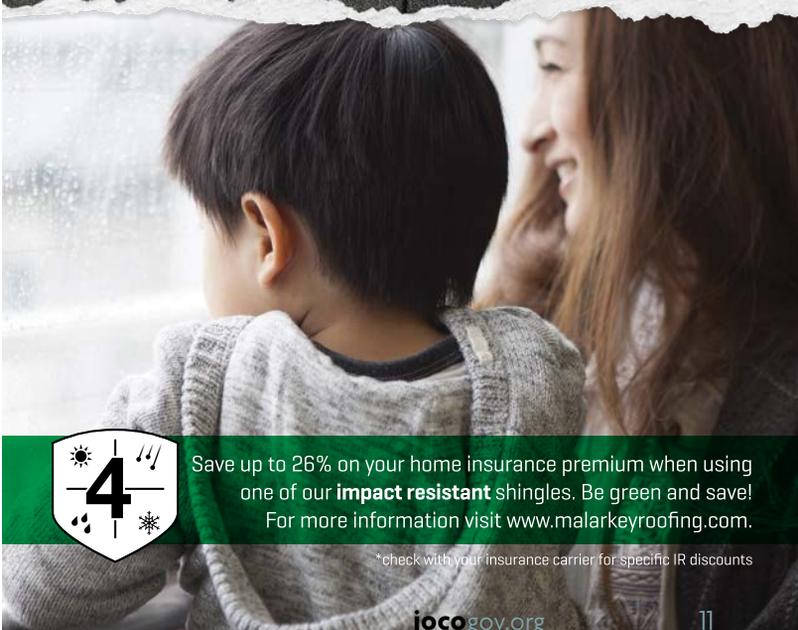
Sources: ¹ www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US#
² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)’s public online database analysis system (PDAS)



SUSTAINABLE, HIGH-PERFORMANCE Roofing Shingles

WHEN IT MATTERS™

Unlike standard shingles, Malarkey shingles are rubberized for superior all-weather resilience, incorporate upcycled tires and plastics to enhance durability and reduce landfill waste, and integrate pollution-reducing granules to help clean the air.



Save up to 26% on your home insurance premium when using one of our impact resistant shingles. Be green and save! For more information visit www.malarkeyroofing.com.

*check with your insurance carrier for specific IR discounts

COVID-19 stories from our community

BY THERESA FREED, JODY HANSON, LORI SAND

Everyone has a COVID-19 impact story. This sampling provides a view of the pandemic through the lens of health care, education, non-profits, businesses, the faith community and survivors. We invite you to read the rest of the story at jocogov.org/COVID19stories.

Family faces cases from mild to severe

Green Family, Shawnee

In March, the Green family became some of the first Johnson County residents to contract COVID-19. It started with their daughters, but then parents, Jason and Katy, started to feel ill. Within a short time, mom and dad were in the hospital. Katy went home to her daughters as they said, over the phone, what could have been their final goodbyes to their loved one. Jason was put on a ventilator for 18 days, and miraculously recovered.



Katy (left) and Jason (front) Green, and their daughters want their Johnson County neighbors to understand that this coronavirus can be mild, but it can also create devastating health impacts.

Q: What do you want Johnson County residents to know about this illness?

A: (Jason) The idea of mask-wearing really is for the other person. When

you live in a society, you need to make tradeoffs to live with other people in a community. In order to slow the spread of this pandemic, we need to wear masks. I wish we weren't dealing with a pandemic. We have COVID fatigue. We miss our family members. We miss being able to travel and our normal daily lives. But this is too important of an issue not to care about the other person next to you.

Providing support for those who are saving lives

Dr. Ravi Sabapathy Clinical Psychologist, AdventHealth

As the director of AdventHealth's Medical Staff Wellness program, Dr. Sabapathy heads a team that is there for doctors, nurses and medical staff. Support for medical staff can look like an in-person

psychology session in his office, a Zoom meeting, a phone call, a text or visiting a doctor or nurse on the job for a check-in. Dr. Sabapathy has even been known to send people food. More than a third of AdventHealth's physicians used his services before COVID-19. Since the pandemic, demand has increased 10 to 15 percent.

Q: From the work you have done over the past few months, of what are you the proudest?

A: Some people have left the medical field due to COVID-19, even though it takes a long time to achieve these careers. I was working with someone who didn't know if they could continue. I actively listened, and after a few visits, this person had



Every day Dr. Ravi Sabapathy supports AdventHealth medical professionals who experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a lack of satisfaction.

a shifted perspective to overcoming adversity. We could have lost this physician to practicing medicine. This person got rejuvenated and wanted to get back at it. This doctor is still practicing medicine today.

