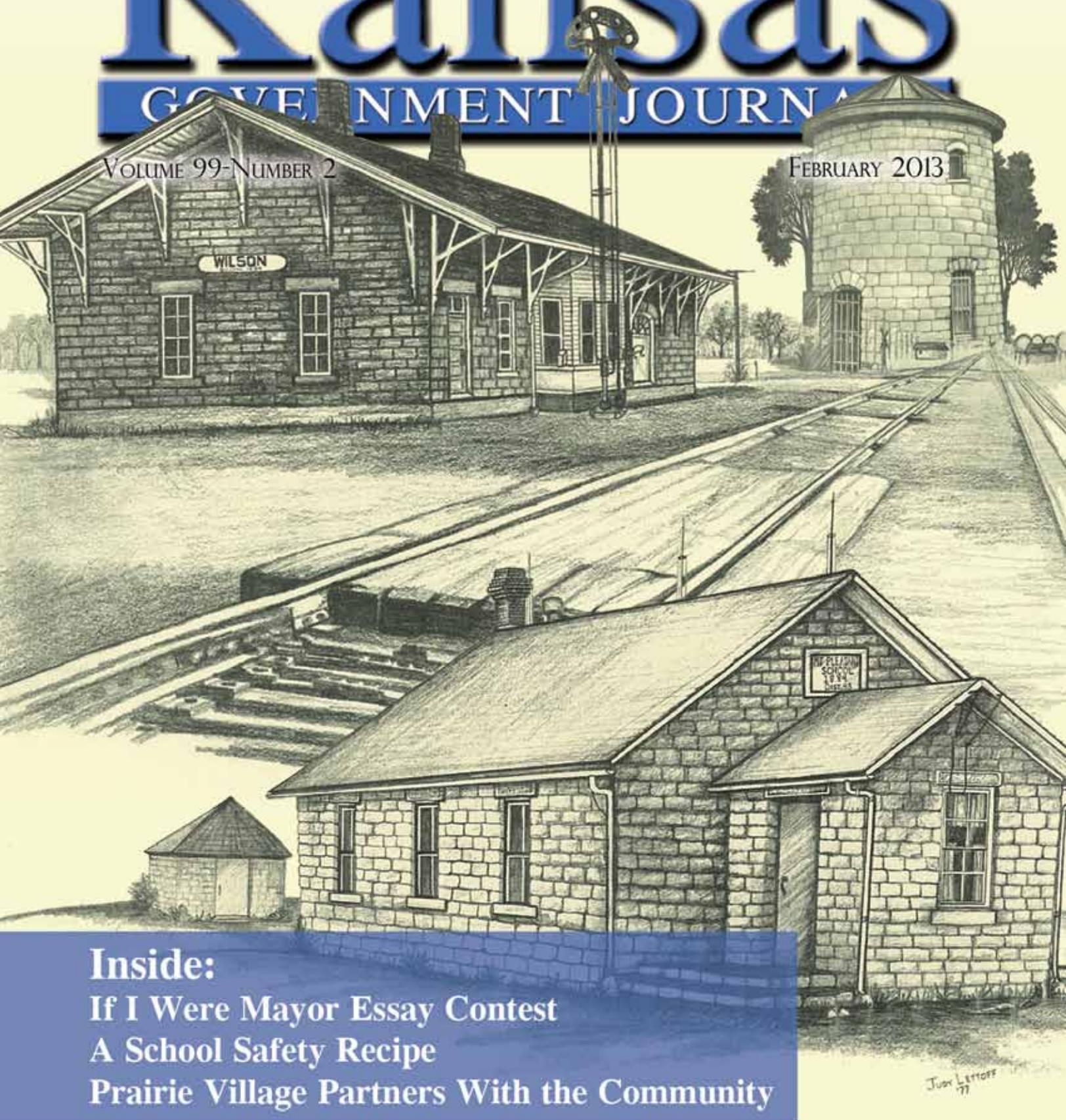


# Kansas

GOVERNMENT JOURNAL

VOLUME 99-NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2013



**Inside:**  
If I Were Mayor Essay Contest  
A School Safety Recipe  
Prairie Village Partners With the Community



## Dion Avello

Mayor - City of Derby



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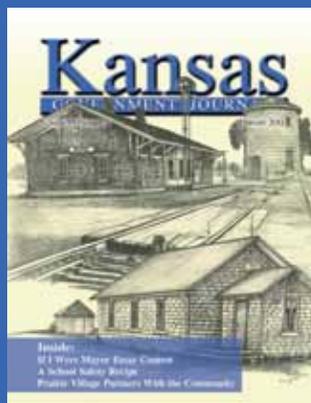
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About the Cover:  
Pencil drawings of historic limestone buildings in Wilson. The City has more than two dozen dating from the 19th and early 20th Centuries. See related article, *The History of Wilson*, beginning on page 46. Pencil drawings by Valley Center Councilmember Judith Leftoff.

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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.*

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## April

- 4 - Strategic Planning Meeting, Kansas City
- 5 - Legislative Regular Session Ends
- 10 - Strategic Planning Meeting, Sedgwick
- 11 - Strategic Planning Meeting, Iola
- 12 - MLA: Municipal Finance, Ellis
- 13 - MLA: Municipal Finance, Marysville
- 27 - MLA: Municipal Finance, Louisburg

## May

- 8 - Legislative Veto Session Begins
- 10-11 - Governing Body Institute, Topeka
- 27 - Memorial Day

## June

- 7 - Governing Body Meeting, Phillipsburg
- 14 - CAAK: Spring Meeting and CLE, Kansas City
- 20 - MLA: City Clerk Fundamentals, Scott City
- 21 - MLA: City Clerk Fundamentals, Neodesha
- 27 - MLA: City Clerk Fundamentals, Roeland Park

## Obituaries

**L. Shane Brady, 72**, died December 30, 2012. Brady was Mayor of the City of Edmond, an active board member, director, and trustee for many business, industry, and community groups. This includes the Kansas and National Grain and Feed Associations, Rural Telephone Association, and the Norton County Hospital.

**Robert I. Nicholson, Jr., 65**, died January 1, 2013. Nicholson's Miami County legal career spanned 40 years of professional service. He was elected to serve as Miami County Attorney, was a solo practitioner, and a partner in the local firm of Hartley, Nicholson & Hartley, P.A. for 25 years. Nicholson also served as a Judge Pro Tem in the Miami County District Court as well as a Municipal Judge for the Cities of Paola and Osawatimie.

**Glen L. Tongier, 88**, died December 24, 2012, at his home in Coffeyville. Tongier practiced law in Coffeyville from 1951 until his retirement in 1996. He served as Montgomery County Attorney from 1958 to 1962. He was a member of the American Bar Association, Kansas Bar Association, and Past President of the Montgomery County Bar Association. Tongier also served as Montgomery County Republican chair from 1964 to 1966.

**Roy E. Williams, 88**, died January 2, 2013, at Wheatland's Healthcare in Kingman. A longtime resident of Kingman, he was a retired attorney with Williams and Williams Law Offices. He was the former Kingman County Attorney, USD #331 Attorney, former board member of the Kingman Recreation Commission, Kingman County Draft Board Attorney, as well as serving with the Kingman Chamber of Commerce, and Kingman Zoning Boards. Williams was also a U.S. Army veteran who served during WWII.



## Cities Team Up On Watershed Issues

Prairie Village will join six other cities in Johnson County to solve watershed issues.

The City Council will join the Rock Creek Watershed Planning and Management Study with the cities of Mission, Roeland Park, Fairway, Overland Park, Mission Hills, and Westwood. At the Council's February 4, 2013, meeting Andy McCaskill of the engineer consulting firm Burns and McDonnell and Lee Schollenberger of Johnson County Stormwater Department explained the watershed study.

"Few problems can be solved within the boundaries of just one city," he said.

McCaskill said the goal of the study would be to form a coalition of those six cities that would address stormwater management in the watershed.

Schollenberger said the Johnson County Stormwater Management Program will fund 90% of the study's cost, and Fairway and Mission would split the rest.

Though the study is the first step in a process that may not lead to any action from Prairie Village, Councilmember Charles Clark said this could be a positive example for how cities could address stormwater issues. There are several watersheds across the metro area.

## Lenexa Named Among Best Cities to Raise Kids

A new report in *Bloomberg Businessweek* has named Lenexa one of the best places in the country to raise children.

Residents said the award recognizes what they already know—that Lenexa is a great place to live.

The Johnson County community has a small-town feel even though it sits inside the large Kansas City metropolitan area. Among the amenities that residents like to brag about is all the green space. The City has Blackhoof Park, Sar-Ko-Par Trails Park, and a majority of the land for Shawnee Mission Park.

"Lenexa is an awesome place," said parent Lauren Haupt. "Great schools, this amazing new park. I love it here."

"I love small-town things," said parent Brenda Smyth. "We know a lot of people in Lenexa. It's kind of a melting pot."

Lenexa also knows how to throw festivals. Every year, it hosts the Spinach Festival, the Chili Challenge, the Great Lenexa Barbecue Battle, and more than a dozen similar events in all.

The *Bloomberg Businessweek* title didn't come from nominations or entries. It was judged using data from the Census Bureau, the FBI, and other agencies. Lenexa stacked up as having good schools, low unemployment, affordable housing, a healthy business base, and providing a safe place to raise children.

Lenexa was named the best in Kansas and among the best in the country. In Missouri, the top community was the St. Louis suburb of Ballwin.

Lenexa third graders even got to play mayor for a day. In one class, the final project is a trip to City Hall and a chance for students to make their own city budgets.

"It's amazing how many times you're going down the grocery store aisle and you hear, 'That's the mayor! That's the mayor!' and it's cute," said Lenexa Mayor Mike Boehm.

## Wichita Starts New Solid Waste/Recycling Program

The City of Wichita has launched a revamped solid waste and recycling program designed to reduce costs and offer more services for residences and small businesses. The new program features three key components:

- A requirement that all local trash haulers offer single-stream curbside recycling—a process that collects materials mingled together with no sorting required by individual recyclers. Recyclable items include brown paper bags, magazines, catalogs, telephone books, soft cover books, junk mail, envelopes, paper, paperboard, cereal and tissue boxes, cardboard, narrow-neck plastic bottles such as milk jugs, bleach and detergent, shampoo bottles, plastic grocery bags, glass bottles, glass jars, metal cans, and other items.
- A new program that potentially offers savings through "pay as you throw" options. Haulers must provide options such as

smaller trash containers for low-generating users at a reduced price.

- A web page that allows customers to shop and compare for prices and services. The web page can be found at <http://www.wichita.gov/Government/Departments/PWU/Pages/SolidWasteRecycling.aspx>. There, residents can provide 1) the name of their trash service provider; 2) the cost of their service; and 3) the services they utilize. Residents select the categories from a drop-down box. The information will be collected, categorized, and accessible so residents can make more informed choices about hauler services and prices.

For more information about the the new solid waste/recycling program, contact Wichita's Communications Team at (316) 268-4351.

## Salina Air Museum Gets a Boost

Efforts to build an aviation museum at Salina Regional Airport are getting a boost from the Peggy and Steve Fossett Foundation.

The Foundation, named for the late adventurer and aviation pioneer, issued a \$1 million challenge grant to help build the Wings Over Salina Museum and Aviation Experience. The grant will match contributions to the project. Salina was the site of two of Steve Fossett's aviation exploits.

In 2005, he took off and landed at Salina in the first non-stop, non-refueled solo flight around the world. The flight lasted 67 hours and 1 minute, and covered nearly 23,000 miles.

The following year, he used Salina as the starting point for a 25,294-mile flight, setting a world record for a closed-circuit flight.

Fossett died in 2007 in a plane crash in California.



## New Kansas Map Showcased State's Beauty

There's no place like Kansas as the new 2013-14 Official State Transportation Map illustrates by highlighting things to see and places of interest that are unique to the state.

From the Kansas Cosmosphere to the Flint Hills Discovery Center, the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum, and all the landscapes featured along the Kansas Byways, the map showcases many places of interest the state has for its citizens and visitors.

In addition to the basic state map on one side and city insets on the other are listings of recreation areas, museums, cities,

and counties. There is also information about accessing road conditions, visitor resources, a distance map, and other helpful phone numbers, and websites.

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) works with several state agencies to create the map. About 800,000 copies of the maps will be distributed in Kansas and across the United States in the next two years.

Maps are available free of charge at Kansas Travel Centers, at KDOT Headquarters and District offices, and at various hotels, attractions, and other locations across the state.

