

JoCo



THE JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT MAGAZINE

WINTER 2019



Features

.....
New medical examiner facility

Black History Month in JoCo



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 the 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

Assistant Editor: Lori Sand

Content contributions:

- Alyson Angell Josh Powell
- Nicole Blackwell Kristen Reese
- Keith Davenport Lori Sand
- Megan Foreman Eric Schultz
- Gerald Hay Jennifer Thompson
- Christopher Leitch Adele Wilcoxon

For information about advertising opportunities, please contact Cherell Bilquist at 913-715-8920 or cherell.bilquist@jocogov.org.

JoCo Magazine:

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



LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Looking forward in the new year

As we embark on 2019, we do so with anticipation and a commitment to continue making Johnson County a place where people want to live, work and raise a family.

This year, look for major progress on some of the biggest county projects we have had in decades. Just weeks ago, we broke ground on the county’s first-ever medical examiner facility. Our cover story provides an in-depth look at this project and how it will enhance public safety and public health. We have also shared project updates on the new Johnson County Courthouse and the Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Facility Expansion.

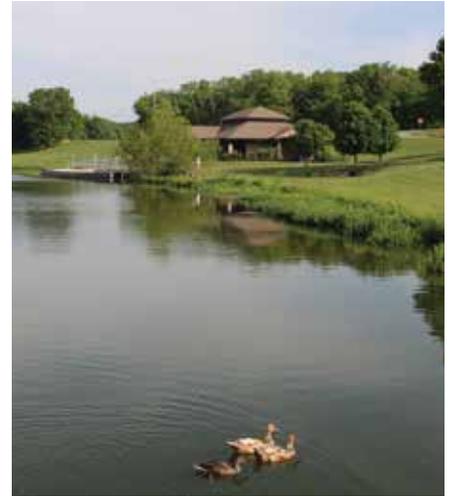
This year will mark the opening of Meadowbrook Park (Prairie Village), bringing 80 acres of much-needed park space to northeast Johnson County. Later in 2019, Johnson County Park & Recreation District will open a 58-foot observation tower in Kill Creek Park (western Johnson County, between De Soto and Olathe.) JCPRD will also break ground on a development project for the Cedar Niles Park (western Olathe.)

Libraries are another community asset that help draw thousands of people to our county every year. During the second quarter of 2019, the Johnson County Library Lackman branch will move to the Lenexa City Center. This 40,000 square-foot facility will house a slightly larger collection than what is currently found at the Lackman branch.

In addition to these exciting projects, we will advance initiatives in the transportation, technology and human services areas. This year we will leverage technology to pilot new methods of public transportation and rebuild our web site to make it more efficient, accessible and user-friendly. With a mixture of innovation, expertise and heart, we will work to advance the self-sufficiency of vulnerable populations—those with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental health needs or those who are aging. And, we will strive toward continuous improvement of all programs and services we provide you.

All of this will happen with two new leaders this year. As we say goodbye and a sincere “thank you” to Commissioners Ron Shaffer (1st District) and Jason Osterhaus (4th District), we welcome new Commissioners Becky Fast and Janeé Hanzlick.

We wish you and yours a happy and healthy new year and look forward to a successful 2019 for all of us.



Ed Eilert
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

Penny Postoak Ferguson
County Manager

On the cover: Dec. 13, 2018 ground breaking for the new Medical Examiner Facility. Pictured left to right: Dr. Diane C. Peterson, incoming Johnson County Medical Examiner; Assistant County Manager Joe Waters; Sheriff Calvin Hayden; Commissioner Jim Allen; Chairman Ed Eilert; County Manager Penny Postoak Ferguson; Commissioner Steve Klika; Commissioner Jason Osterhaus; Commissioner Mike Brown; Commissioner Michael Ashcraft; District Attorney Steve Howe; Commissioner Ron Shaffer. Read more about this project beginning on page 10.

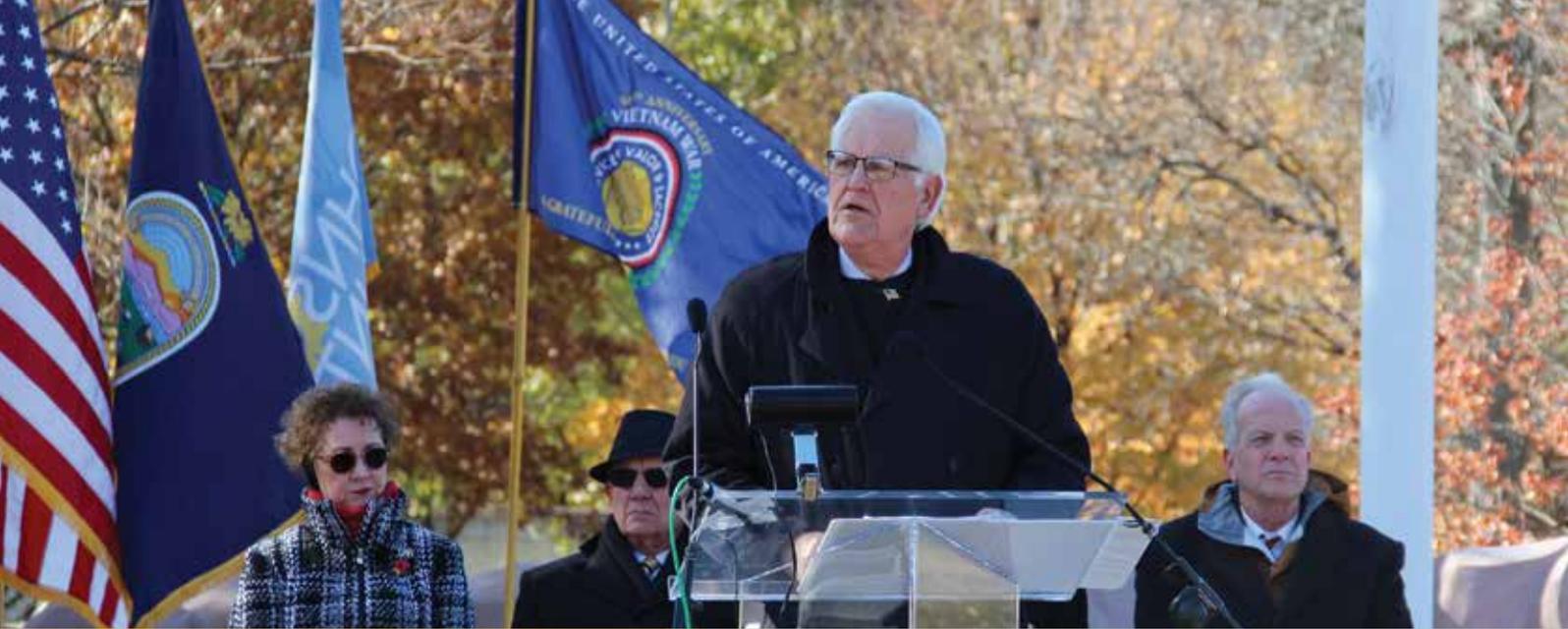


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Winter 2019 • Volume 6 • Issue 1

- 4 In short
- 6 Studies show a link between electronic device use and depression
- 7 Best Times Digest: radon, genealogy, taxes, avoiding financial scams
- 8 A community conversation about how the arts can benefit veterans
- 9 What to watch for in 1Q 2019
- 10 Johnson County breaks ground on new medical examiner facility
- 11 Johnson County hires first chief medical examiner to open new facility
- 12 Construction project updates
- 14 Celebrating Black History Month
- 16 Mark your Calendar: upcoming Johnson County events
- 18 When simple disease prevention is hard: get help!
- 19 Growth and Impact: Preparing for the 2020 Census
- 20 Board of County Commissioners information
- 21 MED-ACT Community Education teaching for you
- 22 Three Questions
- 23 10 ways we help you in the winter

Pictured above: Ed Eilert, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, addresses hundreds of local Vietnam War era veterans and their families and friends. The veterans gathered to be honored on Nov. 10 at the Vietnam Memorial Plaza in Antioch Park. In addition to Certificates of Appreciation from Johnson County, veterans who applied also received Vietnam War 50th Anniversary lapel pins from the U.S. Department of Defense. More photos available at flickr.com/jocoksgovt

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](https://twitter.com/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
- Becky Fast*, 1st District
- Jim Allen, 2nd District
- Steve Klika, 3rd District
- Janeé Hanzlick*, 4th District
- Michael Ashcraft, 5th District
- Mike Brown, 6th District
- Stephen M. Howe, District Attorney
- Calvin Hayden, Sheriff

*To be sworn in on Jan. 14, 2019.

