



JOC



THE JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT MAGAZINE

FALL 2014

INNOVATING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

SCHOOL LUNCH GOES GREEN

20 TIPS FOR A BRIGHTER HOLIDAY SEASON



THE JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT MAGAZINE

JOCO Magazine, a publication produced by Johnson County Government, is mailed to every resident in Johnson County, Kansas, three times per year.

Mission: JOCO Magazine is dedicated to publishing information that informs residents about County services and finances, as well as issues that may impact the quality of life.

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Striving for better ways to serve you

Some might not think the words “innovation” and “government” go hand-in-hand. But they do in Johnson County. You’ll find innovation throughout our organization. Whether it’s harnessing the latest technologies, collaborating with new partners or simply serving residents more efficiently, we strive for constant improvement in the way we offer programs and services to Johnson County’s 560,000 residents.

There are many examples of how technology allows us to innovate new and better ways to provide services. Our website **My Resource Connection** (myresourceconnection.org) connects individuals in need to multiple resources across the region. That site also allows case managers throughout our organization to work collectively and better serve clients receiving services from more than one department or agency. Our new website, **jocogov.org**, was built to be **responsive**, which makes it easy to navigate no matter the size of the screen used for viewing. That’s very innovative for local government.

Innovation can also be found in collaboration. For instance, **Johnson County Transit** and the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority are discussing a proposed management contract plan. Why? To look past our borders and improve public transportation throughout the region. Johnson County participates in a collaborative effort called **Core4** with Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Mo., and Jackson County. Softening the boundaries between counties and cities results in innovations like tax reciprocity, where one jurisdiction will no longer award a contract to a vendor behind on paying taxes in another jurisdiction.

Innovation allows us to improve the lives of our residents every day. Our **Health Home** initiative, a collaboration between the Department of Health and Environment, the Mental Health Center, and Developmental Supports is a new way that we can provide person-centered, coordinated care that focuses on the mind and the body. This

winter, Public Works’ **fleet of snow plows** will be more efficient than ever at clearing the roads thanks to a new satellite system. Johnson County **Project SEARCH** is a new program that places those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in internships at the County.

In this issue of *JOCO Magazine*, we explore the innovations of Johnson County’s **criminal justice system**, and how our use of data and outcome measurements helps put “the right person in the right bed for the right amount of time.” The Justice Management Institute selected Johnson County as **one of only eight test sites in the nation** for a study on the characteristics of a “Highly Functioning Criminal Justice System.”

Also in this issue our Board of County Commissioners discuss new programs or services from 2014 they are most excited about. We look forward to 2015 and the innovations that will come in the New Year to better serve you.

Ed Eilert
Chairman
Board of County Commissioners



Hannes Zacharias
County Manager



Johnson County Elected Officials

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- James P. Allen, District 2
- Steven C. Klika, District 3
- Jason Osterhaus, District 4
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Ways to Engage with JoCo

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Visit jocogov.org to:

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By Email
Find department directory at www.jocogov.org/departments
Send questions about this publication to: jocomag@jocogov.org

ON THE COVER: Innovation lives in every square inch of some of Johnson County Government's newer structures which combine the perfect balance of usability, sustainability and beauty. The cover features the Sunset Drive Office Building, our County's first LEED Gold certified building. The photo above is our multi-award winning Justice Annex, a Silver LEED certified building. Sustainable building has saved Johnson County more than \$3 million since 2006.

In short

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

BOCC gives the green light for transit management consolidation

On Thursday, September 25, the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners gave approval for Johnson County and the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority to pursue a cooperative agreement that would lead to the **management consolidation of Johnson County Transit**.

The management consolidation would result in an approximate savings of \$450,000 to \$510,000 for Johnson County.

New motor vehicle fee coming soon for walk-in tag renewals

Beginning January 1, 2015, residents who renew vehicles in person at the Mission Motor Vehicle Office, 6000 Lamar, or Olathe Motor Vehicle Office, 782 N. Ridgeview Road, will be charged an **additional fee of \$5** for each vehicle tag renewal. Renew your vehicle(s) online at kswebtags.org or by mail to avoid paying the additional \$5 fee per vehicle. **The additional fee applies only to in-person renewal transactions.**

BOCC adopts FY 2015 budget

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted the FY 2015 budget for Johnson County with a constant mill levy of 23.247 mills. **Johnson County's mill levy has remained stable since 2006.**

The 2015 adopted budget totals approximately \$870.1 million with estimated expenditures at slightly more than \$696.1 million and \$174.0 million in reserves to maintain the programs and services administered by Johnson County Government's 32 departments, offices and agencies.

Join the food movement in Johnson County

Your voice is needed to **advance a sustainable food system** in Johnson County. If you have grown, harvested, processed, transported, marketed, disposed of, or eaten food, you are a part of the food system.

Johnson County Government is forming a food policy council and your input is important to us. Join the conversation by attending a community forum (watch for these in early 2015). Call Renee Bryant at 913-477-8325 or e-mail Renee.Bryant@jocogov.org for more information on how to get involved.

New Mental Health Center director appointed

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners, acting as the Johnson County Mental Health Center (MHC) governing board, approved the appointment of **Tim DeWeese as the Johnson County MHC director**, effective September 28.

DeWeese has a long tenure with the Johnson County MHC. He most recently spent the past 20 months as director of Clinical Services, overseeing the largest operating division of the MHC.

Kudos!

JCW recognized with outstanding compliance awards

In July, Johnson County Wastewater was recognized by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) for its **outstanding compliance records** in the 2013 calendar year and was presented with two Platinum Awards. In total, JCW earned six NACWA awards.