## CAIC Approves Programs for Kansas

The Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission (CAIC) announced the approval of two new programs designed to strengthen an important sector of the Kansas economy and create jobs.

The Creative Economy Project Support program provides funding to help communities and organizations complete initiatives that focus on a broad range of cultural and economic development activities, while the Creative Arts Industry Incentives program will offer different financial incentives for creative professionals, businesses, and organizations that are looking to relocate to or expand in Kansas.

The Creative Economy Project Support program supports initiatives that can include the creation of designated creative

districts, rehabilitation of historic properties, and cultural tourism product development, among other projects. The Creative Arts Industry Incentives program can be used for workforce expansion, capital investment assistance, and workforce training assistance.

"I look forward to the CAIC and these programs helping to expand the creative arts industry in Kansas," said Kansas Labor Secretary Lana Gordon, who is chairman of the CAIC's advisory committee. "These programs will fund projects that will allow individuals and communities to enhance their quality of life as well as our economy."

For more information on the CAIC, complete program details, and full application guidelines, go to [KansasCommerce.com/CAIC](http://KansasCommerce.com/CAIC).

## KANSASWORKS Employer Partner Incentive Announced

Kansas Department of Commerce Secretary Pat George and Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Phyllis Gilmore announced the KANSASWORKS Employer Partner Incentive, which is designed to connect employers with persons with disabilities who are looking for secure, permanent, competitive, and integrated employment.

A partnership between the two agencies will provide participating employers with incentives for hiring and retaining persons with disabilities who are certified as eligible by DCF.

"We are excited about this opportunity to get qualified individuals who are eager to work into good jobs with good companies," Gilmore said. "These are highly motivated workers with an excellent work ethic and a great desire to be productive."

"This is a program that will help employ Kansans with disabilities," said Senator Dan Kerschen. "Now we need to work with employers and Kansans to make this program work."

Through the KANSASWORKS Employer Partner Incentive, employers will be paid \$1,500 for employing a qualified employee

on a full-time basis for 90 days. If the qualified individual is still employed after a year, the employer will be eligible to receive an additional \$1,500.

Employers may also receive \$1,000 for employing a qualified worker for a year on a part-time basis that includes a minimum of 20 hours of work per week. Jobs must offer the same level of benefits and pay as is offered to non-qualified workers.

"When qualified individuals are employed, everyone wins—beginning with their employers," Gilmore said. "People with disabilities who become employed experience job satisfaction, they spend their earnings in local communities, and they contribute as taxpayers."

Employers interested in participating in the KANSASWORKS Employer Partner Incentive should contact Jeff Schroeder with the Kansas Department of Commerce at (785) 296-0658 or [jschroeder@kansascommerce.com](mailto:jschroeder@kansascommerce.com).

## Kansas Health Foundation Awards Grant

The Kansas Association of Community Foundations (KACF) received a \$2 million grant from the Kansas Health Foundation.

The five-year grant provides program and operating support to KACF to fulfill its original GROW II ([http://www.kansashealth.org/focus\\_areas/community\\_philanthropy/GROW](http://www.kansashealth.org/focus_areas/community_philanthropy/GROW)) assignments: helping the GROW II endowment grantees meet their goals successfully and building the capacity of the community foundation field in Kansas.

KACF will provide direct and indirect technical assistance to 39 community foundations (GROW II grantees) and will continue its most effective community foundation development programs for KACF members such as annual conference, state-wide training, professional advisor outreach, peer learning/projects, Council on Foundations conference fellowship, and information management training.



## WHY BELONG TO NLC?

The National League of Cities is THE voice for municipalities of all sizes in Washington, DC, as well as THE resource for local leaders and city staff to find solutions to the most pressing challenges in their communities.

### Did you know...?

NLC shares a close relationship with the 49 state municipal leagues. It was originally formed by a core group of state leagues to ensure representation in Washington for local governments. NLC still counts all of the 49 state leagues as voting members, and cities are required to belong to their state league prior to joining NLC.

Cities who are members of the National League of Cities enjoy distinct benefits from those afforded by membership in the state municipal leagues, including:

- Representation and advocacy on the federal level,
- A vast pool of geographically diverse members to connect with,
- Its own unique set of solutions and programs designed to save your city and residents time and money, and
- Abundant NLC resources, publications, and technical assistance to help your city navigate the most difficult local government challenges.

See for yourself what it's all about! Have your city join today and begin the NLC experience! Contact [memberservices@nlc.org](mailto:memberservices@nlc.org) or (877) 827-2385, or visit [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org) for more information.

# “If I Were Mayor” Essay Contest Winners

**O**n February 6, 2013, the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) honored six Kansas students for their winning essays in the annual “If I Were Mayor” contest. As part of LKM’s civics education efforts, the essay contest asked seventh-graders from around the state to describe what they would do if they were elected mayor of their city. This year almost 1,000 students participated in the contest. Winners were selected as regional winners and one winner was declared the overall state winner.

The “If I Were Mayor” essay contest awards were presented as part of LKM’s annual City Hall Day. Phillipsburg City Clerk and LKM President Brenda Chance presented the awards to the seventh-graders.

LKM believes that civics education is the foundation of an active and informed citizenry. A number of

programs have been developed to aid educators in teaching students about local governments in Kansas and to assist them in meeting the state’s civics standards. In addition to the “If I Were Mayor” essay contest, the “My City, My Home” coloring book is designed for third graders and covers the important services that cities provide. A copy of the coloring book is available for download at <http://www.lkm.org/youtheducation/coloringbook/>. LKM has also designed a book for seventh and eighth graders that enhances students’ knowledge and understanding about local government. To order a copy of this book, visit <http://www.lkm.org/youtheducation/localgovt/>.

More information about all of LKM’s civics education initiatives can be found online at [www.lkm.org/youtheducation](http://www.lkm.org/youtheducation).



*The “If I Were Mayor” essay awards were presented to 5 of the 6 winners at LKM’s annual City Hall Day. From left to right: Caleb Vogts, Olpe; Megan Powers, Garden City; Lauren Lowrey, El Dorado; Hunter Fitzpatrick, Larned; and Morgan Westbrook, Kensington. Photos by Amanda Schuster.*

# Caleb Vogts



City of Olpe  
Northeast & Statewide Winner  
Olpe Jr./Sr. High School

**I**f I were mayor, I would make sure I had time for everybody. I would listen to everybody's opinion, and I would be patient with everyone.

I would be a responsible mayor and make sure work got done. If someone had a reasonable complaint, I would make sure the problem is fixed.

As mayor, I would have tough skin and broad shoulders. I would have to accept that I couldn't please everybody.

Safety is a natural priority in any community, so as much as possible I would make sure that everybody in my city is protected from danger.

I would spend tax money on things that need to be done. Repairing damaged sidewalks and installing new sidewalks would be one responsibility. I would encourage my councilmembers to pass a city ordinance that prevents people from having yards with grass over one foot tall.

I would go to city activities and stay up-to-date with the townspeople. It is important to be involved with the community in order to keep in touch with the city's needs.

Installing security cameras around the city might be something I could budget for in the future. Some people might view this type of surveillance as an invasion of privacy, but I would present it as necessary for crime prevention and a tool that can enhance safety and security for people, their property, and businesses.

A vote for me as mayor would be a vote for a responsible, trustworthy, and respectful mayor.

# Morgan Westbrook

**I**f I were mayor I'd want people to know they're electing a worthy adversary for the job, making the town presentable, and increasing population. I think these are ways to be a productive mayor. This is the true meaning of being a mayor.

First, I would want people to think of me as a trustworthy and reliable mayor. I would need to be the leader and voice in my community and show that I'm confident in my town. I need to be reasonable and headstrong when making decisions and stand up for what is right.

Next as mayor, I need to get the town presentable for all visitors. I will make needed repairs and involve others in volunteering. I can get multiple organizations in my community to work together.

Finally, increasing population by attracting people and making them feel welcome, safe, and having a strong educational system. The community can place "welcome" signs with a catchy slogan at both ends of town. We need to show there are activities for all ages to get involved in. Also, education is important and is strongly encouraged. By doing this, it shows that our town is a great place to live. When creating and participating in these projects, I need to be resourceful.

These are the ways of being a productive mayor. If I were mayor, I would want people to know that they're electing a worthy adversary, making the town presentable, and increasing population.



City of Kensington  
North Central Winner  
Kensington Middle School

# Lauren Lowrey



---

City of El Dorado  
Southeast Winner  
El Dorado Middle School

---

If I were mayor, I would find out the individual problems of the community, face them individually, and accomplish them individually, while seeing how it will affect the community as a whole, both the problem and the solution.

As mayor, I would address the budget of the town and the unique needs of those in the community (money standards so that taxes and home/business budgets can meet a fair balance.) I would also cut the unneeded programs so we can make more room in the budget and pay off debt.

Being mayor, I would look at laws and policies and see that the inefficient ones get removed and put in ones that would better the community and would run it effectively.

Finally, if I were mayor, I would offer the community a louder voice. I would talk to those in the community about what issues in the community there is and what needs to be addressed. I believe the one who will know the needs of the community is not someone who has lived half their life in other cities, or even someone sitting behind a desk at City Hall, but someone who lives, 24/7, in the town seeing and dealing with the issues to face that those others would simply just not see.

If I were mayor, I would seek out the individual problem of the town I must lead, to make it a better solution as a whole.

# Donily Sexson



---

City of Weskan  
Northwest Winner  
Weskan Middle School

---

Weskan is a fun small town. Weskan has a small school with Pre-school through 12th grade. We live about 4 miles from the Colorado state line.

If I were mayor I would open a restaurant/gas-station. A little while ago Weskan had a crew to work on the railroad tracks. So if Weskan had a restaurant or gas-station they would just need to go to the restaurant or gas-station in Weskan so they wouldn't need to go 12 miles away to Sharon Springs.

Another reason I would have a restaurant/gas-station is because we had lots of people stop at my house out in country. They were headed up to Mt. Sunflower. They would ask where is the closest gas-station. So my dad said Sharon Springs or Cheyenne Wells. So if Weskan had a gas-station they would just go to Weskan, then they could keep on continue to their trip.

A lot of small towns like Weskan have a restaurant/gas-station, so why not Weskan too. Weskan has had a restaurant/gas-station before. So why not have it again. It would save people from driving longer to get to a gas-station. There also wouldn't be as many vehicles parked on the highway as much.

There are a lot of people in Weskan who think that Weskan should have a restaurant/gas-station. Then, if we had a restaurant/gas-station then we would get more people to move back around Weskan so they can work. Then it would also make the school and town bigger.

# Hunter Fitzpatrick



---

City of Larned  
South Central Winner  
Larned Middle School

---

**I**f I were mayor, I would work to improve the recreational experiences for the citizens of Larned. I would place a greater emphasis on safety of all citizens and work hard to communicate with the youth of our city.

First, I would inform the city council of my wishes to have clean, safe, and well maintained recreational facilities. I would also like to see more family oriented offerings in recreation. We would need to take a look at the budget to find areas where we could implement cost cutting measures to be able to enhance our current recreational facilities and offerings.

Safety is another one of my top priorities. I would like to see an effort to make sure all intersections in the city limits are free of debris and obstructions. We have a major highway running through the middle of our city. This brings about a division that children have a hard time crossing safely. I would work to secure funds to build a walkway that would go over the highway so that everyone could have a safe way to connect to the other side of town.

The final thing that I would like to implement is a way for the youth to be able to connect with me and the other council members. I would have a question and answer assembly each year with each school in town. This would open up communication with the youth.

The most important idea is that we work together as one town.

# Megan Powers



---

City of Garden City  
Southwest Winner  
Kenneth Henderson Middle School

---

**I**f I were mayor of Garden City, Kansas, I would want to make some improvements. I think it would be great to have a water park. It would be nice for when it's hot in the summer. I would also like to make our zoo bigger. It might be fun to have an amusement park.

The reason I think we should make some improvements to Garden City is so that more people want to come here. If you have more people coming into the city they buy things from the stores, buy and build homes, and eat at restaurants. This makes more for our city and the people living here. This makes it possible to continue making more improvements.

If we have more activities for the kids in our town to do they will be happier and so will their parents. If you keep kids busy and entertained it should help them stay out of trouble. It should also help keep kids healthier because they'd be getting a lot of exercise. If they get more exercise it might even help child obesity. It might help kids make new friends.