In short

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

2019 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers needed

This past tax season, 1,102 federal and state tax returns were prepared for free at the Johnson County Sunset Drive Office Building VITA site—the most ever prepared in the history of that site. Between refunds, credit and savings, \$1,425,171 was returned to local citizens—an increase of 27 percent over 2017.

Tax assistance will begin on Feb. 6. Those interested in volunteering should contact Denise Dias, family and consumer sciences agent with the Johnson County Extension office, at 913-715-7000 or by email at denise.dias@jocogov.org.



JCPRD launches new division

Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD) recently launched a new division dedicated solely to arts, culture and history, areas which JCPRD identifies as being part of a healthy community.

“Communities with strong arts and cultural offerings are healthier and more vibrant places to live,” said Susan Mong, who oversees the Culture Division. “I look forward to working with creative thought leaders across our region to forge new partnerships and expand offerings.”

Sullivan joins task force to examine pretrial detention practices



Robert Sullivan, director of the Johnson County Department of Corrections, was chosen by the Kansas Supreme Court to serve on an ad hoc task force that will examine pretrial detention practices in Kansas district courts and report its findings and recommendations to the court within 18 months. He is the only representative from Johnson County.

The 15-member task force was created by a Nov. 7 Supreme Court order signed by Chief Justice Lawton Nuss. Task force membership includes judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors and court services and community corrections officers.

The task force is charged with examining current pretrial detention practices for criminal defendants in Kansas district courts, as well as alternatives to pretrial detention used to ensure public safety and encourage an accused individual to appear for court proceedings.

2018 Fall Election turnout one for the record books

The 2018 Fall General Election in Johnson County set three records:

- Most registered voters at 419,403.
- Most ballots cast in a gubernatorial election at 272,231.
- Highest voter turnout in a gubernatorial election at 65 percent.

Advance voting remained popular in the county's 2018 elections, with 145,042 voters using that option, which represents 53 percent of the total votes cast.

Using 1,950 new touch-screen voting machines that feature the voter-verifiable paper ballot, voters at the 195 polling sites were assisted by 1,750 election workers.



“Johnson County promised ‘dazzling fast’ results tonight and they have delivered on that commitment.”

quotable

— Brian Johnson, KMBC 9 News • Johnson reported live the night of November 6 after Johnson County's record-setting 64.91 percent voter turnout for a midterm election.

TREAT PAIN IN A NEW WAY

If you have **BACK PAIN, NECK PAIN, NEUROPATHY, SCIATICA, ARTHRITIS** or other **PAIN** we may be able to help.



My name is Dr. Michael Riley, D.C., Director of Renuva Back & Pain Centers in Overland Park, and I want to help you determine if our CoreCare™ treatment protocol is right for you.

Many back and neck pain sufferers struggle to find lasting relief with rehab, 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 FDA approved technologies to address three areas that are key to achieving lasting pain relief:

1. CoreCare treats the source of the pain aiming for relief as fast as possible.
2. CoreCare works to improve structure to fight against and prevent degenerative related

WE TREAT:
 BACK PAIN
 NECK PAIN
 NEUROPATHY
 SPINAL STENOSIS
 SCIATICA
 DEGENERATIVE DISC DISEASE
 HERNIATED/BULGING DISC
 FAILED BACK SURGERY
 ARTHRITIS
 AND MORE...

NO DRUGS
NO SURGERY
NO INJECTIONS

conditions that cause pain.

3. CoreCare aims to restore function which helps the body 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 pain from low back to arthritis.

PBM Therapy has thousands of papers published on it, and

has 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 led 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 or 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 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 **February 28th** 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 treatments allows 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 **February 28th** 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 has helped many of our patients live that way again.

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

Call **913-884-1152** by **February 28th** and let us know you would like to come in for the CoreCare Evaluation.

Our office is located at:

4400 College Blvd., Ste 150 Overland Park, KS 66211

Our office is located on the north side of College Boulevard just east of Roe, between Granada Lane and El Monte Street. The entrance and parking is accessible from El Monte Street.

Dr. Michael Riley, D.C.

Call Now Before the Pain Gets Worse!

913-884-1152

Get 2 Treatments \$39 Call by February 28th (913)884-1152

Studies show a link between electronic device use and depression in teens

by KRISTEN REESE

Depression is being reported at higher rates among America's teenagers. Studies identify excessive electronic device use as a convincing link. The statistics from one study by Jean Twenge, author of "I Gen" and "The Atlantic," show that teens who spent three or more hours a day on electronic devices are 34 percent more likely to suffer from depression, feel hopeless or seriously consider suicide. The number rises to 48 percent for teens who use electronic devices at least five hours a day.

"Kids who already have mental health issues are prone to rely on their devices more. If they are depressed or anxious, they are likely to spend more time by themselves in isolation on their phones or games," said Jaclyn Kirwan, mental health clinician at the Johnson County Mental Health Center.

Dr. Natasha Burgert, private practice pediatrician and Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics adds, "When we see something that has a negative effect, it's time to stop and take a minute to have a conversation. Relook at it and do what's right for the family."

Be aware of signs that may indicate a child has a problem with screen time, including: choosing screen time over hanging out with friends, fatigue, lack of sleep, weight loss, emotional outbursts (anger, irritability, sadness), academic problems and behavioral issues (sneaking screens, aggression, entitlement "I HAVE to have my phone"). Many of these can also be signs of depression.

"The fear of kids having too much time on screens is that the coming generations will not develop their executive function skills, which are necessary to become more successful and functional adults," said Kirwan.

Executive skills are located in the frontal lobe of the brain. Too much screen time creates changes in a child's ability to develop executive skills. It can affect the ability to concentrate, ability to self-regulate emotions, impulse control, working memory and social skills.

"We don't know all the implications of how our mental health is impacted by screen time yet. Technology developed so quickly that most adults initially responded by allowing kids to set the rules around how and when screens were being used, Kirwan

Kids who already have mental health issues are prone to rely on their devices more. If they are depressed or anxious, they are likely to spend more time by themselves in isolation on their phones or games.

Jaclyn Kirwan, mental health clinician



said. "There is now data coming out that gives parents and adults more guidance around how to help kids manage their screen use in a way that it lessens the impact of their learning and growth. Unfortunately, our responses as adults have been reactive instead of proactive, because those developing our technology in the past several years have been leaps ahead of the general public with their understanding and ability to capture our attention through screens."

With higher rates of depression and the effects on executive skills, how do we get teens to spend less time on a device?

Here are some suggestions:

- Block access.
- Turn the phone off.
- Turn off all notifications.
- Make sure if a child is bored, he/she doesn't go straight to screens (it's an indication to set limits).
- No screens in the bedroom or at the dinner table.
- Take a break one day a week.
- Have a family meeting to discuss where/when children may have their phones.
- Become educated, and then teach children how social media/phone/games keep them addicted. Consider how much screen time they already have had at school when deciding on amount they can have at home.
- Try the Moment App.

There is undoubtedly a rise in mental health issues among teens, whether it is from electronic device use, or student workloads. Educate yourself on the technology, set limits on screen time use, and know the warning signs of depression. More resources are available online at commonsensemedia.org or humanetech.com. 🌞

Radon test kits are available to avoid a health risk

January is Nation Radon Action Month, and K-State Research and Extension is once again selling the do-it-yourself kits for \$8.

