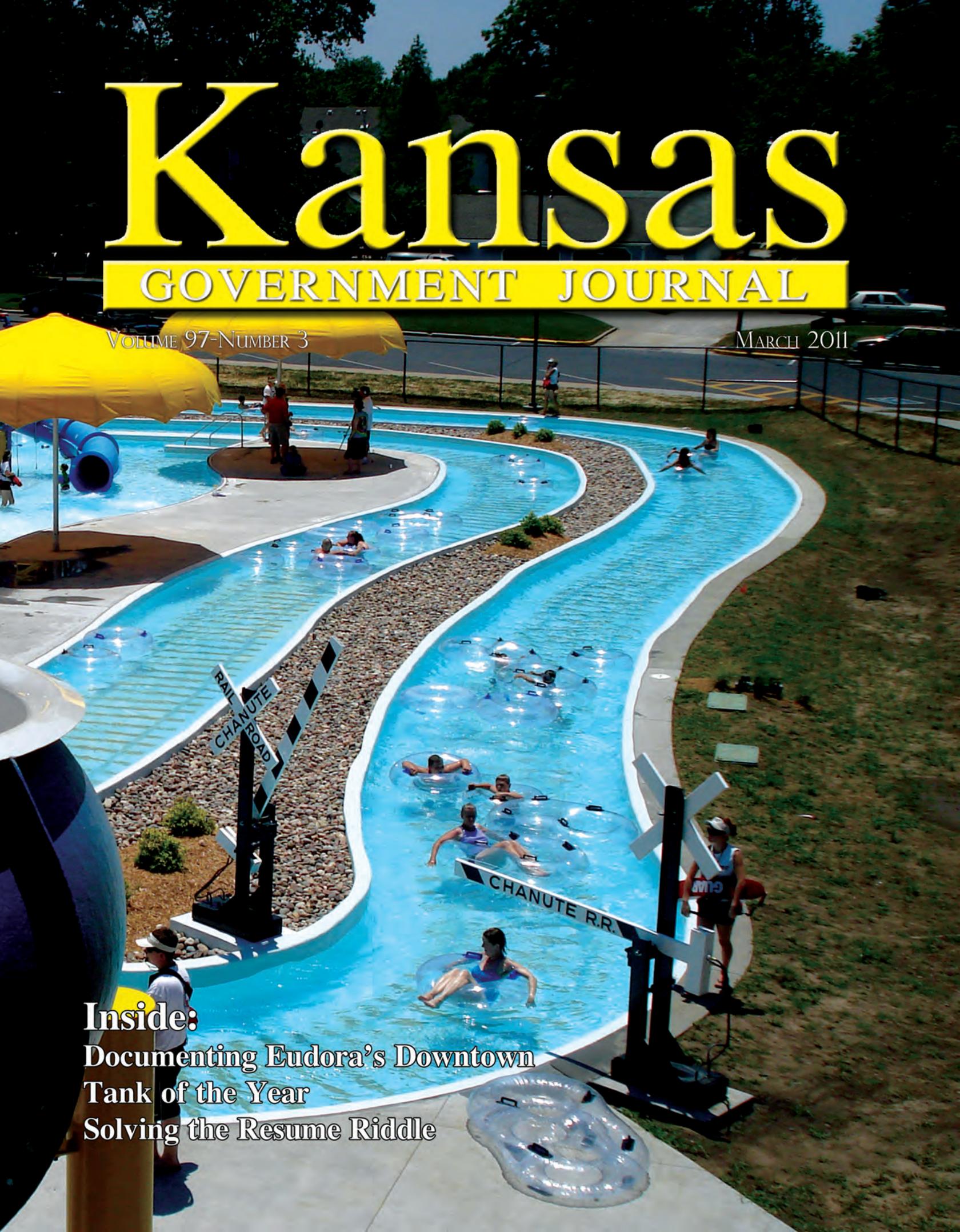


Kansas

GOVERNMENT JOURNAL

VOLUME 97-NUMBER 3

MARCH 2011



Inside:
Documenting Eudora's Downtown
Tank of the Year
Solving the Resume Riddle



2011 CONFERENCE HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS & RESERVATION PROCEDURES

October 8-10 • Hyatt Regency Wichita & Century II Convention Center • Wichita

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE CHANGE

Please note there has been a change in the overall conference schedule. The annual conference will now begin on Saturday at noon, and conclude at 3:30 p.m. on Monday afternoon.

Hyatt Regency Wichita**

400 W. Waterman
Wichita, KS 67202
(316) 293-1234

Single/Double \$116 + tax per night

Cut-off Date: 9/14/11

Connected to Century II

** Hyatt Regency Wichita requires a non-refundable deposit equal to one night's stay in order to secure reservations.



RESERVATION PROCEDURES:

- LKM has made special arrangements with the hotels listed to provide accommodations during our Annual Conference. Room reservations should be made by contacting the hotels directly.
- Attendees are responsible for making their own reservations.
- Reservations may not be made until after 3/1/11.
- Remember to ask for the special LKM conference rate when making reservations.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If you are making hotel reservations for someone else, please confirm with each person that they actually need hotel accommodations and intend to use the accommodations before making the reservation.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMODATIONS:

Hotel at Old Town

830 East First
Wichita, KS 67202
(877) 265-3869

Single/Double \$122 + tax per night
Cut-off Date: 9/17/11

Courtyard by Marriott - Wichita at Old Town

820 E. Second S. North
Wichita, KS 67202
(316) 264-5300

Queen/King: \$109 + tax per night
Cut-off Date: 9/16/11

Fairfield Inn & Suites at the Water Walk

525 S Main
Wichita KS 67202
(316) 264-5300 ext 4924

Queen/King: \$89 + tax per night
Cut-off Date: 9/01/11

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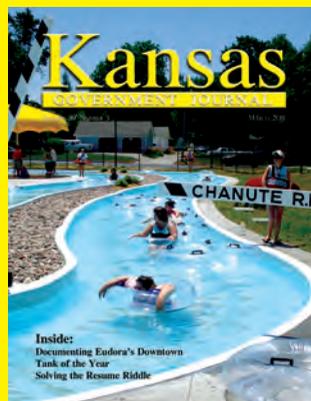
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About the Cover:

The lazy river at the Maring Aquatic Facility in Chanute was designed to look like a railroad as part of the aquatic facilities transportation theme. See related article, beginning on page 86. *Photo provided Westport Pools.*

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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.

May

13-14 - Governing Body Institute & Mayor's Conference

The Governing Body Institute & Mayor's Conference will provide elected municipal officials with a curriculum that will assist them in effectively meeting the requirements and gaining knowledge of their elected role.

30 - Memorial Day

June

10 - MLA: Personnel Management, Colby

11 - MLA: Personnel Management, Arkansas City

17 - LKM Governing Body Meeting, Wichita

24 - MLA: Personnel Management, Atchison

30 - KMIT Board of Trustees Meeting, Andover

July

4 - Independence Day

20 - MLA: City Clerk Fundamentals, Dighton

21 - MLA: City Clerk Fundamentals, Clay Center

29 - MLA: City Clerk Fundamentals, Iola

Obituaries

Richard James "Dick" Croker, 81, died January 12, 2011. He served as Mayor of Lake Quivira from 1980-84. He also served on the board and city council for many years. Croker was instrumental in Lake Quivira's incorporation. He practiced law and was the Secretary and Treasurer of United Utilities (later to become Sprint).

Fred Harris Howard II, 82, died January 14, 2011. He had a distinguished career in public service, having been elected to the Wabaunsee County Commission for three terms. Howard was also a Kansas Highway Patrol Trooper and the Director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation from 1971 to 1975. Toward the end of his career, Howard was appointed Chief of Police for the City of Topeka.

Benton Thomas Munday Sr., 83, died January 9, 2011. He served on the Prairie Village City Council from 1983 to 1994, serving as council president in 1987. He was also chairman of the Prairie Village Park and Recreation Committee and in honor of his service, the City of Prairie Village designated Arbor Day 2010 as "Benton T. Munday Day" and also awarded him the VillageFest Community Spirit Award in 2008.

'C.E.' Charles Ernest Russell Jr., 90, died March 1, 2011. Born in Iola on January 13, 1921, he fought for the U.S. Navy during World War II. Russell served as city attorney in Wellington for more than 50 years. In 2003, he was honored by the League of Kansas Municipalities for 50 years of service in the practice of law in Wellington from 1948 to 2003.

ULYSSES RECEIVES AWARDS FOR STIMULUS-FUNDED PROJECT

BY SHAJIA AHMAD

The City of Ulysses is receiving two awards for its recently completed federal stimulus-funded street improvement project along U.S. Highway 160.

The American Concrete Pavement Association is awarding Ulysses with a best concrete overlay award. In addition, the Kansas Department of Transportation, along with the Kansas Contractors Association, is awarding the community for best partnership based on the cooperation of officials from the City, Grant County, and the Cimarron Valley Railroad, according to Ulysses Mayor Thadd Kistler.

The project along the major east-west roadway that runs through town involved replacement of an old wooden railroad crossing that spanned 200 ft. diagonally across U.S. 160 with a new concrete railroad crossing, according to Daron Hall, Ulysses's City Administrator. Hall said contractors also resurfaced 785 ft. of worn out asphalt with a 4-inch layer of fiber reinforced concrete.

The month-long project was completed in July 2010. In addition to the resurfacing work, the contractor, Kingman-based Klaver Construction Co., performed a necessary sewer replacement under the highway where it crosses Main Street in Ulysses, Hall added.

Most of the more than half a million dollar project was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, better known as federal stimulus dollars.

Federal stimulus dollars covered \$478,489, and Grant County, and the City of Ulysses each covered \$92,664, according to Hall.

Hall said he appreciated the recognition for the community.

"The awards serve as a reminder of what we can achieve if we work together, rather than working on our own...by recognizing the opportunity to partner with the Cimarron Valley Burlington Northern Railroad, the City and County leaders were able to improve a very dangerous railroad crossing, which prior to this time was cost-prohibitive to replace," said Hall.

 *Shajia Ahmad is a Reporter for the Garden City Telegram. She can be reached at sahmad@gctelegram.com. This article was reprinted with permission from the Garden City Telegram.*

New railroad tracks were part of the stimulus-funded street improvement project along U.S. Highway 160 that runs through Ulysses. Photo provided by the City of Ulysses.



Time to Review Youth Employment

Many of you may already be well-versed on this topic, having read many *Legal Forum* articles on youth employment. But because this is the time of year that city officials have many questions about hiring youth, the topic bears repeating. Further, the U. S. Department of Labor audits cities' employment records, and the fines imposed for violation of the child labor laws are substantial. Violators may be subject to a civil penalty of \$11,000 for each minor employed in violation. The penalties rise if the minor is injured in the course of employment. This article will hit the highlights of youth employment issues, but the best resource is www.dol.gov. Under the Wage and Hour section there is a subsection called Youth Rules, which contains many child labor fact sheets. Fact Sheet 43 deals with the general rules for employing youth. Fact Sheet 37 discusses recreational facilities and Fact Sheet 60 addresses lifeguarding. Those three are particularly pertinent to how cities employ youth during the summer months.

First, when talking about employing youth, there are two groups to consider. There are the 14 to 15 year-old and the 16 to 17 year-old groups. Cities should not be employing any youth under the age of 14 years old and those who have reached the age of 18 are not covered by the child labor laws. Generally, 14 and 15 year olds are limited to office work and a few other light tasks that mostly do not involve any equipment. As a general rule, 16 and 17 year olds may perform work that is considered to be nonhazardous by the Department of Labor. Below are a few examples of the regulations involving youth.

Hours

Fourteen and fifteen year olds may work outside of school hours, but no more than three hours per day on a school day, including Fridays. On a non-school day, they may work up to eight hours. When school is in session, 14 and 15 year olds are limited to no more than 18 hours per week and to no more than 40 hours per week when school is not in session. Between June 1 and Labor Day, they may work between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9 p.m., but only until 7:00 p.m. the remainder of the year. Those 16 years and older may work unlimited hours doing work considered to be nonhazardous.