Continued need for blood donation

Kim Peck Senior Executive Director, Community Blood Center of Greater Kansas City

After an initial influx of donors, The Community Blood Center of Greater Kansas City has seen a decrease in donations that has not returned to pre-COVID-19 levels. Because blood donation is an essential component of the community's healthcare network, CBC has made significant changes to procedures to ensure donor and staff safety.

To hear the Greens' story, listen to [JoCo on the Go](#) where you regularly listen to podcasts.



Q: What has been the hardest challenge you have faced?

A: The hardest challenge has been our inability to get back into businesses, churches and schools to set up mobile drives, which have dropped by two-thirds this year as these groups can no longer host drives. Some churches have come back, but businesses have not and now schools are in question. We encourage donors to take the extra step of making an appointment and traveling to one of our donation centers.



Faith community moves worship services online

Pastor Harun Gatobu

St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Mission



Sunday Worship, July 26, 2020 LIVE More from Sunday Worship Autoplay next video

Pastor Harun Gatobu shown delivering a worship service virtually. He says he is proud of how Johnson County has kept the public informed and the work being done to keep the community safe.

No matter the religion, during the pandemic most faith organizations moved their worship services online. Pastor Gatobu noted a benefit of that is the church's faith community is now global, with people from all over the world, especially from Africa, joining their community.

Q: What positive impact have you seen from the pandemic?

A: When the pandemic started, there wasn't anything much that was positive. There was a lot of fear as we wondered what to do. As time went on, we started noticing some positive impacts. Many people were in the forefront trying to help one another. Our church started a drive through food pantry for the community. People started calling each other to check on how they were doing. We started livestream worship and Zoom for meetings. It was great to see people who were technology challenged now using computers and phones for communication.



continued on page 15 >>

Road to recovery for business community

Many Johnson County businesses have taken a hit since the COVID-19 pandemic reached our area in March. Some had to temporarily close and then reopen with restrictions. Johnson County Department of Health and Environment developed guidance for employers to navigate safety precautions. JCDHE also assists businesses with case investigations and helps them determine how long their staff must be excluded from work.

"The new workplace guidance is a user-friendly document that answers some of the more frequently asked questions employers have had, said Amanda Prough, JCDHE business liaison. "It includes template letters to notify your employees if they've been exposed."

Business owners and operators can use all the help they can get. The pandemic presented unanticipated hardships that Jeff Shackelford with the Enterprise Center of Johnson County knows well.

"You're seeing some that haven't reopened and really struggling to figure out, how do I open? What are the requirements with respect to safety and cleaning," Shackelford said. "The struggles of paying rent and keeping your space continue."

Although many businesses are having a tough time staying afloat, some entrepreneurs are looking for opportunities to open.

"Post-COVID, we're going to need new entrepreneurs to step in," said Shackelford. 🌟

For more information:

Workplace guidance:

jocogov.org/industry-guidance

Enterprise Center of Johnson County:

ecjc.com

Prough and Shackelford on

JoCo on the Go podcast:

jocogov.org/podcast





DON'T LEAVE IT BEHIND

yours • theirs • anybody's

Discarded facemasks and other PPE make their way to streams and rivers.

Safely dispose of them when out jogging and walking.

Learn more at cleanwaterkcmetro.org.



If it's on the
GROUND
•••••
It's in our
WATER

>> continued from page 13

Finding new distribution options that will continue past COVID-19

Jill Gaikowski

Executive Director, HappyBottoms

Getting 250,000 diapers out the door each month with major supply chain issues and without volunteers bundling and wrapping them were some major hurdles the HappyBottoms organization had to quickly jump over. They were able to secure product from a long-time vendor partner who not only agreed to provide the diapers needed for the remainder of the year, but would supply them in packs of 25.

Q: Were there any COVID-19 adjustments that you'll carry forward?

A: HappyBottoms has always distributed diapers through social service partner agencies in the six county metro area, including Johnson County, and five area hospitals. Since the pandemic hit, the need for diapers has increased substantially. At the same time, we noticed early on during the pandemic that families were not coming out to get diapers like they once were.



We acted swiftly with several new distribution options, including starting a program to distribute diapers directly from our warehouse, creating new distribution partnerships with Victorious Life Church and Harvesters and piloting a program with childcare centers to ensure families have diapers needed at the childcare location. All these programs will continue once the pandemic has subsided.



There are so many “what if” situations that are overwhelming

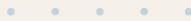
Mary Kate Gartner

First Grade Teacher, St. Agnes Catholic School, Roeland Park

First grade teacher Mary Kate Gartner is worried about the new school year. She’s concerned how virtual learning will impact building relationships with the students and their families, and hopes technology doesn’t prevent her from getting to know her students personalities and “what makes them shine.”

Q: As an educator, how has COVID-19 impacted you and the way you perform your job?