Radon, a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas, is present everywhere, and residents are exposed to it primarily from breathing radon in air that leaks into buildings through structural cracks and gaps. Indoor levels in Johnson County are naturally high. According to the EPA, radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, and is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in smokers.

The test kit price includes tax, postage, analysis by accredited radon measurement experts and the online results report. Kits can be picked up during normal business hours at the Johnson County K-State Research and Extension Office, 11811 S. Sunset Dr., Olathe. The kits cannot be mailed out.

For more information, visit johnson.k-state.edu or call 913-715-7000.

Free tax preparation from Feb. 6 to April 13

Johnson County K-State Research and Extension will offer free income tax preparation in 2019 at the Sunset Drive Office Building for people with an annual household income of \$66,000 or less.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) service will run from Feb. 6 to April 13. Volunteers help file federal and state returns electronically. They are trained to know the latest in tax filing requirements and rules, and they can help find deductions that may increase income refunds. Volunteers can also inform taxpayers about special tax credits for which they may qualify.

Free tax preparation assistance is available from noon to 4:30 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays; and from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., on Saturdays. No appointment is necessary. Sessions are on a first-come, first-served basis. For increased convenience, information can be dropped off, and completed returns can be picked up at a later date.

More information is available at johnson.k-state.edu or at 913-715-7000.

National Genealogy Day Resource Fair set March 9

The 2019 National Genealogy Day Resource Fair can help you explore your family history.

The free fair is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., on Saturday, March 9. It is presented by the Johnson County Genealogical Society and hosted by the Johnson County Library at the Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th St., Overland Park.

Stations and activities will be part of the fair. Advance registration is encouraged to ensure ample supplies and kits. Register online at jocolibrary.org/genealogyfair or call 913-826-4600.

It's tax time—beware of financial scams

A New Year brings warnings to avoid financial abuses and scams. The Johnson County Sheriff's and District Attorney's offices have some suggestions to protect your pocketbook.

If you have been a victim or think you are being targeted, contact the Sheriff's Office at its non-emergency number at 913-782-0720 or the District Attorney's Office through its Consumer Complaint Hotline at 913-715-3003, or White Collar Complaint Hotline at 913-715-3140. Incidents of financial exploitation can also be reported to Kansas Adult Protective Services at 800-922-5330.

As the 2019 tax filing season nears, the IRS warns that phishing scams are on the rise. The emails may have a subject line with "IRS important notice" and demand money or threaten to seize your tax refund. This is an easy way for a scammer to get your financial information and steal your refund.

Protect your finances by:

- Keeping an eye out for grammar errors or misspellings. Sometimes, scammers may spoof an email address with a slight change in text.
- Remembering that the IRS will never call or email to demand immediate payment.
- Never opening a hyperlink or attachment from a suspicious source.

Also, check out page 23 for a list of 10 ways Johnson County helps you in the winter. →

A safe place for vets to call their own

JCPRD collaborates in a creative community partnership

by LORI SAND

A community conversation about how the arts can benefit veterans as a creative outlet, a tool for well-being and a career option has resulted in a community partnership and program opportunity beginning in February, known as Buy One, Vet One or B1V1. The premise is that civilians sign up for any of a series of arts classes at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center and pay an additional fee so that veterans may take the class at no charge.

The smART Exchange, a program of the Arts Council of Johnson County, explores the intersection of the arts and other fields. Key in that discussion was After Action Network, a local organization established to create a new culture in the way the community helps today's heroes, bringing veterans and civilians together.

"The initial seed of an idea to bring arts programming for veterans to the Johnson

County Arts & Heritage Center began about a year ago, when Joey Williams, founder of After Action Network, was our guest speaker at the Arts Council of Johnson County's annual luncheon," said Sarah VanLanduyt, executive director of the arts council. "Afterwards, Devin, Joey and I started talking about how we might work together in the beautiful new Arts & Heritage Center space and help After Action Network serve the 31,000 veterans living in Johnson County." B1V1 is a program developed by After Action Network.

A partnership was formed between After Action Network's Operation Art Program, Johnson County Park & Recreation and the Arts Council of Johnson County to provide this opportunity.

"As a program partner, it is our hope that the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center can really become a home for veterans," said Devin Graham, fine arts coordinator at the Arts & Heritage Center. "The arts offer so many benefits to civilians who participate, but they are especially valuable to veterans who are beginning their transition back to society, or who have found themselves struggling with that transition, even years later."

Ask Army Veteran Clint Hanson and he'll tell you the same thing. Hanson had a particularly difficult time growing up, but even as a child, he turned to art as an escape and coping mechanism.

"I joined the Army and found my 'new family' as well as

a sense of pride and belonging," Hanson said. But a medical discharge sent him into a depression and, "basically stole my identity. I didn't fit in anywhere, and even when I went back to school as a non-traditional student or during periods of unemployment, I've felt singled out," he said.

Now, he is looking forward not only to taking art classes, but also to being a part of something.

"I've always felt better when I'm doing something for others," Hanson said. "Because volunteering is a part of who I am, I want to be a part of this program, not only for the education opportunities, but for the opportunities to connect with people too."

This partnership will be located at the JCAHC, which is on a bus route so that veterans participating in the Ride Free program can have easier access to the programming.

Ash Anders, director, Operation Art Program with After Action Network, noted that the organizations are cross-promoting the program and seeking grants to keep it going in its beginning stages. After Action Network is also raising scholarship funds to assist veterans in covering class expenses.

"B1V1 offers vets a networking opportunity in a safe place to call their own," Anders said.

"Creativity is a powerful tool, and we are incredibly honored to be a part of this collaborative partnership designed to help veterans transition to civilian life," VanLanduyt said.

For more information on this JCPRD program contact devin.graham@jocogov.org. More information on After Action Network is available at afteractionnetwork.org. 



The Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center offers several classes for a wide variety of ages, including an Adult Open Art Studio.

What to watch for in 1Q 2019

What should Johnson County residents be watching for as we kick off 2019? Here are a few issues to keep on your radar.

Improvements to Johnson County RideKC routes

Johnson County has finished the public comment period for the recently completed system-wide analysis of RideKC in Johnson County routes, and will bring recommendations for consideration to the Board of County Commissioners in early 2019. Proposed changes include time alignment and schedule tweaks, the suspension of some route segments and the addition of new on-demand service.



Opioid Overdose Crisis Response funding

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment will use a new funding award of \$70,000 to work on opioid overdose crisis response. These funds will be used in partnership with the Mental Health Center to assess community response capacity and then address the capacity gap.

Johnson County property owners to receive Notice of Appraised Value by March 1

By March 1, Johnson County residential property owners will be mailed a Notice of Appraised Value in their mailbox. It's important to note that this notice is not a bill. Due to current real estate prices, preliminary numbers show some areas (Prairie Village, Leawood, Fairway and eastern Shawnee) could see higher than average increases in value. Homeowners have 30 days to file an appeal.

Stay up-to-date on these issues and more at jocogov.org.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



Have you tested for radon gas?

- Indoor radon levels in Johnson County average 5.3 (pCi/L) which is **above** the EPA's radon action level of 4.0 picocuries of radon per liter of indoor air (pCi/L).
- Radon is known to be the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in smokers.
- Testing is the only way to know radon levels in your home.
- Test your home, school or business with this simple DIY short-term test.

JANUARY IS NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

Get Your Radon Test Kits

You can't see it, smell it, or taste it, but this radioactive gas is present everywhere

Johnson County Extension is selling test kits for a reduced fee. Each kit includes laboratory analysis by accredited radon measurement experts and return postage.

Kits are \$8 each. Kits must be picked up at our office, (sorry, we can't mail them). Test kits are available year round.