Wages

For the first 90 calendar days (not work days), those youth under 20 years old may be paid the youth minimum wage of not less than \$4.25 per hour. The 90 days begins to run on the minor's first day of work for an employer and expires 90 days later. It does not matter how many days the youth works during this period of time. Thus, if this is the second year a youth has been employed by the city, the 90 days has already run and the youth must be paid the regular minimum wage or higher. In addition, a break in service does not stop the 90 days from running. If an individual turns 20 years of age during the 90 day period, he or she must be paid the adult minimum wage.

Driving

Employees 16 years of age or younger may not drive a motor vehicle under any circumstances. Those employees 17 years of age

may drive cars or small trucks on public roads as a part of their job if it is daylight, they hold a valid Kansas drivers license, they have successfully completed a driver education course and have no moving violations, there is a seat belt and they have been instructed to use it, the vehicle weighs less than 6,000 lbs gross weight, and the driving is only incidental and occasional to their employment. The U.S. Department of Labor has instructed that this means no more than one-third of the work time in any work day and no more than 20% of the work time in any work week may be spent driving. There are other limitations as well. The youth may not tow other vehicles, may not transport more than 3 passengers, may not drive beyond a 30 mile radius of the place of employment, and several other regulations. The main rule of thumb is to not have a youth employee drive and make sure that it meets the regulations if it is necessary to occasionally let a 17 year old get behind the wheel of a vehicle.

Lifeguarding

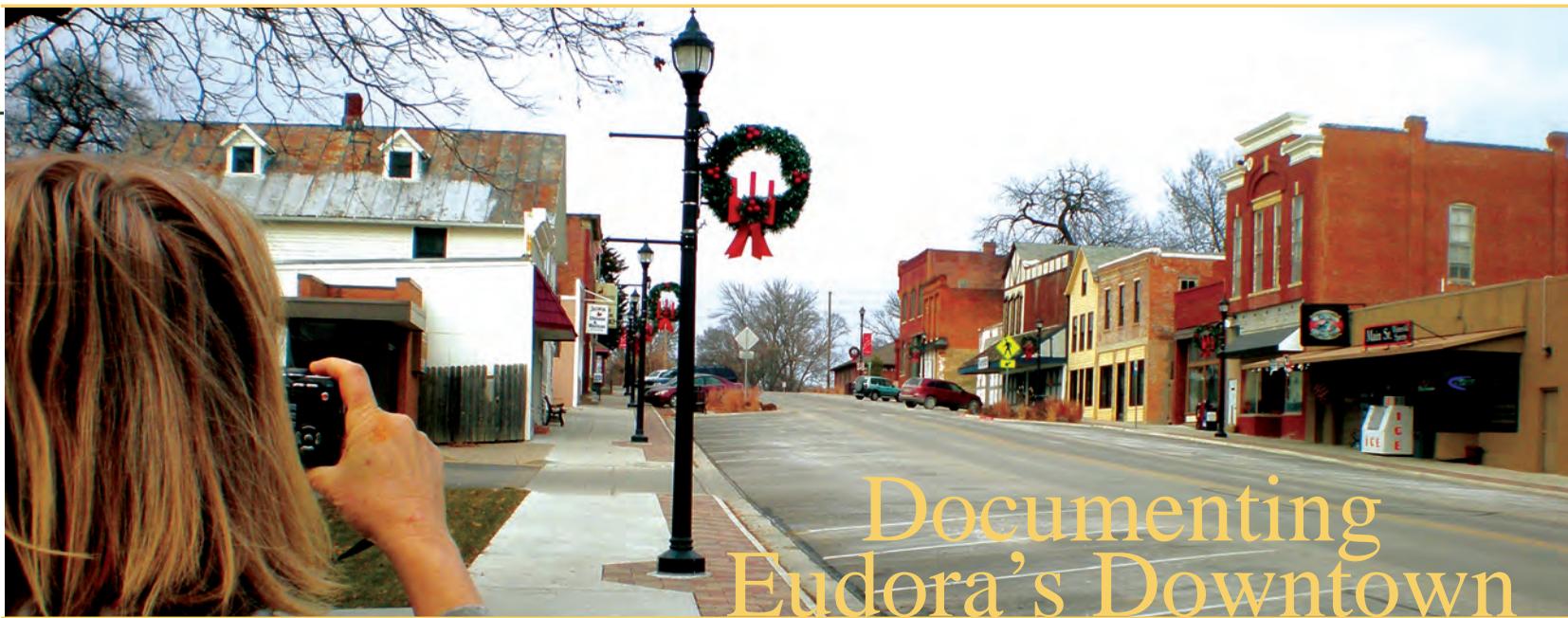
This is a job in which questions always arise when time to hire for the summer pool jobs. Lifeguards that are 16 and 17 years old, may perform the usual duties of monitoring the activities at a pool, including getting on ladders. They may help maintain the cleanliness of the pool, officiate at swimming meets, and administer first aid. If properly certified, such as through the American Red Cross or similar organization, a 15 year old may be employed as a lifeguard. They also may teach swimming lessons if they have obtained certification as an instructor. They can test and record water quality, but cannot enter or work in any chemical storage area, such as where the filtration and chlorinating equipment is kept. 15 year olds may work at traditional swimming pools, including those with lazy rivers and wave pools, but may not work at the top of elevated water slides. They may be stationed at the splashdown areas of water slides, however.

Recreational Establishments and Parks

No youth may use a chainsaw or wood chipper or any kind of high-lift mechanisms on trucks. Sixteen and Seventeen year olds may operate weed trimmers and lawn mowers, with the exception of tractors with mowing attachments. Fourteen and fifteen year olds may not operate such machinery. In addition, 14 and 15 year olds may work at concession stands, but cannot do most cooking, such as with ovens and rotisseries. They may heat food in microwave ovens. In addition, 14 and 15 year olds may perform office work.

This by no means covers all of the possible employment opportunities that cities often have for young people, but should alert city officials to some of the common regulations when hiring youth. For more information, contact your city attorney and the U.S. Department of Labor website for specific factual scenarios.

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



Have you ever wondered what you can do to become involved in historic preservation in Kansas? You need look no further than Cindy Higgins of Eudora. Like others across the state, Cindy has taken the initiative to help document Kansas's historic resources by becoming a registered user on the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (KHRI) online survey database. Higgins, however, took informal survey a step further—instead of documenting an individual building, she single-handedly documented Eudora's historic commercial downtown.

by Caitlin Meives

The result is survey records for 23 buildings in Eudora's commercial core.

The survey records that Higgins submitted contain architectural information, building histories, current photographs, and scanned historic photographs. This effort represents a perfect example of what KHRI is designed to do—give Kansans the opportunity to help document their state's historic resources.

Higgins got her start documenting historic resources during the 2009 Kansas Archeology Training Program in Scott City. During a four-day introduction to surveying historic resources, Higgins and her classmates learned how to conduct field survey, photograph the built environment, and upload survey information and photographs to Kansas State Historical Society's online survey database, KHRI.

We recently sat down with Higgins to hear her thoughts on surveying Eudora using KHRI.

What got you started? I've been active in learning more about the city's past for many years and also live near downtown. Then I took *Surveying Historic Resources in the Built Environment* June 10-13, 2009 in Scott City, where for a nominal fee, my fellow classmates and I learned about building styles and put our knowledge into practice at Scott State Park. We inventoried park buildings, including 1960s "mushroom" shelters, and a few downtown homes and buildings. When I came home, I furthered that practice with one building and just kept on going with the downtown.

Was it difficult because you don't have an architectural background? Not at all. Architectural elements are a part of the entry, yes, but so is the legal description (cut and paste from the county appraisal record) and other easy-to-fill-in-the-blanks. Plus, there are pop-up lists from which to choose and other helpful

online aids. I also made sure to enter only what I knew for sure and always tried to cite sources.

What did you learn? To really look at the whole rather than just the front view! Not only for one building's relation to another—for example shared walls or similar window styles—but the alley view, the back of the building. Because rear photos are part of documentation, I had the opportunity to learn additional information about the buildings.

What do you like about this database? Besides being an easy way to access information, database entry templates in general require and deliver a depth of information not always realized. Having an informational framework for photos, old and new alike, too, is really great.

What did you like about procedures? You can save the entry at any time and go back to it, for one. All changes are documented, and the survey coordinator serves as a "double checker." For example, in one email she wrote that text for the Eudora State Bank was inadvertently cut off and to go ahead and paste the full text in General Remarks. I did!

What advice do you have for others? It's okay to revise another's entry. I did that for Holy Family Church in Eudora because the existing entry had minimal information. I had access to documented information, photographs, and the church interior, which is open only on special occasions. Also, pace yourself. I typically did one entry each week. I had an advantage in that I already had some research on most buildings, but details such as downsizing photographs or having to go back and check on some architectural elements make each entry a bit of a work of love! Also, a building may not look very impressive but its past is significant, so don't bypass it. Finally, a building may have been torn down, but include it too, not only because of the significance it once had but also because it's a placemaker—an old time news



Original Kaw Valley State Bank, 700 Main Street, Eudora. Photo by Cindy Higgins



Pilla Building, 701-703 Main Street, Eudora, KS. View of back of building, showing interesting construction detail. Photo by Cindy Higgins.

article might mention that a certain building was next to “the old Bartusch Building,” so list the existence of a building that may now be an empty lot.

Why do you think your survey project and KHRI in general are important? For one, KHRI allows local citizens to input data that someone from another city might never know. Also, it’s another way to record history and may have uses down the road about which we don’t even know today. And of course, documenting downtown buildings may help preserve them because it offers people a chance to learn what makes each building special with its own story.

What’s next? Oh, I still have some more buildings to do and distinctive houses. I heard Hugh Beaumont, the father in Leave It to Beaver, lived in a house on 900 Road, and I might go check out a house in Lane, Kansas that is related somehow to Laura Ingalls Wilder. Sounds like a fun field trip!

 *This interview was reprinted with permission from the Kansas Preservation, Autumn 2010 issue and conducted by former survey coordinator Caitlin Meives. Cindy Higgins is a journalist at the Division of Water Resources in the Kansas Department of Agriculture. She can be reached at cindy.higgins@kda.ks.gov*

Interested in trying your hand at survey? Visit <http://www.kshs.org/resource/survey.htm> to learn more about surveying historic resources. Visit kshs.org/khri to view Cindy Higgins’s survey of downtown Eudora and to become a registered user with KHRI.

Kansas Preservation is a quarterly publication of the Kansas Historical Society and is offered free to subscribers and online. To be placed on the mailing list or to order back copies, please email cultural_resources@kshs.org or call 785-272-8681, ext. 240.



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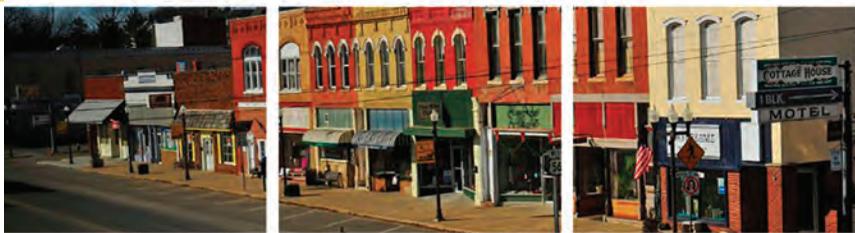
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City Opens New Health Center

The City of Lenexa is taking a creative, proactive approach to address rising employer health care costs while also providing a great new benefit for employees.

The City has opened its new onsite LiveWell employee health center, which will save taxpayer dollars by reducing healthcare costs and time for employees and their families who participate in the City's health insurance plan.

Because of the rising cost of health care, the City began considering an onsite health center about a year ago as a way to save money both for the City and employees, according to Human Resources Director Kim Marshall. This new approach allows the City to deliver a results-based employee wellness program to improve health risk factors and decrease overall health claims.

