

# Kansas

GOVERNMENT JOURNAL

VOLUME 96-NUMBER 4

APRIL 2010



## **Inside:**

**Fighting for a New Fire Station**

**Affordable Housing**

**Lindsborg's 24/7 Recycling Program**

# 2010 Leadership Summit & Mayor's Conference

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is a restoration of the  
original Union Pacific Depot.*

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# Contents

Volume 96 • Number 4 • April 2010



102



107



108



116

## Features

- 102 Fighting for a New Fire Station
- 107 Lindsborg's 24/7 Recycling Program
- 108 Affordable Housing
- 112 Open Source Government, One Fan at a Time
- 115 Joe Friday, The City Kitty
- 116 Lenexa and Scott County Named All-America City Finalists
- 118 Neodesha: Optimistically Building for the Future

## Departments

- 101 Calendar of Events
- 106 State Scene
- 111 Best Practices
- 114 Mainstreet News
- 117 On the Road
- 120 Legal Forum
- 121 Classified Advertising
- 123 Professional Services Advertising
- 126 Moler's Musings



*About the Cover:*  
The City of Paola celebrates the opening of their new fire station with a dedication ceremony. See related article beginning on page 102.

# Kansas

## GOVERNMENT JOURNAL

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*The mission of the League shall be to unify, strengthen, and advocate for the interests of Kansas municipalities to advance the general welfare and promote the quality of life of the people who live within our cities.*



## LKM Updates Signs

In honor of 100 years of service, the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) has replaced the exterior signs in front of their building at 300 SW 8th Ave. in Topeka. The new sign features the 100th Anniversary logo with the LKM sunburst and a scene from the cities of Wichita, Abilene, and Quinter placed within the letters. The logo also reads, "A Century of Service 1910-2010." The Kansas Association of Counties and the Health Care Stabilization Fund signs were also replaced to give them all a fresh, new look.

*Right: last two signs that once hung in front of the LKM building. Photos by Amanda Schuster*



## Obituaries

**Bob Abbott, 75**, died March 23, 2010. Abbott served Kansas for 26 years as a Supreme Court Justice and as Chief Judge of the Kansas Court of Appeals. He also served as the City Attorney for the cities of Milford and Grandview Plaza.

**J.D. Durkin, 76**, passed away on April 2, 2010. He served as the Mayor and City Councilman for Carbondale. He also was a volunteer firefighter for 46 years and was a first responder for 8 years for the City.

**Jerry G. Elliott**, Kansas Court of Appeals Judge died April 6, 2010. Governor Mike Hayden appointed Judge Elliott to the Court of Appeals in 1987. He filled a newly created 8th position on the bench.

**George O. Gigstad, 94**, passed away April 5, 2010. He served as Mayor of Nortonville and on the City Council.

**Marion Claude Miller, 93**, died on March 25, 2010. He was admitted to the Kansas Bar in 1941 and in 1944, he became the first assistant to the County Attorney of Wyandotte County. He was then elected and served as the County's Public Administrator from 1945-1947.

**Dr. Charles V. ("Bud") Neath, 85**, Kansas City, KS, died April 4, 2010. He served on the Kansas City City Council from 1983-1989.

**Richard Ralph Schmidt, 88**, died April 1, 2010. He served in multiple public offices including Ellis County Clerk and County Treasurer. He also served 10 years in the Kansas House of Representatives, representing the 111th district from 1977 to 1986. His district included the southernmost part of Hays and southern rural Ellis County.



# Calendar of Events

## May

### **7-8 - Leadership Summit & Kansas Mayors Conference, Lawrence**

LKM and the Kansas Mayors Association invites you to attend the 2010 Leadership Summit and Kansas Mayors Conference. This two-day event will provide elected and appointed city leaders an opportunity to gather and discuss the challenges facing our cities and will focus on how leadership at the local level can better address contemporary issues in local government. The 2010 Leadership Summit and Kansas Mayors Conference will include a selection of workshops and general sessions designed to provide insight into local government issues. The event will be held at the Spring Hill Suites, located at One Riverfront Plaza in Lawrence. Please visit [www.lkm.org](http://www.lkm.org) for more information and to register.

## June

### **4, 5, 18 - MLA: Ethics, (Ulysses, Goddard, Lenexa)**

LKM will be offering three MLA core classes on *Ethics*. This course will provide an overview of the law as it relates to local government ethics and will offer strategies that your city can follow to encourage ethical behavior. The course will be held in three locations, Ulysses on June 4, Goddard on June 5, and Lenexa on June 18.

### **25 - LKM Governing Body Meeting, Overland Park**

### **25 - KMIT Board Meeting, Hays**

## July

### **9, 10, 19 - MLA: Neighborhood Building (Phillipsburg, Chanute, Great Bend)**

LKM will be offering three MLA elective classes on *Neighborhood Building*. This course will offer participants an increased understanding of building and renovating attractions within your city. The course will be held in three locations, Phillipsburg on July 9, Chanute on July 10, and Great Bend on July 19.

## August

### **6,7,13 - MLA: KOMA/KORA (Iola, Concordia, Greensburg)**

LKM will be offering three MLA core classes, *KOMA/KORA*. The course will be held in three locations, Iola on August 6, Concordia on August 7, and Greensburg on August 13.

### **27 - KMIT Board Meeting, De Soto**

## September

### **10 - Governing Body Meeting, Manhattan**

### **10, 11, 17 - MLA: Sexual Harassment (Scott City, Minneapolis, Westwood)**

LKM will be offering three MLA elective classes on *Sexual Harassment*. The course will be held in three locations, Scott City on September 10, Minneapolis on September 11, and Westwood on September 17.

## October

### **9-12 - LKM Annual Conference, Overland Park**

Preparations are already under way for LKM's 2010 Conference, when the League's 100th Anniversary will be celebrated. This conference will be held at the Overland Park Convention Center and Sheraton Hotel, October 9-12. LKM will hold a Governing Body Meeting on October 10 and KMIT will hold an Annual Meeting on October 11 at the conference.

### **27, 28 - LKM Regional Suppers (Goodland, Dodge City)**

Goodland is the first stop for LKM's annual Regional Suppers on October 27. Dodge City will follow as the second stop on October 28.

## November

### **3, 4 - LKM Regional Supper (Wichita, Concordia)**

LKM will make its third stop in Wichita on November 3 for the annual Regional Suppers. Concordia will follow on November 4.

### **5, 6 - MLA: Community & Media Relations (Manhattan, Fort Scott)**

LKM will be offering two MLA elective classes on *Community and Media Relations*. This course will be held in two locations, Manhattan on November 5, and Fort Scott on November 6.

### **17, 18 - LKM Regional Supper (Leavenworth, Parsons)**

Leavenworth is the fifth stop for LKM's annual Regional Suppers on November 17. Parsons will follow as the sixth stop on November 18.

## December

### **9 - LKM Governing Body Meeting, Topeka**

### **17 - KMIT Board Meeting, El Dorado**

# Fighting For a New Fire Station

by Brian McCauley



*L to R : Assistant Fire Chief Bruce Hartig, Mayor Artie Stuteville, Fire Chief Andy Martin, and City Manager Jay Wieland during the Paola Fire Department uncoupling ceremony. Photo provided by the City of Paola.*

*Paola Fire Department south side of building before. Photo provided by the City of Paola.*



*Paola Fire Department south side of building after. Photo provided by the City of Paola.*



**W**hen Paola Fire Chief Andy Martin first sat down in the summer of 2008 and began to sketch a rough set of blueprints of how an old school building could be transformed into a fire station, he already had a pretty good idea of what he wanted.

After all, getting a new station had been a popular topic of discussion amongst the Paola volunteer firefighters, who had operated out of the same shared building with City Hall since 1909.

When voters approved a 1/4¢ sales tax in April 2007 to fund the construction of a new station, it seemed clear that the Paola firefighters would soon have a new home.

But like most things in life, the project didn't quite go exactly as planned, and city officials were forced to modify their strategy and use some creative thinking amid a dismal economy to see the undertaking through to completion.

For the past several years, it was no secret that the Paola Volunteer Fire Department needed more space and better equipment. Vehicles were stored in three separate buildings surrounding Paola City Hall and there was little to no room for training, drills, or equipment storage.

The problem was, the Paola Police Department was also sharing space at City Hall, and it too needed to expand. Likewise, several other city buildings throughout Paola needed to be renovated.

The answer was a ballot question proposed to voters in 2005. Paola officials originally were going to ask voters to renew a 1/2¢ sales tax to help fund new police and fire stations, as well as renovations to Paola City Hall, Paola Free Library, and Paola Community Center.

A few months before the November election, though, the fire department was pulled from the ballot after volunteer firefighters expressed concern about not having enough funds. Voters agreed to renew the tax in November, which set the funding for the other projects, but the fire station was still on its own.

City officials began looking for a location to build a multipurpose building that could possibly house both police and fire departments, as well as City Hall. Ironically, they soon became focused on the old brick school building at 202 E. Wea St., that now stands as Paola's new fire station.

At the time, the former high school and middle school was being used by Paola USD 368 as the school district administration building. Once the school district was ready to move to a new facility, they started looking for buyers for the old brick building.

In August of 2006, the City of Paola and a nonprofit corporation, the Schoolhouse Foundation from First Presbyterian Church both

Although city officials were impressed by Treanor's first design proposal for the fire station, they weren't impressed by the estimated \$5 million project cost.

"My initial reaction was, 'Nope, too expensive,'" then City Manager Ross VanderHamm said. "But at least we have something to work from."

Martin and VanderHamm previously had targeted about \$2.8 million for a 14,000 sq. ft. fire station. Treanor's design was for 18,700 sq. ft.

Officials spent much of the rest of the year whittling the proposed design down to something more affordable and trying to secure a location for the building. Even after the funding was secured when voters approved a new 1/4¢ tax in April 2007, there were still several questions left to be answered.

Paola City Council members were targeting two city-owned locations. The first was a former Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) building on North Pearl Street. The second was city parking lot No. 1 on Silver Street behind El Tapatio Mexican Restaurant and across from Paola Do It Best Hardware.

Officials eventually decided that the KDOT site would work best for the City's new justice center, and the fire station would have to be built on the parking lot. The decision drew criticism from some residents who didn't like the idea of losing a large number of parking stalls so close to Paola's Park Square.

As the fire station debate continued into 2008, and Martin watched the proposed station get smaller and smaller, work on the justice center construction began.

As it turned out, the Schoolhouse Foundation's plans for the old school building were hitting snags as well. In June 2007,

*Paola Fire Department west side of building before.  
Photo provided by the City of Paola.*



*Paola Fire Department west side of building after  
Photo provided by the City of Paola.*



entered bids of \$250,000 to purchase the old school building. The City wanted to demolish the building to make way for a new combined fire station, police station, and City Hall. The church proposed a \$1.5 million remodel of the more than 50-year-old building to create a youth and community center. Board of Education members accepted the Schoolhouse Foundation's offer, and the City was back to square one.

### **Plan B**

Paola officials headed into 2007 with the goal of getting both the police and fire station projects off the ground. The City hired Treanor Architects to handle the design work on both of the stations.

several Paola First Presbyterian Church members voted to leave the Presbyterian Church (USA) and join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. As a result, the Schoolhouse Foundation's plans for the school building never came to fruition. Paola saw a possible solution to their problems, and they took it.

### **Second Chance**

Paola city officials agreed to buy the old brick school building from the School House Foundation in June for \$267,500. The price included repairs made since the foundation bought the building from the school district in 2006.

This time, instead of demolishing the building, city and fire department officials started working together to come up with a



*Fire Chief Andy Martin addresses the crowd at the dedication of the new Paola Fire Station with the governing body, City Manager, contractor, and the Paola Fire Department. Photo provided by the City of Paola.*

design that would allow the building to be transformed into a fire station without demolishing the current foundation and basic structure—thus saving money.

The process of adapting old structures for purposes other than those initially intended is called “adaptive reuse.”