Learn more at

johnson.k-state.edu or call 913.715.7000

11811 S. Sunset Dr., Suite 1500, Olathe

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Johnson County

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS

In partnership together

Johnson County breaks ground on new medical examiner facility

by ERIC SCHULTZ and JODY HANSON

It would have to take something special to draw dozens of county leaders, members of law enforcement and justice agencies, county employees and other special guests to a mound of dirt on a cold and drizzly December afternoon. Armed with shovels and hard hats, dozens of stakeholders attended a Dec. 13 ground breaking ceremony for Johnson County's new and first-ever medical examiner facility.

The single story medical examiner facility is approximately 33,000-square-foot and will be located on the Johnson County Government campus at the intersection of 119th and Ridgeview in Olathe. The location was chosen because of its proximity to the Johnson County Health Services Building, the county's Emergency Communications Center and the Johnson County Sheriff's Office Criminalistics Laboratory. This facility will enhance services for county residents and become an important collaboration between public safety and public health.

"Having our own medical examiner facility for the first time will help accomplish several important missions," said Board of County Commissioners Chairman Ed Eilert.

"This state-of-the-art facility will allow us to conduct death investigations under the leadership of a certified medical examiner to provide efficient, cost effective forensic investigation results for law enforcement. It will also help us provide reliable, real-time data for public health to identify trends and emerging threats of infectious diseases."

Dr. Diane C. Peterson will serve as the county's chief medical examiner and has been appointed as the county's district coroner. She comes to Johnson County from Jackson County, Missouri, where she also served as chief medical examiner.

Realizing the need for a medical examiner facility in Johnson County

Johnson County has long studied the need for its own medical examiner facility to perform autopsies and death investigations. Currently, investigations of suspicious deaths in Johnson County take place in Wyandotte County at a privately-owned lab where Johnson County has outsourced the facility and the staffing. Having its own facility will allow Johnson County access to the most up-to-date science.



"This new state-of-the-art facility will help ensure a rapid response to homicides, suspicious death and overdoses cases," said District Attorney Steve Howe. "Using best practices on the identification and collection of evidence is crucial for successful prosecution."

Key evidence often includes trace DNA material as well as dust and residual chemicals. Specially designed air-tight rooms at the new facility will allow investigators to collect this type of evidence for the first time.

Johnson County voters paved the way for the new medical examiner facility with the passage of the Public Safety Sales Tax in 2016. Proceeds from the quarter-cent 10-year sales tax are being used to construct the new courthouse in downtown Olathe along with the medical examiner facility. The estimated construction cost for the medical examiner facility is \$16.5 million.

The design and planning process

A unique facility that combines sensitive and important work with advanced and specialized technology required the need to bring together just the right of team of experts. The study phase required the help of many county departments, agencies and stakeholders, including:

- The Sheriff's Office.
- District Attorney's Office.
- Department of Health & Environment.
- Budget and County Manager's offices.
- Facilities Management.



- Department of Technology & Innovation and Justice Information Management Systems.
- Emergency Management & Communications.
- Current County Coroner Dr. Robert Prosser and local forensic pathologist advisors.

Outside expertise and partnership comes from PGAV Architects (architect-of-record), SmithGroupJJR (associate architect and associate engineer, lab planner), Dr. David Fowler (a forensic pathology specialist serving as a consultant); and McCarthy Building Companies (construction manager).

This new state-of-the-art facility will help insure a rapid response to homicides, suspicious death and overdoses cases.

District Attorney Steve Howe

“This process began with high expectations for our medical examiner facility,” said Lougene Marsh, director of the Johnson County Department of Health & Environment. “We needed to design a facility that communicates respect for the dignity of life, protects the health and safety of staff who do this intense and difficult work, and understands the needs of the residents who will live near the facility.”

With those goals in mind, the project team toured four peer facilities in Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico and Maryland. Project team members got a first-hand look at best practices from similar functioning facilities.

“These tours helped inform us in many key areas,” said Brad Reinhardt, director of Facilities Management. “We came away with recommendations on how to lay out a facility and maximize workflow efficiencies and ideas on specialty fixtures, furniture and equipment, as well as strategies on how to plan now for future flexibility and growth.”

continued on page 12 >>

Johnson County hires first chief medical examiner to open new facility

by LORI SAND

Dr. Diane C. Peterson is Johnson County’s first chief medical examiner. She notes that this designation was something that drew her to the position.



“The attraction to the job and Johnson County was the opportunity to be directly involved in a historical event—changing the coroner system to a medical examiner system. Not many currently working forensic pathologists can say that they have been involved in building an ME system from scratch,” Peterson said.

She noted that medical examiners (MEs) nationwide would be envious of the situation.

“Many medical examiners push for the eventual replacement of the coroner system. Although to accomplish this country-wide is many years in the future, Johnson County has started the process now. This is wonderful, and I’m excited to be a part.”

Kansas statute requires boards of county commissioners to appoint a county coroner, so she will perform dual duty come Jan. 14, with the expiration of the appointment of the county’s current county coroner, Dr. Robert Prosser.

“Dr. Robert Prosser has worked tirelessly for many years as coroner for Johnson County. He has done very well for the people he has served,” Peterson said. “I thank him for helping me with the transition.”

With the recent ground breaking for the medical examiner facility, Peterson is excited about the possibility of opening a brand new facility down the road that includes features such as a great deal of natural light. The versatility of the building with a classroom-style conference room is another plus.

Peterson joins the county after serving as the chief medical examiner at the Jackson County Medical Examiner’s Office in Kansas City, Missouri. She began an illustrious career as a deputy medical examiner, interim chief and chief medical examiner at the Jackson County Medical Examiner’s Office. She was then appointed clinical assistant professor of pathology and laboratory medicine at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and soon after was appointed to a similar position at the University of Kansas-School of Medicine.

Prior to her fellowship training in forensic pathology, she earned her Doctorate of Medicine at the University of Kansas - School of Medicine, and completed a four-year residency in both clinical and anatomic pathology at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, as chief resident during her final year.

Peterson said her goal is to provide high-quality death investigations to Johnson County. 🌞

Features of the building

The building was designed to integrate into the county's campus at 119th and Ridgeview in Olathe, and exterior considerations taken into account included creating a discrete delivery area for transport vehicles and utilizing high-quality civic architecture that fits into the surrounding buildings.



“We designed this building to ensure that the public is separated from day-to-day goings-on at this facility,” said Mike Schaadt, principal architect at PGAV Architects. “We placed the portion of the building that houses staff offices and break rooms closest to the residents. The building’s orientation also allows for natural light to enter every working space.”

Features of the building include:

- A totally enclosed vestibule behind a secure perimeter for body transports.
- A public area with an accessible restroom and access to a contemplative garden.
- Five autopsy stations including an observation area for law enforcement.
- Space for up to 12 death scene investigators to do their work.
- Toxicology lab with areas for sample preparation and storage.

Next steps

Construction on the new medical examiner facility will start this winter. McCarthy Building Companies is the construction manager on the project and is scheduled to have substantial completion done by the end of 2019. The facility is targeted to open in the summer of 2020.

To stay up to date on this project, please visit the County Project section at jocogov.org, and search #JoCoMedEx on social media. 🌞

Tower cranes, earthmovers and workers in hard hats are a sign of the times in Johnson County. Here is an update on some of the county's priority projects.

Johnson County Courthouse

Construction can now be seen poking above the site fencing at the corner of Santa Fe and Kansas Avenue in downtown Olathe. Substantial completion is targeted for August 2020. Public engagement meetings associated with the greenspace at the existing courthouse site are planned for mid-2019.

Tomahawk Creek

The Tomahawk Creek Wastewater Facility Expansion began in April 2018 with major construction scheduled to be completed by spring of 2022. Current work includes excavations for new wastewater treatment structures, demolition of existing structures and work on underground piping.