I would like to make fun activities for families. If they have things to do together they can make happy memories. Then families will want to move to Garden City and stay here. Otherwise, sometimes people move to smaller towns and they don't like it. They might want to move to a bigger city.

In conclusion, I think Garden City is a great place to live. If we make it an exciting place for families to live and a fun, safe, happy environment for families they will want to move here. I believe that a water park, bigger zoo, and an amusement park could be the answer. Families could have birthday parties and have fun together. That is what I would do if I were the mayor.

*The Bonner Springs-Edwardsville USD 204 is the first district in Kansas to implement the tenets of the Standard Response Protocol. Pictured is the Bonner Springs High School and, right, the Bonner Springs Middle School. Photos provided by City of Bonner Springs.*

# A SCHOOL SAFETY RECIPE

BY CHIEF JOHN HALEY AND  
SEARGENT MARK ZARETSKI

BONNER SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL

Our greatest asset is our children. In many Kansas cities the largest concentration of people during the work day is not at the Wal-Mart or a strip mall, it is in our schools. Cities, school districts, and first responders have the responsibility to insure the safety of those children against all threats. The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) provides that with a low or no cost flexible student safety plan.

A key ingredient in the safe school recipe is the uniform classroom response to an incident at school. Weather events, fires, accidents, intruders, and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by school and district administration and staff. Historically, schools have taken a scenario-based approach to respond to hazards and threats. It's not uncommon to find a stapled sheaf of papers or even a tabbed binder in a teacher's desk that describes a variety of things that might happen and the specific response to each event.

In April of 2012, Sergeant Mark Zaretski, who represents the City of Bonner Springs on the 29th Judicial District's Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board (JACAB) attended training in San Antonio, Texas. That training was given by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

The Standard Response Protocol is based not on individual scenarios, but on the response to any given scenario. Like the Incident Command System (ICS), SRP demands a specific vocabulary but also allows for great flexibility. The premise is simple—there are four specific actions that can be performed during an incident and each action is then followed by a "Directive." Execution of the action is performed by active participants, including students, staff, teachers, and first responders.

- **Lockout** is followed by the Directive: "Secure the Perimeter" and is the protocol used to safeguard students and staff within the building.
- **Lockdown** is followed by "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight" and is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep students quiet and in place.

- **Evacuate** is always followed by a location, and is used to move students and staff from one location to a different location in or out of the building.
- **Shelter** is always followed by a type and a method and is the protocol for group and self-protection.

These specific actions can act as both a verb and a noun. If the action is Lockdown, it would be announced on public address as "Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight." Communication to local Law Enforcement Agency would then be "We are under Lockdown."

Each response has a specific student and staff action. The Evacuate response is always followed by a location: "Evacuate to the bus zone." Responses can also be chained. "Evacuate to hallway. Shelter for tornado. Drop, cover, and hold."

The benefits of SRP become quickly apparent. By standardizing the vocabulary, everyone involved can understand the response and status of the event. For students, this provides continuity of expectations and actions throughout their educational career. For teachers, this becomes a simpler process to train and drill. For first responders, the common vocabulary and protocols establish a greater predictability that persists through the duration of an incident. Parents can easily understand the practices and can reinforce the protocol. Additionally, this protocol enables rapid response determination when an unforeseen event occurs.

Sergeant Zaretski understood this program filled a vital need in his school district and briefed the program to the Bonner Springs Police Chief John Haley. Sergeant Zaretski first presented the program to the USD 204 Superintendent, Dr. Robert Van Maren, then to the full School Board. Sergeant Zaretski also presented the program to the Bonner Springs City Council and gained their full support.

At the direction of Chief Haley, the Bonner Springs Police Department committed to assist USD 204 become compliant with the tenets of SRP. A team was comprised of Sergeant Mark Zaretski as the SRP Liaison, and Officers Ryan Smith and Lief French assisting. Sergeant Zaretski was responsible for ensuring that the school district was in complete compliance with the tenets of the

SRP. Bonner Springs-Edwardsville USD 204 is the first district in Kansas to adopt these tenets.

USD 204's enrollment is 2,524 students housed in 7 buildings in 3 different cities. Inside the city limits of Bonner Springs is the high school, middle school, elementary school, an early learning center, and a headstart program. Kansas City, Kansas and Edwardsville, Kansas each have one elementary building.

At the training, Sergeant Mark Zaretski attended in April 2012, Mr. John Michael Keyes gave the keynote presentation as well as taught a breakout session on SRP. John Michael Keyes became a subject matter expert in response to a school incident through personal tragedy. On September 27, 2006, a gunman entered Platte Canyon High School in Bailey Colorado, taking seven girls hostage and sexually molesting them before ultimately shooting and killing Emily Keyes. During the time she was held hostage, Emily sent her parents text messages... "I love you guys" and "I love u guys. k?"

As a result of this tragedy, The "I Love U Guys" Foundation was created by Emily's father, Mr. John Michael Keyes, to restore and protect youth through educational programs and positive actions in collaboration with families, schools, communities, organizations, and government entities.

Since May of 2009, John Michael Keyes and Ellen Stoddard-Keyes have presented the program at hundreds of events, conferences, and venues. This has resulted in adoption by school districts, police departments, and agencies in several states.

Sergeant Zaretski, in an effort to ensure the safety of students in the entire area, also coordinated, briefed and instructed the Kansas



City, Kansas Deputy Chief of Police, LTC Terry Zeigler, and Edwardsville Police Chief Mark Mathies on the tenets of SRP and the Memorandum of Agreement required by the "I Love U Guys" foundation. Fort Leavenworth School District USD 207 and Kansas City, Kansas USD 500 requested and received presentations and instruction on SRP. Both school districts have expressed interest in implementing the SRP.

If your organization would like additional information or help in implementing the Standard Response Protocol, contact the Bonner Springs Police Department at [www.bonnerrsprings.org](http://www.bonnerrsprings.org).

 Chief John Haley and Sergeant Mark Zaretski are both members of the Bonner Springs Police Department. They can be reached at (913) 422-7800.

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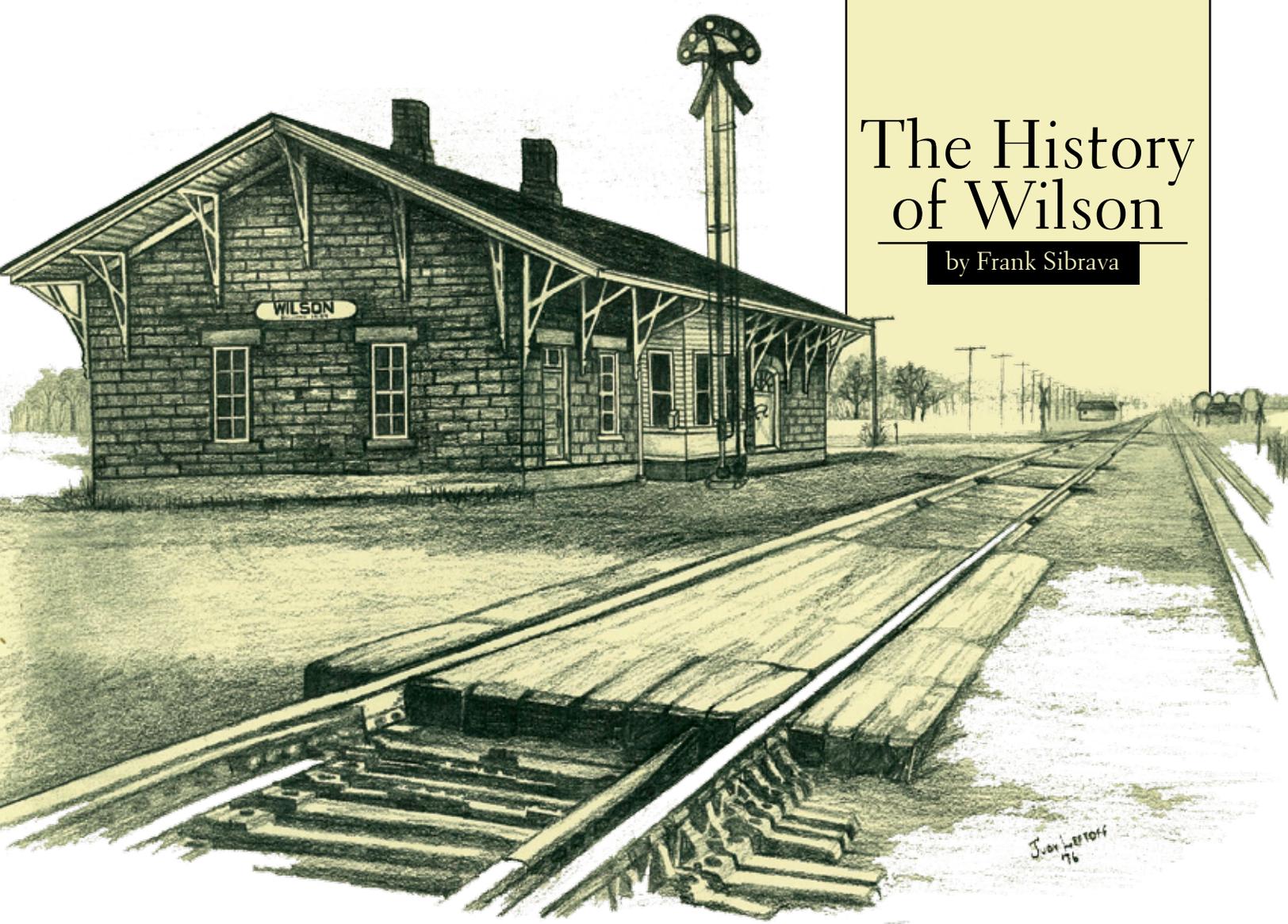
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# The History of Wilson

by Frank Sibrava



**Editor's Note:** This fascinating history of Wilson, Kansas was written in 1978 by a former resident of the area. It is representative of many similar stories of cities across Kansas.

**T**he beginnings of Wilson can be traced with reasonable accuracy, but the origin of the name is, in all likelihood, as lost to history as the smoke signals of the native Kiowas and Cheyennes. We know that as early as 1865 a stage station on the new Butterfield Overland Despatch running from Atchison, Kansas to Denver was named Wilson Creek Station. This crude rest stop and relay point—a “swing station” it was called—was located approximately one-half mile southeast of the present Wilson on what is now the Albert Borrell farm.<sup>1</sup> This stone shanty and stable served the stage line until its abandonment in 1868, the year the Kansas Pacific tracks reached here. But, the identity of the Wilson after whom or which the station was named is unknown. The Civil War Battle of Wilson's Creek in Missouri would be only an educated hunch.

Many towns and cities owe their specific location, indeed their very existence, to some great river or thoroughfare. Wilson and its predecessor, Wilson Creek Station, also have their avenue of high heritage. This was the bustling trace that flanked what was to become modern Wilson's southern perimeter and which its time carried the great and the near great.

The Smoky Hill Route to the mountains was long a favorite road for prospectors and traders. The discovery of gold around Denver in 1859 increased this traffic, but with the decline of the gold rush and disruption of the Civil War, travel slowed. Then in June of 1865, David Butterfield surveyed the route and opened it to a thriving freight and stage business.<sup>2</sup> In August the line carried 300 tons in one west-bound train and its hard driven stages—fast, double-teamed Concords—bore many a questing drummer and fledgling businessman and painted madam to the tents and dance halls of Denver. Butterfield used both oxen and mules to pull his freight which cost 22½ ¢ a pound to move. The stages were horse drawn. Eventually Wells Fargo and Co. bought out the line.

The life of the trail was short, its eastern terminus rolling up before the laying of track by the Kansas Pacific. Butterfield had no monopoly on the trail; and while it lived it carried many a fabled scout, gunfighter, and army officer—flamboyant Buffalo Bill; tall wary-eyed Wild Bill Hickock; and tough, hurrying Generals Sheridan and Hancock and their dusty troopers bent on the military business of protecting the trail from marauding Indians. Wilson Creek, then a seasonal stream of clear pools, was a regular watering spot for these travelers and their thirsty horses. A dug well carried them through the dry times.

