

Spotlight on **BLUE SPRINGS** M A G A Z I N E

Spring 2026
Issue 2, Volume 2



It's America's 250th Birthday!

Red, White & Blue Springs - July 3, Young Park

CONTENT DIRECTORY

America 250 in Blue Springs	4
City Receives Blue Shield Honor	6
Historical Society Turns 50	8
2026 Road Improvement Projects	10
Jeremiah Burnett III	12
Eaglets Hatch	14



WWW.BLUESPRINGSNEXT.COM



COVER PHOTO: Red, White & Blue Springs Fourth of July Celebration at Young Park.

The City of Blue Springs has kicked off its Comprehensive Planning process. This is your opportunity to plan for the future of your community.

STAY CONNECTED

 bluespringsmo.gov

 facebook.com/bluespringsgov

 instagram.com/cityofbluesprings

 x.com/BlueSpringsGov

 www.linkedin.com/company/cityofbluesprings

 youtube.com/CityofBlueSprings

 Comcast Channel 7

STAY IN THE KNOW!

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTERS

[City Newsletter](#)

[Parks Newsletter](#)



CONTACT INFORMATION

BRIAN SPANO

Communications Manager

NATE BECK

Multimedia Specialist

SARAH BREWER

Marketing Coordinator

communications@bluespringsmo.gov



CITY OF BLUE SPRINGS

903 W. Main Street
Blue Springs, MO 64015
816-228-0110

CITY OFFICIALS

Chris Lievsay, Mayor
Christine Cates, City Administrator

COUNCILMEMBERS

DISTRICT 1

Jerry Kaylor
Galen Ericson

DISTRICT 2

Brian Markworth
Katie Tholen (Mayor Pro Tempore)

DISTRICT 3

Nick Brummel
Jeremy Rowan



The Parade of Hearts at the Carson Ross Community Recreation Complex

Blue Springs is leading up to America's 250th anniversary with a full slate of activities designed to bring the community together in both celebration and service.

The season began with an opportunity to get involved in a meaningful way. Green Up the Blue on April 18 invited residents to care for parks and public spaces through a community-wide cleanup effort, reflecting the spirit of service tied to the anniversary's national campaign. More than 120 volunteers picked up litter and debris throughout the parks, culminating in 75 bags of trash.

The celebration continues through more programs and events. Summer Day Camp, running May 26 through August 21, is leaning into a patriotic theme, and an America-themed spin ride is planned for later this summer at the Carson Ross Community Recreation Complex (CRCRC).

The centerpiece of the season is Red, White & Blue Springs Week, a series of events built upon the community's annual Independence Day celebration. All events are free to attend with

There will be plenty to do

Celebrate 250th Birth Blue S

support from Raising Cane's and Comcast/Xfinity:

- Sunday, June 28: Heritage Philharmonic concert at Rotary Park at 7 p.m. (part of the Concerts in the Park series)
- Monday, June 29: Liberty Tree Planting at City Hall, time TBD
- Tuesday, June 30: Hero Academy at Rotary Park from 10 a.m. to noon
- Wednesday, July 1: Popsicles at the Pool at the CRCRC
- Thursday, July 2: Storytime in the Park at



Red, White & Blue Springs

o for red, white and blue America's irthday in springs

Ward Park at 10 a.m., in partnership with
Mid-Continent Public Library

- Friday, July 3: Red, White & Blue Springs at
Young Park beginning at 3 p.m.

The week wraps up with Red, White & Blue Springs,
and this year—we're going big! To commemorate
the nation's birthday, festivities begin at 3 p.m.
and include a hot dog eating contest, best dressed
competition, foam party, live entertainment, dueling
pianos and a variety of performances throughout
the evening. New this year, a drone show will light
up the sky beginning at 9:15 p.m. to kick off the
annual fireworks display.

Together, these events create multiple ways for
residents to celebrate 250 years of the USA. We
hope to see you there!



New Rotary Park Playground

Pardon Our Progress! Renovations Underway at Rotary and Central Parks

Two park projects are taking shape
as part of Blue Springs' continued
investment in maintaining and
improving community spaces.

The playground at Rotary Park by
Vesper Hall was recently demolished
after serving the community for
nearly 30 years. Over time, wear
on slides, handrails and platforms
has accumulated, signaling that the
structure has reached the end of its
lifespan.