Meadowbrook Park

A portion of the former 135-acre Meadowbrook Country Club, located in Prairie Village, is being converted into an 80-acre park to address the shortage of park space in northeast Johnson County. Phase I amenities include an early childhood development center, playgrounds, paved trails, outdoor senior fitness area and more.



Lenexa City Center Library

Lenexa City Center Library

The new Lenexa City Center Library is taking shape with progress on interior and exterior work. When it opens in the second quarter of 2019, the two-story library will feature a convenient Holds area right inside the entrance on the Lenexa Commons level, a drive-through service point, specific areas for kids and teens, and much more.

Kill Creek Park Observation Tower

Construction on the project got under way in early November, with completion tentatively expected in summer 2019. The tower is made of structural steel with a precast concrete elevator shaft to provide access to the



Kill Creek Park Observation Tower

top level. When conditions are right, visitors may be able to see buildings on the hill of the University of Kansas' campus in Lawrence, and the Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kansas.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



This year marks the 50th anniversary of Johnson County Community College. That's five decades dedicated to student success, affordable tuition rates and community enrichment.

As we reflect on our history, we are filled with excitement and anticipation for tomorrow. Our campus transformation is underway, our students are thriving and our alumni are making an impact.

Here's to our next 50 years, and here's to you for being part of the journey.

Visit jccc.edu to learn how we're celebrating throughout 2019.



**JOHNSON COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Celebrating Black History Month

African-Americans changed Johnson County by desegregating neighborhoods

by GERALD HAY

The African-American history in Johnson County is as old as the county, 164 years and counting.

The legacy began in the 1850s and 1860s when free blacks, mostly from the South, moved to the territory of Kansas and continued after statehood in 1861. During that time, Kansas was promoted as the “Promised Land.”

In his book “Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction,” Nell Irvin Painter described Kansas as “the quintessential Free State, the land of John Brown and a free state in which every colored man can enjoy his freedom.”

According to the Johnson County Museum, the “Exoduster” movement occurred with thousands of African-American men, women and children coming to Kansas between the 1870s and 1881. The African-American population in Johnson County more than doubled from 375 in 1865, a decade after the county was created, to almost 900 in 1880.

Although Johnson County historically did not require African-Americans to live separately from white residents, pre-dominantly African-American neighborhoods were formed, including the Fairview neighborhood in northwest Olathe, South Park near Merriam, and to some degree, in Shawnee. African-Americans also clustered in small agricultural enclaves in the Wilder and Holliday communities at the turn of the 20th century.

South Park community

South Park, an integrated second-class city founded in 1887, holds a prominent place in Johnson County and Kansas history. The community opened Walker School, educating both black and white children, in 1888.

Although Johnson County historically did not require African-Americans to live separately from white residents, pre-dominantly African-American neighborhoods were formed, including the Fairview neighborhood in northwest Olathe, South Park near Merriam, and to some degree, in Shawnee.

A school for only white children was constructed in 1912 with black students remaining at the Walker School. That changed in 1948 with the opening of a new school, leading to the “Walker Walkout” boycott by African-American families and the historic lawsuit Webb v. School District No. 90.

While South Park had identifiable boundaries, the museum notes Shawnee’s African-American community did not reside in one, easily defined neighborhood. Students attended the all-black

Dunbar School, established between 1900 and 1910. The one-room school closed in the early 1940s and sat vacant before it was significantly upgraded as the first Johnson County Library in 1953 before closing approximately five years later.

Fairview community

Fairview, Olathe’s historic African-American neighborhood in the northwestern section of the city, began in the late 19th century. Children received their education in the segregated Lincoln School, built in 1882 and finally integrated in 1958, four years after the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education decision.

Andrew Gustafson, curator of interpretation at Johnson County Museum, points out that the Olathe Urban Renewal Project (OUPR), which began in 1967, forever changed the Fairview neighborhood when more than 100 homes and small businesses were either rehabilitated or demolished and replaced by new structures.

Joe Person, an African-American member of the Fairview Neighborhood Council, teamed up with Ruth Shechter, a white equal housing proponent, to create the non-profit Homes Evaluation and Rehabilitation to buy and repair homes before selling them back to the original owners with low-interest, long-term FHA loans. Several families left Fairview since residents could not afford the new or repaired homes.

Person, a respected member of the Fairview community, was prohibited from participating in the program himself because of his involvement in OURP. His family was one of 33 African-American families forced to move from Fairview, priced out of the new neighborhood that Person helped to facilitate.



Joe Person and family

Northeast communities

Following World War II, housing opportunities occurred in a different way for African-Americans in northeast Johnson County when families struggled to fulfill the American dream of home ownership due to deed restrictions.

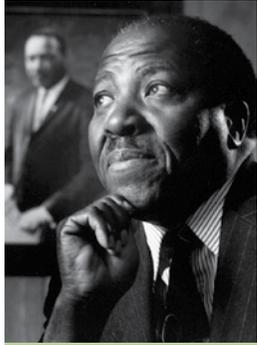
“Sometimes called covenants, the deed restrictions prohibited African-Americans, Jews and others deemed non-white from legally purchasing or renting property in new suburban

continued on page 15 >>

<< continued from page 14

developments being built for exclusively white residents,” Gustafson said.

That situation was successfully challenged in 1966 when Donald Sewing became a civil rights pioneer in the integration of northeast Johnson County by moving his family to Fairway and becoming the first African-Americans in the suburbs.



Donald Sewing

By opening an office in Overland Park four years later, Sewing then sold houses to African-Americans in order to fight housing discrimination by “scattering” black families

throughout neighborhoods. That strategy was a departure from the tendency of black families to cluster in newly-integrated areas and helped to prevent racial turnover of white families.

An audio tour, called “Dividing Lines: A History of Segregation in Kansas City,” has been created as a part of Johnson County Library’s “Race Project KC.” Beginning at Shawnee Mission East High School, Prairie Village, the audio tour allows participants to listen on their phone as they drive the designated route and learn about the history of segregation.

The tour is accessible at: voicemap.me/tour/kansas-city/dividing-lines-a-history-of-segregation-in-kansas-city. 📍

Photos courtesy of the Johnson County Museum.

Please mark your calendar for these Johnson County events which celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King and Black History Month.

Hear from Dr. King’s niece

Dr. Alveda King, niece of MLK, will serve as the keynote speaker at a free community celebration beginning at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 19 in Polsky Hall at Johnson County Community College’s Carlsen Center. The program, entitled “Building the Beloved Community: Love is the Only Way,” will feature performances by the Kansas City Boys and Girls choirs under the direction of Ahlee Robinson.



The 2019 theme highlights what the late Dr. King once said: “We must discover the power of love, the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world a new world, for love is the only way.” The quote comes from his sermon “Loving Your Enemies” delivered on Nov. 17, 1957, at Dexter Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. “Loving Your Enemies” was one of Dr. King’s favorite sermons.

Learn about Kansas City’s 18th & Vine district

Johnson County Museum’s History on Tap program series will showcase “The Community at 18th & Vine” at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 12, in the Arts & Heritage Center, 8788 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park. The presentation features Geri Sanders of the Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri.

The 18th & Vine District was the cradle of Kansas City’s jazz scene as well as African-American culture and business on both sides of the state line. Cost is \$7, which includes museum admission, drinks and snacks. More information is available by calling 913-831-3359.

Enjoy some music

On Feb. 10, the Kansas City Boys and Girls choirs perform in the musical production “We Shall Overcome” in honor of MLK. The performance begins at 7 p.m. in Yardley Hall at the Carlsen Center.

The choirs, under the direction of Damien Sneed, will perform a repertoire of songs from across African-American music traditions that are interwoven with spoken word from Dr. King’s recorded speeches. Music includes traditional gospel, modern gospel, classical, jazz, Broadway and spirituals.

Ticket information is available at 913-469-4445. 📍



Connect with us!

Stay updated on news and events throughout Johnson County through your favorite social media platform.