On July 18, 1867, another traveler of undying fame was to make use of the trail. It was approximately 10:30 that hot evening that

yellow haired George Armstrong Custer, impatient to see his wife and apprehensive at reports of cholera at Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth, together with his brother, Lieutenant Tom Custer, black-bearded Lieutenant W. W. Cook, and one enlisted man, darted east through Wilson Creek Station in two high-wheeled army ambulances—then standard transportation for ranking officers—each ambulance drawn by a team of mules.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Lawrence Frost, in his authoritative, “The Court-Martial of General George Armstrong Custer,” details the events of Custer’s leaving his 7th Cavalry command at Fort Wallace in extreme western Kansas, and with a company of 75 men riding as far as Fort Hays where he and his three companions, foregoing their escort, switched to the ambulances for the final dash to Fort Harker (now Kanopolis). There Custer took a train east. A few days later he was placed under arrest, ordered to Fort Leavenworth, and later court-martialed and suspended from the service for one year for, among other things, abandoning his troops. And, of course, nine years later up on the Little Big Horn in Montana, the still impetuous Custer, along with Tom, and this same W. W. Cook were to lead five troops of the 7th Cavalry into Valhalla. History doesn’t record how long the party paused on Wilson Creek.

For a while after the building of the first railroad depot in 1868, the settlement continued to be known as Wilson Station. Then on June 15, 1871, the Post Office Department designated the site as “Attica,” and according to Robert Baughman’s “Kansas Post Offices” a Byron Tyler became the first postmaster.<sup>4</sup> That label lasted officially just six months—until November 21 of the same year when the designation was again changed, this time to “Bosland.” This name, like Attica, is nebulous in origin but undoubtedly sprang from the Latin word, bos meaning cattle or oxen. Ellsworth to the east was dreaming of and preparing for overnight prosperity as a railhead for the Texas cattle drives—just as had Abilene farther east; and possibly the railroad or the aspiring citizens of Attica hoped to emulate the anticipated (and later realized) success of that town by creation of a proper image. If that was the purpose, it failed. Other railroads sliced through southern Kansas, drying up the northern route.

It was in 1871, that J. T. McKittrick, a world traveler and Civil War veteran, became the first permanent area settler.<sup>5</sup> He located on the NE to NW ¼ of Sec. 20, Twp. 14, R. 10. Later he moved to town and built the Cipra Hotel south of the tracks which is still standing and owned and occupied by Jack Libal.<sup>6</sup> An interesting sidelight on the McKittrick family is that in 1959 when another frontier territory, Alaska, became the 49th state, William Egan became its first governor, and his wife—the former Neva McKittrick of Wilson—became Alaska’s first lady. She is a great-niece of the first Bosland settler as is her sister, Margaret, who still lives in Wilson.

In September of 1871, the townsite was platted and surveyed by the National Land Co., and that same year

Philip Gabel erected the first store building on the west side of Main Street (Michigan St.) near the railroad track.

The initial sizable influx of settlers occurred in 1871, and 1872, many of them Pennsylvanians. Some came by train—others by covered wagon. The Henry Kies family came from Iowa. They arrived by wagon in a blizzard in early 1872.<sup>7</sup> One of their daughters, Lida, was later to become Irene Crawford’s mother.

On June 24, 1873, the Postal Department designated the town as Wilson, finally, by design or by accident, coming almost full circle to the original Wilson Creek.

Then in 1874 began a second wave of settlers, this time Bohemian emigrants from such diverse places as Iowa, Nebraska, Chicago, and New York. Francis Swehla, in his excellent *Bohemians in Central Kansas*, speaks of arriving in “Bosland” in May of 1874 and being the first of his nationality to homestead land here. His identification indicates that Wilson had not yet caught on as the town name.

Mr. Swehla mentions names like Himes and Jellison and Sackman and Hutchison as being native to the area when he arrived. But Mr. Swehla was a colonizer, and the names of the families his blandishments enticed into migrating to Wilson (by Wilson is meant the town’s trade territory) during the next decade had a distinctly different ring. Chrudimsky, Malir, Vopat, Soukup, Peterka, and Hazlicek guaranteed the nationality mix in Wilson that was to become the trademark of America. In fact, after the turn of the century they were still coming. Joe Vocasek, with his parents, came directly from Bohemia in 1911 and Anton Sula after WWI. Both became successful businessmen.

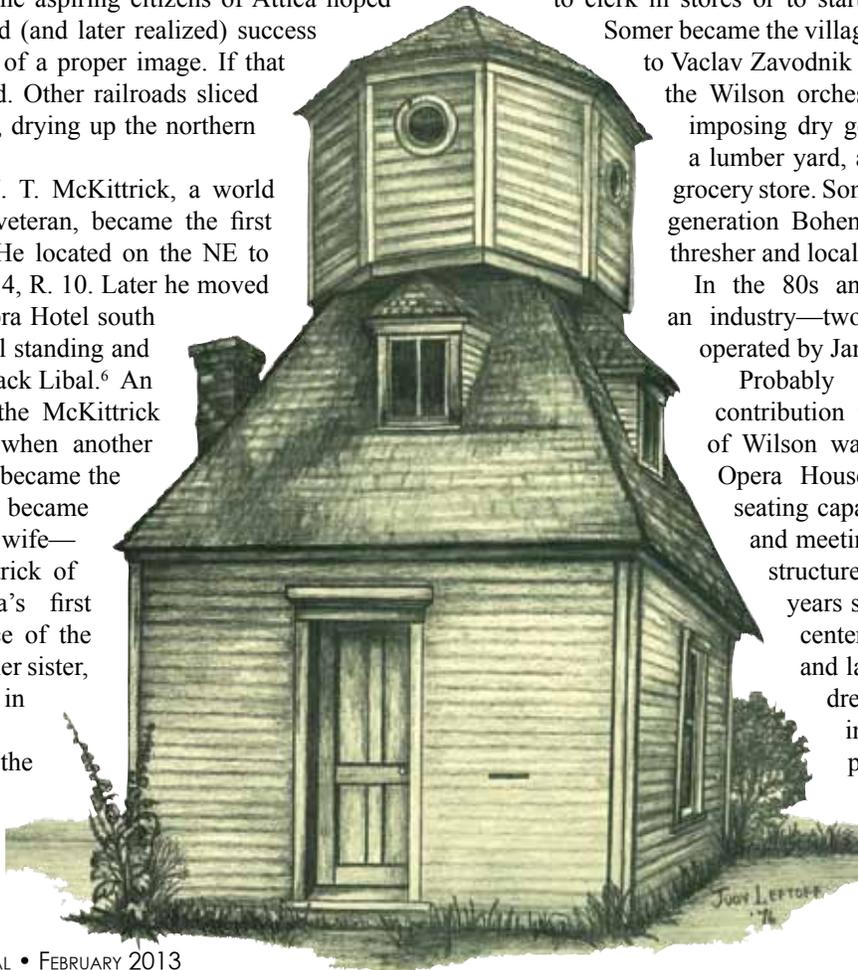
A curious fact about these Bohemians is that although most had been craftsmen in the old country, the majority, in the beginning, made farming—which they knew little about—their vocation here. Cheap, available land was the reason. Gradually, though, the discontented, including their sons and daughters, drifted to town to clerk in stores or to start their own businesses. Anton

Somer became the village black-smith, later selling out to Vaclav Zavodnik who also became the leader of the Wilson orchestra. Joseph Tampier built an imposing dry goods store, the Hoch brothers a lumber yard, and Jarus and Ptacek owned a grocery store. Some of these represented second-generation Bohemians. Frank Vlcek became a thresher and local band leader.

In the 80s and 90s Wilson even boasted an industry—two cigar factories owned and operated by Jan Florian and Vaclav Gregor.

Probably the Bohemian’s greatest contribution to the culture and social life of Wilson was the erection of the Wilson Opera House. Two stories high with a seating capacity of 500 and a gymnasium and meeting rooms in the basement, this structure, started in 1901, for many years served as the town’s recreation center. Stage shows, public dances, and later motion pictures frequently drew capacity crowds. Its decline in the 1950s coincided with the public’s increased mobility and changing entertainment tastes.<sup>8</sup>

The religion of many of these Bohemians was



Catholic, but owing to the poverty of the colony, not until 1885 was a church started. From about 1880 until the church was finished, a Father Kelly of Ellsworth conducted services in Wilson once a month in private homes.<sup>9</sup>

A second curious feature of the Bohemian migration was that the first settlers in 1874-75 came by train, but the next group in 1876 came by wagon. These latter were from Minnesota, among them the Sekavecs and Zajics.

Another colonizer—non-Bohemian—was Frederick Deissroth who was responsible for locating 40 families in the area.<sup>10</sup> These were people of German extraction, “Pennsylvania Dutch,” whose thrifty, hard-working habits were to make a marked contribution to the growth of Wilson. Other Germans, some coming directly from Germany—others from Russia where they had temporarily settled—continued to populate the Wilson area for the next 40 years. These sturdy, independent people were fleeing Old World oppression and militarism.

1877 and 1878 were great building years in Wilson.<sup>11</sup> Adam Jellison and J. M. Keyser were responsible for the erection of two store buildings. S. A. Coover started the *Wilson Echo* in 1879—the forerunner of the *Wilson World*. The present depot was finished the same year, built of sandstone quarried between Kanopolis and Brookville and shipped in by train. It was hailed as one of the finest structures of its kind between Kansas City and Denver.

In 1879 Schermerhorn and Thompson opened a dry goods store and H. Greenough started a modest flour mill. Its capacity was 500 bushels a day and began a mill-continuity in Wilson that was to last until the closing of the Wilson Flour Mill in 1953. Nesmith and Walmer became town grocers in 1880; Anspach and Youngman were the first bankers. A. C.

Jellison was partner in the McKenzie and Jellison grain elevator

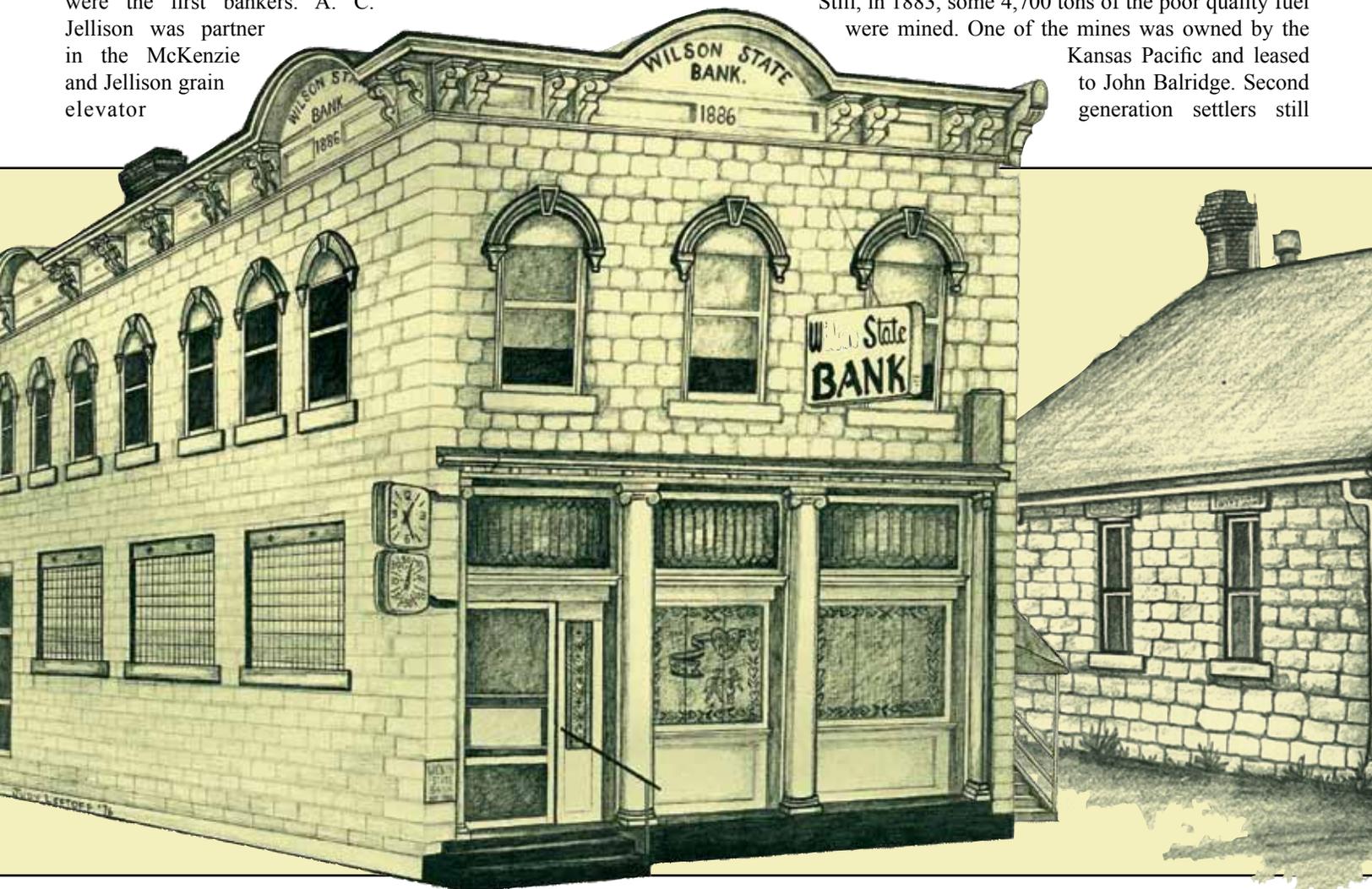
and farm implement business. Jellison was also part owner of the Wilson Creamery, a two story structure with 1,000 lb. per day butter capacity. The creamery was located two miles south of town on the Smoky Hill.