"The new health center is a positive move for the city and for our employees," Marshall said. "Our conservative estimate is that

the city will save \$1.4 million in three years. Our employees who use the facility will also save money and time. Plus, we believe the onsite center will help reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, help improve morale, and serve as a retention tool."

The health center is operated by Wellness Innovations & Nursing Services (WINS), which is affiliated with the University of Kansas Medical Center. The center is staffed 20 hours per week by a nurse practitioner who treats patients for minor illnesses and injuries, as well as prescribes and dispenses generic or routine medications for both personal and minor workers compensation injuries. Other services include employee wellness physicals, lifestyle management coaching, one-on-one health consultations with the nurse practitioner, and sports and back-to-school physicals.

KCK Leads Nation in Animal Control

The *San Francisco Examiner* newspaper named Kansas City as one of several communities leading the nation in efforts to prevent euthanasia of homeless dogs and cats. The newspaper reports that the San Francisco Animal Control program was once considered to be the leader of the "no-kill" movement, but has fallen behind other communities. The article says the KCK Animal Control program has not only exceeded San Francisco's rate of lifesaving, but has achieved "no-kill" status despite a higher number of stray animals and an economy harder hit by the recession.

Wyandotte County is now the only "no-kill" county in the Kansas City metro due to an innovative partnership between the KCK

Animal Control Service and the Humane Society of Greater Kansas City. The Ray of Hope partnership has dramatically reduced the euthanasia rate at the KCK Animal Control Facility from 70% in 2007 to less than 1% in 2010. Only vicious and seriously ill animals are euthanized.

Humane Society officials say despite a strong emphasis on spay/neuter services and education, the number of homeless animals coming into both shelters is growing. The biggest cause is people who simply abandoned their pets because they are moving and can't take the pets with them. Animals being dumped because they are part of unwanted litters are also a major contributor.

City Receives Grant for Street Work

Prairie Village has been selected to receive \$1.6M in federal funding for work associated with 75th Street from Mission Road to State Line Road. The City applied for the funding in 2010 and received official notification that the 75th Street project is included in the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Transportation Improvement Plan as approved by USDOT. The project is slated for construction in 2014. The City made application within the livable communities category and the project scope includes resurfacing asphalt roadway, repair of curbs and sidewalks, aesthetic improvements, pedestrian accommodations, and addition of sidewalks.

75th Street is the City's major East/West corridor and carries 21,000 vehicles per day. Mayor Shaffer will appoint a steering committee to assist the design engineer, George Butler and Associates, work through the design process and identify project scope and amenities. "The announcement is a victory for the Prairie Village community," said Mayor Ronald Shaffer, "Many thanks to City staff and City Council for diligently seeking this source of funding for a significant project at a time when the city budget is strained."

Wichita Reduces Airfare Prices

Wichita Mid-Continent Airport had the country's 13th largest airline fare decrease since 2000 and now ranks 43rd in average fare, according to research by the federal Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS). The Bureau recently released its third quarter 2010 domestic air fare study, which reported that Wichita's average airline fare in the third quarter was slight less than \$347—in line with the current U.S. average of \$340 and is less than the average fare at Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

While average fares at Kansas City are still less than Wichita's, the gap has narrowed significantly, according to the report. In 2000, the fare difference between Wichita and Kansas City was \$148; that difference is now only \$36. Wichita's fares are now 18% less than in 2000, when the average Wichita fare was \$422 and the U.S. average

fare was \$337. The third quarter 2010 average fare at Wichita increased 10% from 2009, while the U.S. average increased 11%.

According to Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer, "The State's [Kansas] Affordable Air Fares Program (KAAP) clearly is responsible for the lowering of airline prices in Wichita. We are looking forward to a continuation of this highly successful program because it not only lowers air fares, but it is an important investment that brings money back into the State coffers and benefits all Kansans with better airline service and improved economic benefits."

The KAAP was enacted in 2006 and is designed to provide more air flight options, more competition for air travel, and affordable airfares for Kansas. For more information about KAAP, visit <http://www.sedgwickcounty.org/airfares/>

TANK OF THE YEAR

by Erin McDaniel

NEWTON'S NEWEST WATER TOWER, FEATURING ARTWORK BY A PROMINENT LOCAL ARTIST, HAS BEEN NAMED THE NATIONAL 2010 WATER TANK OF THE YEAR BY TNEMEC COMPANY.

Newton's Blue Sky Sculpture and water tower artwork was completed by local artist, Phil Epp. Photos provided by the City of Newton and TNEMEC.



The tower's design mimics Newton's *Blue Sky Sculpture*, named one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas Art in 2008. Both the sculpture and artwork for the water tank were created by Kansas artist and designer Phil Epp, who is known for his rural landscapes with expansive skies.

"Both the water tower's exterior design and the sculpture share the artist's signature white clouds set against a bright blue sky," said Doug Hansen, director of Tnemec Water Tank Market. "When you're standing at the sculpture, the water tower is clearly visible. The arched surfaces of the sculpture and the curvature of the tank mural viewed against the surrounding sky create an interesting aesthetic effect that definitely impressed our Tank of the Year judges."

"The City of Newton is honored to receive this award," Mayor Willis Heck said. "We are lucky to have the talents of Phil Epp in Newton, and *Blue Sky* has become an icon of our community. We hope our water tower design sends the message that Newton is a progressive, creative, first-class community."

The 500,000 gal. pedestal tank replaced a standpipe that was constructed in 1905, according to Tnemec coating consultant Rick Penner.

"Working with Epp, the City negotiated a permanent reproduction of his nearby signature sculpture for use on the water tank," Penner said. "After an approximate scaled model of the new tank was used to lay out the artwork, Epp and the project engineer matched Tnemec colors to recreate the artist's original desired effect. To further enhance the uniqueness of the tank's image, the City installed lighting at the base of the tower."

"The cloud as icon and open sky as subject is universal," Epp said. "A clear, crisp, contemporary depiction of this imagery is my attempt to provoke inspiration and interpretation. The cloud in motion seemed an honest motif for a water tower, declaring its content and justifying its purpose."

The new tank was assembled and painted on the ground and lifted by crane onto its pedestal. The tank fabricator, shop, and field applicator on the project was Phoenix Fabricators & Erectors of Sebree, Kentucky.

"We commend the City of Newton and its public officials for their appreciation of the value works of art bring to a community," Hansen said. "Through their efforts, and the vision of Phil Epp, they have created an award-winning landmark that residents and visitors to Newton can enjoy for many years."

The *Blue Sky Sculpture* was named one of the "8 Wonders of Kansas Art" in 2008 by the Kansas Sampler Foundation, a public nonprofit whose mission is to preserve, sustain, and grow rural culture. The City of Newton also uses the *Blue Sky* motif on signage in its parks, tourist attractions, and entry points.

The Tnemec Tank of the Year competition was introduced in 2006, drawing media attention from local and national TV networks and print magazines. Tanks from this year's competition will be featured in the company's 2011 water tank wall calendar.

 Erin McDaniel is the Public Information Officer for the City of Newton. She can be reached at emcdaniel@newtonkansas.com or (316) 284-6055.

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FISCAL TOOLS TO EASE TIGHT BUDGETS

BY JOSH JONES

In light of the economic recession, a great deal of knowledge has been produced concerning appropriate methods that municipalities can use in responding to tightened budgets. From grant writing to layoffs, there are a myriad of ways to approach fiscal difficulties and it would be useful to review some of the most effective, popular, and innovative methods that municipalities across the country have employed.

LAYOFFS AND FURLONGHS

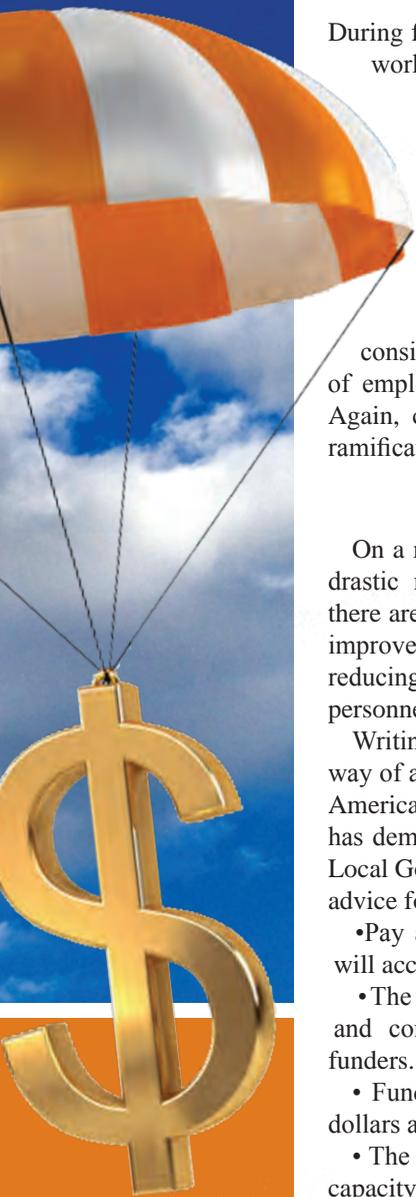
For some cities, the words “layoffs” and “furloughs” are unmentionable and are better not to be used during city council or staff meetings. Yet for other cities, these are unavoidable realities. Layoffs may appear to be the most drastic and quickest way to immediately reduce expenditures, but Heather Pauley of the Local Government Personnel Institute reminds us that there are many caveats attached with laying off employees. Depending on collective bargaining rules and labor unions in your city, this process may be made even more difficult by rules for official notice, severance package requirements, and unemployment benefits, though a fair severance package may also be a bargaining chip in exchange for the waived rights of the laid off employee to pursue a lawsuit.¹

Another consideration that should be examined when engaging in layoffs is the potential effect on employee morale. Pauley states that current employees may feel grief or confusion, which could lead to absences at work and a lack of trust and loyalty to the employer.

Employers may want to allow time for grievance and inform their employees of outside help like the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).² Indeed, these externalities associated with layoffs often ripple through an entire organization, even affecting those people and positions not under scrutiny. If your city should choose to pursue layoffs as a cost-cutting measure, there are a few things to remember that may help the process go smoother.

Attorney Leslie Robert Stellman encourages cities to provide proper documentation that describes the budget rationale and ensuing actions tied to the layoffs. Again, proper notice and communication with employees is key. Supervisors would also do well to avoid making comments about laid off personnel that could be construed as discriminatory. The focus should be on eliminating positions rather than people.³

If your city can avoid layoffs, then furloughs may be a less drastic measure to reduce expenditures. When implementing furloughs, Pauley states that “if it is implemented across the board—managers to employees alike—the employer is sending a message that everyone is in this together.”⁴ At the very least, furloughs may be a temporary disruption or even a day off as opposed to the loss of one’s livelihood as a result of a layoff. Finally, furloughs like layoffs must still be carefully carried out to avoid any appearance of discrimination, favoritism, etc. Federal regulations also provide that exempt employees only lose their exempt status during weeks in which furlough days are instituted, so be mindful of any potential overtime issues during these weeks.⁵



During furlough days, employees must not do anything work related—even checking a work Blackberry.⁶

Moving down the scale in terms of impact, benefit cuts and salary freezes are being considered or have already been enacted by many governments and businesses, and the infamous “hiring freezes” are now a coined term in the world of work. Employer paid medical insurance, pension plans, and paid leave may all be considered ripe fruit when considering budget cuts, and clearly, the landscape of employer provided benefits packages is changing.⁷ Again, careful planning should ensure that any legal ramifications are considered when taking these actions.

GRANT WRITING

On a more positive note, if your city can avoid these drastic measures of cost-cutting for the time being, there are many other ways to generate new revenue and improve efficiency that reduces expenditures, thereby reducing the future possibility of having to reduce personnel costs.