A: COVID-19 has completely changed education in the last five months. As a teacher, we had to create a new way of teaching and rely on the parents to help us facilitate the learning. We are lucky to have the technology for virtual learning. As teachers, we had to totally shift the way we teach in a matter of days. Many parents were used to helping with homework but had to become teachers overnight. Students had to adjust to being home all the time, not getting to see their friends and learn from their parents.

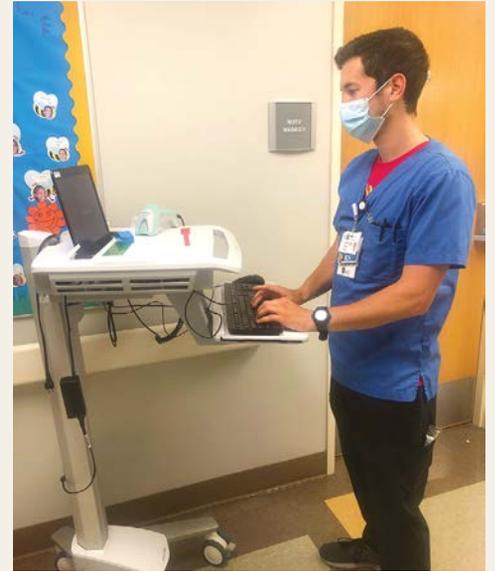


Mary Kate Gartner and other teachers at St. Agnes have been doing driveway visits to meet all of their students.

Going into a war zone overnight

Justin Collins

Orthopedic and Surgical Unit Nurse, Overland Park Regional Medical Center/HCA Midwest Health



Justin Collins, pictured on the job at Overland Park Regional Medical Center/ HCA Midwest Health, values the weeks he spent working with COVID-19 patients in New Orleans.

When COVID-19 hit, nurse Justin Collins’ unit, Medical Surgical, was temporarily shut down. In March, the hospital transferred him to the Ortho Neuro Trauma unit, where he had to refresh some rarely-used skills. In April, he got transferred a bit farther...to New Orleans, where he worked for three weeks in “the Hot Zone” as an ICU nurse at HCA Midwest Health’s sister hospital, Tulane Medical Center.

Q: What was it like on the front-line treating patients in “the hot zone”?

A: I was very excited to get this opportunity. The hospital had two full units dedicated to COVID-19. It was eye opening. Our team of 12 was able to make the load so much lighter for their staff. They were so grateful. I enjoyed making a connection with patients there, including a man who taught me a few Arabic words. 🌞

Major Projects Update

BY NICOLE BLACKWELL

Johnson County Courthouse

The new Johnson County Courthouse has reached the milestone of substantial completion. The project has been under construction for just over two years leading up to this significant date in the overall timeline.

Visitors to downtown Olathe will have noticed the recent installation of landscaping, site walls, fencing, granite pavers and monument signage. The surface parking lot to the north has also been completed.

On the interior, installation was recently completed on Benjamin Ball's public art titled "Open Prairie," visible from Santa Fe Street at the main building entrance. Additionally, the historic Goddess of Justice statue has been relocated to the lobby, marking the third courthouse to house her.

The next phase of the project is underway with the installation of systems and ancillary furniture through the month of November. The project team will now turn their focus towards training and the relocation of staff this winter. The new courthouse is anticipated to be open for business in Q1 2021.

Keep abreast of the latest on the courthouse project at jocogov.org/courthouse.



Johnson County Courthouse

Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility

The Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) expansion project is on schedule and on budget.

The facility, located at 10701 Lee Boulevard in Leawood, was built in 1955. The facility treats wastewater from the Tomahawk Creek watershed, the Indian Creek watershed downstream of the Douglas L. Smith Middle Basin WWTF (Lower Indian Creek), and the Dykes Branch sub-watershed.

Before construction, the facility treated 7 million gallons per day. That was 40 percent of the wastewater collected from parts of Leawood, Olathe, Overland Park and Prairie Village. The remaining 60 percent was sent to Kansas City, Missouri, for treatment.

Once the expansion project is complete, the facility will treat all of the flow that is received. The estimated substantial completion date for the entire project is March 1, 2022.

A major milestone on the project was achieved on July 31, when the Peak Flow Pump Station was placed online for wet weather service. This allows the contractor to take the existing Influent Pump Station offline to begin the major work on this structure. The Peak Flow Pump Station was the first structure to be completed.

The concrete work onsite is nearing completion. You can see the buildings taking shape and the brick veneer throughout the site. The contractor continues work on the inside of structures, focusing on installing pipes, pumps and other major equipment.



Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility

Construction nearing completion on the Biological Nutrient Removal Basins.

The replacement of the western part of Lee Boulevard is underway in order to raise the entrance to the site to the 500-year flood elevation. The road is closed and is scheduled to open by mid-September.

