RESERVATION PROCEDURES:
• The League 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.
• Remember to ask for the special League conference rate when making reservations.

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

Sheraton Overland Park Hotel**
6100 College Blvd
Overland Park, KS 66211
866.837.4214
Rate: $140 + tax per night
Cut-off date: September 16, 2016

Weblink for reservations:
https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/events/start.action?id=1601063360&key=2CD833D1

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

Chase Suite Hotel
6300 W 110th Street
Overland Park, KS 66211
913.491.3333
$89 + tax per night; Studio Queen
$129 + tax per night; 2-Bedroom Suite
Cut-off date: 9/8/2016

Courtyard by Marriott
11001 Woodson Ave
Overland Park, KS 66211
913.317.8500
$89 + tax per night; King
$109 + tax per night; Double Queen
Cut-off date: 9/16/2016

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Sheraton Overland Park Hotel**
6100 College Blvd
Overland Park, KS 66211
866.837.4214
Rate: $140 + tax per night
Cut-off date: September 16, 2016

Weblink for reservations:
https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/events/start.action?id=1601063360&key=2CD833D1

**Sheraton requires a non-refundable deposit equal to one night's stay in order to secure reservations.
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About the Cover:
Photo from the Topeka Huff ‘n Puff Hot Air Balloon Festival. The weather is getting warmer and city events are starting. Submit your city-sponsored event at www.lkm.org/events.

Photo submitted by Visit Topeka Inc.
Obituaries

Ronald Lee “Ron” Armstrong, died January 13, 2016. He was 77. Ron served as mayor of the City of Matfield Green, was the caretaker for the Land Institute buildings, and helped re-build the Matfield Green schoolhouse. He was born April 1, 1938, in Pueblo, Colorado and served in the U.S. Navy. Ron and Peggy Wells were married and she preceded him in death in 1983. Ron worked as a maintenance shop supervisor at the Breckenridge Ski Area for 20 years. He retired in 1993.

Stephen Archie “Steve” Prudden, died January 8, 2016. He was 86. Steve was the mayor of the City of De Soto for four years, and a member of the Lion’s Club and Rotary Club. He served his country in the Army from 1963-1965. He married Charlene Rowland on November 23, 1960. They have been married over 55 years and have two sons, Stephen Mitchel and Troy Darren. He sang in surrounding communities doing many weddings, funerals and church services. Steve was a active member of the Shriners. He was a Deacon of New Hope Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kansas, and a member of De Soto Baptist Church.

John Wagner, died January 29, 2016. He was 78. John served as mayor of the City of Cimarron for four years, on the Cimarron City Council for 15 years, and the City Library Board for one term. He was on the administrative board of the Cimarron United Methodist Church. John was born August 29, 1937 in Dodge City, the son of Ralph Lee and Elsie D. (Davis) Wagner. A lifetime area resident, he was a graduate of Cimarron High School, Dodge City Community College, and Wichita State University. He owned and operated Wagner Accounting and Wagner Real Estate in Cimarron for many years.
I think we may be witnessing the “butterfly effect” of moving Local Government Day up a week! We had absolutely gorgeous weather the entire week of the event, as opposed to our usual blizzard. We seem to have disoriented the weather patterns, as there has been virtually no snow and pretty warm temperatures ever since.

We had an amazing turnout in late January for the event. Several positive comments regarding our combining forces with the Kansas Association of Counties were received from city and county officials, as well as from legislators. Dates are already being considered for 2017, as we look to experiment further with our meteorological powers!

One part of this day that I always enjoy is announcing the winners of our “If I Were Mayor” contest. Over 1,600 seventh graders participated in the contest, as they took time to consider how they would lead their communities if given the opportunity. We had tons of great ideas. Beginning on page 40, you can read the essay of the six regional finalists. The state has some great future leaders waiting in the wings!

The Kansas Mayors Association also hosted these students at a luncheon. During this event, two legislators with local government experience addressed the group. Rep. Ron Ryckman, Jr., currently serves on the Olathe City Council, while Rep. Kristey Williams is formerly mayor of the City of Augusta. Having the perspectives of both municipal and state government, they shared some useful tips for working with legislators. See highlights from Rep. Williams’ comments on page 39.

This is a big month for local governments with respect to the legislature. Beyond the usual, myriad issues we tackle, this month will bring the property tax lid front and center. As this issue of the Kansas Government Journal reaches you, we have likely had hearings on a proposal to do away with several exemptions and move up the effective date of the lid. We also will have had hearings on proposals to add pragmatic exemptions to the lid.

Though several legislators have expressed interest in repealing the lid, the reality is there is not the critical mass in the legislature to make that happen this year. Election-year politics are playing a significant role in the course of this legislation. Please continue to reach out to your legislators on this issue and share with them how your city will be impacted.

I heard someone recently talking about how too many people are being “negative” about Kansas. An additional comment was that “the state may have some budget problems, but the economy is strong.” The point being made was that things are not perfect, but the focus on negatives in the state is crowding out some positive news.

Frankly, I think your view as to the status of the economy is very dependent on local conditions and the sector of the economy in which your local businesses participate. Some areas do have good news, with increasing populations and growing businesses. I would encourage you to share your good news far and wide. Conversely, some cities in Kansas are struggling. In some cases, these struggles go far beyond business cycle concerns and get at the very survival of the community.

Kansas is where we choose to live and work. For most of our readers, it is also where you have chosen to invest your heart and soul into the local community. Certainly, none of us benefit from suggesting our state has insurmountable problems. For businesses or people considering relocating, Kansans proclaiming “it is hopeless” is not the welcome mat we want to place at our border.

However, we should not back away from facing our challenges, nor should we pretend they do not exist by not talking about them. When the core functions of state government, or municipal government, are in dire straits due to lack of adequate funding, those shortcomings should be noted. Not doing so is a disservice to those we serve.

To end on an upbeat note, the second annual “Hometown Showdown” competition will be about halfway complete as this issue reaches you. The excitement for the showdown has been impressive. Cities have developed creative ways to engage their citizens (and even strangers) to help their photo progress through the bracket. Selfishly, we at the League love the success of this competition! Our Facebook page continues to add new “likes,” and our catalog of great photos of the cities of Kansas grows, too.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or comments – I’d love to hear from you: esartorius@lkm.org or (785) 354-9565.
In March of every year, the League of Kansas Municipalities publishes the annual Kansas Tax Rate & Fiscal Data Book. This comprehensive book offers users a look at current data pertinent to understanding the state’s local tax landscape. Such data is helpful to obtain an introductory understanding of the fiscal climate facing municipalities and other taxing subdivisions. Perhaps of most interest, the annual book offers the means to identify any fiscal trends that might arise.

The book is structured to illustrate tax rates and fiscal data from each of the three classes of cities and then moves on to highlight tax rates from counties and unified school districts. The numerical information is provided in an accessible and usable table format. The data is collected annually using myriad resources; including the Kansas Department of Revenue, the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer, and information solicited through a survey sent to all cities in Kansas. The data collected includes, but is not limited to: assessed valuation, bonds, temporary notes, no-fund warrants, and mills levied by each taxing subdivision. The criteria for the data collected provides a well-rounded perspective as to how individual cities, counties, and unified school districts are assessing taxes.

Calculations to determine the Total City Levy and Total Mills Levy are made using a weighted average of all taxing units within a city. This calculation takes into consideration the total assessed valuation and mills levied for each taxing unit. This methodology helps the League ensure that an accurate portrayal of tax rates across Kansas municipalities and other taxing subdivisions to publish for the public’s use.