@jocogov

Mark your Calendar

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

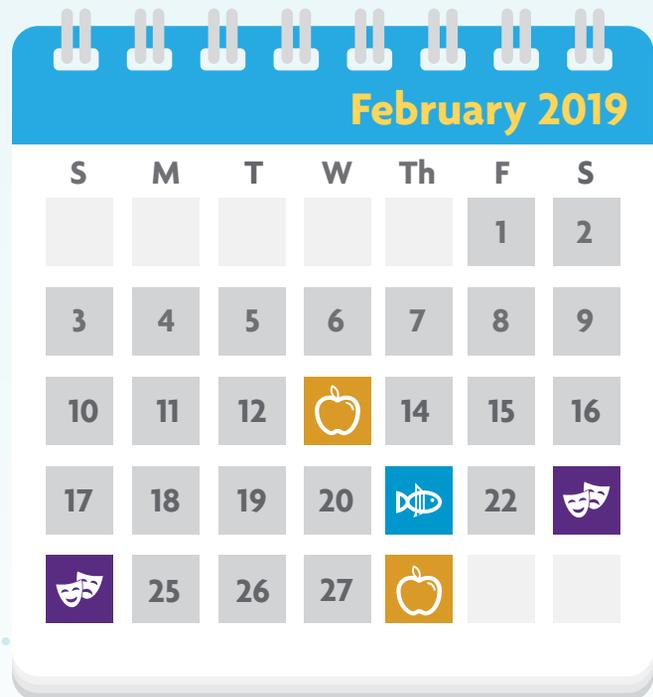


January 2019

- 
Saturday, Jan. 19
 Honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 5 p.m. in Polsky Hall at Johnson County Community College's Carlsen Center.
- 
Monday, Jan. 21
 County offices are closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 
Saturday, Jan. 26
 Learn about community gardens at a workshop. 8 a.m. at the Olathe Community Center, 1205 E. Kansas City Road.
- 
Tuesday, Jan. 29
 Celebrate Kansas Day! Learn about the state's history at kshs.org

February 2019

- 
Thursday, Feb. 21
 Fish for all! Learn about preparing and eating fresh fish. 6 – 8 p.m., 11811 S. Sunset Dr., Olathe. Call 913-715-7000 to register.
- 
Saturday, Feb. 23 & Sunday, Feb. 24
 Audition for The Theatre in the Park! Learn more at theatreinthepark.org



Special events in January & February

- 
Wasted! The Story of Food Waste aims to change the way people buy, cook, recycle, and eat food. Through the eyes of specialists like the late Anthony Bourdain and Mark Bittman, audiences will see how the world's most influential chefs can make the most of every kind of food, transforming what most people consider scraps into incredible dishes that create a more secure food system.
 - Sunday, Jan. 13, 3 p.m. at the Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th St., Overland Park
 - Wednesday, Feb. 13, 6 p.m. at the Central Resource Library
 - Thursday, Feb. 28, 6 p.m. at the Monticello branch, 22435 W. 66th St., Shawnee



March 2019



Tuesday, Mar. 5

Take part in the statewide drill during Severe Weather Awareness Week



Friday, Mar. 8

Sing with Dino O'Dell at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center.

4:30 p.m. Call 913-826-2787 to register.



Tuesday, Mar. 26

Chairman Ed Eilert presents the State of the County. 11:30 a.m. at the Olathe Conference Center, 10401 South Ridgeview Road. Call 913-498-1514 to register.

April 2019



Tuesday, Apr. 1 – Thursday, Apr. 3

Attend the Spring Contractor Licensing Conference.

Learn more at 913-715-2233.



Saturday, Apr. 6

Attend the Johnson County Healthy Yards Expo.

Shawnee Civic Center, 13817 Johnson Dr. in Shawnee.



Special events in February & March



A Place at the Table shows us how hunger poses serious economic, social and cultural implications for our nation, and that it could be solved once and for all, if the American public decides — as they have in the past — that making healthy food available and affordable is in the best interest of us all.

- Friday, March 8, 2 p.m. at the Monticello Library
- Wednesday, March 20, 6 p.m. at the Monticello Library
- Friday, March 22, 2 p.m. at the Central Resource Library

Rural Living Workshop series This is a series for county residents living on a half-acre to hundreds of acres. People think they want land, but don't realize the issues they'll face once they make the move.

Topics include:

- Fence and lease laws.
- Hunting leases.
- Cover crops and soil health.
- Wildlife damage.
- Pasture burning.

Workshops take place in Feb – March. Lunch and dinner provided. Call 913-715-7000.

When simple disease prevention is hard: get help!

by MEGAN FOREMAN

It's New Year's resolution time! At least a few of you are thinking about how to lose weight, quit smoking or get more exercise.

Making lifestyle changes is hard. Consider joining a Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) that meets weekly to support participants in making healthy habits a priority. A trained lifestyle coach will discuss nutrition, incorporating daily physical activity, meal planning and how to cope with the inevitable challenges that arise. DPP goals include losing 5 to 7 percent of starting body weight and increasing physical activity minutes to 150 per week.

New classes are starting in Johnson County now. To learn more or sign up, contact Karen Hanson at the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment - 913-477-8114 or karen.hanson@jocogov.org.

Since February is Heart Health Month, it is worth noting that many small-scale studies have shown people who successfully complete DPP also lower their risk of cardiovascular disease. Part of the improvement in heart health



comes from lowering blood pressure and cholesterol by losing weight, eating more nutritiously and increasing physical activity.

Consider the American Heart Association's *7 Small Steps to Big Changes* for lifelong heart health:

- **Don't smoke or use other forms of tobacco.** Get help quitting by calling the Kansas Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or go to ksquit.org for help.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Exercise regularly.** Adults should get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. Children and adolescents need an hour every day.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** This means at least five fruits and vegetables per day, lean protein and whole grains. Limit sodium to less than 1,500 mg per day.
- **Control your numbers.** Your total blood cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar should be checked regularly and controlled through lifestyle or medication. ☀

For more information about healthy heart living, go to cdc.gov.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



Get the Dirt on Growing Green

Saturday, April 6 | 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.



- Talk with the experts
- Discover greener choices for your yard and home
- How-to tutorials & seminars
- StoneLion Puppet Theatre
- Native plant sale



Shawnee Civic Center
13817 Johnson Drive, Shawnee

details, seminars and schedule at
johnson.k-state.edu | 913.715.7000



Sponsored by



Crave that spring green?

It all begins with a soil test!
Johnson County residents,
get a FREE soil test

- Find out your soil's nutrient & pH levels
- Save money on fertilizers — know the right type and amount to apply
- Proper fertilization promotes a healthy lawn and reduces chemical runoff that can pollute our waterways

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



In partnership together

Growth and Impact: Preparing for the 2020 Census

by KEITH DAVENPORT

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau takes a count. And in October, Johnson County became the first county in Kansas to proclaim its partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau for the 2020 Census. The county has grown drastically since the 2000 and 2010 censuses, which is not news to anyone. What residents might not know is why the census is important to us locally.

Trends¹

Johnson County's total population has grown by just over 30 percent from 2000 to 2017, from 454,539 to 591,178 residents. Since 2000, there hasn't been a single year when the population did not grow by at least 1 percent. The strongest growth was from 2001–2008; with annual increases of 8,296 to 11,685. Since then, the population has grown each year by 1–1.6 percent.

Migration is one major component of this population growth. From 2011 to 2017, the area has experienced a net migration of 19,437 individuals. About 55 percent of this net migration is from other counties within the U.S., but more than 45 percent is attributed to international migration. While new families moving into the county account for a large portion of this greater trend, they actually account for only about 42 percent of the overall growth since 2011.

Natural population change accounts for the other 58 percent—the number of annual births minus the number of annual deaths. Johnson County residents, as a group, average 7,380 new babies every year. The annual average of deaths each year is less than half that number.