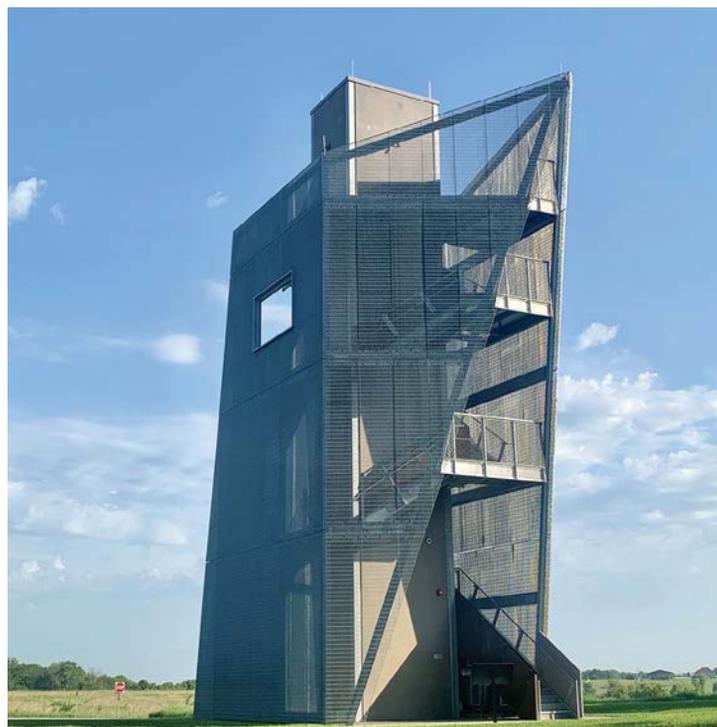
The next contractual milestone is completing the liquids treatment process by Oct. 25, 2021. This will allow Johnson County Wastewater to begin reducing flow sent to Kansas City. In preparation for this, the team is starting to work on a commissioning and training plan to bring the new facility online.

For more information about the project, including how treatment works, visit jcwtomahawk.com.

Russell and Helen Means Observation Tower

The Russell and Helen Means Observation Tower at Kill Creek Park is now open to the public. The 58-foot high structure is located near the entrance of the park at 11670 Homestead Lane, between De Soto and Olathe. The observation tower features a central ADA compliant elevator along with stairs to the top level for viewing the western Johnson County countryside.

The project, which was designed by the Johnson County Park & Recreation District and SFS Architecture, has a parking lot and connection to existing trails. Future additions to compliment the observation tower include additional parking and shelters.



Russell and Helen Means Observation Tower at Kill Creek Park



Medical Examiner facility

An official dedication of the observation tower is expected to be scheduled and announced soon.

The structure is named in honor of Russell and Helen Means. They had owned the land since 1960 and started development of Kill Creek Park with their donation of 355 acres. They also provided an installment purchase agreement for the acquisition of an additional 285 acres to the 640-acre park property. The couple also willed assets now valued at approximately \$1 million from their estate for park improvements, including construction of the observation tower.

Helen Means died on April 4, 2011, at age 89. Russell Means followed her in death on July 20, 2012. He was 92.

For directions to Kill Creek Park, visit jcpd.com.

Medical Examiner's office

Johnson County marked the opening of the new Medical Examiner facility with a virtual celebration in August.

The celebration, which included a virtual tour, was broadcast to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new 32,000-square-foot, single story building opened for business on June 8. The facility is located at 11894 S. Sunset Drive, on the Johnson County Government campus in Olathe.

Autopsy work began at the new facility in August.

The Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) investigates deaths that occur in the county, including deaths due to violent means, are unattended or suspicious, in-custody deaths, deaths due to a public health threat, and deaths where identity is an issue. This includes deaths of individuals without a physician available and willing to sign the death certificate. Investigations may include medical record review, external examination, radiography, toxicology and/or autopsy. Following investigation, the MEO determines cause and manner of death and certifies the death certificate.

Watch the virtual tour on the county's YouTube page at youtube.com/jocovideos.

Fall into virtual opportunities for fun and learning

BY ELISSA ANDRE AND RICHARD SMALLEY

You may be in search of opportunities for events and programming this fall that you can enjoy from the comfort and safety of your own home. Here are some options for you to consider:

Johnson County Library

After a successful summer of virtual programming, Johnson County Library is once again re-imagining fall programming in a virtual space. A new digital events platform will allow the Library to host more interactive online events such as book clubs and programs around civic engagement, career advancement and the history of race in Kansas City. Watch for details on the WoMen & Money programming series kicking off on Oct. 3, and the annual Writer's Conference on Nov. 14. Details available: jocolibrary.org.