Elections Office wins national best practices award for second straight year

In its ongoing embrace of using new technology, the Johnson County Election Office recently won The Minute Man Award from the National Association of Election Officials **for the second year in a row**. The award recognized an innovative practice called "iPad, iRegister" that grew out of a request for help from the Johnson County League of Women Voters in its efforts to register new citizens immediately after their naturalization ceremony at the Federal Courthouse in downtown Kansas City, Kan.



Residents at the Adult Residential Center harvested a bounty of fresh produce—some for the residents of the 398 bed program for felony probationers, while more than 1,000 pounds was donated to SAFEHOME, a Johnson County shelter for victims of domestic violence.

With a history of serving an important role during World War II, today Johnson County's aviation system contributes \$2 billion annually to the local economy. Johnson County holds the unique position of being the only Kansas county to maintain two general aviation airports: The Johnson County Executive Airport (151st Street and Pflumm Road between Olathe and Overland Park) and New Century AirCenter (near Gardner at 175th Street and Interstate 35.)

Both locations are owned and operated by the Johnson County Airport Commission (JCAC), established by the Johnson County Board of Commissioners in 1967 to support the airports' continued growth. Even though the airports are among the busiest in the state, neither receives any funding from County taxpayers. They remain entirely self-sufficient with income from their business operations, including building and land rent, rental rates for hangars, and a fuel flowage rate, which provides the airport with 10 cents per gallon of aviation fuel sold.



Johnson County airports help community soar

A military heritage: yesterday and today

Many will tie the name Sgt. Spencer Duncan of Olathe to New Century. He was one of 30 servicemen who lost their lives in August 2011 in the single deadliest incident in the history of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The Reserves' Bravo Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, which operates 16 Chinook helicopters, is one of the U.S. Army aviation units supported by the AirCenter.

The military heritage of Johnson County's aviation center goes back more than 70 years. During World War II, the New Century AirCenter was the Olathe Naval Air Station. The base served as a refueling point for Naval planes that transported officers, a training facility for Naval Air Cadets, and home to about 1,000 service personnel. The Johnson County Executive Airport also has military roots, serving as a Naval auxiliary field during World War II. "Being located on a former military base

provides us with developable acreage, which enables us to focus on business development," said Colin McKee, executive director of the Johnson County Airport Commission.



New Century brings big business to Southwest Johnson County

Providing easy access to an airport and the interstate highway system in the middle of the country is appealing enough to businesses. But at New Century, the JCAC goes the extra mile — actually, six of them

— maintaining a short line railroad with more than six miles of track that provides direct rail service connections to the BSNF mainline in Gardner for seven international manufacturing tenants in the business park.

"Operating a rail service is very unique to Johnson County," McKee said. "There are two other airports that I know of in the country that have that. Being able to offer rail service and easy highway access along with the airport makes the AirCenter a great location for businesses."

As one of the few places in the United States where air, rail, and road come together, New Century AirCenter and Business Park contributes to the continued rapid growth of southwest Johnson County. The fifth-busiest airport in Kansas sits on more than 2,500 acres and is supported by a 7,300-foot runway monitored by a federal air traffic control tower.

New Century Business Park is home to 64 companies and organizations, including leaders in the fields of telecommunications, food processing, manufacturing, printing,



Johnson County Executive Airport

About eight miles northeast, the Johnson County Executive Airport is the third busiest airport in Kansas; it saw 51,337 aircraft operations in 2013. It sits on nearly 600 acres of land with a 4,100-foot runway and a federal air traffic control tower. An interesting fact: in 1967, the County purchased the Olathe Airport (now Executive Airport) from the city of Olathe for *one dollar*.

and aviation products. Many businesses, including CenturyLink, Unilever Bestfoods, Garmin, and Honeywell, have made major investments in facilities at New Century.

The New Century plant is in close proximity to key agricultural ingredient producers and is also a central location for product distribution. Unilever is creating 100 jobs since it announced the plant expansion in 2013, and is finishing up a \$152.5 million construction project with plans for future expansion.

“Unilever’s spreads manufacturing plant location at the New Century AirCenter has allowed us to employ a ‘total-system approach’ which optimizes the positive economic, environmental and social benefits of the AirCenter location,” said Mike Smith, Unilever factory director at New Century.

At both airports, aviation-related businesses in operation include fuel services, aircraft parking, hangar storage, aircraft maintenance, aircraft rental, charter flights, flight training, and aircraft sales. In addition to business activity and general aviation operations, Executive Airport supports the Civil Air Patrol and is home to KMBC TV-9’s news helicopter.

“Having two airports is beneficial to Johnson County,” McKee said. “Executive Airport is more convenient for corporations on the east side of the County, and with two locations we are able to hangar more aircraft and handle more air traffic.”

Contributing to the County

Back out at New Century, you’ll find many other examples of ways the JCAC

“Being able to offer rail service and easy highway access along with the airport makes the AirCenter a great location for businesses.”

contributes to the community, along with signs of County collaboration. JCAC provides and maintains a water distribution center that distributes approximately 200 million gallons annually to resident businesses, the Woodstone Apartment complex, the Department of Correction’s New Century campus, and the Fred Allenbrand Justice Center.

Johnson County Wastewater provides wastewater services to the businesses from its plant located on the premises. Fire District #1 provides on-field aircraft rescue and fire-fighting capabilities. And the Park and Recreation District operates the New Century Field House, a premier indoor sports and multi-use facility that offers a wide assortment of programs and activities for all ages and interests, as well as spaces that can be reserved for meetings and special occasions. ☀️



WEB EXTRA For more great photos of planes, trains and helicopters, visit www.jocogov.org/jocomag, where you’ll also find a listing of businesses at both airports and the business park.