With the cost of the justice center construction spilling over budget, city officials also wanted to take a different approach to financing the fire station project. Current City Manager Jay Wieland and Martin decided that a design-build approach would make the most sense.

Instead of having an architect draw up designs, which was done with Treanor Architects, the City would create a budget (in this case \$2 million) and then give contractors a basic design and ask them to make proposals for that amount.

Paola contractor Rob George of Legacy Contractors was quick to jump at the opportunity. His proposal of using eco-friendly utilities, such as geothermal heat, as well as hiring many local subcontractors was enough to convince the Paola City Council that he was the best option.

Once the Paola Justice Center opened in January 2009, city officials were able to turn their attention to the fire station.

In April 2009, Paola City Council members officially approved a contract with Legacy Contractors for \$1,999,991, and Legacy was given 280 days to complete the project. The clock was ticking and firefighters were anxious to see what their new home would look like.

### **Going and Saving Green**

Choosing to modify an existing structure instead of building a new one from scratch allowed the City to maximize its dollars. Instead of planning for a 14,000 sq. ft. fire station for about \$3 million, the City was now looking at a building with 23,000 sq. ft., not including an attached gymnasium, and a construction budget of about \$2 million.

Walking through the old school building, Martin saw beyond the lockers lining the hallways and the deteriorating furniture from a school that was built in 1917 and expanded in 1951. He saw the future home of his department.

It wasn't hard for Martin to imagine the band room turning into a large training area, the home economics room turning into a kitchen and day room, or the shop class space on the bottom floor transforming into a nine-bay storage garage for the fire vehicles.

In fact, Martin's original sketches of the building's floor plans were pretty close to the final product. Rob George of Legacy Contractors said it made it easier for him to do the work being able to start with a detailed design straight from the department that would be using the facility.

Once the project began, it was all about recycling and efficiency. Using about 72% local sub contractors, George got to work gutting the school building. Although there was a lot to clear out, much of it was put to good use.

Almost 63,500 lbs. of steel was taken to a recycling facility, 4 dumpsters full of lumber was taken to a Kansas City facility that shredded it into mulch, over 80 tons of block masonry was handed over to Miami County to be used to line ditches, 26 pickup truck loads of cardboard boxes were recycled, over 5 pickup truck loads of usable lumber was given to local residents, as well as a truck and trailer load of insulation, and usable cleaning chemicals were given to the custodian at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

Some of the items were even reused. The department kept some of the wooden cabinets from the home economics classroom, about 30 steel doors were kept for training purposes, and 1,000 sq. ft. of ceiling tile was salvaged from the hallways and reused in the new restrooms and vending room.

Even Habitat for Humanity got involved, as they picked up 12 wooden doors, base cabinets, two toilets, a vanity top with faucets, unopened ceiling tile, and some chairs.

Perhaps most important to the community, the gymnasium was kept intact, and the public was told it will remain open for use even after the fire station is complete.

George also put a focus on finding ways to keep the building's utility costs low. A special foam was sprayed on the roof during repairs to create a quality insulator, and geothermal wells were drilled outside the building to set up the geothermal heating system.

Paola firefighters weren't only watching the project closely, some of them were right in the middle of the renovations. Firefighter Pat Petelin's company, Petelin Construction, was one of the local subcontractors, as he assembled the training tower on the building and helped with some of the cabinet work. Firefighter Joe Flake's company, Target Lawncare, handled the landscaping and painting of the parking lot. Firefighter Kevin Barbour handled the stucco work, and former firefighter Kenny Smith's company, GK Smith & Sons, handled the electrical work and installation of the heating and cooling systems.

The project was certainly a unique one for George. Some of the old school history was uncovered as crews worked to transform the building. During work on the new entryway and elevator, George said crews came across pieces of the old gymnasium floor that were part of the school building that no longer exists.

Also, during the drilling of the geothermal wells, crews found the foundation of an old kindergarten building that was demolished years ago.

When the project was completed earlier this year, it was ahead of schedule and \$200,000 under budget. The fire department paired the savings with \$100,000 that had been saved in the municipal equipment reserve fund to purchase a new pumper truck.

#### Welcome Home

This year's harsh winter dumped several inches of snow during late storms, but the sky cleared and it was summer-like conditions on March 6 when the Paola Volunteer Fire Department opened the doors of its new building to the public during an open house celebration.

With his entire department dressed in their full uniforms standing behind him, and an American flag draped from a fire truck ladder flapping in the wind, Martin addressed a crowd of more than 200 people and thanked them for their support of the project.

Many former Paola firefighters attended the event to see the new station, including Carl Gregg, Don Hadlock, H. Wayne Riley, Ken Hoffman, Carl Buchman, Ken Smith, and Morris Schroeder. Old stories about the department and the school building came flowing out, such as the time a fire broke out in the superintendent's office in

the late 70s. George found evidence of the fire during the building's renovation when he came across some burnt pieces of wood in the ceiling.

Flake remembers going to high school in the building, and he thinks about it every time he backs in a fire truck.

"I'm parking fire trucks now where I used to have shop," Flake said.

Even though the station has only been in service for a few weeks, volunteer firefighters are already enjoying all the new amenities.

The decontamination room makes it safer for the volunteers to properly clean clothing and equipment after a call, and having all the vehicles in one location makes it easier to respond to a fire call. The training rooms and tower also give the firefighters a more professional area to work and better themselves.

The building is a sign of progress, but it also is a testament to the past. Two glass display cases inside show old photographs and other pieces of memorabilia from both the school and fire department.

As for the volunteers, they have already made themselves right at home, and it's a home they think they'll be happy with for quite a while.

"I hope this can be our home for another 100 years," Martin said.

 *Brian McCauley is the Managing Editor for the Miami County Republic newspaper. He can be reached at [bmccauley@miconews.com](mailto:bmccauley@miconews.com) or (913) 294-2311.*



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## Kansas Commission Joins National Campaign

The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns (KCDC) launched its new employer-focused web site, [www.kansasemployability.com](http://www.kansasemployability.com), as part of its local effort to support the national “Think Beyond the Label” marketing campaign to promote the hiring of workers with disabilities.

The \$4 million national campaign will appear in print and on TV, the Internet, and billboards through 2010. The goal of the humorous, edgy campaign is to change attitudes about hiring people with disabilities, raise awareness of the need for diversity in the workplace, counter stereotypes about people with disabilities, and encourage employers to visit [www.kansasemployability.com](http://www.kansasemployability.com) to find local resources regarding employment and disability. States

such as Kansas are participating with local marketing efforts, including the development of new web sites designed to help employers learn the benefits of employing individuals with disabilities.

“We’re excited to unveil [www.kansasemployability.com](http://www.kansasemployability.com) as part of the national ‘Think Beyond the Label’ campaign,” said Martha Gabehart, KCDC Director. “Hiring and retaining good employees is the top staffing issue cited by employers, and it’s a concern that will become more pressing as we feel the crunch of a shrinking and aging workforce. That’s why it’s so important to inform employers about individuals with disabilities as a talented labor pool.”

## State Energy Office Announces Grant

The State Energy Office (SEO), a division of the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), announced the establishment of the Energy Manager Grant program. The program utilizes \$2.5 million of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funding, authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Through the grant program, coalitions of cities, counties, and school districts can apply for a salary stipend of \$50,000 per year for up to two years to hire an energy manager. The energy manager will be responsible for developing short-term and long-term plans for each coalition member to begin the process of transforming energy usage and awareness on the part of local governments in Kansas.

“The Recovery Act continues to provide opportunities for Kansas to improve and grow for the future,” said Governor

Mark Parkinson. He continued, “Local communities have been struggling to pay the bills during the current economic recession, but with this new program, cities, counties, and school districts can hire the needed leaders to help reduce their costs and become more energy efficient.”

Within the first six months of receiving the grant award, the energy manager will be expected to collect, categorize, and analyze historic energy-use data, identify poorly performing facilities, and create a prioritized list of improvements. Over the course of the two-year grant period, the energy manager must meet regularly with coalition members to discuss energy-efficiency upgrade opportunities, train personnel on energy conservation, and identify possible alternative energy upgrades for future implementation.

## Wildlife and Parks Wins Geography Contest

Three public areas managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) have been named to the list of “8 Wonders of Kansas Geography.” The designation came through a public vote on 24 finalists and was sponsored by the Kansas Sampler Foundation, a group formed to “help preserve and sustain rural culture.”

The three KDWP winners are among the state’s most striking and unusual formations, including the following: Maxwell Wildlife

Refuge, McPherson County — midgrass prairie, the only place in Kansas where both buffalo and elk can be viewed in their natural habitat; Mushroom Rock State Park, Ellsworth County — showcases rare, mushroom-shaped Dakota sandstone concretions deposited 100 million years ago and since carved by the relentless forces of erosion; and Pillsbury Crossing, Riley County — a flat, stone creek bottom that forms a natural ford followed by a long, broad waterfall that has been a landmark for generations.

## KHPA Using Web-Based Survey to Solicit Ideas

The Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA) has unveiled a new web-based survey tool that allows health care providers, consumers, and the general public to submit ideas and suggestions for ways to achieve budget savings in the Kansas Medicaid program. The survey can be accessed from the KHPA website: [http://www.khpa.ks.gov/Medicaid\\_savings\\_options.html](http://www.khpa.ks.gov/Medicaid_savings_options.html).

“We began implementing a 10% payment reduction for Medicaid providers,” said KHPA Executive Director Andy Allison. “That was in response to the governor’s allotment order in November. Since then, we’ve heard from many in the provider community about the hardship that the cut is imposing. We’ve also heard from legislators who want us to come up with alternatives.”

“The more information people can provide us, the better KHPA will be able to represent those ideas to our Board and the

Legislature,” Allison said. “We are already collecting ideas from experts and other states, and our staff routinely looks for better ways to manage the program. It’s our job to try to keep costs down, but if ever there was a time to do business just a little differently, it would be now. We’re hoping to see some really good suggestions. We’re asking people that have a suggestion to give us as much information as they can—details about how their idea would work, the types of Medicaid recipients who would be affected, expected savings, and how the idea may have worked in other states or other settings. We recognize not everyone will have that kind of information at their fingertips, but it’s the kind of information the Legislature will need if they are going to count on these ideas to help balance the budget.”



Lindsborg Recycling Center, located between Union and McPherson Streets. Photo provided by the City of Lindsborg.

# Lindsborg's 24/7 Recycling Program

by Jerry Lovett-Sperling

The City of Lindsborg began recycling in the early 1990s as a project of the Smoky Valley High School shop class when they collected 264 tin cans. In January 1992, citizens were urged to bring their recyclables to drop-off containers at the local Coop. As the project grew, it became clear that more space was needed. The City and Mid-Kansas Coop partnered together to come up with a way to house the various bins and keep them enclosed.

The building was set up to be a drive-through to ease congestion and was manned by volunteers on the first and third Saturdays of every month. The center was open from 8 a.m. to noon and volunteers helped unload vehicles and sort the recyclables. At that time aluminum cans, tin cans, milk jugs, number 1 and 2 plastics, glass, newspaper, and cardboard were all accepted and Lindsborg became the largest recycling community in McPherson County. By recycling, and decreasing the tonnage of waste going to the landfill, McPherson Area Solid Waste Utility has been able to keep down the cost of trash pick-up for residents.

As the recycling continued to grow throughout the community, the plant needed more space and was moved to a temporary location while the City made plans for expansion. The City placed pods and containers along the edge of the parking lot at the south head of the Välkommen Trail. Because the area was readily available, there was no need for volunteers and the citizens were able to drop off their recycled items at any time.

The new facility located between Union and McPherson Streets, follows the former temporary site guidelines with 24-hour access. Since then, the McPherson Area Solid Waste Utility has reported a 50% increase in the amount of recyclables collected. In 2006, the City collected 82 tons and in 2008, the City collected 164 tons, doubling the amount collected since the site opened to 24 hours compared to a set schedule.

Not only is the recycling center environmentally friendly, but the sign for the recycling center is made of Enviropoly, a high density Polyethylene. It is routed by a computer driven router producing a product that is durable and maintenance free. The sign has a life span of 20 years, is vandal resistant, requires no painting,

and is mounted on 100% recyclable posts, which meet most recycled material grant requirements.