The little community grew modestly but steadily. In 1882, Wilson boasted a population of 503, and the following year the town petitioned and was granted incorporation.<sup>12</sup> W. H. Carhart, Fred Deissroth, Ed Schermerhorn, Michael Keyser, C.J. Claussen, Ira Danner, Mike Schwarz, C. P. Kyner, A. P. Woodmansee, James Latta, Joseph Latshaw, Dan Carbiener, A. D. Williams, A. A. McCoy, S. B. Jellison, H. Keller, S. A. Coover, and J. T. McKittrick were among the 58 petitioners. John Lang was elected the first mayor. The present city library, named after him, was endowed by his widow. In 1886, the Wilson State Bank was founded and still serves the community.

Regardless of its date of incorporation, it's safe to say that Wilson, nee Bosland, nee Attica, actually was born in 1871. The first school was completed in 1874, and the first church building (Presbyterian) in 1880. Given impetus by the stage line and later the railroad and a healthy whack on the backside by agriculture, mainly cattle and wheat, Wilson shed its swaddling clothes, and by the late 1880s was planted firmly on its own two feet.

The town enjoyed two modest natural blessings during its formative years. Fuel for the cruel Kansas winters was always a problem, and the scattered native cottonwoods and elms and the plentiful but lowly cow chips were poor sources of heat. Thus, it was a most welcome discovery when the settlers found coal deposits along the Smoky Hill River only two and half miles south of town on what later became the Fred Cross ranch.<sup>13</sup> It was of low grade, and its extraction from the river bluffs was an arduous operation.

Still, in 1883, some 4,700 tons of the poor quality fuel were mined. One of the mines was owned by the Kansas Pacific and leased to John Balridge. Second generation settlers still



recall a huge stockpile of the stuff located along the tracks west of Wilson going up in the smoke of a prairie fire. Lew Whitmer tells of taking coal from these mines almost to the turn of the century. Shafts were started on the eastern face of the big hill and others on the western slope, and eventually, inevitably, two of the tunnels met. The coal was pushed out on handcarts rolled on wooden rails, then dumped over the side and later weighed on scales set up at the foot of the hill.

The other commodity in abundant natural supply was building stone. Limestone, with slight overburden, was available for the taking on the divide between the Smoky Hill and Hell Creek, and also on the bluffs south of the Smoky Hill. From this natural resource came tons of stone for the building of numerous store buildings in Wilson and private homes and barns in and around the town. From these quarries also came the massive stone posts peculiar to this area. Miles of them are still in use.

From kerosene to acetylene to electricity, from cow chips to crude coal to natural gas, Wilson somehow managed to keep pace with the technological advances of the rest of the country. An 1899 issue of the *Wilson Echo* boasted of the new Power Hotel, “built of stone and lighted by acetylene.” This establishment, later re-modeled and enlarged, became the Midland Hotel and has remained in continuous service. A municipal water and light system was put into operation in 1911, the year Wilson’s population finally reached 1,000. The power plant has been rebuilt, but the water tower is still in use. Prior to that time, electricity had been furnished, beginning in 1901, by the Weber family which owned a power plant where the Mobil gas station now stands. The town had an earlier tower, though of more modest dimensions and used only for firefighting. It stood and still stands—a curious circular stone structure with a supply tank (now removed) on top—back of what is now the Cooney Building.

Before the introduction of a central water system the town relied on back-yard wells. Old photos show windmills dotting the town, and a community mill stood as early as 1886 on the east side of Main

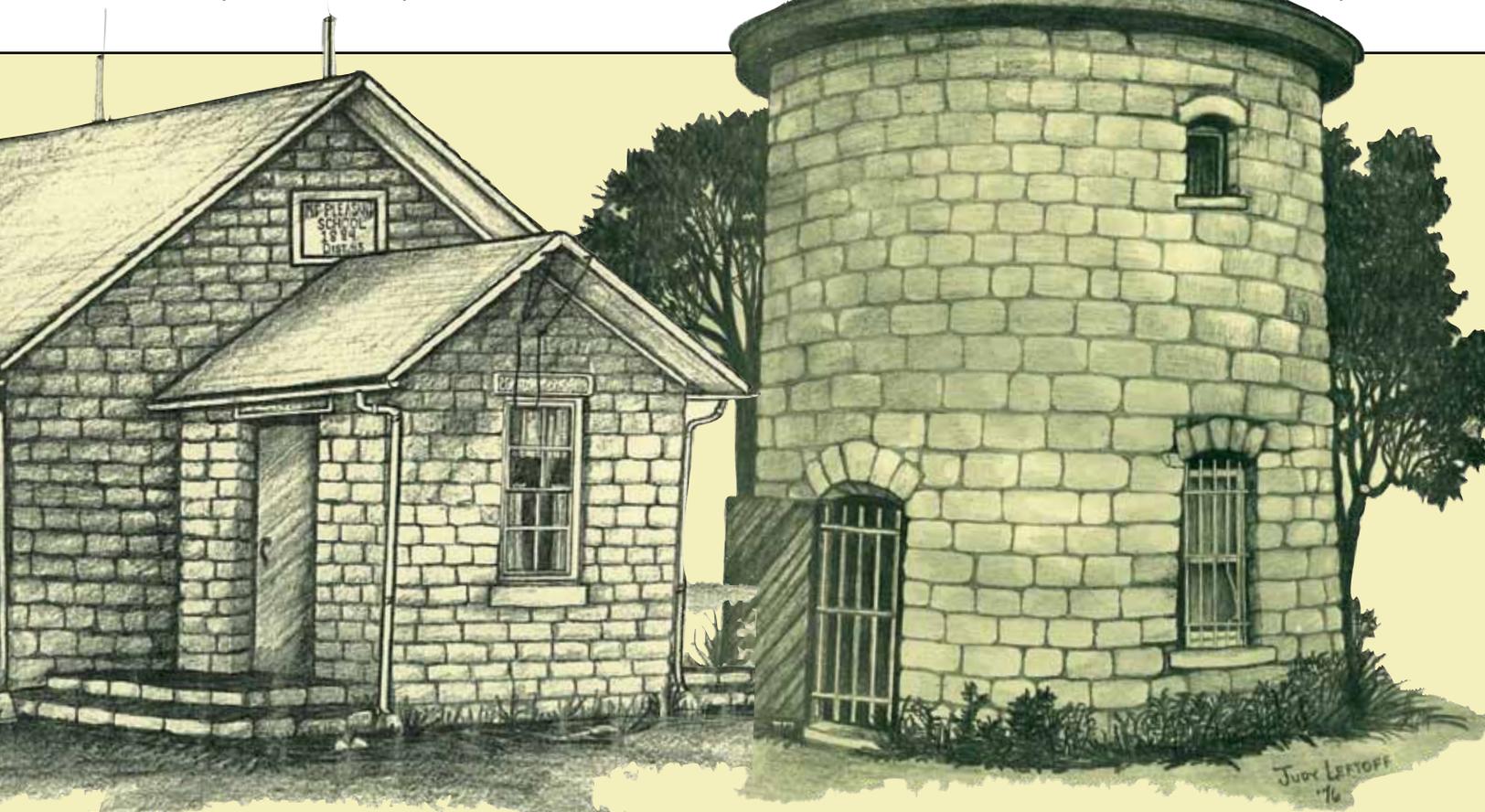
Street across from what is now the Klema Grocery Store. This was known for years as Windmill Corner.

To survive, the town had to shake off numerous calamities: the financial panic of 1873; the grasshopper plague of 1874; the great blizzard of 1886; the crash of 1887; the loss of three servicemen (Harvey Montgomery, Gustav Gahre, and Frank Nemrava) in WWI; the failure of the Farmer’s State Bank in 1925; and finally, a three-barreled threat in the 1930s—depression, dust storms, and more grasshoppers. And, all this time the town, not unlike many of its neighbors, was almost entirely dependent upon agriculture—from a market standpoint one of the most unstable of industries.

Nonetheless, Wilson showed its growing confidence in 1914 when it introduced the Wilson Inter-County Fair, a highly ambitious and popular annual late-summer production.<sup>14</sup> Permanent exhibition, livestock and poultry buildings, horse barns, and a large grandstand facing east onto a half-mile, oval, banked racetrack gave promise of a long-lived attraction. Unfortunately, overextension and adverse conditions both locally and country-wide brought the venture down in the disastrous year of 1929. The fairgrounds stood just outside the north edge of town. As a loss, it was one more of prestige and image rather than financial.

In 1928, Wilson recorded a happier statistic. It was in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in the Olympics of that year that John Kuck, a Wilson boy of German ancestry, threw the shot 52 ft., 11/16 in. for a new world record. These were the years when Wilson registered its high-water mark in population—“around 1,300,” the *Kansas City Star* said.

In 1934, the pavement of U.S. Highway 40 reached Wilson from the east—“pavement all the way to New York,” was the local boast—and in 1936, the town finally secured a dependable source of natural gas after an earlier venture had failed. In 1938, the City constructed a central sewer system.



Of several hundred Wilson men who answered the call to arms in WWII, nine lost their lives during war service. The Korean action claimed two more.

Finally, in the 1960s another ingredient was added to the town's economy. A modest oil field was discovered close by the south edge of town, either paralleling or straddling the old Butterfield Trail for some three miles in either direction. The quantity of the mineral yet untapped is unknown (now some 40 wells), but whatever its limitations, it's a considerable improvement over the brown coal of the 1870s.

Also in the 60s, the town enjoyed temporary financial boosts from federal projects in the area. An Atlas Intercontinental missile base (soon abandoned) 2 miles east of town, the construction of the Wilson Dam 11 miles north of the Saline, and the thrust of Interstate 70 Highway through the state just 1 1/2 miles north of the city limits heralded the end of an era—a changing of the guard. And, the revolution was one more than merely of form, more than just the substitution of the throaty grumble of night-running diesels on I-70 for the savage crack of bullwhips on the Butterfield Trail. The town—and the country—had voluntarily traded, in one century, local autonomy for the seductive paternalism of big government. The Wilson of 1970 had become almost unrecognizable by the standards of 1867 Wilson Creek Station.

Still there are those who will vow—native herdsman and plowmen mostly, with a sense of history—that each year, on a certain July evening, just after sundown when the hot south wind is dying and the nighthawks are beginning their deadly, noisy swoops in pursuit of prey; that two gray ambulances, each drawn by a team of U.S.-branded, sweat-frothed mules can be glimpsed swaying gracefully eastward through the gathering gloom, two blond officers, obviously brothers, atop the lead vehicle, and a black-bearded lieutenant,

and an enlisted man perched impatiently on the driver's seat of the rear conveyance. Probably it's only their superstition, but an odd circumstance—always remarked in hushed whispers by these knowing folk—is the strange absence of any dust or sound accompanying the alien procession.

☀️ *Frank Sibrava was a former resident of rural Wilson. He was an avid writer and farmer. The article was written March 1978, and reprinted with permission from Gordon Scott Ward and Cherilee Shiroky Ward.*

☀️ *Illustrations were all drawn by former Wilson resident, Judith Leftoff. She is now a Councilmember with the City of Valley Center.*

<sup>1</sup>Clarence Wolfe, interview, Tampa, Fla., June, 1968.

<sup>2</sup>Root and Connelley, *Overland Stage to California*, (pub. authors, 1901), pp. 391-96.

<sup>3</sup>Lawrence A. Frost, *The Court Martial of General George Armstrong Custer*, (University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 119-23.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Baughman, "Kansas Post Offices," (Kansas State Historical society, 1961).