School children pitch in to make lunchtime greener

Green Business Program works to increase recycling at local schools and businesses

Lunch hour in a school cafeteria is a cacophony of chattering children rushing to fit in some social time between bites. Usually, the last thing on their minds is reducing waste, but at Mission Trail Elementary, in the Blue Valley School District, waste reduction has become the focus of lunch hour.

Working in close partnership with the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (DHE) Green Business Program, students and staff at Mission Trail have reduced their lunchtime trash by more than 80 percent through composting and recycling since the opening of the 2014 school year.

“At first, it seemed like such a big task that I struggled to see how it would work,” said Debbie Bond, Mission Trail Elementary principal. “But when the County came in, it was so much easier than I thought it would be.”

The vision for cafeteria waste diversion started with one concerned parent, Gareth Matthews. He wanted his children to learn about composting and recycling at school and saw an opportunity in the cafeteria. He enlisted the expertise of DHE staff, and the vision quickly became a reality. The process took several weeks of close coordination between the principal, school cafeteria and janitorial staff, the composting vendor (Missouri Organic Recycling), and it required the commitment of students. The group came up with a system to separate out food for compost, materials for recycling, and determined what would go into the trash.

“I’d heard about a similar project at a Shawnee Mission school, and wanted to see if it could be done here,” Matthews said. “When I reached out to the County, they rolled up their sleeves and gave great comfort that it could be done.”

DHE staff helped the school to identify a vendor for commercial food composting, worked with cafeteria staff to transition



The program offers waste reduction consultation, free of charge, to County businesses and community organizations. Services include:

- Free walk-throughs of facilities, regardless of size, to evaluate handling of waste
- Recommendations and resources specifically tailored for each business’ waste stream
- Continuous support throughout the implementation of new recycling programs
- Education and outreach programs for employees and participants
- Annual Green Business Award eligibility for participating business and school partners.

“You can’t deny that the world is a better place with trash diverted rather than in a landfill.”

to the new composting system, and educated the students about which lunch items and packaging goes in the designated bins for compost, recycling and trash. County staff also assisted with waste analyses before and after rollout to measure results.

“This project progressed easier than expected. The passion from the administration, staff, volunteers, and students really helped this project move along very quickly and smoothly,” said Craig Wood, DHE solid waste management coordinator. “The students picked up the concepts and process really fast. They were doing everything themselves a week after we started.”

The Department of Health and Environment’s Green Business Program has helped several schools and businesses achieve similar success.

Over the past year, the Green Business Program has assisted schools, churches, hospitals, apartment complexes, a moving company and an industrial manufacturer — generally one per month. The primary goals of the program are to promote sustainable practices, minimize the use of hazardous materials, improve energy efficiency, facilitate water conservation, and minimize waste through reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and composting.

Any Johnson County business, school or organization is encouraged to go green and reduce its environmental impact.

“It was great to see everyone working together and our kids and parents so involved,” Bond said. “And you can’t deny that the world is better with trash diverted rather than in a landfill.” ☀️

WEB EXTRA Visit www.jocogov.org/jocomag for additional photos from Mission Trail Elementary, and to learn how your business or organization can schedule a waste walkthrough.



Which new programs and projects from 2014 are you most excited about?



“Johnson County is a host for Project SEARCH, a program that helps young adults with developmental disabilities develop the skills necessary to join the workforce. Jobs, especially for residents with special needs, are vital to our community!”

Chairman Ed Eilert



“This fall, we’ll release a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory update in collaboration with Kansas City, Mo. The study shows that our work is producing reductions in carbon emissions and that we should increase our efforts.”

First District Commissioner C. Edward Peterson



“Johnson County launched a new website in 2014 based on resident input that uses responsive design, so it works well on a desktop, tablet, and smartphone. That technology is very innovative for local government.”

Second District Commissioner James P. Allen



“A cooperative agreement is nearing completion for management consolidation of Johnson County Transit with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, resulting in an approximate savings of \$500,000 for Johnson County.”

Third District Commissioner Steven C. Klika



“The Johnson County Election Office began using a ballot on demand system in 2014 that allows election staff to print ballots in real time to be more responsive to voters and reduce costs.”

Fourth District Commissioner Jason Osterhaus



“Johnson County Transit (JCT) began 2014 with new contract partners 10-10 Taxi, a local cab company, and Reveal Management Services, another locally-based real-time dispatching service. Those new partners help JCT offer higher levels of efficiency at a lower cost to all JCT Special Edition riders.”

Fifth District Commissioner Michael Ashcraft



Public Works has gone hi-tech with a new GPS and Automatic Vehicle Location system using satellite technology. The system features live tracking of vehicles at work sites, including its fleet of snow plows during the winter.

Sixth District Commissioner John Toplikar

at work

with the Board of County Commissioners

On average, more than 90 **proclamations** are issued annually during the weekly meetings of the Board of County Commissioners.

A proclamation is an official document to express a formal position, pronouncement, or statement of interest endorsed by the Board. They are used to recognize, bring community attention to, or observe a special day, week, or month.

The Board also issues Certificates of Merit to recognize outstanding achievements by County residents and County employees.

All requests for proclamations or certificates must be submitted to the Board’s office in writing by e-mail at least three weeks in advance. Requests should include:

- Suggested language and background information
- Date to be proclaimed
- Contact person

If requested, the proclamation may be presented in person during the Board’s business sessions, or it is mailed and can be picked up from the Board’s office.

Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are issued at the Board’s discretion. These documents are ceremonial and not legally binding.