The McPherson Area Solid Waste Utility commends the citizens of Lindsborg on their use of successful recycling practices and 100% recyclable matter. Because of their great success, they encourage other communities to 24-hour site usage and access.

 Jerry Lovett-Sperling is the City Clerk for the City of Lindsborg. She can be reached at [jls@lindsborgcity.org](mailto:jls@lindsborgcity.org) or (785) 227-3355.



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# Affordable HOUSING

by Jonathan Fisk

Often, those most affected by economic recessions are the least able to traverse through them. The current economic environment has strained families from New York to California. Families who lose their home have few options. They may need to rely on family and friends for housing, or find rental units. However, if neither strategy is successful, many families give up and seek public housing and assistance.

In some instances, the market does not provide housing that is both affordable and that meets minimal standards of livability. Recognizing this market failure, the federal government began in the 1930s to subsidize the construction of public housing. The designers of these projects maximized occupancy by designing high-rise and garden apartments.<sup>1</sup> For a variety of reasons, however, this model of public housing has been abandoned. The new affordable housing paradigm promotes public and private collaboration, values flexibility, and emphasizes local control and decision making.

Although many consider affordable housing as just a measure of cost, it is more complex. At its core, affordability is an alignment between price and income level. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a home is affordable if the occupant pays less than 30% of his or her income for housing. If the occupant's housing obligations are consuming more than 30%, he or she may not be able to afford other necessities such as clothing, food, transportation, and medical care.<sup>2</sup> Currently, HUD estimates that over 12 million households are paying more than 30% of their income for housing, with some households paying half their annual income to housing.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that of these families, most are on the precipice of financial disaster.

Increasing rents are also pricing out many American families. Between 1993 and 2003, there was a net loss of affordable rental units of over one million.<sup>4</sup> The remaining affordable units are often owned by individuals or companies that do not possess the expertise or resources to cover their expenses. They commonly regain profitability by reducing maintenance and upkeep costs.<sup>5</sup> Thus, a cycle of disinvestment and neglect is created until the property is eventually condemned.<sup>6</sup> And, according to a Harvard housing study, this process has contributed to thousands<sup>7</sup> of rental units becoming structurally deficient.<sup>8</sup>

Over the same time period, over 1.7 million higher priced units were constructed.<sup>9</sup> Often, with rental costs in excess of \$800 per month, these new units require the occupant to earn approximately \$32,000 (assuming the occupant spends 30% of his or her income

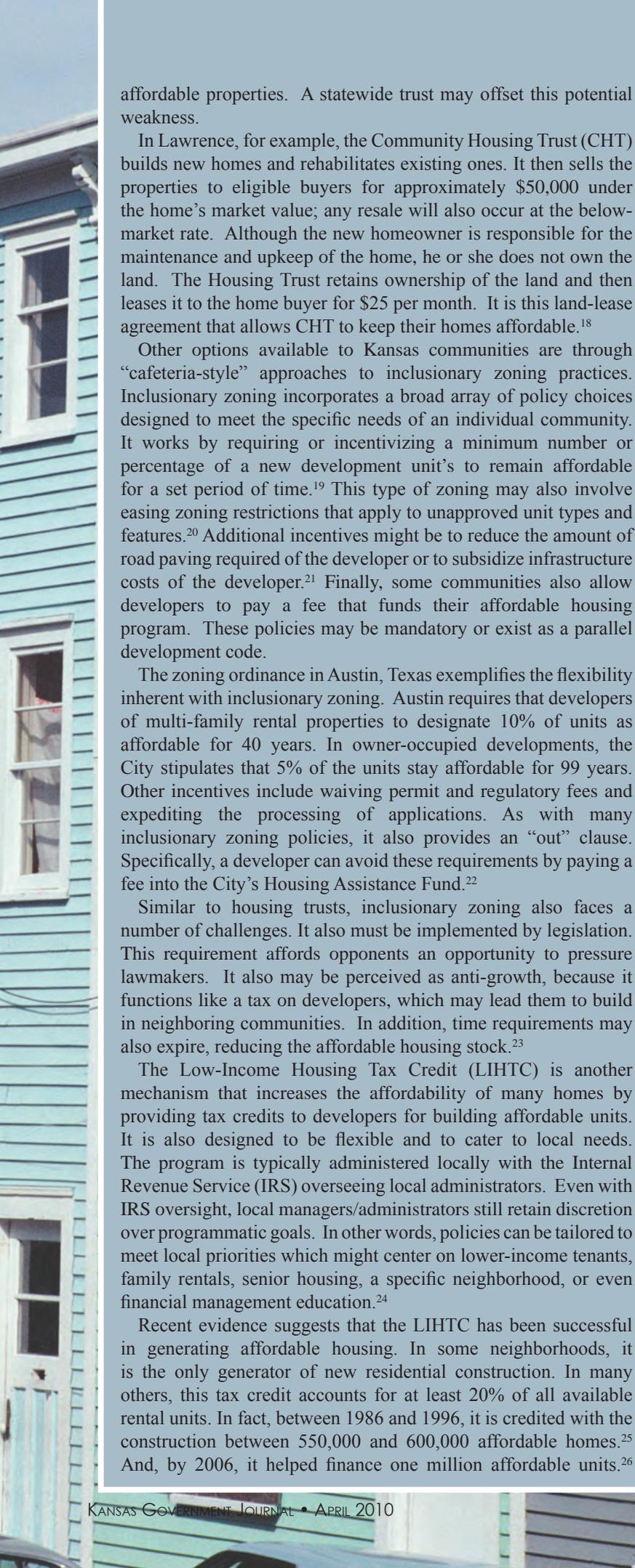
on housing standard) annually. It should be noted that less than half of all renters can meet this income threshold.<sup>10</sup> As a result, HUD states that there are no two-bedroom apartments that rent at local fair market value, which a family with one full-time minimum wage worker can afford.<sup>11</sup>

As the affordable housing paradigm has evolved, so has the government's role in it. Today, the federal government is directly involved in fair housing's "life-cycle." It helps subsidize the construction of new units and the repair of existing buildings. It also provides funds for educational and training efforts. Finally, federal funds may also be spent on demolition of uninhabitable dwellings.<sup>12</sup> Yet, it is at the local level where affordable housing projects become transformative. Successful projects require a mixture of incentives, creativity, and collaboration. According to the Urban Institute, there are several policy options that benefit from a robust network of public-private partnerships. This article, however, will focus on three main options: housing trust funds, inclusionary zoning, and the low-income housing tax credit.<sup>13</sup>

A housing trust fund is a tool designed to increase a community's affordable housing stock. It may be funded from a myriad of sources including: local government transfer payments, non-profits, and even developers. A city, for example, might transfer monies they collect through real estate taxes, accumulated interest from transactions, and other penalties paid by developers.<sup>14</sup>

As with any policy initiative, housing trusts generate benefits and costs. Perhaps, the greatest benefit in creating a housing trust is its flexibility. Money may be used to build new housing, renovate existing homes, or assist with closing costs, and even down payments. Funds could also be targeted to benefit a specific neighborhood, census tract, or demographic.<sup>15</sup> This flexibility enables program administrators to tailor their program to meet a specific goal or purpose.

Housing trusts are not without challenges. It will likely require approval by a governing body, which takes time and political will. Moreover, it may be politically unpopular amongst some to shift resources away from public safety and other programs to public housing.<sup>16</sup> Developers might also oppose its creation because they fear that prices in the city's housing market may decline. Finally, successful housing trusts operate in communities experiencing a strong housing market.<sup>17</sup> In other words, if demand for housing is weak, as it is in many communities in Kansas, the trust could fail to generate the revenue it needs to acquire, construct, and maintain



affordable properties. A statewide trust may offset this potential weakness.

In Lawrence, for example, the Community Housing Trust (CHT) builds new homes and rehabilitates existing ones. It then sells the properties to eligible buyers for approximately \$50,000 under the home's market value; any resale will also occur at the below-market rate. Although the new homeowner is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the home, he or she does not own the land. The Housing Trust retains ownership of the land and then leases it to the home buyer for \$25 per month. It is this land-lease agreement that allows CHT to keep their homes affordable.<sup>18</sup>

Other options available to Kansas communities are through "cafeteria-style" approaches to inclusionary zoning practices. Inclusionary zoning incorporates a broad array of policy choices designed to meet the specific needs of an individual community. It works by requiring or incentivizing a minimum number or percentage of a new development unit's to remain affordable for a set period of time.<sup>19</sup> This type of zoning may also involve easing zoning restrictions that apply to unapproved unit types and features.<sup>20</sup> Additional incentives might be to reduce the amount of road paving required of the developer or to subsidize infrastructure costs of the developer.<sup>21</sup> Finally, some communities also allow developers to pay a fee that funds their affordable housing program. These policies may be mandatory or exist as a parallel development code.

The zoning ordinance in Austin, Texas exemplifies the flexibility inherent with inclusionary zoning. Austin requires that developers of multi-family rental properties to designate 10% of units as affordable for 40 years. In owner-occupied developments, the City stipulates that 5% of the units stay affordable for 99 years. Other incentives include waiving permit and regulatory fees and expediting the processing of applications. As with many inclusionary zoning policies, it also provides an "out" clause. Specifically, a developer can avoid these requirements by paying a fee into the City's Housing Assistance Fund.<sup>22</sup>

Similar to housing trusts, inclusionary zoning also faces a number of challenges. It also must be implemented by legislation. This requirement affords opponents an opportunity to pressure lawmakers. It also may be perceived as anti-growth, because it functions like a tax on developers, which may lead them to build in neighboring communities. In addition, time requirements may also expire, reducing the affordable housing stock.<sup>23</sup>

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is another mechanism that increases the affordability of many homes by providing tax credits to developers for building affordable units. It is also designed to be flexible and to cater to local needs. The program is typically administered locally with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) overseeing local administrators. Even with IRS oversight, local managers/administrators still retain discretion over programmatic goals. In other words, policies can be tailored to meet local priorities which might center on lower-income tenants, family rentals, senior housing, a specific neighborhood, or even financial management education.<sup>24</sup>

Recent evidence suggests that the LIHTC has been successful in generating affordable housing. In some neighborhoods, it is the only generator of new residential construction. In many others, this tax credit accounts for at least 20% of all available rental units. In fact, between 1986 and 1996, it is credited with the construction between 550,000 and 600,000 affordable homes.<sup>25</sup> And, by 2006, it helped finance one million affordable units.<sup>26</sup>



## Affordable Housing in Independence Kansas

By April Nutt and Jonathan Fisk

In suburban and urban areas, high demand often makes homes unaffordable. In rural areas, however, developers may determine that it is not economically beneficial to build affordable homes. Large private developers often refuse to build in smaller and rural Kansas communities, because they cannot generate the volume of production needed to reduce development costs. Small and local developers tend to not possess enough financial capital for construction. Recognizing this market failure, the City of Independence and the Independence Housing Authority partnered to develop the Eisenhower Subdivision.

The Eisenhower Subdivision Program allows only income-qualified families to participate. The buyer's mortgage is set at the cost to construct the home; with the program subsidizes the remaining costs associated with land, platting, road, utilities, design, and professional fees. The subsidy is a forgivable grant with a seven year compliance period. If a home owner needs to sell prior to the end of the seven year compliance period the first mortgage would be paid in full, any principal paid initially or through monthly mortgage payments shall be paid to the owner, and the second mortgage shall be paid to the development fund.

The City serves as the developer whereas the Housing Authority serves as the realtor and general contractor with oversight assistance from the architect and the city building inspector. Due to a strong desire to use local contractors, the program was developed where various construction components were broken up into small bid packages therefore allowing small local contractors the opportunity to bid.

Many local community business and organizations are also providing assistance and incentives. Community National Bank, a local hometown bank, developed a loan program for the purchase of the Eisenhower Homes. In addition, the gas and cable companies install service at no charge. Several local realtors also agreed to assist in drawing up the sale contracts at a flat fee rather than at the market rate. Finally, a local lumber company guarantees their bid price, assists the program in bulk purchases, and offers storage space.