With the intention to make the book easily accessible for all; the League provides the opportunity to purchase the book in two options: either Microsoft Excel or a printed format. Additionally, the League has a repository of tax rate information. Should you desire a previous year’s tax rate book, the League is able to accommodate requests dating back to 2000. If you have questions about how the data is collected, the methodology behind the numbers, or would like to order copies of the Kansas Tax Rate & Fiscal Data Book, please contact Brock Ingmire our Research Associate via email bingmire@lkm.org or phone at (785) 354-9565.
This year, the League and the Kansas Association of Counties co-presented Local Government Day on Wednesday, January 27th (formerly City Hall Day.) The change provided an opportunity for city, county, and state officials to join together and discuss issues important to local government. Over 130 city officials from across the state attended the informative day.

The day began with city officials visiting their legislators at the Capitol. Then, the Kansas Mayors Association hosted lunch for mayors and regional winners of the “If I Were Mayor” essay contest. Representative Kristey Williams and Representative Ron Ryckman, Jr., spoke at lunch on the “dos” and “don’ts” of communicating with your legislator (tips are in the side bar).

City officials gathered to hear the League staff provide advocacy tips and a legislative briefing on hot issues being discussed at the Capitol. County commissioners and county staff joined with cities for a legislative update from Senate President Susan Wagle; Senator Anthony Hensley, Minority Leader; House Speaker Ray Merrick; and Representative Tom Burroughs, Minority Leader. City and county officials then hosted a reception with a record number of legislators attending. The League appreciated the numerous positive compliments shared by both local and state elected officials in regards to the new format.

Dos and Don’ts When Communicating With your State Legislators

**Shared by Representative Kristey Williams**

**DO:**
- Know your legislators personally. Build a relationship before a crisis.
- Ask for cell number or email address based on how your legislator prefers to communicate.
- Keep your legislators plugged in locally. Working in Topeka keeps legislators away from the day-to-day activities of the community. Share information such as special recognitions, awards, new businesses, etc., on a regular basis.
- Invite legislators to events in your city, such as council meetings, ribbon cutting ceremonies, and annual traditions and festivals.
- Weigh in on the issues being discussed in Topeka. But, find out what your community thinks, as well, and share personal stories, specific experiences, and reasons for your position.
- Email at least every quarter. Include city website links to budgets, new services, or any other item on your website legislators might be interested in.
- Look for opportunities to collaborate, exchange ideas, and/or meet with constituents together.

**DON’T:**
- Forget to include them in local activities, events, or special ceremonies.
- Assume they are aware of your local issues.
- Wait to get in touch when a crisis occurs.
- Hesitate to ask for help on issues that impact your community. It is your legislator’s job to intercede on behalf of constituents.
- Delay or not respond to email or phone requests for information.
The League of Kansas Municipalities honored six Kansas seventh-grade students for their winning essays in the annual “If I Were Mayor” contest on January 27th. In the essays, the students explained what they would do as mayor to make their cities the best place to live. The six award winning essays follow this article.

The contest is part of the League’s civic education outreach to youth. Over 1,600 students across the state participated this year. Six students were selected as regional winners, with one was selected as the overall winner. The awards were presented as part of the League’s Local Government Day in Topeka. Mayor of Topeka and League President Larry Wolgast presented the awards to the students.

The League believes that civic education is the foundation of an active and informed citizenry. Promoting education to students on city government is important to the League. In addition to the “If I Were Mayor” essay contest, the League offers a student coloring book to third-graders to illustrate the important services cities provide.

The League encourages all elected officials to connect with the schools in their city and promote civic engagement. More information on the League’s civic education initiatives can be found online at www.lkm.org/youtheducation.
If I were mayor I would be a champion for city parks. Parks are a major enhancement to city life. Green space gives kids the opportunity to run around and have fun. Parks give kids and adults the opportunity to exercise. Physical fitness reduces obesity, improves heart functioning, strengthens bones, and even enhances mental functions. Parks make a city more beautiful and increase property values. In addition, people want to move to places that have nice, well-kept parks. Finally, parks are good for the environment. Trees absorb carbon dioxide in the air which contributes in the effort to control climate change.

To bring all these benefits to my city, as mayor I would increase the number of parks, refurbish existing parks, and add walking trails. Increasing the number of parks allows everyone, even people without transportation, a chance to partake in the benefits of the outdoors. Refurbishing parks with fresh paint, well-kept grounds, and clean bathrooms make the park experience worthwhile.

Walking trails and other exercising opportunities help improve the health benefits of a park.

As mayor, I have a responsibility to manage the city’s budget. In order to pay for these improvements, I would raise taxes on cigarettes and alcohol. With this new revenue, I would be able to fund these new and refurbished neighborhood parks.

In conclusion, as mayor, I would increase property value, improve public health, and protect the environment by championing public parks in my city.

If I were mayor, I would make sure my town was safe, secure, and clean.

The first action I would take as mayor is to make sure that we have plenty of garbage and recycling containers around town to encourage trash collection and recycling. I would also make sure the town stays clean and beautiful with no litter anywhere. Establishing a monthly “Beautification Award” would provide recognition for citizens who work extra hard to keep their properties neat and attractive.

A way I could keep my town safe is to make sure that local law enforcement are on regular patrol. The constant presence of law enforcement would deter crime and provide a more immediate response when a need arises. I would also have an NWP (Neighborhood Watch Program) so that if citizens see anything suspicious, they would feel comfortable contacting law enforcement. Placing security cameras in key areas of our city limits would also deter crime and help to solve matters of criminal activity.

Every town needs to have a sense of community, which I think is an important goal for a mayor to have for his or her town. I would make sure that would happen with monthly community events such as potlucks, Downhome Days, and summer street dances. Being a part of a community makes people feel safe and secure. I believe being mayor would be a very hard job, but it would be worth it to see how happy my town could be.
If I were mayor, I would make our community great. Some of the things that I would like to do would be: build houses, expand businesses, and work fluently with our school.

I would attend school board meetings to help keep me informed with school events as well as possible ways to involve the youth of our town in community projects.

I would also like to hold meetings as a community to discuss what we can fix or do to make our town and people in it great! I would expand our businesses by offering land for a cheaper price to business owners’ wanting to come into our town to build. If we can bring in businesses, we would in turn bring new families to our town to work and build a bigger and better community within. Being able to bring in new families also results in bigger enrollments to our schools and more money spent within our community by buying at the local business level.

In order to bring in more families, we would have to do a housing development project in our town. I would ask for money or grant money from different housing development programs in our area. These houses would be rented out with the opportunity to purchase once the terms ran out at a special discounted rate.

I believe by achieving these goals for our community, we will create a better town for all involved, building a strong foundation for the future.

If I were mayor of Wichita, I would improve our security, roads, and environment. I realize that a city cannot be perfect, but there is always room for progress.

Some areas of the city experience more crime than others. This demand for more policemen requires better pay to motivate people to become officers. To make it easier for them to do their job, we should provide them with the best technology and train them to use it well.

Many roads are too busy. They need more lanes to help traffic flow faster. Others are too bumpy and need to be smoothed out. Road construction should be managed so that projects are completed in a reasonable time frame. Constant construction delays cause frustration for commuters and businesses.

Pollution is always a problem. We need to keep littering at a minimum. Fines should be given to anyone who is caught littering. I would also promote maintaining our parks and beautifying public areas.