Innovations strive to keep justice in balance

Programs hold
offenders
accountable
without bailing
out on public
safety



Lisa* looks like any working mother you might encounter. She works in logistics for a Kansas City-area company, volunteers at her daughter’s elementary school and is active in church. And 99 percent of the people Lisa encounters each day have no idea that she is in Johnson County pretrial services, waiting for the outcome of her court case after an arrest on a drug distribution charge.

In many jurisdictions, Lisa would most likely have waited in jail. Out of the 12 million people booked into jails across the nation each year, 60 to 70 percent are pretrial defendants who haven’t been convicted, are waiting for a verdict and, if found guilty, a sentence. In many of those cases they remain behind bars because they can’t afford to post a money bond. In Johnson County the pretrial population hovers around 70 percent of the total jail population.

“The current pretrial system relies heavily on a money-based bail system, making the

inability to post bail the underlying reason for remaining in jail, versus posing a safety risk to the community or being at risk for missing court appearances,” said Risë Haneberg, criminal justice coordinator for Johnson County. “Research shows that those who could have been safely released to the community while awaiting a trial outcome, but stayed in jail were more likely sentenced to jail or prison, serve longer sentences, or commit a future crime.” These inmates were also more likely to lose their jobs and family support.

In 2008, the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners approved the creation of the Criminal Justice Advisory Council (CJAC) and created the position of criminal justice coordinator, which Haneberg has held to date. The work of CJAC has included the Justice and Mental Health Intercept Project, Second Chance Reentry, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, and was designated as one of the first local Justice Reinvestment Initiative sites by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The right person in the right bed for the right amount of time

The Justice Reinvestment work has led to the designation of five strategies to address jail bed use, including the pretrial project. The work started with the development of a data-based pretrial risk assessment tool, which Johnson County is currently piloting. Technical support has been provided through collaboration between the Pretrial Justice Institute and Dr. Alex Holsinger, professor in the University of Missouri-Kansas City Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology.

“The stakeholders in Johnson County’s criminal justice system reached consensus that decisions on pretrial incarceration need to be made based on validated actuarial risk prediction tools, similar to the automobile insurance industry,” said Dr. Holsinger. “Johnson County is on the leading edge of utilizing science and data to determine who, during the pretrial

phase, is high-risk for failing to appear in court or committing another crime, and who should be allowed to continue working, living in the home and remain a productive member of society.”

A primary stakeholder is Judge Daniel W. Vokins. “At the pretrial stage, the Court must weigh several factors when determining the appropriate bond for an individual charged with a crime. First, we cannot forget there is a Constitutional presumption that every defendant is presumed innocent, until he or she is found guilty. The second factor to consider is if the defendant will appear in court as ordered. Finally, public safety is a significant concern for judges and cannot be ignored. It is not an easy task to balance all of these considerations.” said Judge Vokins. “That is why this data is important. It provides some evidence-based information about an individual so we can do a better job at setting bond. This tool never takes away the Court’s discretion to set a bond at any amount for various factors. Our goal is to be more cognizant of how and why we set the types of bonds for each defendant.”

Once released, Johnson County Court Services provides supervision based on risk level that may include house arrest, 24-hour alcohol detection and drug testing, as well as referral to mental health and substance abuse services. Most defendants, once convicted, will be ordered to probation supervision. This strategy starts the interventions at an earlier point, many times when defendants are open to making changes.

Innovation in corrections

On a September evening, 17-year-old Rodolfo “Rayjay” Castillo sits next to his mother at a table with seven other teenagers accompanied by a parent. They’re at the Olathe Millcreek Center, an older building that used to be a high school and now houses the Evening Reporting Center (ERC). Rayjay played some basketball, had dinner with the rest of that night’s attendees, and participated in group counseling facilitated by staff from The Gillis Center.



Assessment Officer Curtis Barnes conducts a pretrial screening with an inmate.

Opened in June 2014, the ERC provides supervision from 3:30 to 8:30 p.m., four days a week. Programming consists of physical activity, educational opportunities, family-based programming, substance abuse curriculum, and more. Coupled with house arrest, it allows for juveniles

clients who had violated probation or house arrest. It’s the latest innovation born from the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).

JDAI aims to decrease the number of youth unnecessarily or inappropriately

“Our study of Johnson County is part of a groundbreaking new effort to start focusing on what the justice system of the future could look like.”

to remain in their home rather than be in detention. “I like the food and the structure.” said Rayjay, who is waiting for a November court date on a drug charge. “We come in, play some basketball, and talk about how to change our thinking and make better choices.”

Johnson County’s ERC—the first in Kansas—came about through community collaboration between Johnson County Court Services, the Department of Corrections, and other County departments and agencies, along with the faith-based community, Olathe School District, and other partners. All joined forces to fill an existing void for nonviolent juvenile

detained, and reduce the number of youth who fail to appear in court or re-offend pending adjudication. “Through our participation in the data-driven JDAI process, we are creating system improvements that help us find alternatives to secure detention for juveniles,” said Betsy Gillespie, director of the Johnson County Department of Corrections. “Research has shown that even one night in a juvenile detention facility can create harm for youth.”

... Continued on page 12



Judge Daniel W. Vokins, pictured with his assistant Jennifer Smith, weighs many factors when setting bond for individuals charged with crimes.

WEB EXTRA Visit jocogov.org/jocomag to see what else is being said about Johnson County's criminal justice system.

The use of data and outcome measurement is a guiding principle in the work of implementing effective corrections programming for juveniles *and* adults.

“Gone are the days of implementing feel good programs,” said Haneberg. “Only programs that demonstrate success are implemented.” Johnson County’s data-informed decision making is made possible by a state-of-the-art Justice Information Management System. The goal is to increase offender success, which means decreasing recidivism and creating safety. Johnson County programs that do this include the Adult Residential Center (a 398-bed, community-based program that provides structure for felony probationers), the Therapeutic Community (a six-month inpatient drug treatment program), house

arrest, and work release. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a core component of the programming.