Soon, the space will be transformed
with a brand-new playground that
reflects features important to our community today,
including swings, shaded seating and play areas and
an accessible design. This project marks the ninth
playground upgrade completed through the Parks
Sales Tax Program, continuing a long-term effort to
enhance parks across the system. Construction is
expected to wrap up in early summer.

At Central Park, clearing has begun around the
pond to prepare for a future paved walking path,
creating a new opportunity to experience the park's
natural environment. Central Park is part of the
City's broader downtown revitalization efforts and
is being reimagined as a more active gathering and
recreation space. The addition of the trail is phase
one, with future phases aimed at supporting both



Old Rotary Park Playground



Swim Lessons

everyday use and community events in the heart of Blue Springs. Central Park is located at SW Walnut Street and SW Tenth Street.

Water You Waiting For? Prepare for Summer Fun with Swim Lessons for All Ages & Abilities

As temperatures rise, more people head to the water, whether that's at Blue Surf Bay Waterpark, neighborhood pools or nearby lakes. Ensuring your family has life-saving swim skills can make a major difference in overall safety.

Swim lessons are one of the most effective ways to build water confidence early and continue developing it over time. Blue Springs Parks & Recreation offers a range of lesson options designed to meet participants at any age or experience level.

Group swim lessons are available for ages 6 months through adults and are structured to guide participants through clear stages of progression. Early levels focus on water introduction and comfort, while later levels build toward independence, endurance and basic stroke development.

For those looking for a more personalized experience, private and semi-private lessons offer flexible scheduling and targeted instruction. Semi-

private lessons are designed for small groups you choose, such as siblings or friends, allowing participants to learn together while still receiving individualized feedback.

For the youngest swimmers, survival swim lessons provide a critical layer of safety. Offered in partnership with Infant Aquatics, these lessons teach children ages 6 months to 3 years how to enter the water, roll to a back float, turn over and move toward the pool edge. It is recommended that children participate in Parent/Child group lessons prior to survival swim lessons to build comfort being in and around the water.

Adaptive swim lessons, developed in partnership with Children With Opportunity, create inclusive opportunities for individuals with diverse abilities. Both group and one-on-one formats are available, with an emphasis on building confidence, comfort and foundational skills in a supportive environment.

With a variety of options available, swim lessons are a practical step families can take to feel more prepared for the season ahead and to help ensure that time spent in the water stays safe and enjoyable. Lessons are held at the CRCRC and are available to members and the public. Stop by at 425 NE Mock Avenue, call 816-228-0137 or visit our website to learn more.

City Receives Missouri Blue Shield Designation

The City of Blue Springs received official word from the Missouri Department of Public Safety that we have earned the Missouri Blue Shield designation for 2026. This honor recognizes Missouri communities that demonstrate their commitment to enhancing public safety, investing in and supporting law enforcement and building partnerships between law enforcement and our community. The City was also recognized with a Blue Shield designation in 2025.

The Missouri Blue Shield Program was created by Governor Kehoe in January 2025 through Executive Order 25-03. In 2025, 201 Missouri communities earned the Blue Shield designation, recognizing local governments' significant efforts to reduce crime and foster law enforcement – community partnerships to strengthen public safety. The opportunity to earn the Blue Shield designation for 2026 opened on February 4, 2026. Communities that earned the Blue Shield designation in 2025 had to reapply this year to be approved once again.

"The Blue Shield program has shown what's possible when communities commit to prioritizing law enforcement and public safety," Governor Kehoe said. "After awarding \$50,000 grants to more than 200 communities last year, we're continuing that work by

welcoming new communities and renewing Blue Shield designations for counties, towns, and cities that remain committed to the program."

"Strengthening public safety and committing to joint law enforcement community – citizen safety efforts is what the Blue Shield Program is all about and the Department of Public Safety is honored to work with



communities like Blue Springs, that have answered the Blue Shield challenge," said Mark James, Director of the Missouri Department of Public Safety (DPS). "Last year, the essential equipment provided by Blue Shield grants included 388 mobile data terminals, 351 body cameras, 151 license plate readers (LPR), 102 ballistic vests, 91 interoperable radios and 56 vehicles. We look forward to getting additional important equipment and training to our partners in local law enforcement."

