

# THREE Questions for Johnson County Government employees



Joe Yelton, Analytical Chemist,  
Johnson County Wastewater

*Joe Yelton is an analytical chemist for Johnson County Wastewater. He has worked for the County for 16 years. In 2013, Johnson County Wastewater treated 17.5 billion gallons of wastewater, enough to fill the Sprint Center 84 times.*

## **How does your work improve the lives of Johnson County residents?**

Our data is used to protect public health and the environment. We determine if public beaches are safe for swimming and private wells are safe for drinking. We certify that wastewater is properly treated before being discharged to JoCo streams.

## **What do you like best about your job?**

I enjoy the variety of work, the technical challenges and knowing that what I do serves an important role in protecting the environment.

## **How do you protect aquatic life in Johnson County?**

We provide chemical and microbiological data which supports wastewater treatment facilities operated by Johnson County Wastewater. We also monitor stormwater runoff and stream water quality.



Gale Wash, Emergency  
Communications Specialist I,  
Johnson County Emergency  
Management and  
Communications

*Gale Wash has been an employee of the Johnson County Department of Emergency Management and Communications for 11 years, where she receives emergency calls from the public requesting fire or EMS services.*

## **How do you help callers calm down during an emergency?**

Depends on where they are. If they are not as calm as I need them to be then I will raise my tone and say “listen,” a word that draws their attention to me rather than the emergency they are in.

## **What is one thing you would want the public to know about your job?**

That we are going to walk you through it. When you call just make sure you know where you’re at and that you’re in a calm state of mind that will allow you to answer questions. We are all equipped with the same skills, compassion, love and understanding.

## **What is your fondest memory of the job?**

Every day is a fond memory because every day I have the ability to help someone. Every day I make a difference and I like looking back at that.



Robert White, Senior Heavy  
Equipment Operator,  
Public Works Department

*Robert White, a County employee for nine years, clears the roads from snow and ice, in addition to maintaining and keeping them in good condition.*

## **What’s the most difficult part of the job?**

I plow on the night shift, so it’s different from my normal shift and adjusting can be difficult. Also, the work is demanding — you really have to pay attention all the time as the unincorporated County does not have shoulders, street lights, or traffic signals. It’s not like the cities where you have these markers to help guide you. We work 12-hour shifts, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. so by the end of the shift you are really exhausted and drained.

## **How many miles do you plow in an average snowfall year?**

When plowing on our routes we plow about 50 miles, but we will end up driving over a hundred miles in the twelve hour shift.

## **What do you do during the rest of the year, when it is not snowing?**

I build bridges, reinforced concrete boxes, and am on the bridge crew which maintains the roads and bridges.