Recognition for innovation—nationally and closer to home

Recently, the John and Catherine MacArthur Foundation announced a major project to study the characteristics of a “Highly Functioning Criminal Justice System.” Johnson County was selected as one of eight sites for this study. The project is facilitated by the Justice Management Institute.

“Our study of Johnson County is part of a groundbreaking new effort to start focusing on what the justice system of the

future could look like and how counties can make significant improvements, not only in the justice process to ensure greater fairness and equity, but also in outcomes related to public safety,” said M. Elaine Borakove, president, The Justice Management Institute.

Rayjay’s mom, Rose, feels that Johnson County offers options for juveniles that allow them to stay in school and keep occupied while waiting for their outcomes. “We’ll do whatever it takes to keep him out of jail,” she said.

As for Lisa, she appreciates how Johnson County’s innovative criminal justice system allowed her to keep being a mom and working her job while her case is pending. “Pretrial supervision is what you make of it. I think it’s a blessing,” she said. “I’m thankful that I can work hard, pay my taxes, take care of my daughter and live like a normal citizen. It’s a good feeling.” 🌟

**This name has been changed to protect identity.*

JoCo justice innovations leader set to retire

Risë Haneberg started her career as a juvenile probation officer in 1979. After nearly 30 years with Johnson County Court Services, including 13 years as chief, Haneberg accepted her role as the first criminal justice coordinator for Johnson County. The position did not come with a solid job description; the Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution calling for the study and implementation of effective alternatives to incarceration.

“The timing could not have been better. Research in the criminal justice arena has been at an all-time high. We’ve gained access to grant funding and technical assistance to guide our work as we strive to make Johnson County the best at providing a safe community, while improving offender success and reducing recidivism,” Haneberg said. “Criminal justice has become very science-based and we no longer rely on gut instincts alone, as I did 36 years ago when I started.”

Haneberg recently announced her retirement and will leave Johnson County. “Although not every meeting has been easy and there have been barriers to change, we have an awesome group of justice leaders, community providers and great support from our commissioners and county management that has made this a once-in-a-lifetime career experience.”

Move to the head of the class with the Library's help

Johnson County Library (JCL) is the place to go for homework help.

Librarians and specialists at Johnson County Library are always available to assist students of all ages with their assignments by helping them find books, eBooks, online articles or other resources.

Librarians have created booklists on a variety of popular topics and at different grade levels. You can find these lists in the JCL catalog at www.jocolibrary.org/kids and request to have the books sent to your neighborhood library.

Need more help? Ask a coach

Trained homework help coaches are available at the Central Resource Library, 9875 West 87th Street, Overland Park, from 4 to 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday during the school year. This increasingly popular service guides students toward completing individual projects, and advises them on how to get organized to approach and understand future assignments.

Students at all grade levels are welcome to use the service; most current participants are elementary- through middle school-aged.

According to Barbara Brand, youth services manager at JCL, higher level math is one of the most tutored subjects. Homework help coaches use library books and materials as necessary, and have handy computer access to databases of newspaper and magazine articles.

Coaches can also connect students to the very popular "Live Homework Help" resource from Tutor.com. This free, live,



A Johnson County mom and her two high schoolers find successful help on Tutor.com at Blue Valley Neighborhood Library.

online tutoring service is available 4-11 p.m., seven days per week.

"Live Homework Help" tutors help with all subjects and grade levels. Tutor.com users can also request Spanish-speaking tutors. Students can save their online sessions for future referral and can request a favorite tutor. Even college students can take advantage of this service! Tutors will also assist adults with essays and resume writing, through an online submission module with 24-hour turn-around service.

Naturally, there's an app for that

Tutor.com To Go™ is the mobile companion for Tutor.com and is available for use on IOS (iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch) and Android devices.

All that's necessary to use these services: a free JCL Card and PIN. Visit any

neighborhood library with a proof of ID and address verification. A parent or legal guardian must sign the application for students under age 16.

More information about getting a library card can be found on the library website at www.jocolibrary.org/librarycard. Once a student has a library card, all Tutor.com services are available through the JCL website: www.jocolibrary.org/homework. There, users can also learn how to download eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, or eMusic to a personal reading device, and even register for an online class.

Homework coaches and Live Homework Help from Tutor.com are supported through the Johnson County Library Foundation. ☀️

WEB EXTRA

Visit jocolibrary.org/elibrary/elearning to find out more about Tutor.com and a whole bunch of other online learning resources. Want to learn more about computer software, brush up on your job hunting skills, or learn a new language — all from the comfort of your computer? This is the place for you.

Stilwell keeps unique lifestyle on track

Close-knit community preserves past, enjoys present, eyes future in shared plan

“Quiet darkness.”

Those two words sum up why people love living in the Stilwell area of unincorporated southeast Johnson County, according to resident Pastor Dave Richardson.

The arrival of the train established Stilwell in 1886. The trains still go through Stilwell, creating one of the area’s only sources of atmospheric noise. That’s unless you count the sounds of Mother Nature.

“You can hear coyotes howling, Canadian geese honking, bull frogs singing, cicadas chirping, owls hooting, and under the right circumstances, snowflakes falling. Yes, you

residents together and empowered local groups to coordinate one community event per year. Annual activities include July 4th parades and fireworks, “Trunk-or-Treat” in October, Breakfast with Santa, a

“Stilwell’s history and lifestyle are unique to the County, and the residents here are proud of that.”

community-wide garage sale, and Easter egg hunts. Soon, the community will come together in its own park.

together to solidify the community goals and objectives in the Stilwell Community Plan. The process included focus groups, public meetings, and collaboration between Aubry Township officials, the SCO, the Johnson County Planning Commission, Johnson County’s Board of County Commissioners and Planning Department.