"Receiving the Missouri Blue Shield designation two years in a row is a tremendous honor," said Blue Springs Police Chief Bob Muenz. "This recognition affirms our ongoing commitment to public safety, accountability and community trust. We are proud to serve the citizens of Blue Springs with integrity and excellence every day."

Communities are eligible for a Missouri Blue Shield designation based on their dedication to reducing crime, making substantial investments in public safety, and developing strong collaboration with law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders. Each participating community's commitment is reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with the program's goals.

Communities that earn a Missouri Blue Shield designation will receive grant funding for law enforcement training and equipment as part of Governor Kehoe's Recommended Budget for the State Fiscal Year 2027, provided the General Assembly approves the funding. The Governor's FY 2027 budget appropriated \$10 million to the program for equipment and training grants. Communities will also be featured on Governor Kehoe's social media pages as well as the DPS website to highlight their participation in the program.



Blue Springs Historical Society Turns 50



Dillingham-Lewis Home (aka Blue Springs Historical Society)

In 2026, the Blue Springs Historical Society will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. It all started with a gathering September 25, 1975, at the Blue Springs Community Center. Approximately 25 citizens voted unanimously in favor of establishing an organization to preserve and protect items and sites of historical value in the city of Blue Springs.

At an informal election, Larry Wiebusch, a sixth generation Jackson Countian, was named president. Wiebusch's first ancestor in the county was Margaret Henderson Botts who came in 1842. Wiebusch was a fourth generation Blue Springs resident.

After months of recruiting members and formulating bylaws, the official organization was formed on February 3, 1976 with 74 members. The first officers of the Historical

Society included Wiebusch, President; Liz Adams, Vice President; Karol Witthar, Recording Secretary; Stayton Parr, Treasurer; and Maxine Hall, Corresponding Secretary.

The purpose of the Historical Society was to cultivate friendships among its members and to collect and preserve artifacts touching the early history of Blue Springs. The Society also boasted an active youth group organized in 1979 that raised funds for various projects through the years.

Now that the Historical Society had been established, it was time to find a permanent residence to display and house all of the city's history in addition to setting up funding mechanisms.

Eventually, the Dillingham-Lewis home on the southwest corner of 15th and Main streets

was purchased for \$43,500. The Historical Society raised money through several major projects throughout the year to help with the acquisition. This was accomplished by selling "pieces of history" within the house, and plaques were created to recognize those donations.

The stone house was built in 1906 by Morgan Dillingham, a prominent Blue Springs businessman. The Dillinghams were charter members of the first Methodist Church organized in 1872. Mr. Dillingham was on the board of the Bank of Blue Springs and was owner of Blue Springs Mercantile Company. He also bred Missouri mules to be shipped all over the United States. Mrs. Dillingham stayed in the house until her death in 1925 at which time the home was purchased by Miss Narra Lewis.

A resident of Blue Springs since 1883, Miss Narcissa (Narra) Lewis, a wealthy and eccentric lady, purchased the home in 1928. She stayed there until her death in 1947.

By 1978, the Blue Springs Historical Society was hoping other historical buildings around Blue Springs could eventually become part of its organization.

The Chicago Alton Hotel was built in 1878 by J.W. Parr to house railroad employees and travelers. The railroad never owned the hotel; it was always privately owned. Sometime in the early 1900s, it

Historical 50 in 2026

was called City Hotel. During the 1920s there were six rooms upstairs that rented for 75 cents per night and meals were 25 cents. In 1925, Dora Richardson owned it and lived there for 50 years.

In February, 1978, the Historical Society purchased the lot adjoining the museum for \$15,000 to have a place to

relocate the oldest business building still standing in Blue Springs. The Chicago & Alton House was given to the Historical Society by Rachel and Robert Sundvold, which originally sat on the west side of the railroad tracks facing east.

The cost to move the building, raise utility lines and for a new foundation to be poured was \$9,600. Gradually, the building was restored into a historical treasure for the city.

The train depot that now resides in Central Park, just south of the police station on Walnut, was originally located on the west side of the downtown railroad tracks. The one-story depot was built in 1926 after the first two-story depot burned in 1920.