Some areas of the city need more improvement than others. Even in the best areas, there is still room for advancement. If we develop our security, roads, and environment in all areas of the city, we can make Wichita one of the best cities to live.
If I were mayor the first thing I would do would be to make the roads and sidewalks clean. If the roads and sidewalks are clean, more people will think our town is attractive. To welcome people into the town we could have a decorated spot with a welcome sign to make them feel welcome. I would have Main Street looking attractive. There are different seasons, holidays, and special occasions. So for these different events and holidays I would have Main Street looking so beautiful, that more people would come and visit our town.

I would try to have different events that would bring the community together. In the summer I would have a frozen treat party. In the winter time I would have a pie contest and chili feed. The citizens of the town would then be asked to bring a homemade pie. Then at the feed the pies will be judged and the winners will be announced.

If I am the mayor of the town I would try my very best to keep the town safe and secure, because when you’re in a safe town you feel glad and you know that people care about your safety. In the town kids like to play in the park. So I would have a couple of nice areas with playground equipment, and if they need to go to the bathroom then I would have some nice restrooms around so they could go.

THANK YOU! Kyra Ohl

If I were mayor I would want to make the city more of a fun, safe, and healthy place. I learned that as mayor you can’t just do anything that you want, but that doesn’t mean I wouldn’t try to accomplish what the community needs.

The first thing our community needs is a community center because citizens need a place to workout. There would also be a movie theater or a roller blading rink to provide entertainment. I would provide for it by fundraisers. This building would be for the community.

Another thing this town is having trouble with is the water. I would fund improvements to the water problem by using money from the community center and paying for it. We are running low on water from the Ogallala Aquifer. Scott City is a fantastic place to live, and I wouldn’t want to see it fall because of water problems.

The last thing I would do if I were mayor is try and put in a trail for kids going to school because some of the paths kids take when going school have a lot of traffic. I thought it was really cool when almost all of the people in the town worked together and built the city park. I would want something like that to happen with the trail, to have the community help.

Scott City is great, and I would really like for it to grow. My ideas would make Scott City safer and more active.

Brooke Sherwood
Southwest Regional Winner
Scott City Middle School
fused correctly, social media can provide local governments a tremendous tool to engage with citizens in a format that is familiar and convenient. The landscape of social media is constantly evolving, so it is sometimes difficult to effectively leverage the tools. Over the last four years, the City of Wichita has employed a proactive process to engage with citizens over social media to solicit input during budget preparation. The result has been the development of a successful Social Media Town Hall model that serves to energize budget staff and serve who want to voice their opinions.

Citizen Outreach – the Traditional Way

Like most communities, citizen outreach in Wichita regarding the annual budget followed the usual actions. These included statutorily required hearings, static budget discussions for the various citizen groups in the City, and providing infrequent updates on the City’s website. Essentially, the budget document was being developed increasingly without consistent or meaningful input from the citizens who experience its tangible effects. Exploration of new budget concepts was inherently stunted because staff did not have a venue to attract and galvanize interested residents.

This changed in 2012.

The Evolution of the Social Media Town Hall

A renewed push for citizen engagement led to the development of the 2012 Twitter Town Hall. Designed to generate an open and transparent conversation between City Hall and citizens regarding budget items of note, the event broke new ground but was not without its missteps. The 2012 event was scheduled to be an all-day event for two separate days (one in late June and one in mid-July) and was held exclusively over Twitter and Facebook (though all the citizen comments came from Twitter). Staff was decentralized in their own offices. There were no specific topics and staff guided discussion through open-ended questions. At the time, there was a cumbersome approval process for posting on the City’s social media outlets and website. When finally offered, unfamiliarity with the format often provided for unclear answers from staff and many struggled to provide meaningful responses in 140 characters or less. In hindsight, it was likely that staff was unaware of just how in-depth the conversation with citizens should be regarding unresolved budget items. Isolating staff in their own offices away from members of the Communications Division also played a role in the lack of clarity of responses. Comments from City Manager Robert Layton at the time sum up the organization’s reaction to the event:

“As I read through the answers, I found many of them to be too wordy and not directly on point… We should probably develop some alternative answers to demonstrate a different approach for this forum in the future. But I don’t want that to diminish my appreciation for stretching out of our comfort zone to try a different form of engagement.”

Close, but no cigar. Better luck next time.

Armed with lessons learned, the 2013 Social Media Town Hall corrected many mistakes. Facebook was utilized more heavily. A 90-minute timeframe was set for each of the two sessions (one daytime and one evening event). Perhaps most importantly, involved staff were all consolidated within a single IT training room. Gone were the open-ended discussion prompts, instead replaced by a series of posts on specific topics centered on pressing budget issues. These included planting of native grasses along the Arkansas River Bank, the possibility of grounding the police helicopter, a train feature in one of the City’s parks, and the future of the police mounted unit.

Results showed a marked improvement over the previous year. Still, staff from Finance and Communications worked to identify ways to advance the model even further. Observations from staff were noted in a post-event report and referenced while planning 2014’s Town Hall. Increasing citizen participation was paramount in these efforts, as the program’s strength was determined largely on the amount of citizen input that could be solicited. Staff made note that social media posts with a photo naturally increased citizen participation in a topic. Engagement was lower if a session
was scheduled after the printing of the proposed budget. Evening events did not perform as well as afternoon events. These and other observations were taken into consideration when planning the next event.

Continuing the method from 2013, all social media posts associated with the Town Hall were accompanied with a related photo in 2014. Again, there were two events scheduled but both were set in the afternoon and were prior to submittal of the proposed budget to City Council. It should be noted that while town halls were scheduled for specific times, staff spent considerable amount of time over the next few days responding to questions posed in posts. Subject matter experts from throughout the organization, along with IT support, were centrally located in an IT training computer lab. For the first time, elected officials – including the Mayor – were invited to participate. This generated media coverage, as well, and the event was featured in segments from the local news outlets. Discussion prompts were pre-loaded into the Hootsuite social media scheduling tool for efficiency and to allow staff to focus on providing responses. Engagement was slightly less than in 2013, due in part to the lack of a single, rousing topic (wildflowers in 2013) and the controversial nature of some of 2013’s topics (air patrol, mounted units, etc.). While interaction was lower, views were dramatically higher due to media awareness and use of “boosted” posts, a Facebook feature that increases reach with a modest fee.

By 2015, the model for the Social Media Town Halls had largely been established. It is difficult to predict what topics will generate the most interest, and even harder to guess where discussion will lead after the initial topic is posted. For this reason, having key staff on-site is essential to the event’s viability and success. However, with the proper framework in place, duplicating the success of these events is within many communities’ grasp. As a contrast to the comments from 2012, City Manager Robert Layton offered these words of advice:

“The Social Media Town Hall meetings have proven to be a valuable way to gather feedback from residents during the budget process. We understand people are busy and don’t always have time to attend meetings at City Hall. Social media offers ways for people to participate who might not otherwise be able to do so. I would encourage other municipalities to explore this opportunity.”

Social Media Town Hall Toolbox

Adopt and post a social media policy - A social media policy sets the ground rules for online interactions and should be reflective of current guidelines for governing body meetings. The policy should be mindful of free speech, which is protected by the First Amendment, but should also include procedures for addressing speech that is not protected.

Lay the framework - Increase followers on your government’s Facebook page and Twitter feed by promoting current events, holding photo contests, or informing residents of service closures or street projects. Rule of thumb: if you issue a media advisory, then cross-post on Facebook and Twitter. This will build your base audience that you can reach during a Social Media Town Hall.