Writing a grant may perhaps be the most straightforward way of adding “free” money to your budget—the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has demonstrated this. Writing for the New Hampshire Local Government Center, Timothy Parsons offers some advice for grant writing:

- Pay attention to guidelines because not all funders will accept applications from municipalities.
- The formation of partnerships between municipalities and community-based organizations is attractive to funders.
- Funders do not support projects/programs that tax dollars are otherwise responsible for.
- The program must be above and beyond the normal capacity of a municipality.⁸

Parsons also reminds cities that grant writing is rather labor and time intensive, citing that the average grant application takes 20-40 hours to develop,⁹ and may have various deadlines for different parts of the application process. Smaller cities in particular would do well to carefully select which grants to apply for since scarce resources are probably the very reason for the grant application in the first place. It may also be worthwhile to recruit a part-time grant writer for a reasonable hourly wage who can regularly seek out grants and

lead application processes. To help streamline the process, gather the following documents ahead of time which can then generally be used in most grant applications: general operating budget, mission statement and goal, bios of key personnel, annual audit, anti-discrimination policy, resumes of program staff that will administer the grant funded program, and job descriptions of program staff.¹⁰

Writing for *City and Town* magazine, Chad Gallagher comments that grant writing is both an art and a science,

and that there are pitfalls to be avoided. Remember to: follow directions, pay attention to appearance and grammar, demonstrate experience or ability to administer the program, have measurable project outcomes, justify the request, clearly identify the need, be willing to provide matching funds, and show project sustainability beyond the grant’s funding period.¹¹ Also remember that “you should not apply for a grant when it seems like a neat idea; you are seeking a miracle funder; you are unable to develop the grant itself.”¹² It would appear that grants are not exactly free money—they require much focus and dedicated efforts, but they can result in a dream come true for the city when a proposal is accepted. Gallagher suggests consulting the following sources for potential grants: www.Grants.gov, www.foundationcenter.org, the Council on Fundraising at www.confrr.org, and *Philanthropy News Digest*.¹³

IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

If finding money through grant writing is not feasible because of staffing and time constraints, perhaps an investment in your city’s future is in order. After all, sometimes you do have to spend money to make money. Two examples include upgrading software and upgrading machinery.

The first, upgrading software, can increase efficiencies and save personnel time and departmental money. In the State of New Hampshire, the local Finance Officers Association promoted the creation of a municipal finance data model that was web-based and easy-to-use. Most importantly, it allows for improved forecasting that results in better decision making and avoidance of budgeting mistakes in the first place.¹⁴ Other software applications, some of which have been featured in previous editions of the *Kansas Government Journal*, like the City of Topeka’s implementation of an enterprise asset management system for public works (January 2011) similarly improve efficiencies in all areas of city government from work order management to inventory tracking.

The second, upgrading machinery, is evidenced by one city’s decision to invest in its future and upgrade its police fleet with hybrid vehicles. The City of Arkadelphia, AR saw the advantage of investing in Toyota Camry hybrid police cars in order to gain savings in the long run, from 50% savings in fuel consumption compared to the former Ford Crown Victoria models. Police Chief Al Harris says, “Patrol mileage is up while fuel consumption is down.”¹⁵ Most impressive, the City has lowered its five-year police car budget from \$70,000 to \$45,000,¹⁶ resulting in the long-term cost savings previously mentioned. The City did not stop there, however, they also have succeeded in converting all diesel vehicles to biodiesel, resulting in an annual reduction of 70,000 gals. of gasoline. Even two of the City’s dump trucks are hybrids.¹⁷

So, depending on where your city’s financial situation lies, you may have to consider more immediate and drastic measures like layoffs and furloughs, or maybe you might be fruitful in writing a grant. If your situation



is not as dire, consider spending money now to save even more in the future. While some decisions are more difficult than others, rest assured that there are numerous cost-cutting methods available that when properly employed will save your city money. Responsible managers have the internal tools and the external evidence necessary to guide their cities through this fiscal crisis. In conclusion, consult the following partial list published by the Maryland Municipal League for more ideas:

GENERAL

- Greater use of volunteers
- Use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for paving projects where appropriate
- Postpone projects and defer equipment purchases
- Implement results-based budgeting or zero-based budgeting.

PERSONNEL

- Combine jobs or freeze hiring
- No cost of living adjustments
- Comprehensive benefits analysis
- Shift to health plan co-pay card, increase deductible

REVENUE

- Increase user fees or introduce new ones
- Seek development excise tax authority

EFFICIENCIES

- Switch energy supplier
- Practice routine preventative maintenance
- Modernize IT systems
- Install L.E.D. street lights and purchase streetlights from utility companies¹⁸

COPING WITH CITIZEN EXPECTATIONS

- Televised/Direct Invitation budget meetings
- Roundtable, stakeholder, Mayor's Invite meetings
- Web link/Drop box for citizen input
- Invite constituents to problem solve, focus on the positive
- A few angry constituents do not always represent the entire city

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¹Pauley, H. *Local Focus*. "Layoffs and Furloughs: Implications for Cities." September 2010.

²Pauley, H. *Local Focus*. "Layoffs and Furloughs: Implications for Cities."

³Gindes, S. Municipal Maryland. "Layoffs, Furloughs, and Other Money Saving Measures." November 2010.

⁴Pauley, H. *Local Focus*. "Layoffs and Furloughs: Implications for Cities."

⁵Pauley, H. *Local Focus*. "Layoffs and Furloughs: Implications for Cities."

⁶Gindes, S. Municipal Maryland. "Layoffs, Furloughs, and Other Money Saving Measures."

⁷Gindes, S. Municipal Maryland. "Layoffs, Furloughs, and Other Money Saving Measures."

⁸Parsons, T. *Town and City*. "Tips for Grant Writing." October, 2010.

⁹Parsons, T. *Town and City*. "Tips for Grant Writing."

¹⁰Parsons, T. *Town and City*. "Tips for Grant Writing."

¹¹Gallagher, C. *City and Town*. "Why do Proposals Fail?" October, 2010.

¹²Parsons, T. *Town and City*. "Tips for Grant Writing."

¹³Gallagher, C. *City and Town*. "Why do Proposals Fail?"

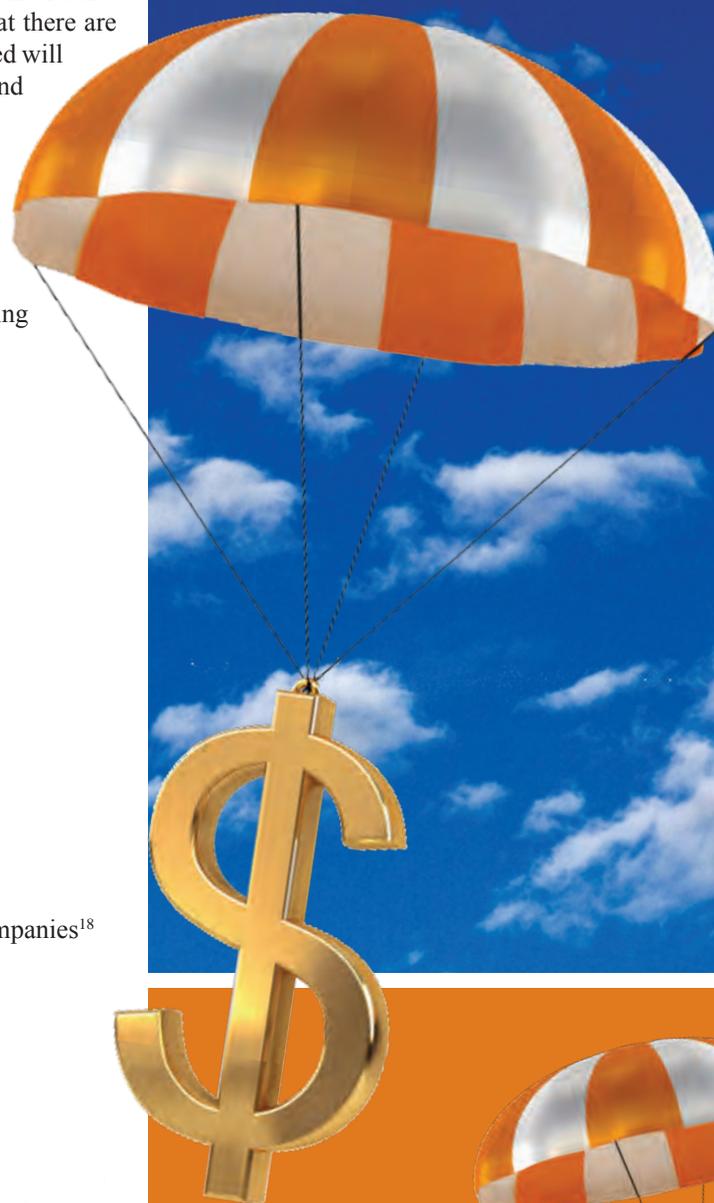
¹⁴Parsons, T. *Town and City*. "New Municipal Financial Data Tool Enables Historic Comparison." October, 2010.

¹⁵Morgan, A. *City and Town*. "Greener Fleets Reduce Emissions, Ease Budgets." June, 2010.

¹⁶Morgan, A. *City and Town*. "Greener Fleets Reduce Emissions, Ease Budgets."

¹⁷Morgan, A. *City and Town*. "Greener Fleets Reduce Emissions, Ease Budgets."

¹⁸Reynolds, T. Municipal Maryland. "Coping with Diminishing Revenue Streams." November 2010.





Kansas Communities Win Award

Three communities that differ by size and geography have one important thing in common; each has taken steps to improve the health of its residents and, in the process, has earned a BlueCHIP® Award from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) and the Kansas Recreation and Park Association (KRPA). In winning a BlueCHIP award, the cities of Lawrence, Hutchinson, and Grinnell each received a check for \$2,500.

BlueCHIP is a community health improvement program created to recognize and reward Kansas communities who encourage and support healthy lifestyles through programs, initiatives, policies and/or community-wide events.

“These communities—Lawrence, Hutchinson, and Grinnell – are all doing phenomenal work and were selected for their collaboration with a variety of organizations, their programs that are changing infrastructures, and for involving community citizens of all ages,” said Marlou Wegener, BCBSKS manager of community relations. “These three communities serve as outstanding examples of what happens when individuals in a community come together to work for a common goal; the result is the entire community reaps the benefits.”

Doug Vance, executive director of KRPA, said he hopes the efforts of the winning cities inspire other Kansas communities to collaborate on healthy initiatives. “The selection process was both challenging and inspiring because of the great work a lot of communities have committed to doing to improve healthy lifestyles,” Vance said. “We hope this recognition serves to reward three of those communities for their great work and also helps inspire others to make healthy lifestyles a priority in the year ahead.”

The BlueCHIP selection committee was comprised of representatives from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Coordinated School Health, League of Kansas Municipalities, KRPA, and BCBSKS. The committee picked one winner from each of the following categories: small (up to 20,000 residents), medium (20,000-49,999) and large (50,000 and greater).

“As the selection committee reviewed all the applications, they really kept ‘CHIP’ in mind,” Wegener said. “They looked for community programs or initiatives supporting, ‘C,’ clean air; ‘H,’ healthy food choices; ‘I,’ initiatives to curb obesity; and, ‘P,’ physical activity.”

T-WORKS Program Announces Projects

Transportation Secretary Deb Miller said of the T-WORKS program, “This is just the beginning for announcing the T-WORKS expansion and modernization projects. We still have nearly \$1.5 billion in projects to announce. KDOT is completing more detailed analysis on a few projects and we expect that analysis to be complete this spring.”

The announced projects and description from Secretary Miller’s office include:

US-69 in Overland Park. This project improves both the US-69 and College Boulevard interchange and the US-69 and I-435 interchange and helps relieve congestion along two of the busiest highways in the State. They anticipate letting this project to construction in May.

K-18 near Manhattan. This project will complete the K-18 corridor improvements and is important to the State from bioscience, defense,

and education perspectives. They anticipate letting this project to construction in April.