Sitting vacant for years after trains no longer stopped in Blue Springs, the depot had fallen into disrepair. In 2011, Kansas City Southern Railroad, who owned it at the time, decided to tear it down. The Historical Society convinced the owners to gift it to them and to allow enough time to raise funds for the move.

The Railroad gave the Historical Society one year to raise the funds and find a suitable location for its home. The Historical Society met the deadline, and approximately 11 months later, it was carefully transferred to its new home in Central Park next to the Community Garden. Painstaking expertise was taken to restore the depot to its original condition, and it is open for tours from April to October.

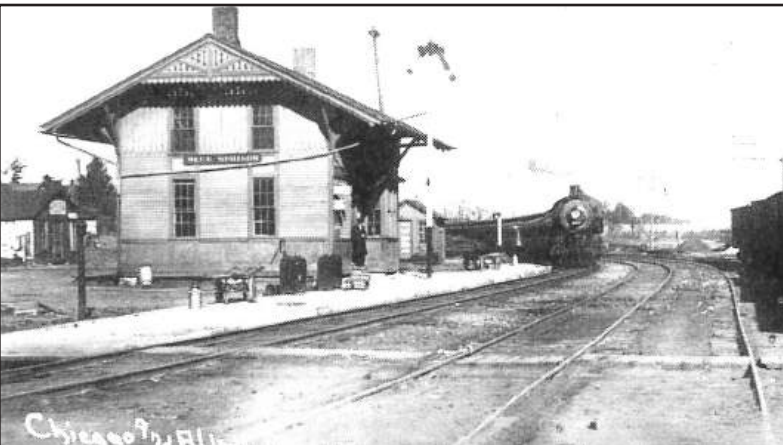
The Blue Springs Historical Society is the only independent society in Missouri with a population between 50,000 and 100,000 that supports multiple historic buildings. Its funding, unlike other communities, comes entirely through the generosity of local businesses, individuals, grants, memberships and fundraising activities. For more information about the Historical Society, visit www.bluespringshistory.org.



Chicago & Alton Hotel



Chicago & Alton Depot Today



Chicago & Alton Depot Yesterday

Infrastructure investments to improve

Blue Springs Announces 2026 Road Improvement Projects

repaired, over the next several months, work will begin on the streets throughout the City. This year's program includes 110 lane miles of the City's approximate 585 lane miles.

SW 12th Street Construction

A major infrastructure project that recently began is the construction of SW 12th Street from SW Southcrest Drive to Wyatt Road. This street addition will allow for access to the future Southwest Park and improve connectivity in the area.

The City of Blue Springs is gearing up for a busy construction season, with several road improvement projects scheduled throughout the spring, summer and fall of 2026. These efforts are part of the City's ongoing commitment to maintaining infrastructure, improving traffic flow, and enhancing the overall safety and accessibility of local roadways. These improvements are part of the City's Five-Year Strategic Plan by building and maintaining infrastructure to provide safe and reliable services.

Residents should be aware of the work in their area and use caution when traveling through work zones. Timelines for all of these projects can be affected by weather.

Neighborhood Street Preservation Program

The City will once again invest in its Neighborhood Street Preservation Program, which focuses on extending the life of residential streets through preventative maintenance such as mill and overlay, crack sealing and surface treatments. All locations are on the City's [website](#).

In preparation for the road work, curbs and gutters are being repaired throughout the City. The entire curb is not being replaced, only segments identified as necessary.

Dates are subject to change with regard to weather conditions and unforeseen conditions that may be encountered. Once curbs are

Adams Dairy Parkway & Duncan Road Turn Lane

To address increased traffic and improve safety at a key intersection, the City is constructing a dedicated right-turn lane from northbound Adams Dairy Parkway onto eastbound Duncan Road. This improvement, which began in April, is expected to reduce congestion and enhance traffic flow, particularly during peak travel times.

Downtown Revitalization – Main Street

As part of the City's continued investment in its historic core, Downtown revitalization efforts along Main Street will take place beginning in May. Improvements will focus on roadway enhancements,

e safety, traffic flow and connectivity



pedestrian accessibility and aesthetic upgrades designed to support local businesses and create a more vibrant, welcoming environment.