The new subdivision will total 28 new single family homes with an estimated assessed value of 4.6 million. Currently 14 homes have been constructed, with 7 currently under construction and the final 7 to be constructed the end of 2010. Of the 14 completed homes, 9 of the home buyers are young families, 5 are retired couples, 8 moved from out of town, and 7 are first time home buyers. As a result of the success of the Eisenhower Subdivision, the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation in 2008 awarded the City \$611,277 for infrastructure improvements and the Independence Housing Authority \$350,000 for vertical construction.

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Today, the LIHTC makes possible the construction of nearly 90,000 units of affordable housing each year. It should be noted that the demand for affordable housing still outpaces the supply.<sup>27</sup>

Like the other strategies described in this article, the LIHTC is not without its set of challenges. First, it relies on Federal authorization and resources, which means it is subject to the whims of Washington D.C. Moreover, because many times it is used to build housing for the lowest-income populations, it can pose a risk for developers and taxpayers. Finally, since many LIHTC homes are built in lower to middle income neighborhoods, benefits are limited to specific neighborhoods.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Byrne, J. Peter, and Michael Diamond. "Affordable housing, land tenure, and urban policy: the matrix revealed." *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 34.2 (2007): 527+. Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. 22 Mar. 2010.

<sup>2</sup>US. Housing and Urban Development. Community Planning and Development. *Affordable Housing* 12 Mar. 2010. 22 Mar. 2010 <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>>.

<sup>3</sup><<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>>.

<sup>4</sup>Affordable as defined as less than \$400 per month adjusted for inflation

<sup>5</sup>Joint Center of Housing Studies at Harvard University. "America's Rental Housing: Homes For a Diverse Nation." 2006: 1-32. Web. 23 Mar 2010. <[http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06_americas_rental_housing.pdf)>.

<sup>6</sup>Up to Fifteen Percent

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06_americas_rental_housing.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>[http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06_americas_rental_housing.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>[http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06_americas_rental_housing.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>[http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06_americas_rental_housing.pdf)

<sup>11</sup><http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>

<sup>12</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. *Keeping the Neighborhood Affordable: A Handbook of Housing Strategies for Gentrifying Areas*. Urban Institute (2006): n. pag. Web. 23 Mar 2010. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>13</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>14</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>15</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>16</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>17</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>18</sup>[http://www.tenants-to-homeowners.org/The\\_Program.htm](http://www.tenants-to-homeowners.org/The_Program.htm)

<sup>19</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>20</sup>Duplexes, attached housing, adding stories than normally allowed, and providing less green space

<sup>21</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>22</sup>US. Housing and Urban Development. *Community Planning and Development*. <http://www.huduser.org/rbc/search/rbcdetails.asp?DocId=1786>

<sup>23</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. "Keeping the Neighborhood Affordable: A Handbook of Housing Strategies for Gentrifying Areas." [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)

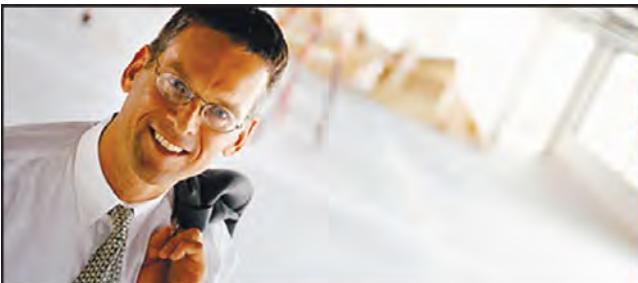
<sup>24</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>25</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.

<sup>26</sup>Byrne, J. Peter, and Michael Diamond. "Affordable housing, land tenure, and urban policy: the matrix revealed." *Fordham Urban Law Journal*

<sup>27</sup>[http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh06_americas_rental_housing.pdf)

<sup>28</sup>Levy, Diane, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. <[http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295\\_gentrifying\\_areas.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf)>.



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# Best Practices

by Nathan Eberline

## Social Sensibility

Government officials who observed a recent Alliance for Innovation webinar may have been surprised to see the lineup of panelists. Representatives from Garden City, Kansas joined speakers from major metro areas in California, Michigan, and Virginia. The group gathered in March to discuss policy issues and risk management associated with social media. Alliance for Innovation, an organization that promotes innovation in local government, wanted to discuss what “effective policies look like, how do you develop them, and how often are they revisited.” The session also addressed the risk management side of social media and its impact on employees, their spouses and friends, elected officials, and recruitment.

Long before Garden City could share its information with the country, the City had to wrestle with how it would handle decisions on policies and risk management. Garden City began its foray into the world of social media in 2009 after a citizen survey revealed a significant disconnect between the community and the City decision-making process (see “Open Source Government, One Fan at a Time,” page 112). The City realized the necessity of better communication lines—both from the City and the citizens. Garden City responded by announcing its presence on Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), search “Garden City”) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/cityofgcks>). The result has been a great success with significant improvements in citizen interaction.

But the incorporation of any new product also brings concerns that require attention. Despite the positive response from the community, the City suddenly faced questions that required answers. Tanner Lucas, Garden City’s Communications Specialist, was soon having conversations with fellow city officials trying to determine how they wanted the tools to function. Similarly, are the tools available for everyone to use? The answers to these questions require a balancing act between effectively reaching constituents with a coherent message, while also providing opportunities for various departments to have a voice. With that in mind, Garden City created a Social Media Policy to address the concerns of current social media tools and the tools that may develop in the future.

Garden City’s policy begins with a purpose statement that emphasizes the need to promote excellent customer service and enhancing that service by using the available technological tools to reach a broader audience. The City also noted the importance of taking a “measured, strategic approach to the implementation of social media to avoid potentially damaging consequences such as the presence of out-of-date information, the failure to provide appropriate information to citizens who have requested it, or the misrepresentation of the City of Garden City policies, services, or values.”

After establishing the policy’s purpose, the City looked to define the media that the City is currently using, while keeping an

eye on tools that may be valuable in the future. They needed a policy that had flexibility to stay relevant as technology changes. Consequently, their efforts took a broad approach at defining social media as it relates to the City.

The City has defined social media as, “any site or online process designed to facilitate simple and streamlined communication between users.” They also noted the social media characteristics, which includes tools that “allow for quick, unfiltered, and often spontaneous communication opportunities.” But it is that “quick, unfiltered” characteristic that raises concerns about providing helpful and professional information to citizens.

Matt Allen, City Manager for Garden City, serves as the goalie to prevent inaccurate information from sliding into the community. The policy requires the City Manager to “approve what social media outlets may be suitable for use by the City and its departments. All departments requesting a presence on an approved social media site must submit a written request to the City Manager.”

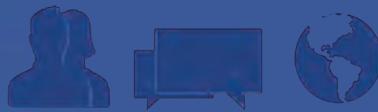
After communications flow through the manager’s office, Lucas organizes the information into a coherent and uniform voice, essentially branding the information with a professional stamp to represent Garden City. He then releases the information via traditional avenues along with the social media sites. The response has been positive from the community, but it has been the strong policy that has helped the process thrive internally.

It is with that success in mind, that Alliance for Innovation included Garden City with the sizable metro cities from across the country. Numerous cities are effectively using social media to better interact with citizens, but it also requires a degree of sensibility to ensure the communications are valuable. Garden City’s approach has helped ensure that they consider everything from reporting malfunctioning stoplights via twitter to discussing the applicability of the Kansas Open Meetings Act as it applies to commissioners posting on the City’s Facebook page.

Not only did Garden City attract a national audience with its use of social media policies, but they are also sharing their information at an upcoming conference in Kansas. The Kansas Association of Public Information Officers (KAPIO) has their annual conference in Lawrence, May 13-14, 2010 (<http://www.kapioconference.org/>). Lucas will present his experiences with social media along with many other presenters on the topic of public communication.

As your city delves into the world of social media, make sure to take the time and make the effort to do so carefully. Your efforts may not gain you national acclaim, but you can be confident that your accessibility to the community and individual citizens will make the endeavor very much worthwhile.

 *Nathan Eberline is the Intergovernmental Relations Associate for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at [neberline@lkm.org](mailto:neberline@lkm.org) or (785) 354-9565.*



## City of Garden City, KS

Wall

Info

Photos

Twitter

You

### Open Source Government, One Fan at a Time by Tanner Lucas

Open Source Government. What does that even mean? It's a pretty catchy phrase that we've been using to describe how we have begun using social media to capture public input. The term comes from the Open Source Governance philosophy, which combines the principles of the open source technology movement (think Wikipedia) and democracy to allow more people to participate in the creation of public policy. This philosophy opens the democratic process allowing people to play an active role in developing policies, programs, etc. that best fit their needs while also serving to improve the quality of life for residents throughout the entire community.

So, there is a philosophical argument for integrating social media technologies into an organization's communication plan. Unfortunately, this philosophy is just that, a philosophy; and while many agree that social media is a useful tool to connect local government and citizens, there must be a practical way to integrate the technology into your communication infrastructure. Let's look at what businesses have been doing for a while now.

Businesses realized the impact of social networking sites a couple of years ago, (2007 to be exact) when they began using the technology as a way to bolster their customer relationship management infrastructure, allowing them to more effectively communicate with their customers. Sites like Myspace and Facebook have allowed businesses to connect with (in theory) more than 400 million consumers, providing a mechanism for feedback on any number of products and services offered by businesses. But for businesses, the act of bringing social media into the fold was profit driven. Businesses had to begin using the same tools as their consumers in order to build relationships and capture a larger market share for their products. But, governments have a unique opportunity to leverage this technology and bring people into the local government decision-making process.

When the City of Garden City began our efforts with social media, we were doing so to meet a community need. Prior to the integration of Facebook in June, 2009, the City of Garden City's communication infrastructure included: a bi-monthly newsletter, our website, and our government access cable channel (Channel 8). A citizen survey conducted in January, 2009, indicated that many of our residents did not feel as though they had a voice in the decisions being made by their elected officials. So, our goal was to provide our residents with an opportunity to provide their input into the decisions their local officials were making.

To accomplish this goal, we knew that our *Fan Page* needed to have an organic feel. We wanted people to see themselves

Add to My Page's Favorites  
Suggest to Friends

The City of Garden City values excellent customer service, the roles our employees and residents play in improving our community, and measuring its performance to your expectations.

#### Favorite Pages

3 of 11 Pages

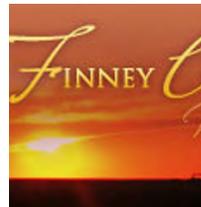
See All



The Garden City Telegram



Kansas



Finney County, KS



### Basic Info

Location: **301 N. 8th ST**  
**Garden City, KS, 67846**

Phone: **(620) 276-1100**  
 Mon – Fri: **8:00 – 5:00 pm**

### Detailed Info

Website: <http://www.garden-city.com>  
<http://www.twitter.com/cityofgcks>  
<http://www.buffalodunes.org>  
<http://www.fly2gck.com>

Parking: **Street**  
**Parking Lot**

Public Transit: **City Link, <http://www.seniorcenterfc.com/transportation.html>**

actually read them and participate.” Since Garden City established its Facebook page, the organization has been able to use a community-based approach to information delivery to generate feedback from our fans on issues ranging from policy decisions that are being considered by the City Commission, to how residents felt about an event held at Lee Richardson Zoo, to what residents feel is the best way for the City to use vacant buildings and properties. We have been able to effectively generate interest and participation in the local government decision-making process simply by integrating these new technologies.

According to Allen, “Social networking is a game-changer. Social networking brings local government to more people and meets them ‘where they are’ and ‘on their terms.’ As a result, the conversations create the most fertile bed for community-based ideas, policy suggestions, complaints, and compliments.