Determine the timeline and team - Work backwards from the date that your proposal will be presented to the governing body to develop a timeline. Look at elected officials’ calendars in order to secure “drop-in” attendance at the event. Recruit team members including core project team and technical experts. Core project team members must be given administrator privileges for the government page in order to reply as the government.
Secure location - Find a place with enough computers, like a training room or library computer lab. Make sure the room is appropriate for outside visitors to access, since the media and elected officials are invited. Test the room to ensure network capacity. A banner can provide a backdrop for photos. It may also be helpful to use screen projection.

Develop topics - Consider the scope of your event in regards to community questions that need considered or topics that are better addressed in a different forum or at a different time. Have at least 4-5 topics, and compile photos for each topic. Stock photos are fine, but avoid photos with too much text as those cannot be promoted on Facebook. Assign 1-2 topics to each core project team member with assistance from an assigned subject matter expert.

When developing topics, make sure discussion relates to the budget. Stress that input will affect the ultimate strategic direction of the organization. Do not be afraid to ask for suggestions for improvements on current service delivery. Avoid being too specific, as you want to avoid discussion being too narrow or too generic. Strike a balance. For example, avoid asking about specific pools and instead post questions that could relate to all of the pool operations in the community.

Promote - Use traditional media, such as a media advisory and news conference, or an announcement at a governing body meeting, and use social media to promote the event. Be clear that the event is for a designated time period, but comments will be monitored and responses given in the following few days. This allows people with varied schedules to participate.

Prepare posts - Include event hashtag on all posts for ease of monitoring. Pre-load and promote posts, which can be done using a content manager such as Hootsuite. Schedule posts to be 4-5 minutes apart during the first 30 minutes of the event, in order to generate momentum and give staff more time to post replies. Promoted posts can be targeted to users in a particular geography, age group, or gender, and the budget for each post could be as little as $5-10.

Host the event - Test the room before the event starts, and group participants by assigned question. Respond to each question, even if the answer is repeated from an earlier post. Use the @ name function to reply to similar posts and assure the initial poster that you have replied. Conversational language is best. Translate jargon into simple terms, such as “long-range capital plan for major investments,” rather than “CIP.”

For comments with ideas, there may be no need to reply, but it is appropriate to thank people for their involvement or click “Like” to their post.

Include links to your website or other resources in cases where people are seeking more information. Direct people to upcoming meetings for plans that are under development. If people have complaints that could generate work orders, log the complaint, but
also direct the poster to an online system or appropriate department so that they are aware of the process in the case of future needs.

Hide posts that have curse words or personal attacks that violate the social media policy, and direct angry discussions to emails.

Develop a catchy hashtag so participants can identify their post as being related to the event. Wichita has typically used the model #ICTBudget15 (#-City-document-year of the engagement).

Follow-up - Reply to questions and comments for the next 1-2 days in small groups. Compile a to-do list for work orders to forward to departments. Reflect on the event and consider what worked and what did not. Since staff worked in teams, it is important to debrief as a group.

Report statistics and celebrate successes - Create report that includes statistics, feedback, and ideas. If ideas or feedback are included in the proposal to the governing body, make sure they are referenced. Share successes, such as including new voices in the process, or revising the approach to a policy problem, in order to generate momentum for future events.

Connecting to the Budget and More

To lend the event even more credibility, the final budget should highlight the process in its policy message. If an idea came from one of the Social Media Town Halls, include descriptions of these when discussing policy changes. Broadcast the results of the event in traditional community engagement venues. Perhaps most importantly, feedback needs to be provided for the decision makers so they can see the impact the engagement has. Wichita’s elected officials have demonstrated a strong commitment to citizen engagement, and their embrace of this process is further evidence of that.

In addition to becoming a tool for engagement on budget issues, the Social Media Town Halls provide city staff with a venue to correct misconceptions and provide clarification for citizens who may have misguided opinions of municipal operations. The format opens up a dialogue that helps staff communicate other ways to get involved and works to create awareness about amenities and events. It’s proven to be a valuable asset to staff in that respect.

Opening up the budget process to citizens and making decision-making a transparent endeavor should not be a groundbreaking effort in 2015 and beyond. There are simply too many potential outlets to connect with the citizenry and more still being developed. With the proper methodology, implementing a Social Media Town Hall can be used for a number of engagement purposes and not just for budget preparation. The technology and audience exist, it is now a matter of taking advantage of the tools that are available.

Zack Daniel is a Public Management Fellow in Wichita’s City Manager’s Office. He can be reached at zdaniel@wichita.gov or (316) 303-8052. Information for this article was furnished by the Communications Division of the Wichita City Manager’s Office and the Finance Department.
Legal Forum

by Larry R. Baer

Your City Attorney: Friend or Foe

Not all cities have a city attorney. Cities of the first and second class are required by statute to appoint a city attorney and cities of the third class may do so. Thus, your city attorney may be full time, or work part-time for the city or simply be an attorney that your city calls upon from time-to-time. The term “attorney” is used to describe the office, regardless of the possible working arrangement.

Keep the City Attorney Informed

Because the attorney has a varied set of duties and is responsible to many different groups, it is not possible for your attorney to have his fingers on the pulse of all of the city at any one time. Therefore, it is your job to keep the attorney informed. Keeping the attorney informed can vary greatly from city to city. It may require formal action by the governing body in cities of the third class where matters are passed on to an attorney only on a rare basis. Where there is a regular ongoing relationship with the attorney, the clerk, city administrator or mayor may make the contact. In those cities where the attorney is present at all meetings, many legal issues are answered by the attorney on the attorney’s own initiative. In large cities, the initial request may be directed through the city attorney or a senior assistant and then referred to another staff member. It is necessary to know what your local policy or procedure is.

Consulting with the attorney as early as possible is critical. The worst time to seek legal input is after the fact or during the heat of a governing body meeting, particularly if the question could have been asked in advance. Often research will be necessary to give a complete and accurate answer and, almost always, full and accurate facts need to be developed before an accurate opinion may be given.

City is the Client

The attorney represents the city and not the citizens or the individual elected or appointed city officials, and acts at the direction of the governing body. This concept is both confusing and frustrating to many officials. This arises if the direction requested by the governing body conflicts with the ethical obligation owed by the attorney to the city. When this occurs, the attorney must resolve such conflict in favor of the city. The duty of loyalty and confidentiality placed on the attorney to the city and not to the individual officials. Therefore, if one council member shares information with the attorney no duty of confidentiality exists and the information may be shared by the attorney with all council members.

The city is the client and the attorney’s professional duty is first owed to the city. This does not preclude the attorney from representing individuals associated with the city. If the attorney discloses the potential for conflicts of interest and the city consents to the “dual representation” the attorney can represent the city and any or all elected or appointed officials and city employees who may be named in a legal action.

This is often done when the city is sued in its name and elected, appointed officials or employees are also named in an individual capacity. Generally, this does not pose an ethical conflict for the attorney. But, care must be taken when the allegations are such that the city is named as a party because of its “deep pockets” and the individual(s) named is the “bad actor”, i.e., the allegations are of the nature of sexual discrimination, harassment, or establish a pattern of activity on the part of the individual that would be outside the scope of employment, or any type of action where the officer’s or employee’s behavior might give rise to a defense for the city. In such case, the officer or employee should be represented by outside counsel.

Policy Decisions

Elected officials set policy for the city. The attorney should be part of the policy making process, but should not establish city policy. The attorney should defer policy decisions to the majority of the governing body. But, the governing body should confer with legal counsel and be mindful of counsel’s opinions given during the policy making discussions. This can create the perception that the attorney always crafts answers or opinions to satisfy the majority, when in fact it is really the majority of the governing body that is following the advice of counsel.