The construction of SW 12th Street, the turn lane on Adams Dairy Parkway to Duncan Road and Downtown Revitalization are all projects identified in the August 2024 Street Bonds Program.

Wyatt Road Improvements

Wyatt Road, from 7 Highway to Adams Dairy Parkway, will also undergo significant improvements. This project, which begins in June, will enhance

roadway conditions, improve traffic efficiency, and support continued development in the surrounding area.

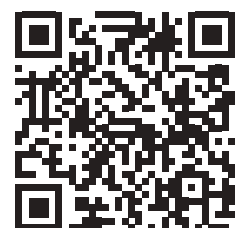
City officials recognize that construction projects can create temporary inconveniences and appreciate the community's patience as these improvements are completed. Updates, including project timelines and potential traffic impacts, will be shared regularly through the City's website and social media channels.

"These projects represent a significant investment in our infrastructure and our future," said

Blue Springs Mayor Chris Lievsay. "By improving our roadways, we're not only enhancing safety and mobility but also supporting economic development and quality of life in Blue Springs."

For more information and updates on these projects, visit the City's [website](#) or follow the City of Blue Springs on social media.

*Scan for
additional
information
about road
projects*



Did You Know, Blue Springs...? **A Patriot at Rest: The of Jeremiah Burnett**



Did you know there is a Revolutionary War veteran buried in the Blue Springs Cemetery?

Tucked among the quiet rows of Blue Springs Cemetery lies a remarkable piece of American history, one that connects this Jackson County community directly to the founding of the nation. Jeremiah Burnett III, believed to be the only American Revolutionary War veteran buried in Blue Springs, lived a life that stretched from colonial Virginia to the early days of Missouri's settlement.

Born in Albemarle County, Virginia, likely in 1749, though some records suggest 1761, Burnett came of age during a time of upheaval and revolution. Like many young men of his generation, he answered the call to serve. He enlisted on December 26, 1777, as a Private in Captain James Franklin's Company of Foot, part of the 10th Virginia Regiment. His service, preserved in the records of the National Archives and Records Administration, places him among those who helped secure American independence. In addition to his military duties, Burnett contributed by providing food for a hospital at the Henry County

he Story t III

Courthouse in Virginia, an often overlooked but critical role in sustaining the Revolutionary cause.

Yet, if Burnett's service to his country is clear, the details of his life are anything but. Genealogists have long wrestled with the Burnett family tree, where generation after generation reused the same names. The confusion became so tangled that even early researchers, and those responsible for his tombstone, mistakenly merged the identities of multiple Jeremiah Burnetts into one. It wasn't until his great-granddaughter, June Baldwin Bork, undertook an extensive study in her three-volume work *The Burnetts and Their Connections* that some clarity began to emerge.

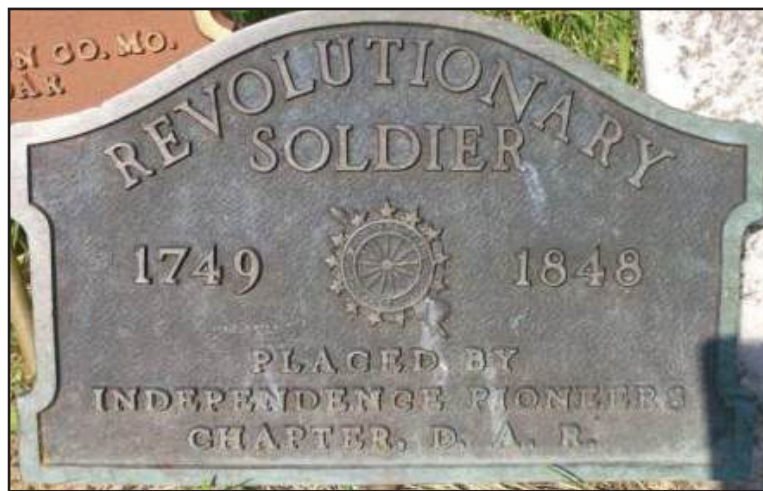
According to her research, Jeremiah Burnett III, sometimes listed as Jeremiah "Santee" Burnett, was the son of Jeremiah Burnett II and Elizabeth Ester Claybrook. He married Epiphania "Effie" Crowley around 1790, and together they raised a large family of eight children, although some records say they had 13 children. Their descendants would eventually spread across Missouri, Iowa and beyond, helping to shape

communities across the Midwest. After Effie's death, Burnett remarried Jane Turner, though the couple had no children together.