Johnson County Park and Recreation District

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District website, JCPRD.com, has a Virtual Activities page with links to something for everyone whether you are interested in music, health and wellness, games or travel. In addition, the JCPRD 50 Plus program is offering many stimulating and entertaining ways to connect virtually in September and October. Details: jcprd.com.

Johnson County Museum

While the museum is open with limited admission, promoting physical distancing and closing each day for a midday cleaning, it also has virtual programming available through their History on Tap program. On Oct. 1, enjoy the thrill of "The Ups, Downs, Loops and a lot of Fun: A History of Rollercoasters and Amusement Parks." It will feature rollercoaster enthusiast Paul Drabek talking about the history and thrills of the popular amusement park ride. Details: jcprd.com/330/Museum.

Utility Assistance Program for low-income residents

BY BRANDY HODGE

Johnson County Human Services manages a Utility Assistance Program (UAP) to assist low income residents with past due utilities (i.e. electric, gas, water, wastewater, and propane services). The Johnson County UAP is a partnership between the county, cities, utility companies, and faith based organizations. The UAP is a safety net for those who have experienced a change in income, family disruption, or a crisis. The goal of the program is to prevent service disconnection, and to provide support in establishing payment agreements with energy providers. The UAP is for past due utility bills and for those unable to make a payment on a current payment plan established by the utility company. Residents do not need a shut-off notice or to be disconnected to receive assistance.

Qualifications to receive services:

- Residents must reside in Johnson County.
- Residents must be at or below 200% of the poverty guidelines. Proof of income is collected for the previous thirty days. If a resident has been directly affected by COVID-19, they could qualify now, whereas in the past they may have been over income.
- Residents must have made a recent utility payment in the past 90 days.
- The resident's utility bill must not exceed the maximum amount of funding available.



There are four Multi-Service Center locations: North Central (Lenexa), North East (Mission), Southwest (Gardner), and Olathe. All the locations, with the exception of Olathe, have a food pantry. Due to COVID-19, appointments are being completed over the telephone and by email. If a resident needs food pantry services, residents may schedule curb-side food pantry. To access services, residents must call 913-715-6653. All appointments are pre-scheduled, there are no walk-in services available. For more information, please visit: jocogov.org/dept/human-services/outreach/outreach-services

Johnson County's Derby Champ

BY GERALD HAY

Eighty-two years ago, Johnson County's favorite son was a horse.

His name was Lawrin, the only Kansas thoroughbred to ever have won the Kentucky Derby which celebrated its 146th running on Sept. 5.

Lawrin, a brown colt with four white socks, was born and bred at the bygone Woolford Farm, purchased in 1920 by Herbert Woolf. He was heir and president of the Woolf Brothers clothing business in Kansas City. The farm, spanning about 200 acres, was located roughly between 79th and 83rd streets and Mission Road and Roe Avenue in Prairie Village.

In the early 1930s, Woolf began buying and breeding thoroughbreds at the Woolford Farm. He purchased Insko, sire of Lawrin, in 1933 for \$500. That equates to almost \$10,000 in 2020 dollars. Lawrin was born two years later.

In 1938, at age 3, Lawrin would run against nine rivals in the 64th Run for the Roses on May 7 at Churchill Downs in Louisville. Heading into the Kentucky Derby, he was an 8-1 long shot. Lawrin would come from behind, holding off the oncoming Dauber to win by a length in a time of 2:04.8.

According to William Robertson in "The History of



Lawrin, the only Kansas thoroughbred to win the Kentucky Derby. Image courtesy The Associated Press

Thoroughbred Racing in America," the Churchill Downs band had gotten so used to playing "Bred in Old Kentucky" after the Kentucky Derby that they stood mute "for an embarrassing interval" following Lawrin's victory.

The headline the next day in the Kansas City Star announced, "It's Our Derby" with a subhead: "Lawrin's Winged Feet Bring Turf Glory to Herbert Woolf and Kansas City."

His jockey was Eddie Arcaro, then 22, the only jockey to win two Triple Crowns (Derby, Preakness and Belmont Stakes). Lawrin was his first of five Derby winners.

Ben Jones trained Lawrin in establishing his record of training six Kentucky Derby winners. Jones worked for Woolford Farms for nine years. Both Arcaro and Jones would eventually be inducted into the U.S. Racing Hall of Fame.

Lawrin had no chance at a triple crown. Woolf did not enter him in either the Preakness or Belmont Stakes. Dauber, on the other hand, won the 1938 Preakness by seven lengths and was second in the Belmont Stakes.

According to the American Classic Pedigrees on thoroughbred breeding and champion horses, Lawrin's racing career included 26 starts with nine wins, eight seconds and two thirds, totaling \$126,275 in winnings. That equates to slightly more than \$2.3 million in 2020 dollars.