It must be understood that the role of the attorney is not one of policy maker but is one of an independent, objective legal advisor. Opinions should be given that are legally sound, ethically appropriate and without regard to what the majority or minority may desire to hear. Should the majority not follow counsel’s advice, the attorney is obligated to support the decision of the majority to the extent legally and ethically possible.

Summary

The city attorney is there to furnish your city advice and counsel. Seek it early. Fully inform the attorney of the nature of the issue, all facts, good and bad, and time frames involved. Do not anticipate an immediate full and definitive answer or a simple yes or no answer.

The attorney represents the city and strives to give opinions that are in the best interest of the city. Communicating with your attorney and understanding that there are legal and ethical responsibilities that place limitations on him are key to establishing a good working relationship and the trust that needs to exist between the city and city attorney.

Larry R. Baer is General Counsel for the League of Kansas Municipalities. He can be reached at lbaer@lkm.org or (785) 354.9565.

[This is a condensed version of an article originally appearing in the June 2007 Kansas Government Journal]
2016 Training Schedule

Classes are open to all elected and appointed city officials and employees. All “Flipped Classroom” trainings will be scheduled for evenings.

March
Municipal Finance/Budgeting (Core)
- Friday, March 11 – Pratt
- Thursday, March 24 – Eudora (Flipped Classroom)

April
Leadership Summit (Core)
- April 22-23 – Junction City

May
Emergency Planning (Elective)
- Friday, May 6 (subject to change) – Crisis City
- Friday, May 13 – Frontenac

August
KOMA/KORA (Core)
- Friday, August 5 – Hays
- Thursday, August 25 – Olathe (Flipped Classroom)
- Friday, August 26 – El Dorado

September
Planning and Zoning (Elective)
- Friday, September 2 – Liberal
- Friday, September 9 – Manhattan

October
Annual Conference, Overland Park, October 8
- Emergency Planning (Elective)
- KOMA/KORA (Core)
- Personnel Management (Core)
- KanCap Board/Council Training (Elective)

November
Ethics & Civility (Core)
- Friday, November 4 – Oakley
- Thursday, November 10 – KCK (Flipped Classroom)

New Name. The Municipal Leadership Academy has been renamed the Municipal Training Institute (MTI), to reflect an increased emphasis on technical trainings, accreditation from professional continuing education programs, and more frequent use of state officials and other subject matter experts.

Flipped Classrooms. As a pilot project, the League will begin using “flipped classrooms” for a few of our trainings. Flipped classrooms are training models where the typical lecture and homework portions of a course are reversed. Short, substantive video lectures will be made available to participants before the class session, which they will be able to watch at work or from home. The following in-class time will devoted to case studies and in-depth topic discussions.

More Information

Additional information about the MTI program can be found at http://www.lkm.org/training/mla/ or contact Kate Cooley, Conference & Marketing Coordinator at (785) 354-9565, kcooley@lkm.org.
What do you think is the primary role of municipal government? Our primary role is to serve the needs of the citizens. Whether it be addressing public safety concerns with our police and fire departments or providing the highest quality essential services like water, sewer, and streets. We must meet and exceed the demands of the community in a fiscally responsible manner. City Government is responsible for enhancing quality of life for its citizens through planning and visionary leadership, and facilitating economic development initiatives when necessary. It is our mission to provide a safe, livable, and sustainable community for present and future citizens.

What is your position and what are your typical duties? I serve as the Mayor of Plainville. It is my duty to provide leadership, act decisively, and inspire community spirit while keeping in mind the fiscal health of our community. It is also my responsibility to always offer a high level of service to our residents, businesses, and guests and plan for future growth and development.

What is your favorite thing about Kansas? Rural Kansas is a beautiful place to live. Its natural beauty is commonly seen in sunsets, wheat fields, and the stars at night. I love seeing first-time visitors react to our natural landscape. I also love that the people here are as genuine as they come; there is a pioneering spirit and hardworking mentality, with a love of family and respect for neighbors.

Please share a little personal information about yourself. I grew up in Plainville. After graduating high school, I attended Washburn University and graduated with a BBA in Finance in 1996. My husband, Chris (who is also a Plainville native), and I moved back home in 2000. We both began careers at the Dessin Fournir Companies where we continue to work today. We have been married for nearly 19 years and have three children: Noah - 16, Ben - 12, and Kate - 8. We truly enjoy the life we’ve built in Plainville and rural Kansas. The best decision we ever made was to stay in Kansas and raise our family.

What is your favorite thing about your community? Plainville is home to us and 2,000 others who enjoy a small town way of life. The people shaping our children - teachers and coaches - are our lifelong personal friends, some of whom taught my husband and I. Our kids ride their bikes to school with friends in the neighborhood without worry and can stop by our office on their way home to check in. It is a caring and close-knit community where you personally know your neighbors and are more like family. We all look out for each other in times of need and come together to celebrate victories. It is nice to visit big cities, but I am so thankful for the opportunity to call Plainville home.

What made you want to join city government? Plainville is my hometown. My community efforts started by working with a small group of other Moms who wanted to raise money to update our City Park. After successfully completing the fundraising campaign of nearly $100,000 and building a new park, I was asked to join the City Council in 2004 and have served as Mayor since 2010. My motivation was to give back to my hometown that has given my family so much.

Is this your first time on a statewide board? Yes, this is my first time on a statewide board. I’m honored to be chosen to represent my area.

What is your favorite thing about Kansas? Kansas is unique in that we have such diversity in our arts and entertainment. Kansas also has excellent community and national parks.

A little bit of information about you. I have a B.A. in organizational leadership from MidAmerica Nazarene University, earned my CMC at Wichita State’s Hugo Wall School of Public Affairs, and am a IPMA-CP certified public human resource professional. Prior to entering public service, I was a health insurance administrator. My roots are in public service. Most of my family has held positions in local government; from street crews to law enforcement and one is currently an Overland Park firefighter. My own career in local government began as a records clerk with the Olathe Police Department, and I have served as city clerk for the cities of Spring Hill and Baldwin City. I appreciate the level of service expected from a local government professional. I hope to provide the same service to the members of the League.

Have you always lived in Kansas? No, my family moved here from Illinois when I was a teenager.

What is your favorite scenic part of Kansas? All of it.
What is your position and what do you do? I am the Research Associate for the League. My responsibilities are multi-faceted and pertain to conducting research that advances the League’s advocacy efforts on legislative issues pertinent to member cities, analyzing fiscal and economic policies, oversee surveys and data collection arising from the office, and providing assistance to local government officials with research and data inquiries.

What is your favorite thing about Kansas? Having had the opportunity to reside in Manhattan, Lawrence, and the Johnson County areas, the sense of community that often arises from any city within the state is unparalleled. Having lived in a few other states, the opportunities to get involved in your community and the sense of genuineness from those encouraging you to do so is, in my experience, fairly unique to Kansas.

A little bit of information about you. I’m originally from a small town called Lincoln, Illinois, about 30 miles north of Springfield, Illinois. I graduated from Kansas State University with a B.S. and M.A. in communication studies, with a focus on quantitative research and political communication. Prior to taking on this position, I had worked in government relations for the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards, an association that advocated on behalf of our membership for effective regulatory principles of the massage therapy profession. I had also spent a few years working in the financial investment and wealth management field doing legislative research and political intelligence work.

Have you always lived in Kansas? I have not. I spent my childhood in Illinois, before later moving to Manhattan, Kansas. Afterwards, I spent time in both Missouri and Nebraska before settling in to make Kansas a permanent home.