I’ve ever seen. Although it is happening in cyberspace, the modern day version of a soapbox, rather than the open air of a town center, the raw nature of Open Source Government is the civic discussions of our founding fathers. So we’ve traded open-air for Internet, and the eloquence of the Queen’s English for phrases like “OMG” and “LOL.” At the core, though, people (from all corners of our community) are re-engaging in their local government and many of those are engaging in their first civic discussion of any kind. That’s what matters.”

In the end, that is what matters. Organizations have an obligation to provide people with information about issues that impact their lives. More importantly, municipal organizations have the obligation to provide their residents with feedback mechanisms. The City of Garden City is on its way to becoming an Open Source Government. We put just about everything we do out for public consumption, and our residents have the opportunity to let us know how they feel about our actions and decisions. When organizations open themselves up to the public, it improves the quality of decision-making and it enhances their ability to connect with their customers. This is exactly what Garden City has been able to do. We have opened up and become more transparent, allowing people to actively participate in discussions and decisions that impact their lives on a daily basis.

interacting with other members of the community at special events. So, we began posting pictures of community events—parades, festivals, recreational activities, etc. We posted pictures of City-owned facilities and information about them. Staff also started posting information about services, programs, etc. on the *Fan Page*, providing our fans with information so that the page could be viewed as a resource. Most importantly, though, we began asking for opinions about what citizens thought was important. Along the way, something funny happened—it worked! People actually began to actively participate in discussions about facilities, programs, and events.

The key for the City of Garden City has been our approach to social networking. Our philosophy is that social networking is essentially the same as community building. The same principles apply, so an organization’s on-line community (particularly a municipal government’s on-line community) should be consistent with its actual community. We have taken this approach to information sharing and generating conversations to allow fans to organically construct their own online community through Facebook. It has a very rich culture and is opening doors for participatory government in our community—the City of Garden City has 1,260 fans on Facebook and 120 followers on Twitter.

The great thing about Facebook, and eventually Twitter, was that our top level management supported the initiative from the beginning. According to City Manager, Matt Allen, “Social networking technologies have allowed us to take well-developed and well-intended public information about our services and decision-making processes and get them to a place where people

 *Tanner Lucas has been the Communication Specialist for the City of Garden City since July, 2007. He can be contacted at [tlucas@garden-city.org](mailto:tlucas@garden-city.org) or by phone at (620) 276-1160.*



# Mainstreet News

## Hays Wins Award

Hays, known as the “little city with a big heart,” is the latest recipient of the Governor’s Arts Award for Arts Community. The City was recognized at a ceremony held on the campus of Washburn University.

The Governor’s Arts Award celebrates and recognizes the arts and artists of Kansas. The winner of this award is a Kansas community that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in arts activities. The City was recognized for its commitment of significant funds to the growth, development, and sustainability of artists and arts programs, activities, and organization. Typically, the funds are raised through a combination of public and private dollars.

During the ceremony, Governor Parkinson reflected upon the significant role of an artist in a community, “although they may be obscure, anonymous and often impoverished in their lifetime, long after the politician has gone, they will endure...this is the case because they amaze us by their incredible work. They inspire us by telling us what humans are capable of and they tell the story of their time in a way that otherwise simply could not be told.”

Mayor Ron Mellick, who accepted the award, added that “we [Hays] are literally an arts hands-on community...a community that supports and lives beyond our legacy through the arts.”

## City Official Named President of National Organization

John D’Angelo, Manager of the City of Wichita’s Arts & Cultural Services Division, has been elected president of the United States Urban Arts Federation’s (USUAF) Executive Committee. D’Angelo, who has served as an at-large member on the organization’s Executive Committee for the past two years, was named to the position during USUAF’s biannual meeting in Washington, D.C.

USUAF is a program of the Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. USUAF is comprised of the chief executives of arts agencies in the nation’s largest 60 cities. D’Angelo will guide USUAF in addressing the social, educational, and economic development impact of arts in its represented regions and around the United States.

“It is an honor to lead this group of art administrators and facilitate the exchange of best practices,” D’Angelo said. “I consider USUAF to be a beneficial resource for the City of Wichita as we continue to expand and enhance our cultural offerings and offer all citizens art opportunities that are both relevant and thought-provoking.”

D’Angelo plans to utilize the first-ever Arts Index Report, issued by Americans for the Arts which measures charitable giving and attendance. “I’m pleased that John is being recognized for his long time commitment to the arts,” Wichita City Manager Robert Layton said. “He will be a valuable asset to this organization in his new leadership role.”

## Kansas Cities Receive Grants

Six rural Kansas communities will share \$500,000 in Small Communities Improvement Program funding from the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The cities of Phillipsburg, Rossville, St. Mary’s, Tribune, Udall, and White City were each awarded funds through the program, which is designed to assist communities with populations of 5,000 or less. The six communities will provide \$681,690 volunteer time, labor, and materials toward their projects.

“We are excited to provide funding to these deserving communities and organizations,” said Secretary of Commerce Bill Thornton. “The Small Communities Improvement Program was created especially for our smallest communities, those communities that sometimes struggle to secure other funding sources. SCIP funding is a great tool for us to encourage rural community development in Kansas.”

## Kansas Has Nation’s Best Highways

A special report on the nation’s highways, published in the April edition of *Reader’s Digest* concluded that Kansas had the top highway system. The study factored safety statistics, pavement condition, bridge condition, congestion-urban freeway, and congestion-urban lane miles in ranking the Kansas highway system. Rounding out the top five are Wisconsin, Montana, New Mexico and Utah.

“This announcement is great news for our state, but also serves as a reminder that in order for Kansas to remain competitive,

we must maintain our exemplary transportation system,” said Governor Mark Parkinson.

“Strong roads not only protect the well-being of our citizens, they allow us to attract businesses from around the world, create jobs, and stimulate the Kansas economy. In order to come out of this recession stronger than before, we need to properly fund the services that uphold the foundation of our state and position us to move forward.”

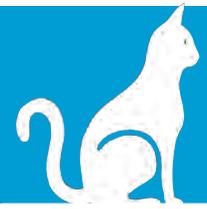
## “Staying Alive” CPR for OP Council

After a recent “Heart Saver Award” presented to a citizen for saving a life with Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), one councilmember confessed that he did not know how to perform CPR.

Overland Park Fire Department Training Officer Buck Heath, along with help from firefighters and paramedics, plan to fix that

with a special CPR class for Overland Park Council members. Buck uses some very entertaining teaching methods that help students remember key elements of this life-saving training.

# On the Lighter Side... Joe Friday, The City Kitty



If we're lucky, life around City Hall is pretty good most days. Hopefully, folks get along with one another, customers leave satisfied, and city leaders are content. But, on those days when it doesn't go so smoothly, it's nice to have something to break the tension, to make you smile, to remind you that there's life beyond these walls. In Atchison, our morale booster is our city kitty, Joe Friday.

Friday joined the City Hall family about six years ago when our City Attorney, out on his pre-dawn jog, saw a pitiful fuzzy black kitten hanging around City Hall. With the chill in the air, he cracked open the front door, thinking he would come back by later on and find a home for the kitten. Little did he know that Friday was already home.

Friday found a soft spot in our hearts and a life in public service. City Hall is his kingdom and he roams freely. There's always something interesting going on, a chance to see and be seen as cats love to do.

Just about everyone around City Hall plays a role in Friday's quality of life, whether it's a dish of water on the file cabinet, sharing a little tuna broth treat, or catnip at Christmas time. Nights and weekends, Friday beds down in the police chief's office in our west wing. But each work day, he maintains a rigorous schedule of visiting office to office, wandering to wherever the action is.

A big, husky kitty with long black fur, Friday is friendly towards everyone. He prefers not to be picked up, thank you, but will tolerate it graciously. He would much rather woller around on the floor and let you scratch his chest, neck, and whiskers.

If you let him, he'll park himself in the middle of your desk and might even sit through a meeting or conference call, weighing in now and then with a soft yowl and a flip of the tail. But like a consummate professional, he also knows when we're getting down to business and it's time to find his entertainment elsewhere.

In the afternoons, he prefers naps on the Commission dais when the sun hits it just right or a little quiet time in the basement

stalking the dust bunnies. But, he's really in his element on Wednesdays. The City holds Municipal Court at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday mornings. It's a tough audience and the proceedings can get tense, but leave it to Friday to break the tension.

"Friday knows when it's Wednesday," said Municipal Court Clerk Rona Downing. "He'll visit with everybody and work the crowd. Our court clientele aren't always so happy to be here, but it really does help calm things down having Friday around. He puts a smile into a tough situation for a lot of folks."

City Manager Trey Cocking has dogs at home, but is happy to have a mascot like Friday at work.

"Quite a few salespeople and consultants remember Atchison because we're 'the place that has that cat,'" says Cocking. "Every year, we have a consultant come in to give a group presentation to employees and every year, Friday sits in on the workshop. This consultant looks forward to coming back to Atchison because he gets such a kick out of this cat and being in an environment like ours where we support something like that."

Yes, most days around City Hall are pretty good. But when they're not, it's nice to have a reminder like Friday that there's a lighter side to public service. Friday is our stress-buster and our morale booster.

None of us own Friday, but we all have ownership in Friday. He reminds us that beyond just a cat, we're all stewards of something shared. If you think about it, taking care of Friday together is really just an extension of what we do as public servants. We make an individual contribution for a greater good. When we're able to connect to that purpose, we remember what we're here for after all and why it's worth the effort. And, that, friends, makes for a good day at City Hall.

☀ *Mandy Cawby is the Director of Finance for the City of Atchison. She can be reached at [mandyc@cityofatchison.com](mailto:mandyc@cityofatchison.com) or (913) 367-5500.*





# All-America City

# Lenexa and Scott County Named 2010 Finalist

by Mike McGrath

The National Civic League (NCL) announced the finalists for the 2010 All-America City Awards, the nation's oldest and most prestigious civic recognition award.

"These are some of the most innovative communities in the country," notes NCL President Gloria Rubio-Cortes. "They give us hope and inspiration and teach us important lessons about leveraging the civic energy of ordinary people to address difficult challenges during some very tough economic times."

**The 2010 All-America City finalists are addressing such issues as:**

- Diversifying the labor force
- Providing affordable housing options in a tough economy
- Funding basic services to people of need in the recession
- Increasing tax base to fund schools
- Transitioning to a more diverse workforce
- Providing cold weather shelter for the increased numbers of homeless
- Overcoming financial hurdles to serve the needs of youth

**Listed alphabetically by state, the 2010 All-America City finalists:**

Chandler, AZ; Bentonville, AR; Dublin, CA; Lynwood, CA; Rancho Cordova, CA; Vernon Central (neighborhood) CA; Miami Lakes, FL; North Miami, FL; Acworth, GA; Belleville, IL; Canton, IL; Noblesville, IN; Des Moines, IA; Lenexa, KS; Scott County, KS; Bowling Green, KY; Salisbury, MD; Ferguson, MO;

Riverside, MO; Lynbrook, NY; Gastonia, NC; West Chester, OH; Wyoming, OH; Mount Pleasant, SC; El Paso, TX; Abingdon, VA; Middleton, Wisconsin.

To become a finalist, each participant completed an application documenting three community projects that address their communities' most pressing challenges. More than 500 communities from around the country have earned this distinguished title. Some have earned it five times over the past 61 years. Each community will send a delegation to Kansas City to tell their stories of positive community change to a jury of civic experts. The 10 All-America Cities will be announced on June 18.

Learn more about the award program and follow events leading up to the Kansas City event on All-America City's blog at [www.allamericacityaward.com](http://www.allamericacityaward.com).

The All-America City Awards program is sponsored by Prudential, MWH, Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Southern California Edison, Burns & McDonnell, Pforzheimer Foundation, and Southwest Airlines, the official airline of the All-America City Awards.

NCL is a 116-year-old nonpartisan nonprofit organization that strengthens democracy by increasing the capacity of our nation's people to fully participate in and build healthy and prosperous communities across America.