This process resulted in a document focused on a six-square mile Planning Area, capturing its heritage, and objectives for reaching goals such as preserving the sense of community, creating public gathering spaces and protecting the environment. The plan even includes an objective for businesses and residents to



The first three photos from the left were taken by theRYEstudio, located in Stilwell. On the far right, District Three Commissioner Steve Klika speaks to Stilwell area residents during the Stilwell Community Plan process.

seriously can,” said Pastor Richardson. Stilwell isn’t a city, a town or a suburb. It has no municipal government, no chamber of commerce, and no homeowners association. It does have six churches, a post office (established in 1888), an elementary school, a fire station and, what some might call its biggest asset, a community of passionate people who want to preserve a certain way of life.

One organization that harnessed this passion is the Stilwell Community Organization (SCO). Established in 1968, the SCO is run by a volunteer board of directors and represents a community of nearly 5,500 residents.

“We are one community,” said SCO president Ken Klingensmith, who rallied

In June, the Johnson County Park and Recreation Department decided to construct the 55-acre Stilwell Community Park near 207th Street and Metcalf. The SCO is leading the charge on a campaign to secure some of the funding needed to break ground. The new park was announced to the community during this year’s July 4th parade via a banner on a bulldozer, ridden by Johnson County District Three Commissioner Steve Klika.

“The people of the Stilwell area have come together to control their destiny,” said Commissioner Klika. “They are committed to maintaining their identity while planning for future development.”

In 2013, the Aubry-Oxford Consolidated Zoning Board brought several groups

limit their outdoor lighting to protect what Pastor Richardson describes as the ability to see “thousands of stars, shooting stars and comets and other celestial phenomena.”

“The community of Stilwell predates many of the cities in Johnson County, said Darrel Dougan, a longtime resident. “Stilwell’s history and lifestyle are unique to the County and the residents here are proud of that.” 🌻

WEB EXTRA Tell us about a Johnson County community to profile in a future issue of JOCO Magazine by emailing us at jocomag@jocogov.org.

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?

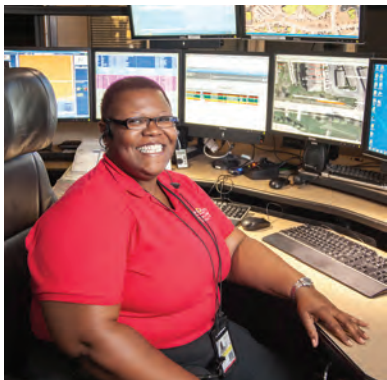
Our data is used to protect public health and the environment. We determine if public beaches are safe for swimming and private wells are safe for drinking. We certify that wastewater is properly treated before being discharged to JoCo streams.

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.



Making spirits **bright**

Johnson County's guide to a happy holiday season

Most families don't have a perfect holiday season, but this advice from the Department of Human Services, Johnson County K-State Research and Extension Office, and the Johnson County Mental Health Center can reduce both emotional and financial stress, and help with food preparation. Make family memories by helping other JoCo residents, or by enjoying a Johnson County-hosted event.

Reduce stress

Remember that things don't have to be perfect and problems don't equal disaster. Think about previous holidays and decide what was most important. Use those events to set reasonable expectations this year.

- Plan and work ahead as much as possible.
- Look at alternatives. Instead of a large family dinner at home, consider going out to dinner so that no one has to worry about cooking or cleanup.
- Take care of yourself. Exercise, eat wisely, moderate or eliminate use of caffeine, alcohol and nicotine. Reward yourself for completing tasks and schedule time to relax.

Avoid overspending

- Set a budget for the holidays and stick to it.

- Try drawing names in the family and setting dollar limits.
- Replace excessive spending with new traditions, and non-material giving.
- Shop from a list with a few options for each person. Ask for ideas if you aren't sure what would be appreciated. A list of unique gift ideas at different price points can be found at www.jocogov.org/jocomag.
- Keep in mind that baking, sewing, and crafts can cost just as much as store-bought gifts and can take more time.

Help others

- Decorate bags or make crafts for homebound seniors who receive hot, nutritious meals five days per week from Meals on Wheels. For more information, call 913-715-8859 or email HS-volunteer@jocogov.org
- The Meals on Wheels and Catch-a-Ride programs need volunteers to deliver

meals or provide transportation to seniors, people with disabilities, and those with no means of transportation. To learn more call 913-715-8859 or email HS-volunteer@jocogov.org.

- Whether it's food for one of the six County-run food pantries, or commodities for the Meals on Wheels Share the Love event, each donation will make the holiday season a little brighter for Johnson County residents served by the Department of Human Services.
- Ernie Miller Nature Center always needs supplies for the animals at the center and the wild animals that use the feeders. Consider donating clear critter totes/pet keeper boxes with lids; pinewood shavings; suet cakes and dried seed corn on the cob; non-clumping cat litter; bleach; laundry soap; or quart size ziplock baggies.

Stay in touch

- Call often or use social media or video chat technology to stay in touch. During the winter months, senior adults typically stay at home more often. Nearly 70 percent of Johnson County Meals on Wheels recipients say their delivery volunteer is the only person they see each day.
- Mail surprises such as notes, cards, or small gifts to let your loved one know you are thinking about them.
- Give your loved one something to look forward to, such as a day visit.