Despite the population growth through births, the median age of residents continues to rise. In 2000 it was 35.2 years. In 2017, it was 37.7 years. Twenty-four percent of Johnson County residents were 65 and older in 2017, compared to just 10 percent in 2000.

The county has also become increasingly diverse over the past 20 years.

Incorporation

Many cities in the county accommodate this growth by incorporating additional land into their city jurisdictions. The map at right illustrates the changes in city footprints from 1999 to 2018. The areas of the map in red represent land that has been incorporated by the cities during this time span. As one can see, there has been a lot of growth in the southwest, especially in Edgerton, Spring Hill, Gardner, Olathe and Overland Park.

Local impact

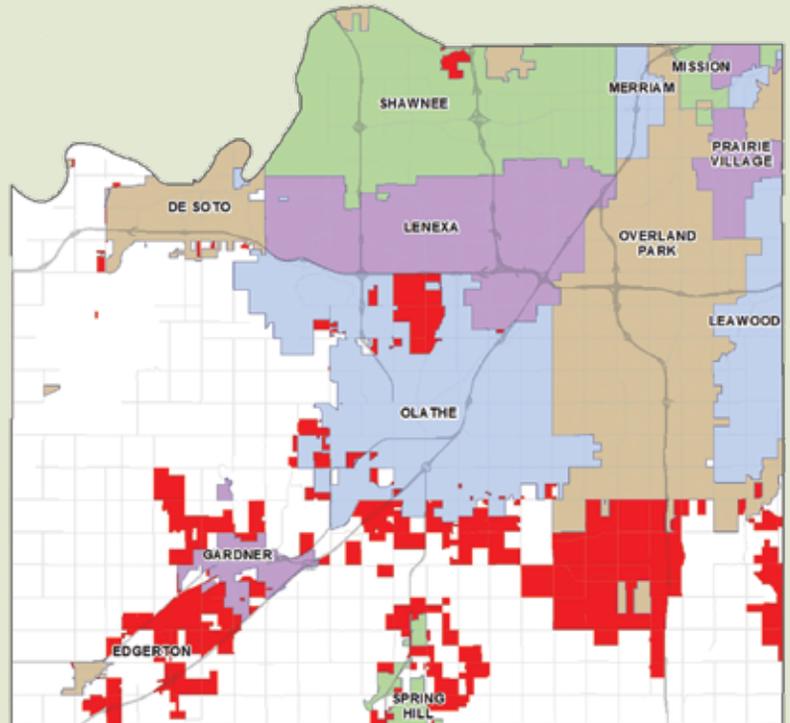
Beyond getting accurate counts of county population growth, the U.S. Census provides data to federal and local agencies to distribute funds and make programming decisions. These decisions can directly impact how federal dollars are distributed to support key services such as education, health care, transportation and more.

This is why counting everyone is important. In fact, in a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners in October, Census Bureau Partnership Specialist Alan E. Organ, M.D., PhD, explained that, over a 10-year span, the county receives \$39,000 less than it should for each household that doesn't get counted.

Lougene Marsh, director of Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (DHE), echoed this sentiment. "A good portion of DHE's budget (close to 40 percent) is from grants, most of which originate at the federal level. Since population is a factor in the amount of resources provided by the federal government, an incomplete count on the 2020 census could adversely impact the dollars coming to Johnson County."

In short, it is incredibly important that every person in our community is counted. ☀️

Incorporated areas of Johnson County, 1999 vs. 2018



AREAS IN RED HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED SINCE 1999

¹ All population data was provided by the County Economic Research Institute, based on population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners

We want to sincerely thank Commissioners Ron Shaffer and Jason Osterhaus for their service to the Board of County Commissioners and the entire county. The best of luck in the future to you both.



Ron Shaffer
1st District
2015-2019

Current board/committee assignments as county commissioner

- Planning Commission
- Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee
- Solid Waste Management Committee
- Mid America Regional Council Board of Directors
- Library Board

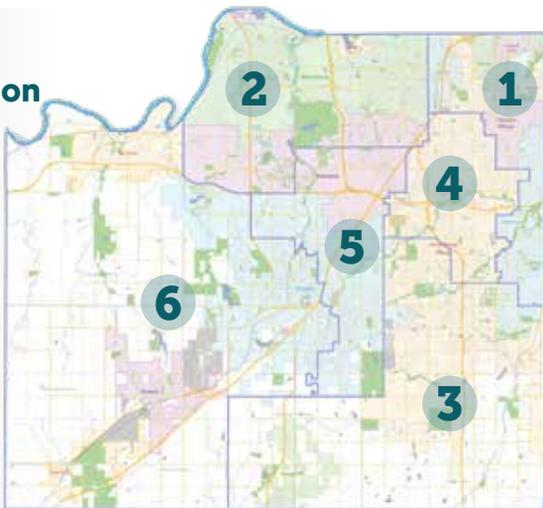


Jason Osterhaus
4th District
2011-2019

Current board/committee assignments as county commissioner

- Developmental Supports Governing Board
- Juvenile Corrections and Community Corrections Advisory Boards
- Workforce Investment Board (Kansas Works)
- Johnson County Education Research Triangle Authority

County commission districts



County commissioners

Chairman Ed Eilert		913-715-0500
Becky Fast	1st District*	913-715-0431
Jim Allen	Vice chair, 2nd District	913-715-0432
Steve Klika	3rd District	913-715-0433
Janeé Hanzlick	4th District*	913-715-0434
Michael Ashcraft	5th District	913-715-0435
Mike Brown	6th District	913-715-0436

*Sworn into office on Jan. 14, 2019

Meet the Incoming Commissioners

On Jan. 14, two new Johnson County Board of Commissioners will be sworn in. Becky Fast, District 1, and Janeé Hanzlick, District 4, and were elected in November. When asked about their top priorities, here is what they had to say:



Commissioner-elect Fast

“I’ve been very concerned about the lack of affordable housing. And when I say affordable housing, that’s not subsidized housing, it’s housing that meets the differing price points within the county, so our seniors can retire and live here, and children can grow up here and afford to live in Johnson County.”



Commissioner-elect Hanzlick

“The areas where I think I can make a difference are in helping to strengthen our mental health services, raising awareness of all the county has to offer, and working to strengthen and expand senior services, especially since our senior population is rapidly growing.”

Learn more about the incoming commissioners at jocogov.org.



MED-ACT Community Education teaching for you

by ALYSON ANGELL

Paramedics at Johnson County MED-ACT are prepared to respond to your home any time you are faced with sudden illness or injury, but have you done everything you can to prepare? What if a serious injury causes excessive bleeding beyond the use of a bandage? What if the friend or neighbor with cardiac problems collapses? What can you do?

MED-ACT's Community Education Division continually offers multiple lifesaving courses throughout the year to help residents prepare for these types of events. One-hour interactive courses are built to help you succeed in hands-only CPR; bleeding control; and, for new student drivers, a distracted driving course. These courses are free of charge to Johnson County residents, organizations and businesses.



HeartSafe Hands-Only CPR & AED

Our HeartSafe Hands-Only CPR & AED course will help your group get comfortable with hands-only/compression-only CPR skills (also known as "bystander CPR"), and how to use an AED. This course is about an hour long, featuring a slideshow presentation and practice time with mannequins. To date, the bystander rate has gone from 19 percent in 2014, to 66 percent in 2017, meaning that more patients are surviving cardiac arrests, as more people learn CPR.



Stop the Bleed: Bleeding Control

Stop the Bleed: Bleeding Control has been covered by the news during the past few weeks and advertised on Facebook. This program provides training in vital initial responses, in the hope that a bystander

will be able to stop uncontrolled bleeding in emergency situations. The interactive program features a slideshow presentation and hands-on practice with tourniquets and wound packing kits. This national program was created in conjunction with the American College of Surgeons, the Hartford Consensus and the Committee on Trauma. This year, more than 300 people have learned how to "Stop the Bleed." Your group can learn to as well.