 *Mike McGrath is the Editor of the National Civic Review. He can be reached at [mikem@ncl.org](mailto:mikem@ncl.org) or (303) 571-4343.*

*Photo Below Left: Scouts from the City of Lenexa volunteer their time to plant trees on Earth Day to assist with one of Lenexa's community projects. Photo provided by the City of Lenexa.*

*Photo Below Right: With the help of hundreds of volunteers and months of collaboration and planning, Scott City built the "Park on the Plains." The playground was a \$300,000 private funded community project that was completed in one week's time. Photo provided by Scott City Area Chamber of Commerce.*





## ... '10 Spring Break, Part Deux

Leaving Emporia, we stopped by two cities I had not previously “officially” visited: Neosho Rapids (pop: 273) and Hartford (pop: 496), both located just east of Emporia (along the Neosho River, of course), south of I-35.

Neosho Rapids, like many very small cities, does not list a physical address for city hall, so we did not get to say hello there. In Hartford, after Sue took a picture of Maddi next to another old city jail cell (this one an iron-bar cage, displayed along the sidewalk by the local museum), we stopped in and chatted with City Clerk, Chris Botterill, who we found out, was an Ohio transplant to Kansas about six years ago. Chris, like our family, picked the wrong basketball team to root for, as hers (Ohio State, of course) also lost shortly thereafter, and way too early in the NCAA tournament to be thrilled about.

A few miles on to the east, south off the interstate and just north of “Old-50,” we stopped in at Lebo (Pop: 949), and had a fun time visiting with City Clerk, Carrie Sloan. On this mild mid-March day, Carrie told us about the annual Odean Sargeant Trout Tournament, scheduled for upcoming Saturday—just four days later ([www.skyways.org/towns/Lebo/index.htm](http://www.skyways.org/towns/Lebo/index.htm)). Lebo has a trout season every year, from February to May, at the city pond (this year, the City paid \$1,200 for 432 trout), and holds this fishing derby (first place is worth \$250) on the Saturday closest to the first day of Spring. (Unfortunately, Spring can arrive wild in Kansas, and this year’s first day of spring Saturday turned out to be the day a big, windy “winter” snowstorm roared through. The tourney was postponed a week...but, then, Mother Nature greeted the anglers on that day with a soaking rain...March in Kansas can be tough to plan for.)

Later in our multi-day excursion, we stopped in the Linwood City Hall and talked with Assistant City Clerk, Bert Fritz. Linwood (pop: 391) is located on K-32 (Linwood Road), several miles east of Lawrence—tucked up alongside a northward bend in the Kaw, and south of the Kansas Turnpike (I-70 in this part of the state). Bert filled us in on local goings on, and how the City is coping (as most all cities in Kansas seem to be having to do) with the “Big R” (recession/bad economy/downturn/whatever). Times are tough in big cities, AND in small cities, too.

The first city stop we made on our last day out was at “The Secret City”... Grandview Plaza (current population officially listed at 1,017), located right on old US-40, and just off I-70; squeezed in between Junction City to the west and Fort Riley to the east. I spoke at length with City Clerk, Shirley Bowers, and she told me all about the history of Grandview Plaza, which is interesting in that cities in non-metro areas typically do not share borders. Obviously, the Army post right next door had a lot to do with Grandview Plaza’s beginnings, but there were other factors, including the massive state-wide flooding of 1951 (and two other floods), and the rather

famous Cohen’s Chicken House restaurant, which, after the big flood, was re-located right on US-40, and on high ground (and which then burned to the ground in 1987—Shirley spotted the smoke on her way to work in Junction City...by the time she got there, the restaurant was fully engulfed). Shirley is only the fourth city clerk ever in Grandview Plaza, which was finally incorporated in 1963. She provided me with a neat little history work-up done by now retired and longtime Mayor, Gerald Bielefeld (1985-2009; a city council member before that), whose service to the City totaled nearly 34 years! Because of a wonderful new, HUGE multi-unit apartment complex on the City’s east edge (the last unit just now being finished), the City’s population has grown by over 500 in the last year or so, and will ultimately almost double as a result of the project (which is on the tax rolls in its entirety). Grandview Plaza’s name comes (mostly) from its original Native American description, which, translated, meant “grand view,” naturally enough...though it is not known, for sure, how the “Plaza” part got added. Apparently, the “Secret City” tag came about since visitors to town also thought it was a part of Junction City, and thus, the City was a “secret.”

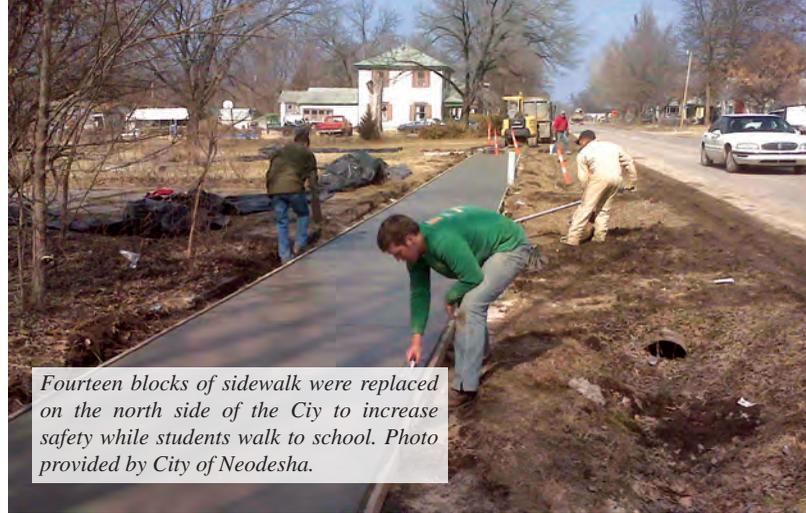
Our annual work/play spring break trip featured stops in several other small cities, on which the confines of this space do not allow further elaboration until next time.

My recommendation this month of the opening of the 2010 Baseball Season is two books: *Jackie Robinson: A Biography*, by Arnold Rampersad, and *Carrying Jackie’s Torch: The Players Who Integrated Baseball—And America*, by Steve Jacobson. Baseball and social history buffs will appreciate these two wonderful works, which detail just how hard it was for the “first round” of Integration to take place, and the incredible obstacles these men and others had to overcome to succeed. Jackie was the first of his race to play in a major league ballgame (in April 1947), and those who signed right after him were pioneers of the highest order; many of those had to live in and travel throughout the South, in baseball’s minor leagues (before getting to the big leagues—which were then contained nearly entirely in the Northeast US). Even into the mid-50s several major league teams were not integrated, and in one big league city, the visiting team’s black players were forced to find separate hotels even into the mid-50s. P.S...Did you know that Jackie Robinson was one of the very first group of African Americans to graduate from officer candidate school?—he was commissioned a second lieutenant on January 28, 1943, as a United States Army Cavalry officer... at Fort Riley, Kansas.

 Don Osenbaugh is the Director of Finance and Field Services for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at [dosenbaugh@lkm.org](mailto:dosenbaugh@lkm.org) or (316) 259-3847.



*Neodesha Splash Zone swimming pool is set to open on Memorial Day, 2010. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*



*Fourteen blocks of sidewalk were replaced on the north side of the City to increase safety while students walk to school. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*

# Neodesha: Optimistically

The community of Neodesha is located in Southeast Kansas where the Fall and Verdigris Rivers meet. Many challenges have beset Neodesha over the past several years including contamination of land and groundwater, the flood of 2007, the wind and winter storms in 2009-2010, and the economic downturn.

Fortunately, Neodesha has long been a diversified community with many employers. While some employers faced layoffs, others continued on. In fact, one industry is expanding its operations by building a new 100,000 sq. ft. facility, while another is planning to build a new facility as well.

Neodesha has “weathered the storm” and the community is focused on the future. Some of the exciting projects that are currently happening in the city include:

### **New Swimming Pool**

Neodesha has had no pool for our community since the flood of 2007. Even in the face of economic uncertainty, the community overwhelmingly approved a 1¢ sales tax for the construction of a new swimming facility by a 4:1 margin. A new site, situated between Northlawn Elementary and City Hall was selected. To the eager anticipation of children and adults alike, the new Neodesha Splash Zone is set to open on Memorial Day, 2010.

### **New Ball field Constructed/Old Swimming Pool Demolished**

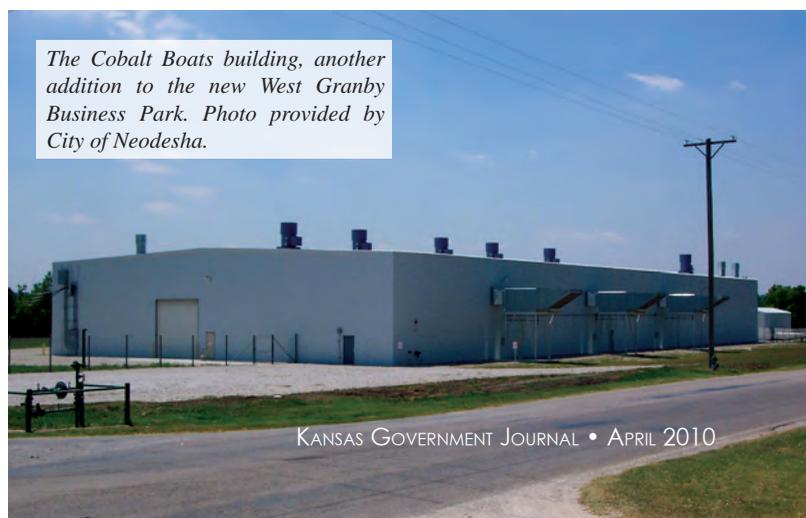
The old swimming pool was demolished, and a new ball field is in the process of being constructed at the same location. One of the benefits of the new ball field is its location—just east of the high school and adjoining the existing Barney’s baseball/softball field just to the north. In fact, the new ball field is appropriately named Barney’s North, and is expected to be operational in time for the summer baseball/softball season.

### **Safe Routes to School Sidewalk Replacement (\$250,000 Project)**

To fit in perfectly with the location of the new swimming pool on the north side of the city, Neodesha was awarded and began construction on a Safe Routes to School Sidewalk Replacement project. The \$250,000 Kansas Department of Transportation grant was a culmination of several years of collaborative work between the City and the School District and replaces approximately 14 blocks of sidewalk along the City’s north-south corridor with new, beautiful 5 ft. sidewalks and pathways. This project is nearing completion and the community loves the new sidewalks.



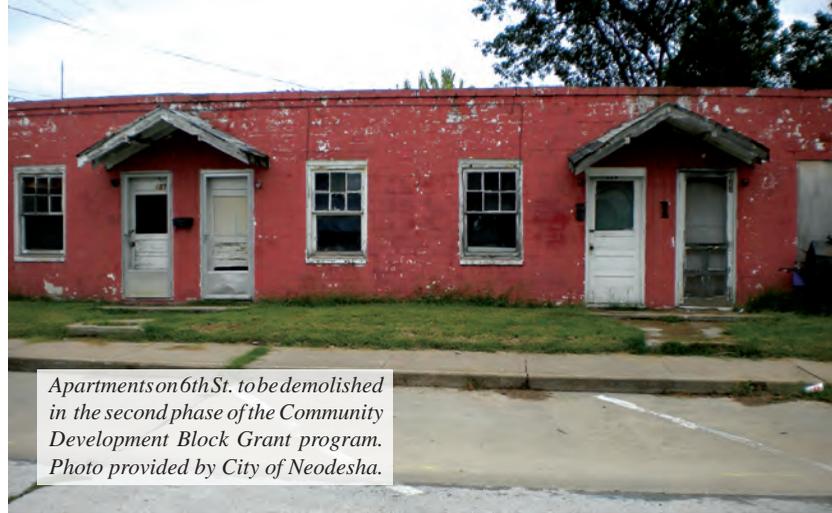
*Neodesha Plastics Inc., one of the first facilities to be built in the new West Granby Business Park. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*



*The Cobalt Boats building, another addition to the new West Granby Business Park. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*



*One of 29 structures to be demolished in the second phase of the Community Development Block Grant program. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*



*Apartments on 6th St. to be demolished in the second phase of the Community Development Block Grant program. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*

# Building for the Future

by J. D. Cox

## **CDBG Housing Demolition (\$253,645 Project):**

In addition to the houses that were included in the flood buyout project in 2009, the City was awarded a \$126,822 Community Development Block Grant for the demolition of additional dilapidated structures in the community. The bid for the demolition of 29 structures in the second phase has already gone out, which is in addition to the already demolished 24 structures in the first phase.