US-50 in Hutchinson. This project provides important safety and economic development benefits by extending the four lanes of US-50 to Yoder Road, including a new interchange at K-61 to accommodate the new Siemens plant. They anticipate letting this project to construction in June.

Secretary Miller concluded by saying, “Today is a good and important step forward to put our State on the road to growth. But there’s much more to come under T-WORKS—and I look forward to announcing many more expansion and modernization projects.”

Parks & Recreation Board Member Honored

Lenexa Parks and Recreation Board member Nancy Klunder received the Distinguished Board of Commission Award at the Kansas Recreation and Parks Association (KRPA) annual Awards of Excellence Lunch in Wichita.

The KRPA Distinguished Board or Commission Award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions and supported the advancement of parks and recreation in local, state, or national level service. Klunder, a Park Board member for more than 30 years, has been involved in master planning recreational amenities in more than 25 parks and recreational facilities. She is a lifetime member of the Lenexa Historical Society, a past member of the Lenexa Arts Council, and served on the Vision 2020 Committee.

A strong supporter of the programs provided by Lenexa Parks and Recreation and passionate for the arts, Klunder organized the arts and crafts in the Lenexa Spinach Festival’s formative years. She was an original member of the committee that created and presented the “National 3-Dimensional Art Show” sponsored by the City during the

1980s. “Nancy is one of those special people whom you don’t even have to ask to help,” Gary Ristow, parks and recreation director, said. “She jumps right in and assists in whatever way is needed. It is obvious she has a deep love and passion for Lenexa and this community has benefitted from that passion.”

Other accomplishments include helping to build an authentic sod house that stood on display on the grounds of the Legler Barn Museum for many years, creating the herb garden around Legler Barn, and even repairing a damaged tapestry from Lenexa’s permanent public art collection. Each year, Klunder visits numerous arts and crafts shows and exhibits to find ideas for improvements in the City’s programs and events. According to staff members, she is instrumental in attracting artists and vendors to the Cupid’s Gem jewelry show and the Lenexa Spinach Festival. Klunder is currently guiding the future of the Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department by serving on the committee for the department’s comprehensive master plan.

SOLVING THE RESUME RIDDLE: SELECTING THE BEST APPLICANTS FOR EMPLOYMENT

BY NATHAN EBERLINE



In a recent commentary on business ethics, Professor Marianne Jennings from Arizona State University called attention to the degradation of principles in the workplace.² The focus of Jennings's work includes analysis of the poor business trends demonstrated by companies such as Enron, Tyco, WorldCom, and Marsh McLennan.³ Her commentary concludes that the absence of business ethics is a systemic problem, as opposed to an issue for a few isolated bad apples.⁴ Jennings noted that a recent resume study found that 50% of resumes had false information, and that the falsehoods included material information relating to degrees, job titles, and previous employment.⁵ The take-away is that cities—like all employers—must exercise caution when deciding which applicant will join the ranks as a city employee.

While there is no single solution to ensuring the perfect hire, there are a number of steps that cities can take to encourage sound employee selection. First, cities should incorporate background checks before extending an employment offer to applicants. For more information, see the sidebar included with this article on

page 81. Second, cities should carefully review the resumes that applicants submit before employment. By following the guidance provided in this article, cities can increase the likelihood of finding the best candidate for the position and reduce the likelihood of bringing a disreputable employee into the fold.

-START WITH THE BASICS-

It is important not to over-think the hiring process. Sitting down to a stack of even 50 resumes can be daunting when trying to find the best candidate for an open position, but the applications should provide helpful guidance in assessing an individual. Though it is not an exact science, an applicant's biodata—education and work experience placed in a work context—is the best starting point for considering whether the applicant's talents will align with the open position.⁶

The first step in assessing whether an applicant's experiences will fit with the position is sincerely evaluating the open position and its job description.⁷ Having a solid grasp on what you are

THE BENEFITS OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

looking for in a candidate will make it easier to separate the qualified from the unqualified. Then look at the applicants' previous job duties and responsibilities, as opposed to simply looking at titles.⁸ This may lead an employer to a non-traditional candidate, if it becomes clear that the individual's skills will effectively transfer to the open position.

-LOOK FOR SPECIFICITY-

There are few things more frustrating for an employer than to encounter an application that does not align with the specific job opening. Far too often, cover letters and resumes arrive in cookie-cutter form with the employer's name apparently pasted into the application. Indeed, some applicants even neglect to paste the proper name.⁹ But employers can use this slothful trend to help eliminate candidates.¹⁰

By looking for signs that the applicant has adjusted the text of his or her resume and cover letter, an employer can better discern whether the individual was intentionally seeking the specific job or whether the applicant was merely seeking any job. When an applicant has taken the time to incorporate the language advertised by the employer, it is indicative that the individual will be more likely to continue working to meet the employer's needs after transitioning from applicant to employee.

-NOTE THE CANDIDATE'S ATTENTION TO DETAIL-

Similarly, an applicant's resume and cover letter can serve as an indication as to what type of product he or she will produce as an employee. A resume is a document best produced over an extended period of time, as opposed to the night before a job application is due.¹¹ This is not, however, how most applicants approach the application process.¹²

So while it may not be an absolute indication of an applicant's potential if a resume or cover letter seem hastily thrown together, the quality of the application can be a litmus test for how an individual approaches projects. In addition to the timeliness and thoroughness of an application, typographical errors are often the death knell of an application, as they indicate a lack of care or, at a minimum, a lack of attention to detail.¹³ It may be obvious to an employer that an applicant's inability to correct errors may be a negative characteristic when evaluating resume details, but there are additional details also worth considering.

Just as important as typos are the dates of employment. In recent years, there has been a trend towards applicants using a functional resume, as opposed to a chronological resume.¹⁴ As most employers have experienced, a chronological resume "highlights your dates, places of employment, and job titles, presenting them as headings under which your accomplishments are written."¹⁵ Alternatively, a functional resume focuses on skills relevant to the sought-after position.

The League of Kansas Municipalities makes it a practice to run background checks on applicants that have made it to the interview stage of the hiring process. The practice of running background checks serves as a tool for employers to avoid hiring the wrong employee by painting a more complete picture of the candidate, while helping employers avoid exposure to liability for negligent hiring.

Business studies estimate that employees steal over \$200 billion annually.¹ Numbers like that should make an employer take notice. And while a background check is no assurance of upright employee behavior, it is a worthwhile step to help hire the best possible candidate.

Disclosure regulations require individuals to sign-off on background checks. As a practical matter, the League addresses this by preparing the waiver document before the applicants arrive for their interview. If the individual is still in contention at the close of the conversation, the League asks for a signature to authorize a criminal check, an education check, and a credit check.

This information can be quite helpful, and it is somewhat common for an employer to discover information that highlights one candidate over another. But, it is important to be cautious when using that information, and employers should keep these legal considerations in mind when using background checks:

1 Employment decisions based on background searches must be consistent with business necessity. Employers cannot use the information if it links to the class of an applicant (no employment decisions based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin).

2 An employer should retain the job application and background information securely for a minimum of 3 years. This is a recommendation, but a wise one to protect against future suits.

3 The Fair Credit Reporting Act prevents an employer from rejecting an applicant solely based on an individual's credit history. If an applicant's credit history factors into a decision, an employer must tell the applicant of the decision before denying employment. The employer must also provide the rejected applicant with a copy of their credit report, a summary of their rights, and contact information for the credit agency. Rejected applicants have 60 days to dispute any inaccurate or incomplete information in their credit report.

4 Because there is chance for error in credit reports, it is poor business practice to reject an applicant solely on credit history. Running a credit check can be valuable, but an employer should consider how closely a credit check ties to the employee's position.

In addition to reviewing resumes and cover letters with a great degree of care, background checks can supplement an employer's efforts in hiring the best possible candidate.

¹ Kulas, John T., Joanne E. McInnerney, Rachel Frautschy DeMuth, and Victoria Jadwinski. 2007. "Employee Satisfaction and Theft: Testing Climate Perceptions as a Mediator." *Journal of Psychology* 141, no. 4: 389-402. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed April 5, 2011).



For applicants, this can be a helpful tool to communicate the wide-ranging experiences that the candidate offers. An employer should not discount the functional-resume approach, but reviewers should be on guard against applicants who use the functional resume to hide gaps in employment. In either a chronological or functional resume, employers should seek out explanations for any sizeable gaps in employment. The time of unemployment is by no means a guarantee that a candidate is ill-suited for a position, particularly during times of when our country is in an economic recession, but employers must attentively follow-up on applicants who withhold any explanation for time out of work.

-CHECK FOR RELEVANCY & RESPONSIVENESS-

A typical employment advertisement might ask for the following documents: cover letter, resume, and three references. Even when an employer makes a specific request for information, it is fairly common for applicants to submit more or different information than is requested. In some instances, the simple request for a few meaningful documents becomes a folder filled with everything from newspaper clippings to certificates of participation. The applicant may hope such additions help him or her stand out in a crowded applicant pool, but as an employer, this is often a way to distinguish an applicant in a negative light. It is much more helpful to seek applicants who provide specifically what an employer requests—and do so with excellence—than to use your time as an employer wading through irrelevant information.

The author of “A Search-Committee Virgin Tells All,” and individual who describes his experience selecting candidates for hire, perhaps sums it up best:

Part of the bulk [of lengthy applications], in my view, was fluff. Would anyone, in the course of considering candidates, really care to read their e-mail messages to students? The person who sent this trivia, I immediately concluded, was unable to discern the incidental from the useful, and would probably carry that same obliviousness over into his scholarship and teaching. Scratch.¹⁶

If a resume or cover letter leaves you, as an employer, asking “so what?,” it is time to move to the next applicant.¹⁷ Seeking individuals who submit job applications that are relevant and responsive to an employer’s request may not be vital for all employment positions, particularly those without a communication tilt, but keeping those characteristics in mind when ranking individuals for an interview can help simplify the identification process.

-IS THERE STYLE?-

The next consideration, whether the applicant’s resume or other materials are prepared with style, is primarily a method to distinguish between quality applicants that otherwise appear to have similar merit. Much like characteristics such as specificity, attention to detail, relevancy, and responsiveness, style can also be an indicator as to what type of product an applicant might produce as an employee.

As unemployment numbers continue to hover near 10%, there is an increased likelihood that employers will continue to receive sizeable numbers of job applications. Even when employment



levels are healthy, an employer is unlikely to spend more than 30 seconds determining whether a resume is worth consideration.¹⁸ Part of the way that employers effectively evaluate applications in such a rapid manner is to evaluate the style of a resume.

Characteristics like excessively long-winded materials—which includes anything more than two pages for a low-level position or three for a higher-level position—can be suggestive that an applicant is unable to discern important information from the unimportant. It can also be informative as to how succinctly and clearly a candidate can communicate, at least in written form. At the very least, resumes covered with an explosion of information suggest a disregard for the employer's time as they seek the best candidate for the position.

Similarly, resume choices like fonts and formatting selections can also be a tool for an employer's consideration. By keeping an eye out for unexpected or sloppy changes to the font, an employer can gain insight as to the quality of work that an applicant might provide. Similarly, if a resume is littered with underlined, italicized, and bold-faced print, you may have insight as to the excessive amount of flair your candidate may exhibit when producing work for you. Depending on the position being filled, this may or may not be a desired characteristic.

Much like the consideration of relevancy and responsiveness, it is worth considering what the applicant is portraying with his or her design. Such a consideration has less importance than a candidate's actual employment history, but considering whether the overall look of the documents presents a picture of professionalism and structure can serve as a bit of insight as to what the applicant might bring to the table.¹⁹

magic cheat-sheet for selecting the best person to meet your organization's needs, following these steps can help ensure that the candidate you select will be a solid organizational fit.