<sup>5</sup>Andreas, *History of Kansas*, (Lakeside Press), Vol. II, p. 1280.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph McKittrick Trowbridge, interview, Russell, Kansas, April, 1969.

<sup>7</sup>Irene Crawford, interview, Wilson City Clerk, Wilson, Kansas, January, 1969.

<sup>8</sup>Francis Swehla, *Bohemians in Central Kansas*, Vol. XIII, Collections, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>9</sup>Robert Malir Jr., Address, Ellsworth Historical society, Ellsworth, Kansas, May, 1966.

<sup>10</sup>Andreas, *History of Kansas*, (Lakeside Press), Vol. II, p. 1281.

<sup>11</sup>Tbid.

<sup>12</sup>Malir, address.

<sup>13</sup>Louis Whitmer and James Lambert, interview, *Salina Journal*, April 17, 1966, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup>Lois Cross, "History of Wilson Fair," *Wilson World*, July 15, 1948.



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# DID YOU KNOW?

by Kimberly Winn

Did you know that famed automobile executive Walter P. Chrysler was born and raised in Kansas? Walter Percy Chrysler was born April 2, 1875, in Wamego, Kansas, to Henry and Anna Maria (Breymann) Chrysler. The family soon moved to Ellis, where Chrysler grew up. His father was an engineer for the Union Pacific Railroad, and Chrysler gained an appreciation and understanding of engines. His first job was delivering groceries. He worked as a janitor in the Union Pacific shops for a dollar a day. He worked his way up to mechanic's apprentice, and eventually works manager for the American Locomotive Company. Chrysler married Della Viola Forker on June 6, 1901.

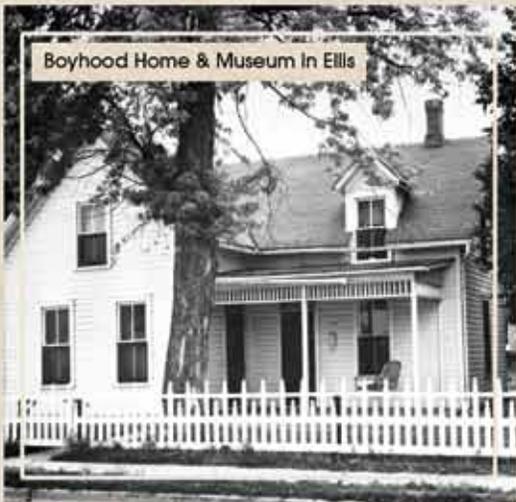


Wamego

Chrysler was living in Oelwein, Iowa, in 1908 when he attended an automobile show in Chicago. He did not own a car, but was curious to learn how it worked. There he bought a locomobile for \$5,000 and had the car shipped home. Buick Motor Company hired him in 1912 as the works manager in charge of production at its Flint, Michigan, plant. Chrysler helped Buick increase its daily production from 45 cars a day to 600.



In 1916 Chrysler took the helm at Buick, with the then unheard of salary of \$10,000 a month plus a \$500,000 bonus at the end of the year. When he left the company in 1919, he was one of the richest men in America. He attempted to turn around the Willys-Overland Motor Company, which he left in 1921. He acquired controlling interest in Maxwell Motor Company and applied his philosophies for reorganizing and improving production.



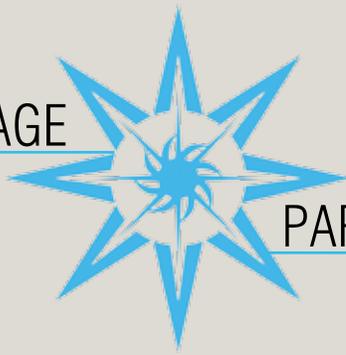
Boyhood Home & Museum in Ellis

Chrysler launched his own auto company June 6, 1925, and established the Plymouth and DeSoto brands. The company absorbed Maxwell Motors and became the third largest automaker in the United States, thriving during the boom of the 1920s. In 1928, Chrysler acquired the Dodge Brothers Company. He acquired an estate on Long Island and built the distinctive Chrysler Building in New York City, the world's tallest skyscraper at the time. *Time* named him 1929 Man of the Year.

Chrysler went into semi-retirement in 1935, remaining as chairman of the board of directors until his death August 18, 1940, in Great Neck, New York. His boyhood home, now a museum, still stands in Ellis. (left)

Source: Taken from *kansaspedia*, maintained by the Kansas State Historical Society, [www.kshs.org](http://www.kshs.org).

If you have a story that you think should be shared in this column, email LKM Deputy Director Kimberly Winn at [kwinn@lkm.org](mailto:kwinn@lkm.org). Photos provided by the Kansas State Historical Society and the City of Wamego.



### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

**O**n May 17th, 2012, a quiet neighborhood in Prairie Village, Kansas was the scene of an invasion by unusually cheerful visitors wielding brushes, hammers, scrapers, and nearly every shade of brown work gloves imaginable. The neighborhood would never look the same again.

The City of Prairie Village and the Prairie Village Municipal Foundation celebrated its one year partnership anniversary with

Heartland Habitat for Humanity's innovative subprogram, A Brush with Kindness (ABWK). Since then, the collaboration has aided numerous local residents with minor home maintenance repairs and property beautification. The partnership focuses on aiding locals who are the least able, either physically or financially, to bring their property up to code compliance.

Habitat for Humanity began as a non-profit dedicated to building affordable homes, but since then their mission has expanded to include a number of other correlated initiatives like ABWK. Kate Fields, Director of Resource Development with Heartland Habitat explains that home repair was a natural expansion to Habitat's mission. "A couple of years ago we kept getting calls for help...and we thought, why can't this be part of our mission?"

Because Habitat has a vast volunteer base with experience in construction, Fields says implementing ABWK "just made sense."

Partnering with ABWK was also a logical fit for Prairie Village.

In 2011, Marcia Gradinger, Prairie Village Codes Enforcement

Officer, read an article about work ABWK had done with a neighboring city, Roeland Park. She recognized the potential benefits for several Prairie Village residents and sought the support of the City Municipal Foundation.

The Municipal Foundation has a venerable history stemming back to 1983. The Foundation accepts tax-deductible donations that help fund programs such as utilities assistance, Shop with a Cop, and minor home repairs. Supporting ABWK accomplishes the foundation's mission to "provide assistance to persons in need."

ABWK partnered with the Municipal Foundation and City Code Enforcement to form a potent trifecta of community service.

The process begins when Gradinger identifies an individual or family in need and inquires if there is interest in working with a Heartland Habitat ABWK. Once the resident qualifies for assistance, she then works between the Municipal Foundation and Heartland Habitat for Humanity as a coordinator. Habitat brings the tools and volunteers, the



*A before and after look of one of the homes that benefitted from the partnership between the City of Prairie Village, Prairie Village Municipal Foundation, and Heartland Habitat for Humanity. Photo provided by the City of Prairie Village.*



Municipal Foundation purchases the supplies. The partnership has produced remarkable results since it began over a year ago.

The municipality/non-profit collaboration has resulted in major improvements to five homes and six projects overall since its inception in November of 2011. Projects have included the replacement of a patio, exterior painting, removal, vegetation, new gutters, and general landscaping.

Reminiscing on a past project, Gradinger remembers how one particular resident benefited from the project. The service “started elevating and lifting this person up. It elevated her in a way that she started responding differently to life.” The resident is often not the only beneficiary either. Gradinger saw “a difference in the life of her grandchildren and her parents. It’s a huge ripple effect.” She admits that revitalizing someone’s home is not a cure-all, but changing their environment is often life-altering for everyone involved.

From the City’s perspective, partnering with Heartland Habitat was a compassionate and strategically sound alternative to residential rehabilitation. Upgrading homes reduces the number of complaints and code violations managed by the City Code Enforcement Department. Additionally, the City avoids the often onerous task of volunteer recruitment and liability management. Heartland Habitat also provides the equipment, thus freeing the City from the associated costs of purchasing, transportation, storage, and maintenance.

Prairie Village’s partnership with ABWK is also becoming of interest among other municipalities in the Kansas City area. Fields reports a rapidly developing interest from cities looking to collaborate with Habitat for Humanity.

Local businesses have also joined the effort. Deffenbaugh Refuse Services, Safety Tree Service, and Smith Brothers Tree Care contributed valuable services at no charge.

Community members can support the ABWK project in a number of ways. Habitat encourages anyone with interest to complete their online registration and become a volunteer. Individuals more inclined to donate can give directly to Habitat or to the Municipal Foundation’s website for projects in Prairie Village. The community can also contribute by informing neighbors who might have interest in participating in the ABWK program.

Gradinger summarizes their work with Heartland Habitat for Humanity as a solution to “...a pretty big problem when there was no other way to solve it. It has made a difference for the residents, their homes, and the community.” “We appreciate the opportunity to improve our neighbor’s homes through our alliance with Heartland Habitat for Humanity,” said Mayor Ron Shaffer. “We also thank the residents who have contributed to our cause with their time and generous donations.”

### Dorr Light Display

In late November 2012, the public grounds of Prairie Village, Kansas hosted the mischief of elves, majestic twinkling trees, and the synchronized rhythm of the Dorr family light and music

Christmas display. The fact that any display exists today is the result of a collaboration between the City of Prairie Village and resident light enthusiast, Tim Dorr.

By 2010, the traditional Christmas light display at the Dorr residence had outgrown its humble beginnings as a simple FM transmitter controlled display. Thousands of cars poured through the neighborhood each year to catch a glimpse of Dorr’s fanciful display. Traffic and noise pollution from visitors also increased, irking neighbors. One resident eventually approached Dorr and



*Above, a patriotic tree display lights up the night at the Dorr Family Light and Music Christmas Display. Shown right, is a view of the lighted elves display. Photos provided by Tim Dorr and the Prairie Village Post.*



asked him to put an end to the display for the sake of the neighborhood. No city code legally restricted Dorr’s display, but Dorr reached out to the community anyway in order to find a solution that would accommodate his neighbors and still keep the lights on.

After meeting with local officials, Prairie Village invited Dorr to use public land adjacent to the Shawnee Mission East High School parking lot—provided the display meet several key criteria. They first required that the display feature only secular themes in order to comply with First Amendment restrictions. The second directed donations from visitors to a city municipal fund sponsored charity. Mr. Dorr agreed to meet both criteria and eventually partnered with a charity to which he already actively contributed, Heartland Habitat for Humanity. In 2012, Dorr light display donations contributed to beautifying six Prairie Village resident homes; 2012 donations will fund new projects for the 2013 building season.

In many ways, the dilemma caused by outgrowing the neighborhood produced a more robust display. In 2011, the display

experienced a 23% increase in donations on city grounds than it had the previous year; 2011 donations totaled \$3,602 and \$3,180 in 2012.

The sharp increase is partially the result of a location that is both easily visible from a main road and accessible to more visitors. Mr. Dorr reported seeing 38 cars at one time and 17 cars, 1 bus, and 3 limos on a separate occasion. The new grounds also provide a larger canvas for Dorr's creativity. "We have had several discussions about what changes, if any, should be made next year, and there will be some," said Dorr. "And as the months roll forward to next year's display, we will test things and see how they may play out in the 2013 display."

The City's willingness to offer solutions to this community issue has resulted in resounding benefits for the community. Visitors still enjoy the display, the City facilitates a community service while funding a municipal charity, Dorr's neighbors are relieved, and Mr. Dorr continues to do what he loves. "We have been very pleased with the help and cooperation from the City in keeping the spirit of the season alive in Prairie Village through the ability to continue our lights display in a venue where it can be enjoyed by more people comfortably."

☀️ *Jeff Robbins is a Management Intern with the City of Prairie Village. He can be reached at [jrobbins@pvkansas.com](mailto:jrobbins@pvkansas.com). Quinn Bennion is City Administrator with the City of Prairie Village. He can be reached at [qbennion@pvkansas.com](mailto:qbennion@pvkansas.com).*



## Dorr Light Display Quick Facts

- Completed its 7th season; 2nd season on city property.
- The display includes over 50,000 lights.
- Mr. Dorr and volunteers spent 606 hours and 29 minutes spent preparing the 2012 display.
- 4-6 hours of work for each minute of animation.
- Between 10,000-15,000 visitors in 2011. Dorr estimates several thousand more attendees in 2012.
- 14,129 hits on the Dorr Christmas Display Blog (as of Dec 14, 2012).
- 100% of donations go to Heartland Habitat for Humanity A Brush with Kindness Program.
- \$1,018.70 in donations as of December 10, 2012.
- Each show ran for 17 minutes, 8 seconds.
- Over 20 volunteers including family, friends, contributed to the 2012 display.
- Played continuously, 5:30 pm to midnight, from November 22, 2012 to midnight New Year's Eve.