The association described Lawrin as "a robust bay colt of staying type," adding the Kansas thoroughbred was "tall and was workmanlike and plain in appearance. He was troubled by hoof problems during his career and was permanently retired in 1939 after suffering a recurrence of a tendon injury. He was a gluttonous eater who required a lot of work to stay fit. He had a fractious disposition."

Lawrin died on Aug. 31, 1955, at age 20. He was buried next to Insko (1928-1939) at the Woolford Farm before the property was sold to real estate developer J. C. Nichols in 1955 shortly after Lawrin's death.

The gravesite is amid a small island in a quiet cul-de-sac at 59 Le Mans Court located in the Corinth Downs subdivision, Prairie Village.

The rest is history. 🌻

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

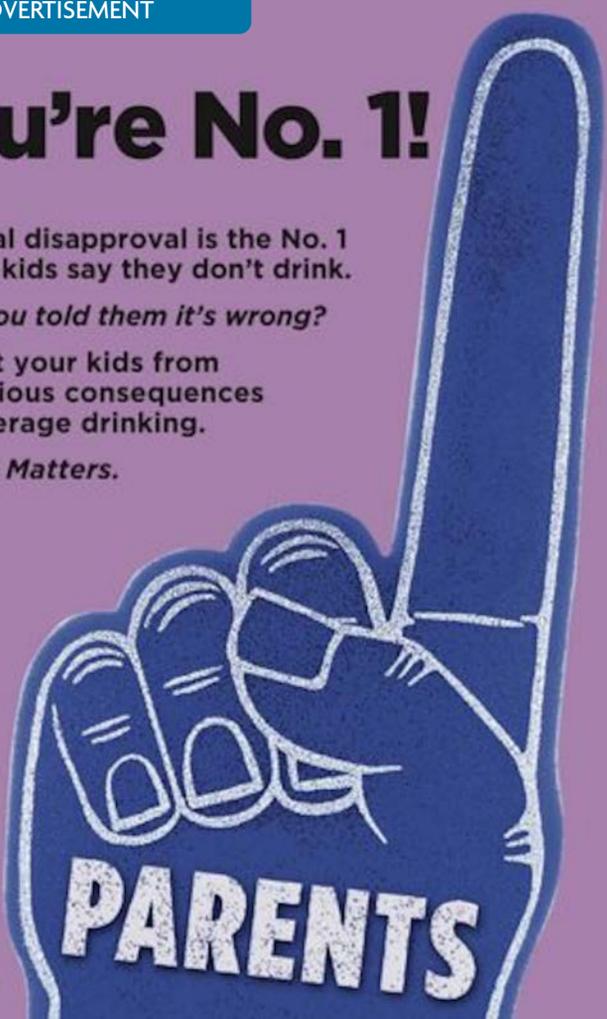
You're No. 1!

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.



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



Becky Fast
1st District
913-715-0431



Janeé Hanzlick
4th District
913-715-0434



Jim Allen
2nd District
913-715-0432



Michael Ashcraft
5th District
913-715-0435

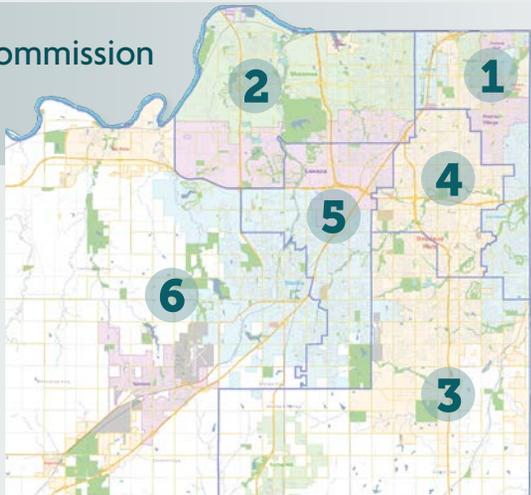


Steve Klika
3rd District
913-715-0433



Mike Brown
Vice chair,
6th District
913-715-0436

County commission
districts



jocogov.org/bocc

Roles and authority during a public health pandemic

Per Kansas state statute, the members of the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners also serve as the county's Board of Health. Though they can hold separate meetings, the BOCC will typically figuratively "change hats" and address Board of Health items during a BOCC regular business session on the same agenda.

The Board of Health is required to appoint someone licensed to practice medicine and surgery to serve as the local health officer and in an advisory capacity to the Board. Johnson County's local health officer is Dr. Joseph LeMaster.

The local health officer and the Board of Health have performed more functions and played more prominent roles during this time of COVID-19 compared to typical times. But they have always been responsible for protecting the health of the Johnson County community.

Both the local health officer and the Board of Health can issue local health orders. Following the passage of Kansas House Bill 2016, the local health officer's orders are subject to review, amendment and revocation by the BOCC.