By specifically seeking the applicants who gear their documents to the specific needs highlighted in the job advertisement, you are more likely to find the individual who will respond to your requests as an employer. Seeking candidates who offer documents that are "created with care," can indicate that the person will treat the job with respect. The same is true for evaluating whether a candidate has provided relevant information that responds to your request. Simply stated, the resume is a first test in carrying out an employer's request. Finally, if the applicants clear each of those hurdles, it's worth considering how much professionalism and style the candidates offer in their applications. By evaluating the resumes on your desk in such a manner, you may just find the perfect fit for the employment puzzle.

 Nathan Eberline is the Intergovernmental Relations Associate for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He operates the League's executive search program, LEAPS, which helps member cities fill management-level positions. For more information on LEAPS, visit: www.lkm.org/services/leaps. Nathan can be reached at (785) 354-9565 or neberline@lkm.org.

²Jennings, Marianne M. *European Business Forum*, Summer 2006, Issue 25, p. 32-38, 32.

³Id at 32-34.

⁴Id at 32.

⁵Id.

⁶Cole, Michael S., Hubert S. Feild, and Jeremy O. Stafford. "Validity of Resumé Reviewers' Inferences Concerning Applicant Personality Based on Resumé Evaluation." *International Journal of Selection & Assessment* 13, no. 4 (December 2005): 321-324, 321. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed April 11, 2011);

⁷"How To: Hire For Creativity." *Inc* 32, no. 8 (October 2010): 53-56. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed April 11, 2011).

⁸Zagury, Carolyn, and Kenneth R. Cohen. "The Dirty Dozen—The 12 Deadly Sins of Hiring." *Nursing Management* 26, no. 7 (July 1995): 92. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed April 11, 2011).

⁹Clio, Max. "A Search-Committee Virgin Tells All." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 50, no. 21 (January 30, 2004): C2-C3. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed March 10, 2011).

¹⁰Ireland, Susan. "A Resume That Works." *Searcher* 10, no. 7 (July 2002): 98. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed March 10, 2011).

¹¹Farris II, M. Theodore, and Jeanne D. Maes. "Tips on Reviewing Students' Resumes." *Journal of Education for Business* 71, no. 6 (July 1996): 368. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed April 4, 2011).

¹²Id.

¹³Krannich, Ronald L. 1995. "You are what you write." *Black Collegian* 26, no. 1: 64. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed March 10, 2011).

¹⁴Ireland, Susan. "A Resume That Works."

¹⁵Id.

¹⁶Clio, Max. "A Search-Committee Virgin Tells All."

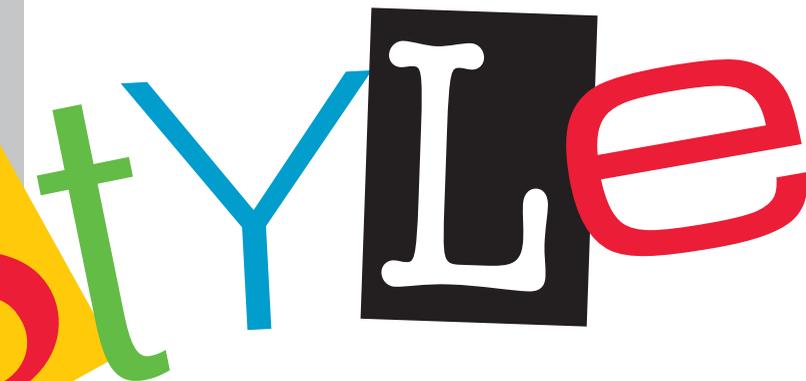
¹⁷Ryan, Liz. 2009. "Resume Writing That's Relevant." *BusinessWeek* Online 10. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed March 10, 2011).

¹⁸Crosby, Olivia. 2009. "Résumés, Applications and Cover Letters." *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* 53, no. 2: 18-29. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed April 4, 2011).

¹⁹Krannich, Ronald L. 1995. "You are what you write."

-PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER-

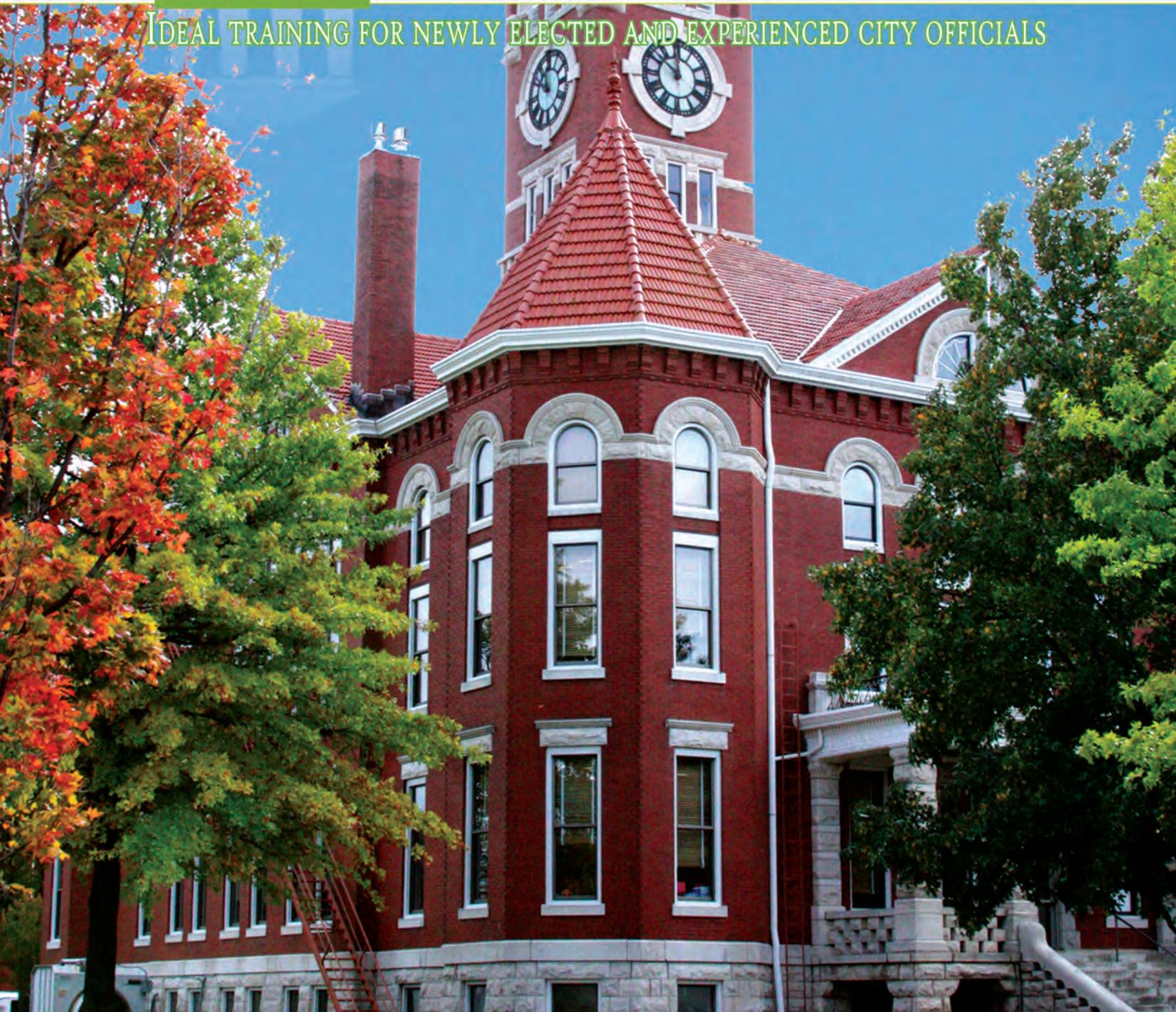
Sitting down with a stack of resumes hoping to select the best candidate for a position can feel like the start of a 1,000-piece puzzle—many pieces with little resemblance to the picture you envision for the ideal candidate. And while there is no





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...In Eastern and Southeastern Kansas

It was time for our annual Spring Break tour, so Grandma Sue, Grandpa Don, and Granddaughter Maddi hopped in the Ford and took off early on a Tuesday morning in late March. This year, we headed east from our Derby home base, first along US-54/400 and then on US-54.

The first pause on our trip was at city hall in Yates Center, where I visited with Mayor (and longtime LKM Governing Body member) Les Wilhite. Les and I chatted a bit (he told me about the June 4 Kids “Hooked on Fishing” Derby and the Mardi Grass and Hay Capital BBQ on July 8-9—see <http://cityofyatescenter.com/cms/Events/tabid/113/Default.aspx> for more information on both), and he also introduced me to Deputy City Clerk Joni Driver and office worker Carla Green—who doubles as the pool manager in the summer, as she has for the past 15 years (for that, alone, she deserves a gold star).

On east a bit on US-54, and then northeast up US-169 a few miles lies the City of Colony (pop. 372), where Maddi and I spent a little time with City Clerk LaNell Knoll... well, that’s ONE of her titles... she told us she does five different jobs (and gets three separate paychecks), all out of the City Hall/Library offices. She was called on to do tasks related to at least three of those jobs during our short time there, including a state-funding call about the library (yes, she is the Librarian) and another call about a gravesite (in her role as Cemetery Secretary/Treasurer). Small town city employees, such as LaNell, are often called upon to wear multiple hats (though not always THIS many), and have to be tuned in to many different topics and issues... I admire them a great deal.

In Spring Hill, located just south of Olathe, on US-169, straddling the Johnson/Miami County line, Maddi went into city hall with me, where we were greeted by the ever-affable City Clerk/HR Director Anna Keena, whom I know best through KMIT (the League’s work comp pool). Anna had a really big health scare this past year, and I was happy to see how well she has come back. If attitude has anything to do with it (and it likely does), Anna will be back to 100% someday soon (she already appears to be). Anna introduced us to all the office staff, several of whom I already knew, including Senior Accountant Brad Smith, new to the City (and to city government) just last December, but already a participant in two of my League Finance MLA courses earlier this year. Anna also led us, by car, to the public works facility (in the original downtown area), and introduced me to Assistant PW Director, Jeff Rupp, who is also the Safety Committee coordinator. Jeff told me about the terrific employee-safety program he has organized in Spring Hill... something all cities should be very serious about.

Over on US-69, south out of the Big City 25 miles or so, I met Louisburg City Administrator Jeff Cantrell for the first time. Jeff is a peculiarian; he told me so. And he showed Maddi and me a really neat cannon ball from the “Bleeding Kansas” (“Bloody Kansas,” “Border War”) days immediately preceding the Civil War; his eclectic office décor also includes a stuffed bobcat. Jeff has a long history of public service in Missouri and Kansas, and strikes me as being really smart and a really good guy. I look forward to working with him in the future.

In Fort Scott (while Maddi and Sue rumaged through yet another antique store or three), City Clerk Diane Clay gave me the 10 dollar tour of the brand-new City Hall. A totally rennovated/remodeled former SRS office, the new City Hall is quite a nice upgrade from their former digs in the Municipal Auditorium basement. In Arcadia (pop. 385), which is one those places you have to be looking for to find (located almost right on the Missouri border, a few miles east of US-69, roughly equal distance between Fort Scott and Pittsburg), there was a sign on the old city hall door, directing us to a temporary office several blocks away (in the senior center). Turns out a quick move was made when the roof partly collapsed. City Clerk Linda Moore and Council President (and acting Mayor) Lilly Coonrod filled Maddi and me in on the details, which include a brand-new building next-door east of the old one, which is due to be completed and open for business very soon.