Be safe in the kitchen

- To thaw a frozen turkey, place the wrapped turkey in a shallow pan or on a baking sheet with a lip to catch drips, then place in the refrigerator. Allow one day of thawing time for each 4-5 pounds of turkey.
- Forget to put the turkey in the refrigerator to thaw? Submerge the entire wrapped turkey in cold water in a clean, large sink or bathtub. Allow 30 minutes of thawing time per pound. Drain and replace cold water every 30 minutes during the thawing process.

- Place leftovers in a shallow pan for fast, uniform cooling. Cover to reduce risk of cross contamination.
- If leftovers will not be used within three days, wrap, label, and date them before freezing for a future meal. Wrapped, cooked turkey generally freezes well for three to four months.
- Ask a Master Food Volunteer questions about food preparation, safety, and preservation at 913-715-7070 or email food.help@jocogov.org. ☀️

SOME JOHNSON COUNTY HOLIDAY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

A Harvest in My Lunchbox (Johnson County Museum, 6305 Lackman Rd., Shawnee, Nov. 19, 10 a.m.) Storyteller Jo Ho will take families on a tasty thankfulness trip to farms, dairies, and factories to discover how healthy food gets in their lunchboxes. FREE.

A Very Fifties Christmas (Johnson County Museum, 6305 Lackman Rd., Shawnee, Nov. 29 - Jan. 3) The 1950s All-Electric House is decorated for the holidays! Rock around our aluminum Christmas tree and celebrate the holidays 1950s-style! \$5 adults/\$3 children 5-12.

Letters from Santa (Matt Ross Community Center, 8101 Marty St., Overland Park, Dec. 1-18) Arrange for someone to receive a personalized letter from Santa for just \$5. Call 913-642-6410 by Dec. 18 to remind Santa of name, address, hoped-for gifts, and other information.

Sock Snowmen (Shawnee Library, 13811 Johnson Dr., Shawnee, December 4, 2 p.m.) Make a sock snowman to warm your heart throughout the winter. Registration begins Nov. 3, 2014 at jocolibrary.org or call 913-826-4600. FREE.

A Country School Christmas (Lanesfield Historic Site, 18745 S. Dillie Rd., Edgerton, Dec. 6, 1-3 p.m.) Enjoy stories from Jo Ho, see a Christmas program given by local schoolchildren, enjoy free refreshments, make an ornament to take home, and visit with Santa. FREE.

KC WildLands Native Christmas Tree Event (Mildale Farm, 32250 W. 119th St., Edgerton, Dec. 6.) Get your tree and help clear parkland of red cedars, which choke out sun-loving prairie plants. A minimum donation of \$15 is suggested for trees of all shapes and sizes that will be available.

Holiday Card Extravaganza (Lackman Library, 15345 W. 87th St., Lenexa, Dec. 9, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.) Drop by the library to help spread the holiday cheer! Make cards for residents at nearby Sunrise Senior Living. FREE.



Gingerbread Holiday Creations (De Soto Library, 33145 W. 83rd St., De Soto, Dec. 13, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) Help decorate the library with gingerbread craft projects and make some for home.

Holidays Around the World (Johnson County Museum, 6305 Lackman Rd., Shawnee, Dec. 17, 10 a.m.) Storyteller Jo Ho will take families around the world for a global holiday celebration. FREE.

Winter Solstice Celebration (Ernie Miller Nature Center, 909 N. K-7 Hwy., Olathe, Dec. 20, 6:30-8 p.m.) Hike along Little Cedar Creek and witness nature's quiet time. Warm up by the fire with hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows while listening to stories about the longest night of the year. \$6/person. Register at www.jcprd.com.

Christmas Tree Recycling (The Theatre in the Park at Shawnee Mission Park, 7710 Renner Rd., Shawnee; Heritage Park, 16050 Pflumm Rd., Olathe; Kill Creek Park, 11670 Homestead Lane, Olathe; Dec. 26 - Jan. 31) Bring your natural tree to one of these collection sites and JCPRD will turn it into mulch for trails! Be sure to remove decorations. This program is open to anyone, regardless of residency. FREE.

When the season transforms **County parks** into winter wonderlands, it's time to go sledding, cross-country skiing, and — when the deep freeze is long lasting — ice skating and ice fishing.

WEB EXTRA Go online for a full list of events, unique gift ideas, more information on volunteer opportunities, and ways to make your holiday environmentally friendly, as well as tips for caregivers and how to manage the post-holiday blues.

New Museum exhibit celebrates era of Modernism in Johnson County architecture

We drive by older buildings in Johnson County every day, probably without giving them a second thought or recognizing the architectural significance of their designs. But many of the buildings and residences designed and built after World War II represent a very different approach to architecture that was not seen elsewhere in the region.

“Post-war Johnson County was a blank canvas,” said Matt Gilligan, curator of interpretation at the Johnson County Museum. “There was a lot of new building here after World War II, when people were very excited about innovation and new consumer goods. That attitude is evident in much of the architecture from the period.”

Starting November 21, the free exhibit “Johnson County: A Modern Community” opens at the Johnson County Museum. The exhibit explores the Modernist movement that began in post-World War I Europe and eventually spread to the United States, including Johnson County. The exhibit details how modern ideas about architecture and lifestyle took hold locally during the period of 1945-1970, and why the movement manifested itself in the built environment in Johnson County — from homes and churches to schools and office buildings.

Jody Searing and her husband Paul, built a house in Prairie Village (featured in the exhibit) in 1966 and chose architect Bruce Goff to design a home with lots of glass, light and an open floor plan. They’d been living in Kansas City, Mo., where it was difficult and expensive to find a suitable lot, and were drawn to the open and natural spaces of Johnson County.