## **Construction of New Housing**

Neodesha was also awarded funding by the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation through Senate Bill 417 in 2009. Funding consists of a \$278,446 grant awarded in 2008, as well as a \$512,000 grant awarded in 2009 for the construction of infrastructure and housing in the community. These funds will be used to install infrastructure on a site that will be developed with multiple housing units as well as for construction of some in-fill homes.

## **New West Granby Business Park**

Finally, the City is embarking on the construction of a new business park that will be conveniently located just off of US400

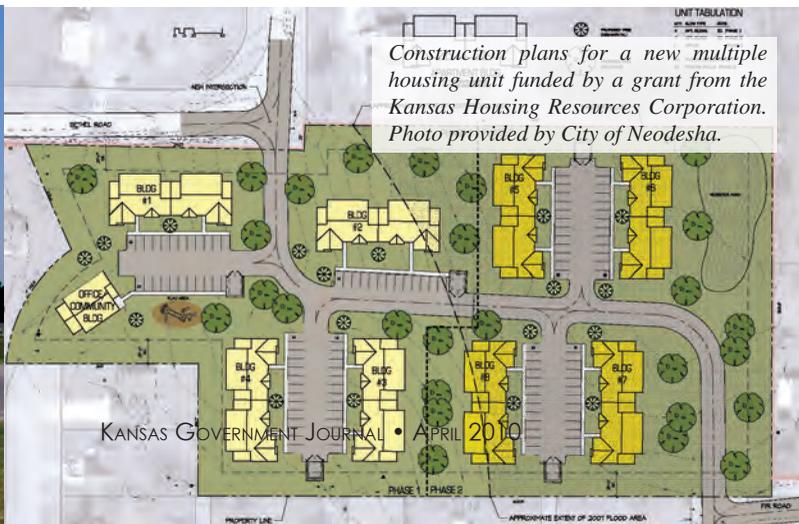
on the west side of Neodesha. The project consists of three phases, with the first phase to bring the necessary infrastructure to Neodesha. The first industry to build in the new park, completed. Another aspect of this project includes bringing in a secondary transmission line. This line will not only supply electricity to the new business park, but will also resolve the problem of the City's reliance on a single electrical feed into the City.

Finally, the community is reinvigorating itself with energy and leadership in its drive by the founding of a community development process that strives to engage the entire community in a process of planning and building for the future.

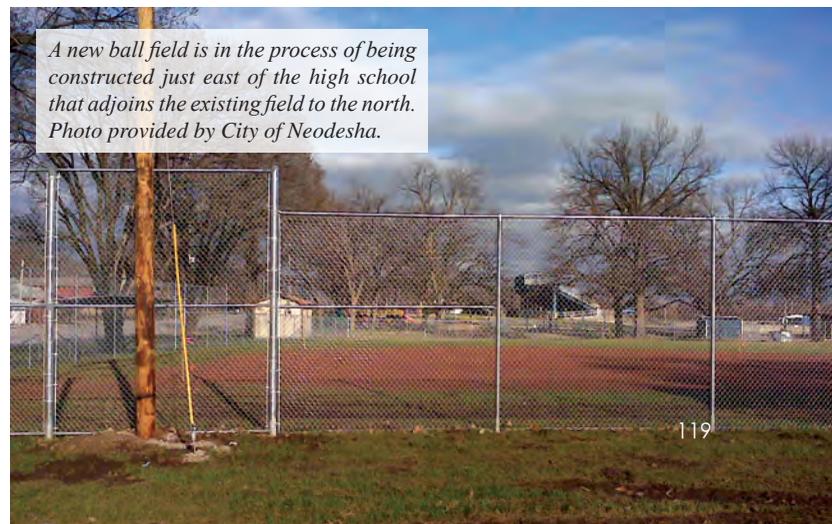
So, despite the many obstacles that have been thrown in our path, Neodesha is a town alive with activity, expansion and most of all optimism. The future is a bright one for our residents.

We are deeply grateful to all state and federal agencies for their assistance!

 *J.D. Cox is the City Administrator for the City of Neodesha. He can be reached at [jdcoc@neodesha.org](mailto:jdcoc@neodesha.org) or (620) 325-2828.*



*Construction plans for a new multiple housing unit funded by a grant from the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*



*A new ball field is in the process of being constructed just east of the high school that adjoins the existing field to the north. Photo provided by City of Neodesha.*



## Collective Bargaining

For many years, the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) has had a position in the Statement of Municipal Policy supporting the current process in the Public Employer-Employee Relations Act (PEERA), which allows cities to opt into the act if they wish to recognize unions. The statement goes on to say that we oppose any federal or state mandate requiring collective bargaining at the local level. There are a few cities in Kansas that have opted in to the PEERA, but most do not participate in collective bargaining. That may change in the coming months as Congress considers a mandatory collective bargaining bill for public safety employees. Even cities who have opted in to PEERA will be affected if the new law is adopted. A review of the Kansas process and what Congress is considering should be helpful and timely for cities concerned about this issue. While there are several different bills that have been introduced, they are very similar in their provisions and requirements.

First, it is important to note that LKM has no position on unions or collective bargaining, but supports cities being able to make a local choice about whether to opt in to the collective bargaining process. That is the posture of the PEERA, which begins at K.S.A. 75-4321, *et seq.*, which states that the governing body of a local government, “by a majority vote of all the members may elect to bring such public employer under the provisions of the this act. . . .” It further provides that, once the governing body has made the choice, it continues in effect, “unless rescinded by majority vote of all members of the governing body.” This has recently happened with one Kansas city rescinding its option to participate in the PEERA. Note that an affirmative action must be taken for cities to opt in to the PEERA. City employees, however, may join unions, organize and generally participate in a unionization process, but unless the city opts in to PEERA and recognizes the union by a majority vote of the governing body, it has no power to compel the city to negotiate with it as a bargaining unit representative of the city employees. Also, for cities wanting to opt in to PEERA, understand that there is a specific statutory process for how employees organize and how bargaining units become recognized.

The collective bargaining process brings into play many concepts with which cities are unfamiliar. Of course, most city employees in Kansas are employees-at-will, meaning the employment relationship may be terminated by either the employee or employer at any time for any reason, except for an unlawful reason. With employees subject to collective bargaining, however, that is not the case. First of all, most employees, except professional and supervisory employees, will be members of the bargaining unit. Both the city and representatives from the bargaining unit will “meet and confer in good faith” to reach an agreement on a union contract referred to as a “memorandum of agreement.” All conditions of employment are topics to be decided upon during the meet and confer process. Some of those include salaries, wages, hours of work, vacation and sick leave accrual, holidays, retirement and insurance benefits, overtime pay, shift differential pay, and discipline and grievance procedures. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement, there is a process in place for an impasse to be declared and the matter subject to mediation, in which an impartial third party mediator is assigned to assist the

parties in reaching an agreement. If that process is unsuccessful, the negotiations go to “fact-finding,” in which an individual weighs the facts as presented by both parties and prepares a report with recommendations about how to settle the dispute. Cities should keep in mind that the mediator, the fact-finder, and the arbitrator, discussed below, are paid for by the city, with the union paying for some of the costs, depending on the memorandum of understanding.

The grievance procedure has a set process that both the employee and city management must go through whenever an employee is disciplined or is unhappy with some condition of employment, including termination. Most memoranda of agreement have provisions that require just cause for termination and discipline must be substantiated, which eliminates the employment-at-will status. Most grievance procedures in collective bargaining agreements have a final step, which is to an arbitrator, or a panel of arbitrators, which may or may not be binding on the parties. Thus, both sides present their positions to the arbitrator, who will decide the merits of the case. One example might be an employee who was terminated appealing through the grievance procedure to have the union assist him or her in presenting the grievance to an arbitrator. If the arbitration is binding, both parties are bound by the decision and the employer may have to return the employee to work, if the discipline was a termination of employment.

With that backdrop of the Kansas law, here is a brief summary of how the several bills being considered by Congress could affect cities. First, it applies to public safety employees which would include firefighters, emergency services personnel, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and probation officers. It would not include supervisory employees. Under the bills, local government employers would be required to recognize the employees’ labor organization, to agree to bargain with the labor organization and to commit an agreement to writing. It would be required to bargain over wages, hours and conditions of employment. There must be a procedure in place to resolve impasses over contractual terms, such as mediation and fact-finding discussed above. As with the PEERA, these bills preclude striking by public employees.

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) will be given the responsibility to review states’ laws within 180 days to determine if they grant the same rights as the bill and, if so, those particular states’ laws will be respected. The FLRA will promulgate regulations for states whose laws do not substantially comply with the bill. So, the fact Kansas has the PEERA does not exclude Kansas from the act. It is up to the FLRA to deem Kansas to be in substantial compliance with whichever bill passes. Because PEERA is an opt-in type of act and not mandatory, that provision, at the very least would be considered non-compliant and would need to be changed to comply for public safety employees. Watch for more information from the League as these bills continue their way through Congress. It is anticipated that something could pass as early as this spring.

 Sandy Jacquot is Director of Law/General Counsel for the League of Kansas Municipalities. She can be reached at [sjacquot@lkm.org](mailto:sjacquot@lkm.org) or (785) 354-9565.



# Classified Advertising

## Assistant City Superintendent

The City of Leoti is hiring for the position of Assistant Superintendent. This position will be under the supervision of the City Superintendent. This employee assists the City Superintendent in supervising, planning, and organizing the activities of the Public Works Department including water, sewer, and street maintenance. This candidate should possess a strong mechanical aptitude and excellent communication, supervisory, organizational, and public relations skills.

A knowledge of equipment, road construction and repair techniques, water and wastewater treatment, and safety procedures, and a working knowledge of mathematics is required. This employee will operate loaders, tractors, trucks, backhoes, street sweepers, graders, mowers, and other department equipment. The ability to understand and anticipate problems, to enforce departmental policies and procedures and to interpret written instructions, maps, blueprints, reports, and manuals is required.

A high school diploma or GED is required. A valid Kansas CDL and small systems Kansas Water and Wastewater License will be required.

Successful candidate must agree to reside within the City of Leoti. Compensation will be commensurate with experience and ability. The City of Leoti is an Equal Opportunity Employer which offers generous salary and benefits packages. All offers of employment are conditional upon the successful completion of a post-offer physical exam, drug/alcohol testing and thorough background check, which includes a driving record.

Please contact the City of Leoti at 620-375-2341 for application or download at [www.leotikansas.org](http://www.leotikansas.org). Return application to: City of Leoti, PO Box 7E, Leoti, KS 67861

## Chief of Police

The City of Tonganoxie, Kansas (4,305 pop.) is accepting applications for the position of Chief of Police. The Chief of Police is responsible for planning, organizing and directing all activities of the Police Department for the community located in northeast Kansas.

This is a managerial position requiring experience, education, and training in modern

law enforcement with an ability to provide active leadership for the Police Department and support to the City administration and governing body.

This position requires budget preparation, personnel supervision, law enforcement knowledge, public and administrative communications, organizational management, capital planning, and public relations skills.

The Chief will supervise a department that includes 10 full-time officers including the Chief, 15 part-time officers, 5 reserve officers, and 1 police clerk.

Detailed information about the position and application requirements can be found on the City's website at [www.tonganoxie.org](http://www.tonganoxie.org).

The application deadline is May 28, 2010. Cover letter and resume should be submitted to Chief of Police Recruitment, City of Tonganoxie, 321 S. Delaware, Tonganoxie, KS 66086.

## City Superintendent

The City of Conway Springs is seeking an experienced working supervisor who will be responsible for all aspects of public works, including the maintenance and operations of the water and wastewater distribution systems, and for facility and road maintenance. Class I water or wastewater certification is preferred. Applicant must have a valid driver's license and High School diploma or equivalent. Salary is based on qualifications and experience. Applications are available at City Hall 208 W. Spring Ave. Conway Springs KS 67031, [cscity@haviglandtelco.com](mailto:cscity@haviglandtelco.com) or 620-456-2345.