My reading recommendation this time around is a series of short and colorful history books by Joy Hakin, which were first published in 1993, and collectively titled, *The History of U.S.* I have now read the first three books from the Third Edition (2005) updating: *The First Americans, Prehistory—1600; Making Thirteen Colonies, 1600—1740; and From Colonies to Country, 1735—1791.* Each of the books is only about 175 pages long, plus cool maps and other good stuff at the back, and are splendidly illustrated, with lots of side stories, which makes reading them interesting and entertaining. These books were written by Hakin because the history books used in schools are, frankly, DULL, as well as HUGE and intimidating. The US books were written with junior high and high school kids in mind, but, PLEASE don’t let that stop you from reading them; they are a real and rare treat—trust me on this one. I was a history student in high school, got my B.A. degree in U.S. History at WSU, and have read extensively about US history my entire life, and, yet, I have learned a ton of new things from reading the first three books in this wonderful series (I have purchased the next one, and will be reading all of them). The only problem I have with these fabulous little gems is that you will only find them in the kids’ section in the bookstores. That is a real shame; they should be in the History section, as well. Online, you can get the whole eleven-volume set for about \$110; in the brick and mortar stores each book costs about \$15. Maddi (almost 13 now) is being bribed by me to read these marvelous books, at the rate of \$20 per book... and, I am convinced, there is not much better way to spend money on your kids or grandkids. Kids should love history, or at least appreciate it. Today, most kids HATE history (i.e., “social studies”), and don’t have a clue about the what and why of history, and that is OUR loss... all of US.

My eatery of choice this month is Harry’s Café, in downtown Pittsburg, where, also on our Spring Tour, old buddy Jon Garrison (Pittsburg Director of Finance) and I shared a long conversation over a hardy early-morning breakfast.

☀ *Don Osenbaugh is the Director of Finance and Field Services for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at dosenbaugh@lkm.org*

Maring Aquatic Center Receives Award

The Maring Aquatic Center of Chanute was awarded the 2011 Silver Award for innovative swimming pool designs and construction techniques from the Aquatech Society of Pool Building Professionals.



The Maring Aquatic Center's unique transportation theme highlights historical aspects of the City of Chanute. Photo provided by Westport Pools.

The Aquatech Society of Pool Building and Retailing Professionals is comprised of some of the nation's best pool companies. Membership in the society is by invitation only, and all members have passed stringent qualifications in order to be accepted. This was the 47th year for the Aquatech awards program. Aquatech members from all over the nation competed for honors in more than 21 pool design and construction categories. The Maring Aquatic Center won the silver award in the category of Commercial-City or Municipal facilities. The transportation theme that highlights historical aspects of the City of Chanute was a unique factor in garnering the Silver Award.

Being recognized with the Silver Award is one of the highest honors a pool company can receive. Fellow peers and a panel of industry judges were

asked to evaluate each company on creativity in design, safety in workmanship, construction innovation, and overall aesthetics, according to Thomas C. Brown, vice president, of the Aquatech Society.

"The award for Chanute was decided by pool professionals from across the country. A peer award if you will," said Dave White, vice president for business development at Westport Pools. "It's not an award that the public had any input on, but rather a select group of aquatic professionals thought it was worthy enough to be awarded a Silver. There were only two Silvers awarded in our category, the other one was built by a firm in Texas."

The aquatic facilities of the Maring Aquatic Center were designed and built by Westport Pools. Westport Pools is a member of the Aquatech Society and



Norma Maring cuts the ribbon at the opening of the new Maring Aquatic Center. The aquatic center was named after Norma & Keith Maring for their 50 years of service to the previous Chanute Public Swimming Pool. Photo provided by Westport Pools.

proudly submitted the Maring Aquatic Center for the award. Westport Pools also worked with McGown Gordon, local contractors, and the City, making this project a team effort. Chanute City Manager J.D. Lester said, "they all worked extremely well together from the beginning." This was critical since Chanute had been without a pool for over three years. The team of contractors broke ground September 1, 2009 and released the keys two weeks before opening on Memorial Day in 2010.

Another group who made the aquatic center possible was the Chanute community. Lester commented that the one thing he is most proud of on this project is the community support. The community gave the City authority to \$4 million in bonds for the project using a ¼ cent sales tax for the debt service. However, the aquatic center used a design build process and was only issued \$3.5 million.

The Maring Aquatic Center features a lazy river, competitive sized pool, a water slide, and various spray water features. It was named after and tributed to Keith & Norma Maring in recognition of 50 years of dedicated service in operating the Chanute Public Swimming Pool.

In addition to a summer past time, the Maring Aquatic Center will also be used for recreational purposes. The aquatic center sits next to the old Chanute High School gymnasium. The foundation around the competitive size swimming pool was purposely extended with the intent to one day enclose the area. This future project will allow for swim meets and recreational swimming during all seasons.



Patrons enjoying the competitive-sized swimming pool at the Maring Aquatic Center. Photo provided by Westport Pools.

The Maring Aquatic Center will open for its second season on May 30, 2011. More information on admission and hours can be found at <http://www.chanute.org/Misc/PDF/NewMaringBrochure.pdf>.

☀️ Contributors to this article are Chanute City Manager, J.D. Lester and Westport Pools. Lester can be reached at jdlester@chanute.org or (620) 431-5210.

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Best Practices

by Nathan Eberline

Demonstrating Character

One of the responsibilities I assumed when I began working for the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) was teaching ethics for the LKM Municipal Leadership Academy (www.lkm.org/training/mla), a continuing-education program geared towards elected and appoint city officials. When I discovered I would be teaching ethics, I was a bit taken aback by the task. First, some question whether a lawyer is equipped to teach ethics—a deprecating quip raised at nearly every class. Second, ethics just did not excite me as much as the other topics I would teach.

Many class attendees have come into class with that same sentiment. They rightly see themselves as good Midwesterners who know the difference between right and wrong. But the class discussions have also increasingly imparted upon me that ethics should be the topic that receives the most enthusiasm and participation by government officials. This is not necessarily because individuals need to assess or change their personal ethics, but because cities need to actively take steps to promote and highlight their character and trustworthiness to the public—a challenging and continuous process.

Cities of Character

One of the cities that understood this principle long before I began teaching is the City of El Dorado, a “City of Character” recognized by the International Association of Character Cities (IACC, www.characterfirst.com/programs/community) starting in 2001. IACC’s mission for cities is “to strengthen citizens, their families, and the community as a whole by promoting excellence in character...” Other Kansas communities that have received the “Cities of Character” designation from IACC include: Chase County, Dodge City, Iola, Olathe, and Topeka.

One part of the process for El Dorado and the other Character Cities from the IACC included forming a Community Character Council. The El Dorado Character Council launched in 1999, and its mission is to “create a culture of character that encompasses every area of the community of El Dorado, family, faith, government, education, business, media, law enforcement, and fire protection.” El Dorado Police Chief Tom Boren, an advocate for ethics in government, noted that key department heads with the City of El Dorado participated in training “on the goals, aims, and practical application of character development within the community at their respective businesses, schools, and organizations.”

The training was a partnership with interested citizens who develop community projects and programs that help build character in the community. The group serves as a liaison between parties interested in promoting community character and ethics. El Dorado took further steps by adopting “character development” as a key component in employee training, evaluations, operations, and city business. This includes incorporating a commitment to character in the City of El Dorado employee manual.

Character in Practice

The El Dorado City Departments keep concepts like ethics and character at the forefront of their discussions. Once a month, the

department heads discuss a word of the month that has a nexus to ethics, and they discuss how the concept is important to their operations and the city as a whole. The result is a community that expects ethical, character-driven conduct from its employees.

The community has also followed suit by engaging the youth in Character Counts, a character-education program developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (www.josephsoninstitute.org). The program promotes the Six Pillars of Character, which include: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. El Dorado has taken it upon itself to ensure that students grow up understanding ethics and more importantly, understanding why it is important (www.360eldorado.com/Government/CharacterCounts.html).

The program has included a week-long celebration of character and promoting upright conduct through the city’s sports programs. The goal is to simultaneously encourage good citizenship at a young age, while ensuring that when the youth participants eventually fill the roles of city leaders, they will already have a solid grasp on demonstrating and promoting ethics within their organization.

The City of El Dorado recently reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion of ethics in its last employee newsletter. In it, the City asked, “Why is character so important to the City of El Dorado?” The city noted that “[r]ules, regulations, programs, and correction alone cannot create good character.” The City instead strives to hire and develop employees who live a life of character. Both organizationally and individually, El Dorado has taken steps to be an ethical organization.

As a community, El Dorado has intentionally sought to be known as a community of character—an ethical community. As part of the city’s submission to be a “City of Character,” Chief Boren wrote:

Our employees need to know that we are leading by making good ethical decisions. Our businesses should be known as character-driven organizations. Our community must be known as a place where character is celebrated. Our schools must reinforce good decision making skills. Our homes must be a place where positive, healthy attitudes, of service to others over self are the norm not the exception to the rule.

El Dorado’s example may not suddenly lead to ethics becoming the most popular training for city officials, but it certainly highlights the value of promoting a better understanding of character both within City Hall and the larger community. And a community that can demonstrate these characteristics is certainly one that will thrive.

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



Classified Advertising

Assistant Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent (City of Hutchinson)

This position is primarily responsible for assisting in the operational control and maintenance of the city's wastewater treatment, biosolid handling and wastewater collection lift station systems; Ensures compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations relating to municipal wastewater treatment, industrial pre-treatment, biosolids handling, wastewater collection pumping, and illicit discharges; and performs other administrative functions such as managing personnel.

Requirements include: A high school diploma or G.E.D. required with advanced education in related fields preferred. Three years of administrative or supervisory experience is required. Must also have experience with pumping and treatment systems, telemetry SCADA systems and personal computers for office and field use. A valid Kansas Driver's License is required. Annualized Pay Range: \$39,087 - \$52,581.

Hutchinson offers a wonderful quality of life with excellent public and private schools, and numerous recreational and cultural amenities. It is also within a short drive to larger metropolitan areas. For more community information, visit: www.hutchchamber.com.

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Budget Analyst

Monitor and analyze governmental services including delivery strategies, costs, results and comparative performance; provide coordination, expertise and knowledge to departments in preparation of multi-year strategic plans, annual budgets, and quality improvement projects; monitor regulatory compliance with city agreements; and perform a wide variety of analytical and financial tasks.

Requires a Bachelors degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in finance, accounting or a related field and 3 years of increasingly responsible and professional analytical experience in the areas of budget, finance, accounting, or capital improvement programming preferred. MPA degree and experience with JDEdwards EOne software, preferred.

Must be detailed-oriented with excellent customer service with strong verbal and written communications skills. Emphasis in strategic planning, and the ability to work effectively with diverse groups and establish and maintain cooperative professional relationships within the organization. Should possess essential competencies in the areas of: Budgeting/Resource Management, Performance Measurement, analytical skills, problem solving, decision making, teamwork, strategic thinking, and presentation skills. Must pass a pre-employment physical, drug screen, and background investigation. Fulltime position. Starting Salary Range: \$45,178 - \$61,300/yr. DOQ.

Apply online at www.olatheks.org or in Human Resources, City of Olathe, 100 East Santa Fe, Olathe, KS, 66061. Application Deadline: Open Until Filled

City Superintendent

City of Cimarron (pop. 2,035) is seeking an energetic, innovative individual for the position of City Superintendent. This position is for a working supervisor in the field who must have knowledge of all aspects of city operations, including employee supervision, electric distribution, water and wastewater distribution systems, road maintenance, airport maintenance, purchasing, inventory, budgeting procedures, computer skills, zoning, and community development. This position requires strong management, communication and public relations skills. Water and wastewater certification and valid CDL necessary. Cimarron has mayor/council form of government and \$3.4 million budget with 20 full-time employees. Salary commensurate with education, qualifications and experience. Excellent benefits. Application forms available at City Hall: (620) 855-2215. Please provide application and resume to City Clerk, City of Cimarron, PO Box 467, Cimarron, KS 67835. Equal Opportunity employer. Position open until filled.