What is your favorite scenic part of Kansas? Having come from the Manhattan area, I imagine it would be a faux pas for me to say anything but the Flint Hills and the Konza Prairie. I love the opportunity to go biking or for a quick hike, the Flint Hills area around Manhattan provides a great area to do so.
In 2011, the City of Garden City, KS approved the opening of a near-site clinic to offer to its 300 employees (880 total insureds), no-copay access to a comprehensive preventive healthcare program. Until late 2014 the near-site clinic, managed by Wellness Innovations and Nursing Services Inc. (WINS) had delivered outstanding results: almost 2,600 visits were delivered annually, employees’ participation in the city’s wellness program had reached the 95% threshold and, thanks to the combined support of a dietitian and a fitness pro, 40% of repeat participants had lost or maintained their weight, ten participants had each lost more than 25 lb. with a combined weight loss of almost 450 lb. Such results had contributed to a stabilization of medical claims, and significant savings for the city.

City Manager Matt Allen reflects on the first year, saying, “usually when dealing with matters of health and behavioral change, the returns begin to materialize long after the initial investment is made. In our case, the health indicators after year one were impressive and we were excited to see the health, as well as the culture, of our workplace improve. A bigger surprise was that in the first year the City could document a net budgetary savings from diverted claims. While the “soft cost” savings were nice as well, it was the quick payoff of “hard cost” savings that caught the attention of the city commission and the administration.”

Then in early 2015, WINS was unable to execute a financial restructuring and had to liquidate its assets. The clinic in Garden City closed its doors on Friday March 13th. The following Monday, the doors stayed closed, without any certainty about timing for a reopening.

“It was a sudden and immediate loss of an important employee benefit. We certainly didn’t want to return to a benefit model that took on the low-end claims we were able to divert,” said Allen of the loss in service. “However, there wasn’t any guarantee we would be able to recreate what we had or if the organization had the resolve to start all over again.” The question of resolve was soon answered for Allen and the rest of the administration. “During the closure, our workforce really opened up about the impact the clinic was having on their life. There were anecdotes of dramatically improved health for the employee and other family members, of the clinic serving as a primary point of care and an alternative to the emergency room for many families who couldn’t find a family doctor. We also learned of several instances where, had the clinic not been open, an insured member of the family (most often a child) probably would have gone without care because of an inability to afford the co-pay or an inability to either get an appointment or be seen at a large clinic in a timely manner.”

Revere Healthcare Solutions Inc. (RHS) was incorporated in late March. It acquired the assets owned by WINS from Kansas bankruptcy court in late May 2015 and on June 17th reopened the Garden City clinic with a new staff, led by Merilyn Douglass, APRN, a distinguished local provider and chair of the Board of Trustees of the local community college.

Lead Nurse Practitioner Merilyn Douglass says: “having spent decades in the more traditional healthcare setting, I would point to the emphasis on individual care and wellness as the biggest benefit of this innovative model. From lab works and measurements, to health risk questionnaires, health and wellness plan reviews, RHS entire delivery of healthcare is designed around the individual. In a traditional fee-for-service model, that kind of individualized attention and counseling rarely happens. However, it is precisely that individualized attention which is the starting point for behavioral changes leading to healthier habits. Our services are not meant to replace an established physician relationship. In several instances, the co-ordination with the local providers, for example by sharing notes and lab results, leads to a better, more a comprehensive and efficient healthcare experience and therefore to better outcomes for the employee and lower costs for the employer.”

RHS with the financial backing of Revere Partners LLC, an investment firm founded in 2009, refined the WINS program into the RHS comprehensive preventive program, increasing the emphasis on “Delivering Better Preventive Healthcare at a Lower Cost” and on more systematically leveraging the extensive intellectual property developed over twenty years by WINS. This intellectual property includes a library of best practices for onsite clinics management, of the outstanding outcomes supporting the clinical approach, and of detailed Return-On-Investment evaluations for employers with different profiles, including several municipalities.

City Manager Allen has noticed a change. “Our employees have always received great care at the Grow Well clinic. The difference now is the added sophistication of cost, use, and health impact analysis available to the city. This allows data-driven decision making about our wellness and benefits program.”
The city Human Resources Director, Allie Medina, has heard feedback from employees on their experience, “Employees definitely see the benefit of having access to the near-site clinic. RHS has been responsive to the needs of the employees and has shown time and again that they are willing to implement feedback from employees. This provides a sense of ownership for employees and enhances trust in the services that RHS provides.”

The RHS Program was designed more than twenty years ago by Ms. Tracy Fry, RHS Senior VP Client Services, a registered nurse and a pioneer in worksite preventive care.

Ms. Fry is also a graduate student at the Pittsburg State Nursing School and her research project (“The Effectiveness of a Worksite Life Style Management Program on the Glycemic Control of City Truck Drivers”), has been funded by RHS.

Ms. Fry says, “The RHS preventive healthcare program has evolved over the last twenty years. Participant outcomes have been measured and correlated with specific health interventions. A clear pattern of meaningful health improvements correlating with those specific interventions emerged during our analysis. I led the design of a structured, systematized, and repeatable program comprised of the most successful interventions. Our design included and will include ongoing measurement, analysis and processes for continual refinements and improvements. RHS’ commitment to and support of both a robust data analytics infrastructure and medical research projects on the topics of lifestyle and disease management, underline our philosophy: achieving consistently better outcomes at a lower cost.”

The RHS Program is delivered for a capped monthly fee, at near-site (or onsite) clinics staffed by at least one nurse practitioner and an office manager. The program includes primary care, urgent care, occupational medicine, workers’ compensation and an extensive, year-long wellness program. The wellness portion of the program is designed to reduce the health risk profile of the individuals on the employer’s plan. It is essentially a program which manages common chronic conditions and pre-conditions. Consistently, through over two decades, the Program has translated into healthier employees and financially stronger employers.

Ms. Fry added, “Prospective clients usually quickly grasp the benefits of the RHS program, but are concerned about funding the monthly fee. My answer is always that they are already spending that money, only in a much less efficient way”.

Based on its extensive library, RHS can quantitatively demonstrate an intuitive argument to employers seeking to stabilizing healthcare costs while maintaining a high quality of care: incentivizing the utilization of lower cost, comprehensive preventive care, results in a decrease in the utilization of higher-cost reactive care. Outcomes improve and healthcare costs are curbed.

In addition, the direct relationship and engagement between RHS and the employer dramatically reduces overhead costs. In fact, in primary care, for each one dollar spent, approximately forty cents covers administrative costs. Engaging RHS cuts entirely such costs, because it contracts directly with the employer.

A Prairie Village, KS based company, RHS has been following the developments in smaller communities in Kansas, where local hospitals have closed or are expected to close their doors. While the reasons behind such closures are several and ranging from macro-economic to demographic, one observation seems difficult to argue with: in smaller, more rural communities the traditional healthcare model, based on reactive healthcare, the third-party payer based system is inadequate to provide long-term sustainability and financial stability.

When RHS enters a community with a near-site clinic serving local employers it is, by all means, an addition to and not a subtraction from the local providers’ services. In fact, in Garden City, RHS refers patients to local hospitals and physicians and sees its role in the local healthcare system as one which allows for long term sustainability through enabling significant efficiencies in the more basic segment of the healthcare market, with a program which benefits employees and employers first, and the entire community second.

The old saying says it all: “An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure.”