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## Capitalizing On Your City's Youth

Kids possess a level of energy and creativity that amazes me. While it takes a small miracle for me to run 20 minutes on the treadmill, my young nephews can chase each other around non-stop for hours. If they take a break, it's just a brief pause in a continuous cycle of chaotic activity. Their little minds are always moving too, trying to soak up and understand all the information that they're exposed to. Young adulthood will bring a slightly slower pace, but even then they'll experience creativity and idealism that they'll likely never know again.

Wisely, several Kansas cities are making use of the unique qualities of their youngest residents. One way they're doing this is by utilizing "youth councils." These groups generally consist of local high schoolers, providing an opportunity for them to weigh in on community issues and learn about municipal governance. In Topeka, the City's Youth Council hosts free social events, provides input on state and local legislation, and devotes over 2,000 hours of community service annually.<sup>1</sup> The Wichita Youth Council performs similar functions, but has also tried to engage area citizens in the democratic process. In January of this year, they hosted a teen legislative forum that featured several Kansas state senators and representatives. At the forum, members of the council discussed with the legislators how they became involved in politics and why youth should get involved in government.<sup>2</sup> Youth councils are also contributing to smaller cities like Ramona (pop. 187), whose group hosts town barbecues, organizes dances, and raises money washing cars.<sup>3</sup>

Middle schoolers are chipping in to make their cities better too. In Pittsburg, the Mayor is using local fifth graders to identify problems in the community. Each year, Sarah Prince's persuasive writing class writes letters to their principal and the current mayor about which issues they think need to be addressed in Pittsburg. Last November, after reading the students' letters, Mayor Ketterman decided that he wanted to visit with them in person. They shared several concerns with him, including accidents caused by potholes, suspicious men lurking in the parks, and the need for longer hours at a nearby shelter so kids could do service projects there after school. Mayor Ketterman let the class know that the City was working on keeping the shelter open later, and took steps to investigate the suspicious person at the park. The Mayor's visit was a small gesture, but Pittsburg is now a little better off because it gave its youngest citizens a chance to speak up.<sup>4</sup>

In Sweetwater, Texas, the City benefitted from a different kind of student feedback. There, the local middle school gave advanced students disposable cameras and told them to take

photos of what they liked and disliked about Sweetwater. Parents chauffeured the participants as they took pictures of the community, which gave families an opportunity to discuss the assignment. After they finished taking pictures, the City scheduled a two-night open house where parents, community leaders, and interested citizens could meet with and hear from the students. The open house featured intriguing results. The same sites showed up in almost every class in both the "like" and the "dislike" categories. The kids liked parks but disliked the lack of certain facilities, and liked the historic Texas Theater but disliked that it had been closed for a couple of years. After a seventh-grade teacher challenged the students to "do something" about their choices, they decided to focus on the recently shuttered theatre. They raised \$3,000 selling hamburgers and soliciting donations, which was the first step toward jumpstarting a stalled fundraising campaign. Inspired by their younger counterparts, Sweetwater's adults raised about \$30,000 toward the purchase and renovation of the theater, and local businesses raised or contributed another \$80,000. The theatre has now re-opened, and the initiative has been featured on regional news stations, *BBC World News*, and other media.<sup>5</sup>

The fundraising efforts in Sweetwater are proof that amazing things can be accomplished when you tap into the energy and creativity of children and young adults. Many cities in Kansas and across the country have realized this and are benefitting from their youth engagement efforts. Your city should consider taking advantage of this powerful resource as well.

 Michael Koss is the Membership Services Manager for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at [mkoss@lkm.org](mailto:mkoss@lkm.org) or (785) 354-9565.

<sup>1</sup>The Topeka Youth Project. (n.d.). *Youth Leadership/Volunteers*. [topekayouthproject.org](http://www.topekayouthproject.org). Retrieved April 2, 2013, from <http://www.topekayouthproject.org/youthcouncil.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson, B. (2013, January 31). Mayor's Youth Council to host teen legislative forum. *The Wichita Eagle*. Retrieved from <http://www.kansas.com/2013/01/31/2657515/mayors-youth-council-to-host-teen.html>.

<sup>3</sup>City of Ramona. (n.d.). Ramona Youth Council. [Ramonaks.com](http://www.ramonaks.com). Retrieved April 1, 2013 from <http://www.ramonaks.com/index.php/government/youth-council>.

<sup>4</sup>Klusener, W. (2012, November 29). Students ask mayor for solutions. *The Morning Sun*. Retrieved from [http://www.morningsun.net/news/x35745678/Students-ask-mayor-for-solutions?zc\\_p=0](http://www.morningsun.net/news/x35745678/Students-ask-mayor-for-solutions?zc_p=0).

<sup>5</sup>Wortham, G., & Chowning, K. (2012, September). "Through Our Eyes: Students Bring Fresh Perspective to Community Vision," *Texas Town & City*, 6-7, 56.



## FLSA & Youth Employees, Part 1

It is that time of year when cities start to consider the hiring of temporary help, including youth, to assist with the additional services and activities provided during summer months. The following is designed to provide guidance on frequently asked questions concerning the hiring of youth employees. It is not designed to replace the opinion of your city attorney with regard to this issue.

Child labor provisions under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are designed to protect the educational opportunities of youth and prohibit their employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety. Enforcement of the FLSA's child labor provisions is handled by the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor (DOL).

In recent years several local governments were fined for the inadvertent violation of federal child labor laws. Current federal law provides that employers may be fined up to \$11,000 for each youth who is performing prohibited work. The intentional violation of child labor laws can result in substantially higher penalties, including criminal charges. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the special rules that apply when employing youth.

The primary resource in the area of child labor continues to be the DOL and its excellent website, [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov). Numerous publications are available from the DOL to print or download. Youth Employment Provisions for Non Agricultural Occupations Under the FLSA (July 2010), often referred to as "Child Labor Bulletin 101," is the most comprehensive publication.

In addition to federal law, Kansas law also addresses the employment of youth. K.S.A. 38-602 *et seq.* Kansas law prohibits the employment of youth under the age of 18 in any job that "is in any way dangerous or injurious to the life, health, safety, morals, or welfare of the such minor." K.S.A. 38-602. Therefore, even if a job has not been deemed hazardous by the secretary of labor, it may still be a violation of law. Where there is an conflict between state and federal law, the more stringent provision apply.

**Can we hire 13 year olds to officiate younger kids sports programs?** No. You should not hire anyone under the age of 14.

**Are there different rules for different ages of youth employees?** Yes. The types of tasks and hours of employment are much more restrictive for the 14 and 15 year olds, than for 16 and 17 year olds.

**What can 14 and 15 year olds do; what time restrictions apply?** The general rule is that they cannot be employed in a "hazardous occupation" as determined by the Department of Labor (DOL), or in any mining or manufacturing capacity. They may do office work and general clean-up (light janitorial) type work. In addition, they could perform many kitchen tasks such as those involved in the operating snack or concession stands, except for those involving ovens or grills. Thus, they may serve drinks and food and use equipment like popcorn poppers, blenders, and microwave ovens. They may also do errand and delivery work, but only on foot, bicycle, or on public transportation.

They may not operate any type of mower or weed whacker, or other type of power driven machinery. They cannot drive motor vehicles. They cannot use ladders or do any type of maintenance or repair work.

Restricted work hours apply to 14 and 15 year old employees. They may be employed only outside of the school day, no more than 3 hours per day on a school day, no more than 8 hours per day on a non-school day, a maximum of 18 hours per week on weeks that school meets, and 40 hours per week on non-school weeks. They may only work between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. except between June 1 and Labor Day each year when the evening hour is extended to 9:00 p.m.

### **What can 16 and 17 year olds do; are their hours restricted?**

The hours of work that 16 and 17 year olds may work are unlimited. FLSA overtime rules apply. They may work in all jobs that have not been declared "hazardous" by the Secretary of Labor. Some of the hazardous jobs include: driving a motor vehicle or being an outside helper on a motor vehicle (see below for an exception); using most power driven machinery, including saws and hoisting equipment; working with explosives, firearms or ammunition; and working in roofing, demolition, manufacturing, or excavation operations.

A recent and significant change in the law regards the prohibition of youth under 18 being involved in roofing operations. The expansion is to prohibit the performing of work on or about a roof. This has been interpreted to mean that 16 and 17 year olds may not be in close proximity to a roof when any type of work is being done, including painting and coating, gutter and down spout work (cleaning out leaves and other obstructions), servicing or installing television or any type of communication equipment, and any other work that may be performed on or about the roof. Of course, the prohibition on excavation type work would include any type of trenching, such as that required for installation or maintenance of gas, water, or sewer lines.

It should be noted that Kansas uses the generalized language of "dangerous and injurious" in its limitations on types of work permitted by youth. Even though a work activity may not have been deemed hazardous under federal rules, it may still be a prohibited activity under Kansas law. For example, firefighting has not been declared to be a hazardous occupation per se, but it is unquestionably dangerous. Therefore, a city should exercise judgment as to whether the job is dangerous in any way.

Cities can assign all types of work permitted of 14 and 15 year olds to 16 and 17 year olds. In addition they can perform life guarding duties (see below), teaching, assisting, helping or monitoring park and recreation programs, officiating youth league sporting events, building and grounds maintenance (subject to operation of power equipment prohibitions), operation of push and riding lawn mowers so long as it is not a tractor with attached implements. The operation of "bat-wing" type mowers is not permitted. Because there is a general prohibition on driving, "roading" of mowers from one location to another is prohibited.

Next month's column will cover hiring youth as lifeguards, driving restrictions, and other FLSA requirements.

☀ *Larry R. Baer is Legal Counsel for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at [lbaer@lkm.org](mailto:lbaer@lkm.org) or (785) 354-9565.*

# LKM 2013 Annual Conference

## Hotel Accommodations & Reservation Procedures

October 12-14 • Sheraton Hotel & Overland Park Convention Center • Overland Park

### Sheraton Overland Park Hotel\*\*

6100 College Blvd  
Overland Park, KS 66211  
913.234.2100  
Rate: \$137 + tax per night  
Cut-off date: September 21, 2013

\*\*Sheraton requires a non-refundable deposit equal to one night's stay in order to secure reservations.



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### RESERVATION PROCEDURES:

- LKM has made special arrangements with the hotels listed to provide accommodations during our Annual Conference.
- Attendees are responsible for making their own reservations. Please contact the hotel directly.
- Reservations may not be made until after 2/1/13.
- Remember to ask for the special LKM conference rate when making reservations.

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### SPECIAL NOTE:

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



# Classified Advertising

## City Administrator

The City of York, Nebraska (pop. 7,766) is accepting applications for the position of City Administrator. York has a Mayor/City Council form of government with eight council members and 72 employees. City Administrator is an appointed position and responsible to the Mayor and City Council for coordinating, overseeing and managing the operations of all city departments. Ideal candidate would possess an emphasis on professional team leadership, progressive attitude, effective communication, public relations, participatory leadership style, strong organizational skills, good communication skills and have experience in strategic planning, management, budgeting and employee relations. Qualified candidates should possess a Bachelor's Degree with major coursework in Public Administration, Business Administration, Economics, Finance or related fields, and a minimum of two years of responsible job-related experience in a professional management position. Salary DOQ. Benefits include but are not limited to health, dental, life insurance, employee pension, vacation, sick leave, and holidays. EOE. Submit applications to League of Nebraska Municipalities, 1335 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68508.

## City Manager

Ogallala, NE (4,737) City Manager: Salary: \$73 - \$104K DOQ. ICMA (CM) recognized in 1963; 5 managers since 1990. Last manager served 20 months. 5-member council. 42-FTE's and 40-PTE's. Located 3 hours from Denver and 5 hours from Omaha on Interstate 80. Excellent quality of life with abundant recreational opportunities near Nebraska's largest lake, McConaughy. Performs high-level administrative, technical and professional work in directing and supervising the administration of city government and works under the broad policy guidance of the City Council. Ideal candidate will have considerable knowledge of modern policies and

practices of public administration; working knowledge of municipal finance, human resources, public works, public safety, community development; preparing and administering municipal budgets; and, planning, directing and administering municipal programs. Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, city officials and the public; ability to efficiently and effectively administer a municipal government. Require graduation from an accredited four year college or university with a degree in public administration, political science, business management of a closely related field, and five (5) year of experience as a municipal administrator; or, any equivalent combination of education and progressively responsible experience, with additional work experience substituting for the required education on a year for year basis. Resume with a cover letter may be submitted to: Jane Skinner, City Clerk, at 411 East 2nd Street, Ogallala, NE, 69153; or electronically at [jane.skinner@ogallala-ne.gov](mailto:jane.skinner@ogallala-ne.gov). The position will remain open until filled

## City Clerk

The City of Lyons is seeking a professional individual for the position of City Clerk. This is an administrative position with oversight responsibilities for the daily operation of the city. Applications will be received until such time the position is filled.