## City Superintendent

The City of Jetmore is accepting applications for City Superintendent. Salary DOQ, plus excellent benefits. Position performs administrative and professional work in planning, organizing, and directing Public Works including: electric, wind generation, sewage/water treatment, water utilities, parks and lakes, and airport. Send cover letter and resume to: City Clerk, P.O. Box 8, Jetmore, KS 67854 or e-mail [jetmore@fairpoint.net](mailto:jetmore@fairpoint.net).

## City Superintendent

Successful candidate will demonstrate ability to plan, coordinate and schedule personnel, materials, and equipment necessary to maintain the City of Leoti

streets, alleys, parking lots, water system, sewer system, and parks in good working order and sound condition. The candidate will enforce departmental safety policies and procedures—must possess excellent communication, organizational, supervisory, technical, and public relations skills.

A knowledge of equipment, road construction and repair techniques, water and wastewater treatment, and safety procedures, and a working knowledge of mathematics is required. This employee must be able to operate loaders, tractors, trucks, backhoes, street sweepers, graders, mowers, and other department equipment. The ability to understand and anticipate problems to enforce departmental policies and procedures, and to interpret written instructions, maps, blueprints, reports, and manuals is required.

A high school diploma or GED is required. Must be able to attain a valid Kansas Commercial Drivers License (CDL) and small systems Kansas Water and Wastewater License.

Successful candidate must agree to reside within the City of Leoti. Compensation will be commensurate with experience and ability. The City of Leoti is an Equal Opportunity Employer which offers generous salary and benefits packages. All offers of employment are conditional upon the successful completion of a post-offer physical exam, drug screen, and thorough background check, including driving record.

Please contact the City of Leoti at 620-375-2341 for application packet or download at [www.leotikansas.org](http://www.leotikansas.org). Return application and resume to: City of Leoti, PO Box 7E, Leoti, KS 67861

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## Consolidated Emergency

### Communications Center Director

The Communications Center Director is a new position that will be responsible

for merging two existing PSAPs into one consolidated countywide emergency communications center. The Communications Center will be a department of Cowley County and the Director will report to the County Administrator. Salary Range: \$48,339 to \$63,523, plus benefits.

**Minimum Requirements Desired:** Bachelor's degree in business, public administration, emergency communications, administration of justice, or related field. Minimum of five years experience in emergency communications, including responsible supervisory duties, or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience.

For complete information on the position and to download a county application form, please visit the [www.cowleycounty.org/website](http://www.cowleycounty.org/website).

Mail resume, a minimum of five work related references, salary history, and completed Cowley County application form to: Cowley County Emergency Communications Center (911) Director Search, 311 E. 9th Avenue, Winfield, KS 67156-2843. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled; however, the first review of applicants will take place May 7, 2010. Cowley County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minority and Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

#### **County Administrator**

Finney County is seeking an experienced professional to serve as County Administrator. Finney County is a progressive regional agricultural, commercial, and medical services center in Southwest Kansas. The county's population is over 40,000 and there are two incorporated communities, Garden City, the county seat with a population of 30,000, and Holcomb with a population of 2000.

The County Administrator reports to the five-member Board of County Commissioners and is responsible for the day-to-day professional management of 15 departments and 325 employees. The 2010 annual budget for Finney County is over \$35 million. The County Administrator assists the County Commission in the development of budget, policy and procedures, and personnel administration, and coordinates strategic planning and financial management activities. The Administrator works with 5 elected department heads and has direct supervisory responsibility of ten department heads and their departmental operations.

Qualifications for this position include a minimum of 5 years in public administration

with extensive knowledge of county operations, including budget development, capital improvement planning, strategic planning, and statutory requirements impacting local government administration in the state of Kansas. Qualified candidates will have a master's degree in public administration or related field with 5 years of experience, or a bachelor's degree in a relevant field with 7-10 years of county government experience. Starting salary and benefits are negotiable based upon experience and qualifications.

Comprehensive resumes are to be submitted to the Application Review Committee, c/o County Clerk Elsa Ulrich, P. O. Box M, Garden City, Kansas 67846. Email address for electronic submissions is [eulrich@finneycounty.org](mailto:eulrich@finneycounty.org). Resumes will be accepted through the close of business May 21, 2010.

#### **Director of Human Resources**

The City of Pittsburg, Kansas is seeking a Director of Human Resources. Pittsburg is located in extreme southeast Kansas and has a population of 19,234. The City of Pittsburg employs 197 full time employees. This exempt position will plan, organize, and direct the activities of the Human Resources Department including but not limited to recruitment and selection, job classification and compensation, employee benefits, organizational development and training, Federal and State employment law compliance, and maintaining employee relations.

A Bachelor's degree in public, personnel or business administration, or related field and five years experience in all phases of public or private sector personnel administration including three years of progressively responsible supervisory experience is requested. A Masters degree is preferred. Any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the knowledge and abilities necessary to perform the work will be considered.

The salary range is \$51,751 - \$84,032 depending upon qualifications and experience.

Please submit application, cover letter, resume, and up to five references to the attention of: The City Clerk at 201 West 4th Street, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Applications will be accepted through May 31st, 2010, and are available at City Hall, 201 W. 4th Street, Pittsburg, Kansas, or online at [www.pittks.org](http://www.pittks.org). EOE

#### **Executive Director**

The Kansas State Board of Emergency

Medical Services is seeking applications from interested persons for this lead position with our agency. To apply, please access [www.jobs.ks.gov](http://www.jobs.ks.gov). Refer to Requisition #165503. Applications accepted until close of business on June 3, 2010.

#### **Fire-EMS Chief**

The City of Arkansas City, Kansas, (12,000 pop.) seeks a skilled, proven, and progressive individual to lead and manage the Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department. The department operates from one central station, has an operational budget of \$2 million and responds to an average of 2,100 calls annually.

The City is seeking a candidate who will be an innovative leader with the ability to mentor, train and motivate employees, set objectives for the department, and ensure the delivery of exceptional fire and emergency medical services. A strong background in integrated Fire and EMS necessary.

Significant supervisory experience and firefighter certifications required. Bachelor's degree in Fire Science or related field and certified Fire Inspector designation and a minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in a Fire-EMS area, including 5 years of increasingly responsible command experience preferred. Any equivalent combination of training, experience, and education that provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities may be considered by the City.

Must establish residence within the City of Arkansas City within six months of date of hire. Compensation DOQ. Excellent benefits package. The successful applicant must pass post-offer, pre-employment drug/alcohol screens along with physical capacity profile, and background checks.

Please apply through Kansas HRePartners at [www.hrepartners.com](http://www.hrepartners.com). For additional information on the position and our community visit [www.arkcity.org](http://www.arkcity.org). Click on City Government and then click on Fire-EMS Chief Position Profile. Applications accepted through Monday, May 3, 2010. EOE/ADA

#### **Journeyman Lineman**

City of Osawatomie is currently taking applications for a Journeyman Lineman. Requires electrical lineman experience. Job descriptions are available and applications will be accepted at City Offices, 439 Main Street, Osawatomie, KS 66064 or email [asmith@osawatomiaks.org](mailto:asmith@osawatomiaks.org). Applications will be accepted until position is filled. The City of Osawatomie is an EOE.



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## The Old Briggs & Stratton



Yesterday I bid farewell to my trusted old Briggs & Stratton lawnmower. I purchased the machine new in the summer of 1984, and it had provided 26 years of excellent service.

I had often thought that the lawnmower would outlast me as its 3.5hp engine was nearly indestructible. That is not to say that the various ancillary pieces which make up a push lawnmower did not need to be repaired from time to time. As is my style,

I purchased the lawnmower at a discount store, and of course got one that was propelled by me. It was about as basic a machine as one could find. What was amazing about it was the fact that the engine started first time, every time. It didn't seem to matter how old the gasoline was or how long it had been since it was last started.

Over the years, I suppose I replaced the wheels two or three times along with the pull cord and the handle parts, which seemed to break on a regular basis. You wouldn't think that the handle on a push mower would be a big deal, but of course it is, especially where it attaches to the lawnmower case. That area takes a great deal of strain and the metal is its thinnest at that point. I couldn't estimate the number of times I sharpened the blades, which is a hazardous job if there ever was one. I was probably lucky I didn't slice my arms off removing the blade from the motor, but I never got a scratch. Eventually, the machine began showing its age, but the engine ran continuously without pause. At first I changed the oil on a reasonably regular basis, but as the years passed, I found that the old one cylinder Briggs & Stratton engine would run just fine regardless of when I had last changed the oil. It didn't even foul the spark plug, but probably every five years or so I would replace the plug just on general principles.

As it turned out, the only real problem with the machine was that it was never going to really wear out. If I kept replacing the ancillary pieces, it would last forever. In the past few years, it had become a speciality mower for a rather steep hill that goes down to the street in front of our house. Thus I had to horse the machine back and forth on the hill, or up and down on the hill, depending on where I was mowing at a given moment. At some point, late last summer I found myself scanning the ads for new lawnmowers, and had decided that it was time to move on, despite the fact that the old machine ran just fine. It was also true that the handle was about ready to break again, and on my last pass on the hill, on the last mowing of the season for 2009, the left rear tire came apart and would have needed to be replaced as well. So, I decided it was time to let loose of this fine old machine, and get a newer, but perhaps not better, machine.

So I went and got a new, self-propelled machine which I convinced myself would make it somewhat easier to mow the steep hill in front of our house. But, I couldn't quite let the old machine go, at least not immediately. So it sat in our garage over the winter and into the early spring. The day before yesterday I

set it outside by the street to be picked up by the recycling man, on his monthly run through our neighborhood. What was interesting, however, was that I knew the machine would never be there by the time the recycling man came to pick up the other recyclables the following day. I suspected that in the middle of the night it would simply roll away, and someone else could get the benefit of the engine that never dies and never fails to start. So I was not surprised when I got up the next morning and the recyclables were still there, but the old push mower, which I had used for over a quarter of a century, was gone. It was like saying goodbye to an old friend, and I know that sounds silly to those of you who don't get into old machinery, but I could only "guesstimate" how many miles I had walked between that old machine with the Briggs & Stratton engine on it. It had served me well, and I had certainly gotten my money's worth out of it many times over.

But it reminded me that even when things continue to work, it is sometimes better to move on. I think that is the moral of today's story. As I said at the beginning, I think this engine would have lasted the rest of my lifetime. As a sort of a nod in that direction, after I had pushed it out to be recycled, I decided to see if it would still start after a winter sitting in the garage and almost no fuel in the tank. Sure enough, I pulled the rope and she sprang into life. I let her run for a minute or so then turned her off figuring that whoever picked her up would at least have an old machine with a great engine that they could count on.

I think that is one of the challenges about changing in business or government. It gets very comfortable using the old ways, especially when they have been successful. It is easy to say we should stay with what we know because we know that it works, and something new might not be as successful or work as well. But, I think it is necessary to analyze why we stay with those things we know, and why we need to move on from then from time to time. I have no real hope that the new lawnmower will last anything as long as the old lawnmower, although I certainly hope I am around walking behind it in 25 years to find out. It is always a challenge balancing the old with the new, change with the status quo, and new technology with old technology. Oftentimes we find that once we have made the switch to the new, we wonder why we waited so long to do it in the first place. In other instances we second guess ourselves, and with the luxury of 20/20 hindsight, wonder why we ever made such a foolish choice. The reason is simply that we have to make our choices based on the best information available to us at a given point in time.

We cannot allow ourselves to be hamstrung by inaction for fear that we will make a mistake. Clearly, mistakes can always occur, but through thorough research, and by using a plan that makes some sense, the possibility of failure is greatly reduced. We need to be able to always appreciate the work that we have done, with the equipment that we have known, but we need to be willing to move on to allow us to improve what we do, and become ever more efficient as we do it.

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