By the early 19th century, the young United States was pushing westward, and the Burnett family joined that migration. Around 1820, following the death of his second wife, Jeremiah and several family members left Virginia behind for the promise of new land in Missouri. It was a journey shared by countless families of the era, one that transformed the American landscape and brought Revolutionary War veterans like Burnett into the nation's frontier communities.

Burnett spent his final years in what would

become Blue Springs, Missouri, where he died on June 28, 1848. His long life, nearly a century by some accounts, spanned from the colonial period through the Revolutionary War and into the expansion of the American frontier. It is a lifespan that mirrors the nation's own evolution.



Today, his grave stands as a quiet but powerful reminder of that history. Visitors to Blue Springs Cemetery may pass by without realizing the significance of the name etched in stone. But beneath it rests a man who witnessed the birth of a nation and helped carry its ideals westward.

In a city shaped by growth and progress, Jeremiah Burnett III offers a tangible link to America's earliest chapter, a reminder that even in local places, national history runs deep.

Blue Springs Eaglets Hatch; Given Names

Scan to view
the livestream



Throughout the month of March, everyone watched with bated breath to see whether or not our Blue Springs eagle friends, Freedom and Liberty, would lay any eggs. Fortunately, they laid three, and the excitement began to build waiting for the first egg to hatch.

The first of the three eaglets did hatch, marking an exciting moment for our community and for the growing eagle family.

Soon after, the second eaglet hatched, but it struggled from the beginning and unfortunately perished. That same day, the third eaglet hatched.

We know many in our community have been watching and rooting for all three, and this loss can be difficult to see. While heartbreaking, it's important to understand that this is a natural part of life in the wild. Factors like food availability, weather and natural competition in the nest all play a role in an eaglet's survival.

Nothing was done wrong, this is simply how nature works. By sharing this journey, our goal has always been to provide an honest look at wildlife, including both the joyful and the challenging moments.

Over the last few months, we've have been watching the two eaglets grow quickly while



Photo by Tim Kahmann

Freedom and Liberty continue to feed and protect them. The two surviving eaglets were named through a social media survey. People were able to choose from six sets of two names over the period of one week. The winning names for the eaglets are Honor and Valor.

It's a special reminder of the strength and resilience that the bald eagle represents, especially meaningful as our nation prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday.

5 QUESTIONS WITH...

Raquel Stark, Administrative Assistant, Police Administration



HIGH

Raquel has been employed with the City of Blue Springs for 23 years. She is married to Roger, and together they have one son, Quade, who is a Sophomore at Grain Valley High School. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with family, thrifting and attending sporting events.

1 **What's a fun fact your coworkers might not know about you?**

My nickname my entire life, since the day I was born, has been "Rocky".

2 **What's the best concert or event you've attended?**

It's a tie between an Imagine Dragons featuring Macklemore concert and a Harlem Globetrotters game.

3 **How would you like to be remembered by your colleagues?**

I want to be remembered as someone who showed up every day ready to help and was cheerful. I truly believe people feed off each other, so I do my best to lift others up, keep things upbeat and help create a positive work environment.

4 **If you could switch jobs with anyone in the City for a day, who would it be and why?**

I would be interested in a job shadowing opportunity with someone from Public Works. I would like to learn how to operate a snowplow and learn how to complete asphalt work.

5 **What's your favorite Blue Springs event or tradition?**

I absolutely LOVE the North Pole Trail of Lights at Rotary Park—what a fantastic addition for everyone in Blue Springs and surrounding community members to enjoy! My family and friends truly enjoy the ambiance (the background music is such a great touch) and the new Mayor's animated Christmas tree is a highlight. The fact that it's a free event makes it accessible for everyone, and that's fabulous! I feel it really brings so much joy to all who visit. I also really appreciate that it stays open for a while after Christmas.

America's 250th Birthday Celebration Concert

The Heritage Philharmonic
7 p.m., Sunday, June 28
Rotary Park



BLUE SPRINGS
MISSOURI