Residency: The City Clerk is required to live within the corporate city limits of Lyons beginning no later than one year after initial appointment to such position.

Education: Minimum requirement of two-year Associate's degree but prefer Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Business Administration or Management, Public Administration, or related field.

Experience: Successful applicant will have worked in an office environment, have good understanding of computers and technology, have supervisory/

management experience with excellent technical skills in accounting, budgeting, budget analysis, financial reporting, and financial management. Applicant must possess excellent communication skills and strong interpersonal skills; have budget, finance, and management experience, basic understanding of city government, adapt well to change, have positive attitude, be proactive, self-directed, and enjoy serving the citizens of Lyons.

Duties: Includes preparing the city's annual budget, maintaining adherence to state budget laws, supervising city personnel, preparing payroll, assisting citizens, maintaining fiscal, legal, and other public records, monitoring financial condition, preparing reports, and other duties.

Benefits: Public service EOE work environment, Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs), health/prescription/dental/eye/life and disability insurance, vacation and sick leave. Salary dependant upon qualifications.

For confidential consideration, please mail or e-mail your resume ([jsweet@lyonsks.org](mailto:jsweet@lyonsks.org)), including salary history, to:

City of Lyons

Attn: John Sweet, City Administrator

PO Box 808

Lyons, KS 67554

## Electric Utility Supervisor

The City of St. John is currently accepting applications for Electric Utility Supervisor. Experience should include line work, power plant operation, and supervisory duties. Applications and job description available at the city office or [www.stjohnkansas.com](http://www.stjohnkansas.com). Excellent benefit package. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. City of St. John is an EOE.

## Finance Director

The City of Russell, Kansas is seeking a Finance Director. Located along Interstate 70, Russell is a city of the second class and is the county seat with a population

of 4,280. The Finance Director also serves as the City Clerk. Requirements include a Bachelor's Degree in accounting or equivalent, additional education in public management and/or Certified Public Accountants certificate desired. Knowledge of Kansas Municipal statutory accounting and budgeting principles, investment management, INCODE municipal software and supervisory experience are preferred. Some travel is necessary. Experience in forecasting financial activity and financial positions in areas of revenue, expenses and fund balances based on past, present and expected operations. This position receives administrative direction from the City Manager. Salary range: \$40,300 to \$66,300, DOQ plus excellent benefits package. Send completed application, resume and three work related references to Jon Quinday, City Manager, 133 W. 8th St., P.O. Box 112, Russell, KS 67665-0112. Applications available at [www.russellcity.org](http://www.russellcity.org) ADA/EOE

#### **Police Officer**

The McLouth Police Department is accepting applications for a full-time police officer. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age, possess a valid driver's license and a high school diploma or equivalent, have no criminal history or lengthy traffic violation record, be in good physical condition, KLETC certified, successfully pass a background investigation and other pre-employment requirements and preferably have patrol and investigation experience. The City of McLouth offers a competitive wage and benefits include BC & BS health insurance, paid vacation and sick leave and KPERS retirement plan. To obtain an application form: print from the City of McLouth website - [cityofmcclouth.org](http://cityofmcclouth.org) - or from the McLouth City Hall - 110 North Union Street, McLouth, Kansas 66054; (913) 796-6411. Completed applications with resumes will be accepted by the Chief of Police until the position is filled. The City of McLouth in an E.O.E.

#### **Public Works Director/County Engineer**

Johnson County Government in Olathe, Kansas is seeking applicants for Public Works Director/County Engineer. Johnson County is one of the nation's premier counties, providing comprehensive services to its citizens in its role as a leading organization in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The Johnson County community is

nestled in the southwestern quadrant of the Kansas City metropolitan area (combined population of 1.9 million) and exhibits all of the hallmarks of a great community: a thriving and growing business sector; nationally-recognized public schools; first-class cultural and recreational amenities; and distinctive and welcoming neighborhoods. Johnson County is a growing and diverse community of more than 544,000 residents.

The Public Works Director/County Engineer is a high visibility position supporting the County's public works and infrastructure. The successful candidate will provide strategic direction for the Public Works Department. This position serves as a member of the County's executive team and reports directly to the Deputy County Manager.

The ideal candidate will exhibit outstanding leadership, communication and professional engineering skills, and will possess the demonstrated capacity to successfully manage in a fast-paced public environment. Requires a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering; five years of progressively responsible experience in public works management, three years of experience in administration and supervision, two years of experience in administration of comprehensive public works services and programs; or an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to demonstrate the ability to successfully perform the essential duties of the job. Licensure as a Kansas Professional Engineer is required.

Johnson County is an equal opportunity/equal access employer and offers a competitive salary and benefits package. The expected salary range is \$105,441-\$140,588. For consideration, apply online at <http://hr.jocogov.org/jobs-open-public>.

Learn more about Johnson County at [www.jocogov.org](http://www.jocogov.org).

Johnson County Government  
Department of Human Resources  
111 S. Cherry St., Suite 2600  
Olathe, KS 66061  
telephone (913) 715-1435  
fax (913) 715-1419  
EOE m/f/d

#### **Utilities Assistant Distribution & Collections Superintendent**

\$35,797-\$52,333 DOQ. The City of Atchison has an opening in the Utilities Department for an Assistant D&C Superintendent. This position will train in

the essential functions of the Superintendent. Upon successful demonstration of ability to fulfill requirements of the position, the individual will transition to position of Superintendent upon current superintendent's retirement. Duties include, but not limited to: direct the day-to-day operations and mechanical maintenance and repairs of the City's distribution and collection systems; oversee meter reading and customer service activities; supervision of subordinate personnel; ensure work quality and adherence to established policies & procedures. Will serve as Lead Operator for a minimum of 2 months to gain experience working with crew members and gain knowledge of existing infrastructure. Job related physical and substance abuse screen upon offer of employment. Applicants must apply on-line at [www.hrepartners.com](http://www.hrepartners.com). Position open until filled. EOE

#### **Water & Wastewater Facilities Director**

Seward, NE (pop 7,000) located just west of Lincoln, on the I-80 corridor. Seward is Nebraska's Official 4th of July City and the Seward County Seat. Home to Concordia University, Progressive Business Courthouse Square Business District and established diversified Manufacturing-Service Businesses. Seward was recently named as one of "America's Best Small Cities" on the Eden List. Outstanding Quality of Life Features including Schools, Libraries, Police, Fire and Community Pride. The City of Seward Water Treatment Facility is a Class II Type and the Wastewater Facility is classified as a Class III. Qualified and interested Applicants can submit the following required items by 4pm, May 10th, 2013: (1) Letter of Interest with Salary History and Desired Pay Range (2) Current Resume with Four verifiable references (3) Completed and signed City of Seward Job Application (4) Copies of Certifications, and other Candidate support items to: City Administrator Brett R Baker, 537 Main St - PO Box 38, Seward, NE 68434-0038. Position Interviews slated to begin on May 20th, 2013. Position open until filled. The City of Seward Nebraska is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Full Job Announcement and City Application available at: <http://CityofSewardNE.com/jobs.htm>.



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## The Granite Countertop



This is another story emanating from ongoing Moler home improvement projects. This one focuses on the bathroom in the main hallway which was beginning to show its age. Judy and I determined that it was time for some changes to be made. The entire bathroom had been renovated a quarter of a century ago by a prior owner of the home. While they had put in a double sink, they had unfortunately chosen

a distinctly down-market countertop made out of, as best I could determine, a faux marble which didn't really look like marble to me. Anyway, this synthetic plastic material began to degrade over time. But the real problem, which brought this project to the forefront, really wasn't the countertop, but the faucets. The faucets, while somewhat more up market than the countertop itself, were of a type and design which was almost impossible to repair. So, we had been limping along with one faucet that barely operated. By that I mean the hot water wouldn't turn on at all, and the cold water would turn on, but the handle would fall off almost every other time you would attempt this operation.

At this point, I just couldn't see putting two brand new faucets in place on a 25-year-old faux marble countertop which by this time looked more faux than marble. After some research, I realized that we could probably put in a granite countertop at roughly the cost of a synthetic or plastic countertop, if I could find a piece of granite that was not an entire slab of granite. They can be reasonably inexpensive if you buy remnant or scrap pieces where someone else has paid the big price for the slab, and the dealer has remnant pieces from an earlier project laying around that they can use for your smaller project.

So, I spoke with a realtor friend who knows virtually every craftsman, tradesman, and vendor in Topeka. I was directed to an individual who ran a very small countertop operation in Topeka. I had it in my head that I wanted a piece of granite that had some mauve in it to match the walls of this particular bathroom as I really, really, did not want to have to repaint the entire bathroom. So I contacted the countertop man, and explained what we were looking for and he told me that he would undertake a search to try and locate a remnant piece of granite that would work for our purposes. And so we waited, and waited, and waited. About every four to six weeks, I would contact this gentlemen again and be told the search continued but that he couldn't find anything, etc, etc, etc.

Finally, after probably a passage of six months, my spouse was getting restless. She had long since tired of not being able to turn on the hot water on this particular sink, and basically gave me an ultimatum that either we needed to find some closure with this fellow, or we needed to go elsewhere to get the countertop, sink, and water faucets replaced. It was at this point that I suggested we make a trip out to his warehouse, in which he had a variety of granite slabs and remnants, though admittedly none of them were pink or mauve. After wandering around his freezing warehouse for perhaps half an hour, we stumbled upon a remnant on the back shelf, literally at the back of the warehouse, that appeared from our flashlights, as the electricity wasn't working in this part of the warehouse, to have just the slightest

hint of mauve in it. So we thought that this piece might just work. So the countertop man picked up a hammer, broke off a corner of this remnant, and handed it to Judy to take home and see if it would work for our purposes. As luck would have it, it did. So a couple of weeks later, the countertop had been appropriately machined for the space, appropriate sinks had been selected, and it was installed with great professionalism by the two men who worked for this fellow. We are very pleased with the finished product, and Judy is very happy she has hot water once again on this particular bathroom sink.

The challenge, which we can glean from this saga, highlights the issue of timeliness. Now the original request was to find a particular type of granite in a certain color, in a remnant. The difficulty came not so much in the passage of time, but the fact that the countertop guy didn't communicate with us at all during this period of time. If I wanted an update on the search, or to discuss if we were actually going to get the countertop done, I had to call him. As the time of the search got longer, our patience with the process got shorter. By the time we finally got around to finding a piece of granite, and starting to get the final phase of the operation underway, both Judy and I had become doubtful of the ultimate outcome of this project. As it turned out, however, the final product was great, and even several weeks after it has been completed, we still are commenting on how nice it looks and what a good job they did with the small piece of remnant granite.

The issue that this highlights for government, I think, is one of communication. Most people, in my experience, are pretty reasonable about delays and inconvenience that can be caused by any number of public works projects. But, one of the keys to keeping people happy is good communication. Not hearing anything, or believing that a project is never ending, sows the seeds of discontent. Much like our countertop search, one begins to wonder if you have been forgotten about, and if the project will ever proceed. We need to be vigilant in public service to always remember that our constituents may not be as well informed as we might think about certain projects that impact their everyday lives. It is important to remember that even if the news is that the project will continue, at least the presentation of that news gives some context for the public to understand what is going on. If there are reasons for delays, or unexpected detours of a project that are necessary along the way, I would suggest that it is very important to let your public know about these on a regular, ongoing basis.

Systematic communication allows the public to understand the challenges you are facing when trying to complete a public works project. As we all know, projects that may appear on the drawing board to be straightforward and easy, can often turn into much more complex projects which require increased expenditures of capital, manpower, and ultimately time. While we will solve the ultimate problem, and resolve it in a very satisfactory fashion, often this requires extended periods of time. The more your public understands the reasons for these extensions, the happier they will be. Ultimately, if the project takes a little longer, but turns out a superior product, most people will forget the temporary inconvenience and embrace the finished project.

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