Also due to HB 2016, the BOCC may issue orders related to public health that are less stringent than provisions of an executive order issued by the governor if they consult with the local health officer or other local health officials and determine that implementation of the full scope of the provisions of the governor's executive order is not necessary to protect the public health and safety of the county.

The BOCC may review, amend, or revoke any declaration of local disaster emergency.

To learn more about the BOCC's role as the Board of Health, as well as other roles, please visit jocogov.org/BOCC.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



Dentures Plus

Implant and Dental Center

8630 Maurer Road, Lenexa, KS 66219

913-227-0466 www.DenturesPlusLenexa.com

COMPREHENSIVE DENTAL CARE

Free Second Opinions

General Dentistry • Hygiene • Implants

Same Day Dentures • Implant Stabilized Denture



What to watch for in Q4

Expansion of microtransit service

In 4Q 2020, watch for a newly expanded microtransit service area to capture areas with higher prevalence of poverty, low-income and disability and senior populations. This is due to a Kansas Department of Transportation one-time grant of \$1,027,278, with a \$102,728 match of county funding, for four Johnson County transit pilot projects.

In addition to the microtransit pilot, planning will continue next quarter on pilot programs that help get transportation-disadvantaged patients to maintenance health care appointments in order to reduce inappropriate emergency room visits, expand access to prenatal services to teenage and/or low-income mothers and their children, and provide transportation to get people to food pantries.

Contractor Licensing Fall Education session goes virtual!

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the annual Contractor Licensing fall conference will be held virtually. Our program has been using an online platform this summer in order to continue offering continuing education while in person classes are closed. Staff has received positive remarks from those using the online platform. This will be the platform used for the fall virtual education delivery. Johnson County is known nationally for the quality of its program and achieving the #1 preferred provider status with the International Code Council (ICC). Watch jocogov.org/dept/planning-and-codes/cls/home for more information.

Here are some county programs and events to look forward to in the coming months.



Planning underway for 2020 Veterans Day event

While all veterans are honored each year at Johnson County's Veterans Day event, this year there will be a special recognition for World War II veterans. 2020 marked several WWII 75th anniversary milestones including V-E Day (May 8), V-J Day (Aug. 14) and Japan's unconditional surrender (Sept. 2). We are looking for Johnson County WWII veterans to honor this Veterans Day. If you or someone you know is a veteran of WWII, please email Gerald.hay@jocogov.org. 🌻

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Water quality...

It all starts with you.

Leaves and grass release nutrients when they decay, which lowers water quality, allowing algae to grow and killing fish.

Keep leaves and grass clippings out of the streets and out of our streams.

johnson.k-state.edu
or call 913-715-7050

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Johnson County

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS

In partnership together

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

Three Questions

BY LORI SAND

These are the people who have been on the frontlines, providing recommendations, data and guidance to the Johnson County Board of Health and the Johnson County community.



Dr. Joseph LeMaster Local Health Officer, Johnson County Government

As someone who is working on the frontlines, what impact are you noticing on your colleagues and the environment? Many frontline workers are experiencing fatigue and discouragement as the pandemic goes on, and we see so many beloved patients affected and some die. With that is the ongoing realization that “I could be next.” Yet our patients need us to be upbeat and encouraging as we apply cutting edge medical science as well compassion to their medical problems.

How has your training and experience prepared you for the pandemic? My training as a public health physician focused on epidemiology and statistical analysis. During the past 18 years, I have learned to conduct research and read the emerging medical literature critically, focusing on systematic reviews that summarize multiple studies testing different types of treatments using exact, reproducible methods. I have also practiced medicine continuously so I can supervise health care staff using the most up-to-date standards of care.

Where do you anticipate the county will be by the end of 2020 in this challenge? I anticipate by that point we will have a vaccine and will be discussing how to administer/promote its uptake in the population. If enough of the population receives the vaccine, we may reach herd immunity.



Dr. Sanmi Areola Director, Johnson County Department of Health and Environment

Please describe your role within Johnson County during the pandemic: I lead our department's response to COVID-19. JCDHE has spent years preparing for similar events, including building relationships, coordinating with partners and planning for large scale events. I make sure the department has the resources to conduct timely case investigations and contact tracing. I also work to ensure that accurate, up-to-date information is provided to the BOCC, our residents and staff of Johnson County.

What has been most surprising to you during this time? COVID-19 is unlike any virus we have seen. The magnitude and impacts of this pandemic are a once-in-a-lifetime incident requiring a lifestyle change that is rare. What has been surprising to me is the resilience of our residents and their ability to adapt. Also, the JCDHE staff who work endlessly is a good thing to behold. Their attitude is “let's get it done.” Impressive!

What has been most surprising to you during this time? Not having a vaccine is a challenge. The fact that this will drag on and the associated fatigue is a challenge.