“We wanted to have an original, modern home,” Jody Searing said. “My husband wanted a house that was out-of-the-way and minimal without a lot of doo-dads. It was also important to be surrounded by nature. I really love my house.”

After World War II, smooth, straight lines, flat roofs and open floor plans defined this style. Designs relied on building materials such as steel, glass and reinforced concrete. People wanted to own a new home and with the available land Johnson County had to offer, building here was easy and affordable.

“People were living in the city, in apartments, and there was a rush to leave the city,” said Anne Jones, curator of collections at the Johnson County Museum. “It was cheaper to buy a new house and people wanted something that looked different.” 🌻

WEB EXTRA Learn more about the exhibit and view more examples of Modernist architecture in Johnson County at www.jocogov.org/jocomag



Congregation Ohev Sholom in Prairie Village was completed in 1969. Architect Manuel Morris gave the building a distinctive sloping roof. *Photo courtesy of Johnson County Museum.*



Osage Elementary, Overland Park — demolished now — was designed by Boyle and Wilson Architects, who also designed two other modern elementary schools in Johnson County. *Photo courtesy of Boyle and Wilson Architects.*

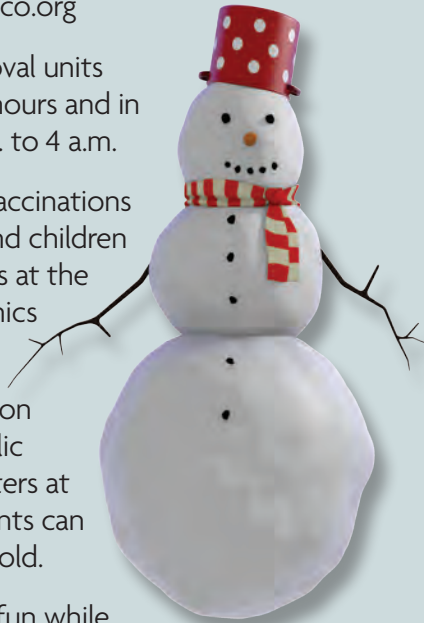


Paul Searing hired architect Bruce Goff to design this Prairie Village home in 1966. Bruce Goff designed three houses in Johnson County in the 1960s. *Photo Courtesy of Bob Greenspan Photography.*

10 THINGS To Know About JoCo

10 WAYS JOHNSON COUNTY IS THERE FOR YOU IN THE COLD WEATHER MONTHS

- 1. NotifyJoCo:** Johnson County has a mass notification system designed to keep residents informed of emergency events such as extreme cold warnings. Register at www.notifyjoco.org
- 2. Snow Plows:** Snow removal units operate during daylight hours and in emergencies, from 6 p.m. to 4 a.m.
- 3. Flu Shots:** Seasonal flu vaccinations are available for adults and children over the age of 6 months at the immunization walk-in clinics in Olathe and Mission.
- 4. Warming Centers:** Johnson County has thirteen public libraries and various shelters at County parks that residents can use to retreat from the cold.
- 5. Indoor Activities:** Have fun while staying warm at the three Johnson County Museum sites: The History Museum, the 1950s All-Electric House, and the Lanesfield Historic Site. Johnson County Park & Recreation offers three indoor sports facilities where you can be active.
- 6. Park Deals:** Reservations for a Johnson County park shelter are half price during off season dates (October 16-April 14).
- 7. The Library:** Cold weather can be isolating so stay connected by joining your local library's book club.
- 8. Special Events:** Parks host various events throughout the winter season for residents, including: Elf on the Shelf contest, Letters from Santa, Kids' Night Out, Winter Solstice Celebration, and Holidays for Animals.
- 9. Ambulance Stations:** There are 17 strategically placed ambulance stations ready to respond to emergencies during cold weather months.
- 10. Weatherization Program:** The County provides assistance to low-income residents to make homes more energy efficient.



10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES

- 1.** In Johnson County, driver's license services are provided by the State of Kansas Department of Revenue. The Johnson County Motor Vehicle Offices do not process driver's licenses.
- 2.** The month you renew corresponds to the first letter of your last name. Visit jocogov.org to determine which month your renewal is due.
- 3.** Get in line online or by phone to reserve your spot at the motor vehicle office from the comfort of your own home through Johnson County's line queuing system.
- 4.** Residents are encouraged to renew vehicle registrations online using Web-Tags, the Kansas motor vehicle online renewal system, or by mail.
- 5.** Vehicle registration fees can cost between \$39 and \$49 per year and vehicle title fees cost \$10.
- 6.** To title a new motor vehicle you need a manufacturer's statement of origin, valid proof of insurance, and a sales tax receipt OR bill of sale.
- 7.** Want to stand out on the road? Order personalized license plates at either motor vehicle offices.
- 8.** Kansas law requires the Kansas Highway Patrol to inspect vehicles that were previously titled in another state.
- 9.** Vehicle inspection fees are \$20 for a regular inspection and \$25 for salvage/prior or rebuilt salvage.
- 10.** The County mails courtesy vehicle registration renewal notices 30 days prior to expiration dates.

WEB EXTRA

Visit www.jocogov.org/jocomag to learn more about all 20 of these "things" — great resources related to services JoCo provides during the cold weather months, and more information about motor vehicles services.



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- 93 percent of JCCC's career program completers find a job within six months.
- 93 percent of participants in an Overland Park Chamber of Commerce Foundation study had a "favorable" opinion of JCCC; 68 percent had a "strongly favorable" opinion.
- 83 percent of participants in the Chamber survey believed higher education at JCCC is critical for economic development; 85 percent believed JCCC prepares a workforce of today and in the future.

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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www.jccc.edu/admissions

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