Carmine Di Palo is the Chairman and CEO at Revere Healthcare Solutions Inc. and the Managing Partner at Revere Partners LLC. He can be reached at cdipalo@reverehs.com.
“I am convinced that my life belongs to the whole community; and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can, for the harder I work, the more I live.” – George Bernard Shaw

On January 27 the League was honored to recognize six young Kansans for demonstrating their idea of the role of an active and informed citizenry in our annual “If I Were Mayor” contest. It’s important to take note that these students were selected from a review of approximately 1,600 essays. This is the largest number of students the League has ever had to accept our invitation! League staff was humbled not only by the number of participants, but by how each demonstrated a basic understanding of civic engagement. It’s during a process such as this that we hope to inspire youth into the different forms of civic engagement such as political activism, environmentalism, and community service. Each student was challenged to describe how to make a difference in the life of his community and how he would work to develop a combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. Every writer met our challenge and shared his or her ideas of promoting the quality of life in his community, through both political and non-political processes.

Today’s citizen seeks opportunities to engage—from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. Her desire to engage can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. A different way to describe this concept is the sense of personal responsibility an individual feels to uphold her obligations as part of a community.

Working together

Often we are faced with a resident who lives and works within his community under the impression he is only a “customer” and expects service and treatment as such. Cities are constantly striving to meet standards set by this assumption and can often fall short in that individual’s perception of “customer service”. The importance of helping a resident move from always being a customer to understanding that he is truly a citizen and has a shared responsibility for the quality of life in his community can be critical for a city’s success. The best way to accomplish this is for the city to begin playing a role in building a community within the city.

Once engaged, most begin to understand that local government works for the common goal to be helpful to its community’s overall well-being. Bringing citizens together through information and education to accomplish these common goals can be crucial for the harmony of the community. This working together is called civic engagement. It is commonly understood that a fundamental step in creating a functioning society begins with the civic education of the children within the community.

Volunteering at the local level

It is thought that when a young child serves her community through volunteerism, political participation, or through local activism, she is more likely to emerge as an engaged adult; voting and serving all aspects of society. Many, like us here at the League, appreciate that civic education becomes a lifelong process.

Many of our communities host food pantries, senior centers, community clean-up programs and the like. These bolster efforts to create a strong community bond. They also help to teach the young volunteer where more work is needed in her city. Volunteering personal time to community projects is an aspect of civic engagement that is widely believed to support the growth of a community as a whole. In nearly every community there are services that governing bodies may not be able to fully fund and volunteers are becoming necessary. Volunteers require such community collaboration to be successful and to thrive.

Community collaboration

Civic engagement can bring local government, citizens and organizations together. When civic engagement is done properly, it can build the community and increase participation within the local side of government. Civic engagement and community work are basically a side-by-side concurrence that together can each help to grow your community and start off with a strong foundation for the role of government resulting in satisfying collaborations to better the community.

Community collaboration requires people of like interests making the changes they believe will benefit their community. These collaborations can be your arts councils, board of zoning appeals, planning commissions, public safety advisory boards, recreation commissions, school boards, and similar settings creating a venue where citizens are given the opportunity to provide their personal input in governmental decisions regarding public interest.

This can easily begin with a simple essay contest; directing a child’s interest towards the positive impacts of volunteerism and how it can work well with local government in his community. How it is fostered after that event is up to you. I’m interested in hearing what you are doing in your community to inspire the youth, citizens, your employees, as well as yourself. Please feel free to share your “best practices” with me at my address below.

Anna Keena is the Member Services Manager for the League of Kansas Municipalities. She can be reached at akeena@lkmm.org or (785) 354-9565.

Sources on page 61.
On a clear and crisp October morning, a couple of hundred people gathered to celebrate the opening of a new city park in Shawnee, Kansas.

But to city officials and citizens, this ceremony was about much more than the expansion of the city’s parks system. The opening of Erfurt Park represented the continuation of a special bond that Shawnee shares with its three sister cities, including Erfurt, Germany.

In addition to Erfurt, the city has established relationships with Listowel, Ireland and Pittem, Belgium which became Shawnee’s first Sister City in 1983.

Each has a city park named in their honor. Items from each of these cities are also displayed in the front lobby of Shawnee’s City Hall.

Shawnee established the program with the hopes of increasing international understanding with communities around the world. The city was also eager to build relationships that allowed city employees and Shawnee citizens the opportunity to experience different cultures while encouraging an open exchange of thoughts and ideas that might help. For example, the Shawnee Fire Department has established an exchange program with the Erfurt Fire Department that allows firefighters to visit and work in the other city’s department for a short time.

The Sister City Program has accomplished so much for Shawnee according to City Manager Carol Gonzales.

“One of the things that I am continually amazed at is the similarity of the issues that these cities deal with on a daily basis. They are often focused on the same projects and priorities that we are,” said Gonzales. “Even more special though is the personal relationships that we have been able to establish with the people of these communities. We see so much of Shawnee in them.”

It hasn’t always been easy though. The world has changed a great deal since Shawnee first began its program. For instance, formalizing Shawnee’s relationship with Erfurt took a bit of international politics when then Mayor Tony Soetaert had to literally negotiate his way through what was left of the Berlin Wall in order to meet with government officials to make the relationship between Shawnee and Erfurt a possibility.

Shawnee’s Sister City Committee organizes regular trips to visit Listowel, Pittem, and Erfurt to see these communities up close and learn more about their history. Historians have noted that many of the early immigrants from both Listowel and Pittem eventually settled in Shawnee.

“Having a sister city is about more than a sign or a resolution passed by a City Council,” said Dennis Busby, who is President of Shawnee’s German-American Club and also serves as the President and Chairman of the City’s Sister Cities Committee. “It’s important to us to share our common experiences with the citizens of these communities. In a lot of ways, I feel like we have become a big family.”

To learn more about Shawnee’s Sister Cities Program, visit www.cityofshawnee.org.

If you are interested in submitting an article about your Sister City please contact Andrey Ukrazhenko at andrey@lkm.org.
Area Communities Will Share $8.6 Million in Federal Grants

The Kansas Department of Commerce has announced that 25 communities will receive federal grants for sewer and water project, housing rehabilitation, and community facilities projects.

Through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, 11 Kansas communities will share a total of $4,940,100 in federal grants for water and sewer projects, three Kansas communities will share $886,000 for housing rehabilitation, and 11 communities will share $2,735,214 for community facilities projects.

“We are very excited at the Department of Commerce to be involved in so many deserving communities receiving this much needed funding,” said Commerce Secretary Antonio Soave. “These federal grants ensure that smaller and rural communities receive the necessary funds to keep their communities beautiful and thriving.”

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/zkjue4e

Augusta Mayor Proclaims Great Kindness Challenge Week

The challenge is a proactive and positive bullying prevention initiative that improves school climate and increases student engagement. The challenge is a one-week event devoted to performing as many acts of kindness as possible. It was created and launched in 2011 by Kids for Peace, a global nonprofit based in California.

“I’m happy to be here to help implement the Great Kindness Challenge. I invite others to also take the challenge,” Childers stated.

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/z7rte4z

City Council Approves Construction of New Library

The state of the art library will take the place of the old downtown branch that opened in 1967. The city already spent $3.6 million for the vacant lot back in 2008 where ground will be broken this summer for the new building.

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/zp87fmm
City Commission Announces Grant Program for Events

In the 2016 budget, the City Commission set aside $150,000 in Transient Guest Tax funds for the purpose of creating a grant program that would allow the city to draw on budgeted funds for requests for support. The TGT Grant Program would fund events and programs that benefit the Lawrence community and/or enhance the visitor experience in Lawrence. The Transient Guest Tax Fund (TGT) is supported by a 6% tax collected on all overnight hotel stays in Lawrence. The TGT is used to promote tourism and convention promotion in Lawrence.