Dr. Ryan Jacobsen Medical Director, EMS System

Please describe your role within Johnson County during the pandemic: Continuing to keep abreast of the medical literature to ensure the EMS care we are providing to Johnson County residents is appropriate and just as importantly ensuring that we minimize the risk to our EMS providers from acquiring COVID-19. I also work as a liaison between police, fire, EMS, hospitals and our county leadership regarding our coordinated response during the pandemic.

What has been most surprising to you during this time? There is the ability for many stakeholders who don't normally work closely together to form multi-disciplinary teams and tackle complex problems. The relationship building has been invaluable and very beneficial going forward.

Where do you anticipate the county will be by the end of 2020 in this challenge? To be honest, I couldn't begin to predict how this is going to look. The possibilities seem to be endless. Cautious optimism is my current state.

10 things

to know before the general election

The Johnson County Election Office has taken multiple steps to protect voters and election workers at the polls and make voting by mail as convenient as possible.

1 Johnson County voters have three options for voting

in the November general election: voting by mail, voting early at an advance voting location, or voting on Election Day. More information for each voting option is available on the Election Office's website at jocoelection.org.

2 Historic turnout is expected for the November election

34% of Johnson County voters cast their vote in the August primary election, which was a record-setting voter turnout for a primary election. With voter registration at an all-time high, the Election Office expects another record to be set in November.

3 Election workers are needed

to work at polling locations during advance voting and on Election Day. Election workers are trained before each election. Being an election worker is a great way to serve your community and earn money. Apply to be an election worker at jocportal.org/apply.



4 Safety precautions will be taken at every in-person voting location

including physical distancing of voting equipment, masks and hand sanitizer for voters and election workers, plexiglass shields to separate voters and election workers, and single-use styluses and pens for marking ballots. As a bonus, every voter keeps their stylus or pen, which makes for a great souvenir from a historic election.

5 Voting by mail will reduce traffic at in-person voting locations

and help the Election Office keep voters and election workers safe and healthy during the November election. The Election Office encourages voters to consider voting by mail.

6 The deadline to apply to vote by mail

is Tuesday, October 27. Applications are available at voter.jocoelection.org. Remember to provide your Kansas driver's license or ID number and signature on the application.

7 Applications and ballots can be tracked

using the Kansas Secretary of State's Voter View tool available at jocoelection.org/voterview.

8 Ballots received by mail do not have to be returned by mail



Ballots can also be returned to any advance voting location, any Election Day polling location, or the 24-hour, drive-thru ballot boxes at the Election Office in Olathe.

9 The deadline to register to vote

is Tuesday, October 13. That is also the deadline to update your voter registration with a name or address change. Voter registration applications are available at jocoelection.org/registration.



10 Your sample ballot can be viewed

at voter.jocoelection.org. Sample ballots will be available in early October. A list of candidates for the general election is already available at jocoelection.org/current-candidates.



Protect yourself from COVID-19

How can you protect yourself and others while out in the community? Here are a few tips to keep in mind whether you're going to work, out to eat, or just to run errands.



Wash or sanitize your hands regularly.

Frequent hand-washing remains one of the best and easiest ways to prevent the spread of disease, including the coronavirus. Hand-washing is preferred, but an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is a good thing to keep in your car or purse and at your desk at work.



Avoid touching your face.

Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth, especially after contact with high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, bathroom sinks, elevator buttons, front counters in offices or restaurants, and public transit.



Maintain 6 feet of distance from others when possible.

When you're at a restaurant or business, pay attention to the distance between your group and the one next to you. If you are seated less than 6 feet apart, ask for more space. Transmission is more likely the longer you are close to someone, so it's okay to be close very briefly, such as passing in the aisle at a grocery store.



Wear a mask.

CDC recommends that you wear masks in public settings around people who don't live in your household and when you can't stay 6 feet away from others. Masks help stop the spread of COVID-19 to others. Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth and fits snugly against the sides of your face and chin.



Cover your cough or sneeze.

Droplets from your cough or sneeze travel much farther than droplets from breathing or talking and have a higher potential to infect others. Even if you don't think you have the coronavirus, you should always cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze to avoid spreading germs.



Enjoy the great outdoors.

Better air circulation and wide open spaces make outdoor activities a safer choice than being indoors. If you eat at a restaurant, ask for outside seating when possible. Consider going for a walk, bike ride, or wheelchair roll in your neighborhood or in another safe location where you can maintain at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and other pedestrians and cyclists. Avoid crowded areas where you cannot stay at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with.



Keep social contacts limited.

If possible, limit your contacts to those in your household, even when you go out.



If you are sick, stay home.

If you have any symptoms of illness, including cough, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue, or chills, stay at home and call your primary care doctor to see if you should be tested for COVID-19.