City Superintendent

The City of Medicine Lodge is seeking an energetic, innovative individual for the position of City Superintendent. Responsibilities of the position include: operations and maintenance of the water, wastewater, streets, parks, and solid waste departments. The successful candidate will be responsible for budget

preparation for the departments under his or her supervision. Requirements include three years management experience, knowledge of water and wastewater with the ability to achieve a Class II Certification in water and Class III Certification in wastewater within a reasonable time period. Applicant must have, or be able to obtain, a valid Kansas CDL. Salary range is \$45,000 - \$54,000, plus excellent benefit package. For more information, contact Austin Gilley, City Administrator at 114 West First Ave., Medicine Lodge, KS 67104, or call (620) 886-3908 or e-mail cityadmin@cyberlodg.com. To apply, please submit resume to City Clerk, City of Medicine Lodge, 114 W. First Ave. Medicine Lodge, KS 67104. Equal Opportunity Employer. Position open until filled.

Director of Public Works

Due to the retirement of the incumbent the City of Hays is accepting resumes for the position of Director of Public Works. Hays is a community of 20,000, and is located on Interstate 70 midway between Kansas City and Denver. It is home to Fort Hays State University and prides itself on being the regional trade, health and educational center for North Central Kansas. For more information about Hays, please visit www.haysusa.net. Appointed by the City Manager, the Director of Public Works is an exempt position and is responsible for the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and coordinating of all departmental activities, which includes the Service, Solid Waste, Planning, Inspection and Enforcement, Airport, and Stormwater Management Divisions. This employee should possess 3-5 years experience in a similar or related position in a supervisory role and excellent organizational, administrative and communication skills. Applicants are required to have a related college degree or have equivalent experience in a related field. Salary hiring range: \$58,000 - \$76,440 plus excellent benefits. Residency within Hays city limits required within 180 days of employment. Job offers contingent on passing a physical and drug test. Resumes must include a minimum of 3 references, 5 year salary history, and cover letter. Incomplete resumes will not be reviewed. Resumes can be emailed to eniehaus@haysusa.com or mailed to Human Resources, P.O. Box 490, Hays, KS 67601. Position is open until filled. Phone: (785) 628-7320 Fax: (785) 628-7323 EOE



Classified Advertising

Economic and Tourism Representative

The City of Marion is seeking an Economic and Tourism Representative. This position is responsible for assisting economic and tourism development for the City of Marion. This employee should possess excellent communication, organization and public relation skills. Candidates should have experience or interest in economic development, tourism or convention and/or visitor's bureau. A college degree in business or public administration with an emphasis on marketing, public relations or a related field is desirable. This employee must be able to operate computers and computer software. A competency in Social Media Marketing is preferred. Salary range is \$28K — 34K

For more detailed information go to www.marionks.net and click on "Job Opportunities". A cover letter of interest, resume and four references should be mailed to City Administrator, City of Marion, 208 E. Santa Fe, Marion, KS 66861. Applications are also accepted via e-mail at doug@marionks.net.

Maintenance

The City of Syracuse is hiring for the position of maintenance. This position will be under the supervision of the public works director. This employee will assist in the maintenance of water, sewer, street, and solid waste. The successful candidate should possess strong mechanical aptitude and excellent communication, organizational, and public relations skills. Knowledge of equipment, road construction and repair techniques, water and wastewater treatment, safety procedures and a working knowledge of mathematics is required. This employee will operate loaders, tractors, trucks, backhoes, street sweepers, graders, mowers, and other departmental equipment. The ability to understand and anticipate problems, to understand policy and procedure and to interpret written instructions. A valid Kansas drivers license with the ability to acquire a Class B license within one year of employment. The candidate will be required to have a Class II water and wastewater operator license within 2 years of employment. The successful candidate must agree to reside within the City of Syracuse. Compensation will be commensurate on education, training and ability. The City of Syracuse is an Equal Opportunity Employer, which offers a competitive salary and benefit package. All offers of employment

are conditional upon completion of a post-offer physical exam, drug/alcohol testing, thorough background check that includes a driving record. Submit applications/resumes, work and salary history with a cover letter to City of Syracuse, P.O. Box 148, Syracuse, KS 67878, (620) 384-7818.

Performance Management Coordinator

The City of Topeka is seeking qualified candidates for a Performance Management Coordinator. This position reports directly to the City Manager and works closely with the Budget and Finance Director and other leaders to develop a comprehensive performance management system that identifies opportunities to improve and communicate organizational performance. The salary range for this position is \$63,700 - \$80,000 DOQ. Minimum qualifications include Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in Public Administration, Business Administration, or a related field; Master's degree preferred. Must have four years of progressively responsible experience in organizational performance management and statistical analyses, preferably in municipal government. Must have previous experience developing and analyzing measurement systems and reports along with advanced EXCEL and PowerPoint skills. To apply, please submit cover letter, resume, and employment references to msmith@topeka.org. Full position details available at www.topeka.org/employment.

Police Chief

The City of Wilson is accepting applications for Police Chief. For job description and qualification information contact the Wilson City Hall at 2407 Ave E, PO Box J, Wilson, KS 67490 or call (785) 658-2272. Initial application deadline is April 20, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. Resume with references will be required. KLETC Certified preferred. Wage based on experience. Must live in the City limits. Czech out Wilson on www.wilsonkansas.com. EOE

President/CEO

The Independence Chamber of Commerce is advertising for the position of President/CEO. The Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce is interested in a person who can:

- Manage the day to day operations of the Chamber

- Implement all policies, procedures, and guidelines set forth by the Chamber Board of Directors

- Exercise all the executive powers, privileges, and prerogatives necessary and proper for the operation of the Chamber

The successful candidate will possess:

- Bachelors degree from an accredited college or university or equivalent experience

- Three years experience in business administration and personnel supervision

- Demonstrated history of effective leadership and organizational management

- Primary residence will be required to be located within the Independence, KS zip code (67301) within 30 days following employment.

Applications are accepted immediately and until position is filled. Salary and benefits package are negotiable. A more detailed job description may be viewed at www.indkschamber.org. The Chamber is an EEOC employer. Please submit resume, cover letter, and references to:

Search Committee
Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 386
Independence, KS 67301

Water Facilities Engineer (City of Topeka)

The Water Facilities Engineer is responsible for the long-range and short-term Water Treatment and Distribution facilities Capital Improvement Plans for the Office of Utilities and Transportation. In addition to the primary duties of planning, developing, administering and coordinating the Water System Capital Improvement Plan, the position assists with wastewater and stormwater engineering activities, provide or coordinate utilities engineering support services for electronic and paper drawings and specification documents, manages personnel matters and prepares and administers related budgets. Minimum qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or closely related field and registration as a Professional Engineer in the State of KS along with five years of post-professional registration related experience in Water Plant Operations/Design and Distribution System Operation/Design and a minimum of two years of supervisory experience. Full details and application available at www.topeka.org/employment. Hiring range up to \$65K annual DOQ.



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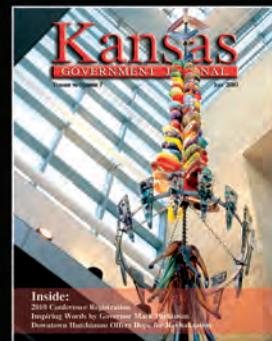
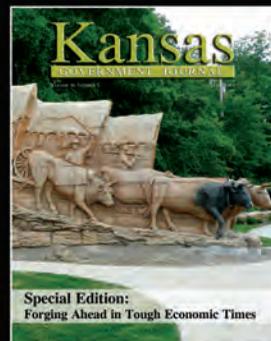
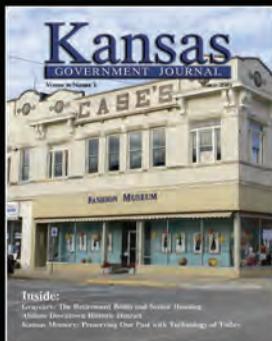


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Moler's Musings

by Don Moler

Spring Clean Up



Well, it is that time of year again and I have been out in the yard trying to clean things up and make it look nice for the spring rains and warmer weather. One of the first things I usually do is take stock of what needs to be done throughout the yard, and then I prioritize the various projects that need to be accomplished in the coming weeks when a little bit of free time presents itself in the evenings or on the weekends.

One of the first jobs is always to get out my trusty old Seymour Smith Original #119 Snap-Cut hand shears, and start pruning back the rose bushes. Depending upon my mood, and how willing I am to get my hands scratched up, I sometimes will wear gloves, but other times I will throw caution to the wind and simply do this job bare-handed. What I find, of course, is that on some rose bushes it is no big deal, and on other rose bushes it is possible to come back with blood dripping from both hands. In either case, it is vitally important to trim the bushes so that they are primed for new growth during the coming growing season.

This year I went on a veritable pruning frenzy in which I pruned not only the rose bushes, but also the butterfly bush, the cedar trees, the pink cloud butterfly bushes, and various other growing shrubs, bushes, and trees throughout the yard. By the time I was done on my initial foray in pruning, I had removed a full dumpster load of limbs, branches, and miscellaneous other growth which I deemed to be superfluous to the well being of the yard. I also decided to start replanting various bushes as well as removing a few permanently. It is interesting when you get into a certain gardening zone, that all of a sudden decisions become clearer, and actions are swift. It is good to be in this zone because you don't stand around wondering about what to do next. You are decisive, decisions and actions are final, and at the end of the day, you have succeeded in changing the landscape of your yard forever.

Now here is where it gets difficult. If you know what you are doing, and make good choices as far as the pruning, moving, and removal of the bushes, shrubs, and trees in your yard, then you will end up with an excellent result. On the other hand, if you are not skilled at this, or are having an off day, it is altogether possible to make serious mistakes which you regret down the road as your yard progresses throughout the growing season. Oftentimes, of course, it is not even possible to know if you made a good or bad choice until the growing season is in full swing, and you have the ability of 20/20 hindsight to determine if you made a good choice or not. This year, for example, I corrected a planting mistake I made years ago with a Natchez Mock Orange bush. It was planted in a location that was much too close to the house, and so had never had enough sun or moisture to grow properly. This year I dug it up and moved it elsewhere. Either it will thrive or die. Sometimes it simply is

the case that only time will tell whether or not your gardening decisions made sense in the grander scheme of things.

Now as I was out there doing my trimming, planting, replanting, and removal of various plants in our yard, it struck me that this is similar to what we do in the governmental realm. It is always the case that governmental programs are being planted, nurtured, grown, and ultimately pruned or removed. I think we are currently at a point in time where existing programs are under increasing scrutiny, and many have the pruning shears out and ready for action. I would never argue that programs should not be reviewed for effectiveness, and then pruned from time to time as necessary. I believe that it is the nature of all public programs. They need to be reviewed for their worth, need, and success within both current and future contexts. Just because a program was first rate 25 years ago does not mean that it is still first rate today. On the other hand, simply because a program is 25 years-old, or 5, or 10, or 50 for that matter, does not necessarily mean that it is no longer a good program, or that it does not still have significant and wide-ranging benefits to the public. What is important is to review these programs, and where necessary and in a prudent fashion, prune the programs or reposition them so that they can have the greatest effect and produce the biggest bang for the buck. I think it is important at this point in our governmental history to be thinking very seriously about how we go about pruning, altering, and perhaps removing programs which have long been part of the governmental landscape in Kansas. Much like pruning one's garden, you have to be very careful not to over prune the shrub.

In my gardening life, I have watched a number of gardeners do this sort of work. Some gardeners take extreme care and time in observing and planning what they are going to do, and then they carry out the plan. You also have gardeners who do not plan, or proceed with caution, but simply start hacking away. This ultimately leads to mistakes and can butcher a very nice bush, tree, or shrub. Finally, I have seen gardeners who can never really make up their minds about how to proceed but they sure like to prune. Ultimately, unless they are very, very lucky, random pruning has the effect of killing the plant, or reducing to such a state that there is no option but removal.

I think we in government must be mindful of this same sort of thing. We need to be careful in how we approach the pruning, maintaining, and transplanting of programs that are in place, and that are currently serving our citizens. We need to approach them with great care and thoughtfulness, and be very careful whenever looking to prune or reposition them so that we do not do irreparable harm that will ultimately lead to the death of the program, and the loss of whatever public services it may be providing. Care must always be taken as we look to the future and are pruning our gardens. Our citizens expect no less.

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