Grave Mistakes: Distracted Driving

The Grave Mistakes program was created at the end of 2016, to revitalize the distracted driving programs for students who are just learning to drive. The program is a 45-minute presentation, with time for students to ask questions and participate in discussions about driving for the last part of the hour. The presentation includes real images of accidents and stories of distracted driving, from not only across the country, but in Johnson County as well. Students are engaged throughout the program with still photographs, statistics and videos. Currently, this program has been scheduled by Bishop Miege, Olathe East, and the summer driver's education program in the Olathe School District. If your student isn't receiving this program, please have a representative contact us for more information.

Community groups interested in any of the training opportunities should contact MED-ACT's Community Education Division at 913-715-1981. ☀

Three Questions

by LORI SAND

for three communication specialists of Johnson County Government



Richard Howell
Master Deputy,
Sheriff's Office

My responsibilities include a variety of community outreach and communication tasks. I've been with the county for 21 years.



Melissa Reeves
Community Relations Manager,
Developmental Supports

My focus is advocacy for our clients and help to promote the work of JCDS. I've been with Johnson County since October 2018.



Theresa Freed
Asst. Director of Public Affairs
and Communications, Public
Information Office

I provide support and assistance to the Director of Public Information and Communications. My role includes overseeing county branding and digital communications. I have been with the county since Nov. 27, 2018.

What do you do?

My duties include public affairs and community outreach. We fulfill requests from the media and maintain social media. We also interact with the citizens of Johnson County through events such as reading in the classroom, safety seminars, fairs, etc.

I engage residents, lawmakers and local businesses to encourage support for the agency's mission, which is to advocate alongside people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live and work in the community.

I am serving in a newly-created role, and just started Nov. 27. I address the communications needs of the agency. My specific duties involve overseeing the digital functions of the division, including social media, multimedia messaging and the website.

What do you like most about your job?

The thing I enjoy most is meeting all the interesting people who call Johnson County home.

At my core, I am a public servant. Through my job at JCDS, I have the opportunity to work alongside staff who are true public servants who put and put the needs of our clients at the forefront of everything they do. To me, there is no higher calling than to serve.

I am enjoying getting to know the experienced and skilled communications team. It's wonderful to see an agency invest in public relations, as it's such an important part of public service.

How does the work you do affect the lives of Johnson County residents?

My job has a direct impact because we provide education, prevention and information directly to the citizens we serve.

Johnson County has more than 2,000 residents who are currently receiving, or are on the waiting list to receive, developmental disability services. Increasing the visibility of JCDS helps encourage community engagement, which is important because residents are critical to the work we do—helping in areas such as volunteering, donations and employment.

The communications division serves a vital function—ensuring that residents and staff receive important information that personally affects their lives and the work they do. We live in a world that expects instant and open exchanges of information. Communications facilitates these conversations, ensures residents' needs are met and questions answered, while also promoting the good work of the county.

10 WAYS

Johnson County helps residents in the winter

Winter weather has arrived. It's time to break out the snow shovels, turn up the furnace or throw a log on the fire. There are plenty of ways we brace ourselves for colder temperatures. The county is also working hard to help residents with winter-weather needs, like plowing snowy roads in unincorporated areas and designating libraries as warming centers for those in need of daytime shelter. The county's services during this frigid season include even more. We're here to help residents stay safe, healthy and entertained all winter long. Here's a look at just some of the important programs and services available in Johnson County.

1 Weather warnings

By registering for NotifyJoCo at notifyjoco.org, you'll get real-time messages from the county about emergencies, including weather warnings. NotifyJoCo is a great tool to get alerts on public safety concerns in your area throughout the year.



2 Transportation

If you don't want to battle slick streets, hop on a RideKC bus. If you've never used public transit in Johnson County, plan your trip with the Rider Guide, online at ridekc.org/rider-guide.

3 Warming centers

If you need a warm place to be, the Johnson County libraries are open and available during their regular business hours. Residents can visit free of charge, read books and magazines and newspapers, use a computer or view an art exhibit. Visit jocolibrary.org to get a complete list of hours of operation at the various locations across the county.



4 Meals on Wheels

The Area Agency on Aging provides home-delivered meals to frail and elderly homebound residents, age 60+ and their spouses. Meal delivery is canceled during bad weather if road or weather conditions are hazardous. "Blizzard meals" consist of shelf stable food items and are delivered at the beginning of winter. They are to be used in the event that a hot meal cannot be delivered.

5 Vaccines

The Johnson County Department of Health and Environment provides flu shots and other vaccines that help prevent illnesses that are prevalent in the winter. Immunization clinic hours are available online at jocogov.org/dept/health-and-environment/health-immunizations/overview. Stop by the Olathe or Mission clinics.



8 Indoor activities/classes

Johnson County Park & Recreation District offers a variety of indoor activities and classes for all ages, from children to older adults. The Johnson County Museum includes an exhibit about the history of Johnson County, traveling exhibits and KidScape. Kids can learn through play in the immersive history experience. Learn more at jcprd.com.



9 Digital resources

When the weather makes travel difficult, entertain and educate yourself using the eLibrary at jocolibrary.org. You can browse the collection, download books and music and periodicals, and research and learn in the databases. Or, take a trip down memory lane through the JoCo History website at jocohistory.org. The JoCo History website lets you explore historical photographs and documents about the people, places and organizations of Johnson County, Kansas, from the 19th century to the present.

6 Mental health services

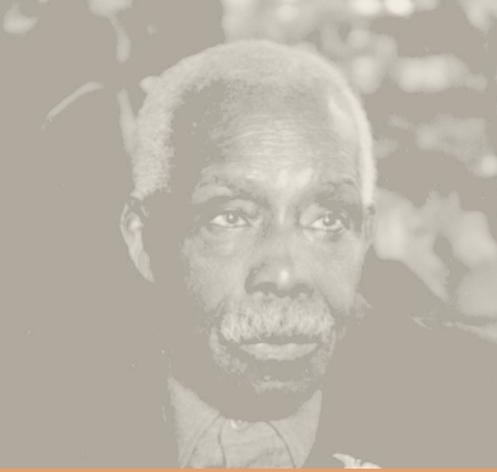
Seasonal Affective Disorder is a type of depression that typically starts in the fall or winter. The Johnson County Mental Health Center offers a wide range of mental health services to Johnson County residents, including a 24-hour emergency crisis line, 913-268-0156.

7 Volunteer opportunities

Help make the chilly winter months warmer for your fellow community members. The county offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. Check them out at jocogov.org/volunteer-information-services.

10 Holiday tree recycling

When the festivities come to an end, recycle your holiday trees at four county parks: Shawnee Mission Park, Heritage Park, Kill Creek Park and Big Bull Creek Park. Visit jcprd.com for dates and exact drop-off locations.



We honor these Johnson County trailblazers as we approach February as Black History Month.



Marvin "Mickey" Oliver

In 1970, owned and operated the first African-American-owned business in Overland Park with the opening of a Bonanza Restaurant.



Rhonda Mason

In 2016, became the first African-American judge appointed to the 10th Judicial District Court of Kansas, commonly called Johnson County District Court with 24 judges. She is only the second African-American woman to be named a judge in the state of Kansas.



Robert Lee McCallop



A Shawnee man who in 1934 turned an agricultural truck into a bus and shuttled Johnson County children to Northeast Junior High and Sumner High Schools, in Kansas City, Kansas where they could go to school.



Luella Johnson



This young child sued the Olathe Board of Education in 1890 to attend an all-white school.



Julius McFarlin



Elected to the Merriam City Council in 1973, becoming the first African-American man elected to public office in Johnson County.



Carl Wilkes



The first African-American in Johnson County to be elected as mayor of a community. He was sworn in as the 10th mayor of Merriam in 2001, serving two terms.



Sonny Maynard



The first African-American coach at the Johnson County Community College, starting in 1969, working with an all-white team and becoming head coach in 1972.



Photos courtesy of Johnson County Museum