The program will have two funding cycles each calendar year. An advisory board will review the applications and make recommendations for funding to the City Commission for approval and final funding decisions.

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/h7zv2wa

Offer of Free Land to City of Topeka Seeks to Create ‘Elevation Parkway’

Henry McClure and Dana Anderson (Jayhawk LLC) are offering free land to the city of Topeka to try to revive efforts to develop a thoroughfare they believe would better enable residents to drive into town from the southwest.

The thoroughfare would run from the intersection of 37th and Gage southwest to S.W. 41st and Wanamaker Road. The name Elevation Parkway refers to a rise in elevation that occurs in the area where it would be built.

Elevation Parkway isn’t among projects funded in the CIP approved last year for 2016 through 2020 by the city’s governing body, consisting of the nine council members and Mayor Larry Wolgast.

Still, Gerber noted that the parkway project is on the city’s CIP “unfunded list.” That list includes 32 different projects.

“We appreciate Mr. McClure reaching out to us, and the council will evaluate the offer as part of the annual CIP process,” Gerber said.

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/h7kpcx4

Eudora

Eudora Looks to Offer Net Metering

The Eudora city staff will prepare an ordinance that would allow residents to benefit from the excess sustainable electrical energy they produce.

The Eudora City Commission had a workshop on the issue at its Monday meeting after receiving a request from a resident who intends to install solar panels on his home. In a 2009 compromise reached between then-Governor Mark Parkinson and the Sunflower Electrical Power Corp., Kansas investor-owned utilities are required to purchase from customers excess power produced from solar or wind sources.

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/z7by2pf
Assistant Finance Director- Salary Range: $48,000 – $70,000 Full Time

The City of El Dorado is seeking applicants for the Assistant Finance Director position. As a member of the City Administration Department, this position will perform a variety of complex professional and technical accounting and finance functions in maintaining the fiscal records and systems of the City. This position will report directly to the Finance Director and will supervise the Utility Billing Department including the billing clerk and utility cashiers.

Applications will ONLY be accepted through the Butler, Cowley or Wichita Workforce Centers by mail, walk-in, or email.

clee@kansasworks.com
Kansasworks.com
316-321-2350

Chief of Police

The City of Sedgwick (pop. 1700) is seeking applicants for the position of Chief of Police. Must be Kansas-certified with a minimum of six to nine years of law enforcement experience. Successful applicant will demonstrate skills in management, team building, reporting, budgeting, emergency management, and coordinating activities with other agencies. Supervises one full time and 8 part-time officers. Good communication, both oral and written, and public relations skills are required. Must have a thorough knowledge of all applicable laws and ordinances. Position will also include patrol duties. Residency required. Salary DOQ. Good benefit package. Applications accepted until position filled. Position to begin July 1, 2016. Send resume to City Administrator, City of Sedgwick, PO Box 131, Sedgwick, KS 67135 or email to administrator@cityofsedgwick.org. Applications may also be picked up at Sedgwick City Hall, 511 N. Commercial, 316-772-5151. EOE.

City Services Program Director – IBTS-CS / Guymon, Oklahoma

IBTS Community Services, LLC, is accepting applications for a City Services Program Director to oversee Administrative, Community Development, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Library services for the City of Guymon, Oklahoma. The City of Guymon, Oklahoma, has a population of nearly 14,000 and is the largest city in the strip of land known as the Panhandle of Oklahoma.

The City Services Program Director will report to the IBTS Director of Local Government Solutions and lead a diverse team of over 80 incumbent staff members.

This position requires a bachelor’s degree and 10 or more years of progressively responsible relevant work experience in municipal services delivery and/or similar work in the private or nonprofit sector. Experience in a similar leadership role/director level position working with municipal organizations or large commercial clients is required. Similar/equivalent commercial experience will be considered in lieu of local government experience. A master’s degree is preferred.


For more information on this position contact:
Ronald Cori
Corporate HR Officer, IBTS
cori@ibts.org

Community Development Coordinator - City of Lyons

POSITION SUMMARY
Assisting the City Administrator in all areas of Community Development, with the primary focus being on commercial projects and housing, coordination and working with numerous public boards and private sector business interests; participates in physical development projects in the area, administration of grants. This is a non-exempt position.

Sandy Taverner
Admin Asst. / HR / PR
City of Lyons
620-257-2320
staverner@lyonsks.org

Community Development Director

City of Baldwin City has an opening for: Position: Community Development Director
Reports: City Administrator
FLSA Status: Exempt
Retirement: KPERS
Salary Range: 48,000 – 70,000

Under the supervision of the City Administrator, the Community Development Director is responsible for planning, directing, managing, and overseeing the activities and operations of the Community Development Department, including the Land Development, Comprehensive Planning, Zoning, Building, Code divisions, and Economic Development activities and programs of the City. Coordinates assigned activities with other City departments and outside agencies, and provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the City Administrator, including conducting special projects directly assigned by the City Administrator. Exercises direct supervision over management, professional, technical, and clerical staff.

Experience: One (1) to three (3) years of increasingly responsible professional experience in city planning. Other combinations of experience and education that meet minimum requirements may be considered.

Education: Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in Urban Planning, Public Administration, or a related field. Master’s Degree preferred.

License/Certification: Valid Kansas Driver’s License. American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification preferred but not required.

For more information regarding this position, please contact Glenn Rodden at grodden@baldwincity.org or 785-594-6427
EOE

Director of Engineering

Reports to the City Manager and is responsible for directing the operations of the Engineering Department, which includes management of Capital Improvement Projects involving road, flood control and storm water management infrastructure. The Engineering department also conducts traffic assessments, conducts development reviews in coordination with the Planning and Development department, and manages the city’s GIS operations. The city’s Capital Improvements Program contains $4.6 million for street improvements in 2016. It programs over $750 thousand in storm water related improvement in 2016. The 2016 Engineering operating budget is $1.39 million which includes 14 staff and the director position. This position provides direction, coordination and oversight to in-house staff and professional service contractors for various technical
Director of Municipal Court Services
The City of Corpus Christi, Texas, is seeking a new Director of Municipal Court Services. Corpus Christi, located on the Gulf of Mexico, is the largest city on the Texas coast, with a population of approximately 312,000.

The Corpus Christi Municipal Court, with a FY2015-16 administrative budget of just over $4 million, includes 66 employees: the Director, Assistant Director, 30 municipal court staff, 23 City Detention Center staff, 3 Case Managers, and 8 Marshals. Reporting to an Assistant City Manager, the Director of Municipal Court Services is responsible for the overall management, strategic planning, and employee relations for the Court.

Bachelor’s degree required. Master’s degree preferred. Must have a minimum 10 years’ experience with similarly sized courts as Director, or larger courts at Assistant Director level. Class 3 Texas Municipal Court Clerk Certification required, or equivalent for out of state candidates.

View complete position profile and apply online at:
For more information, contact:
Molly Deckert, Senior Vice President
Strategic Government Resources
MollyDeckert@GovernmentResource.com

Program Manager
Want to be part of a dynamic team helping communities? The Environmental Finance Center at Wichita State University is seeking a talented Program Manager to join the Center’s fast growing team. The ideal candidate would have working knowledge of utilities and be interested in assisting communities to enhance utility management and finance. The position would provide on-site and project assistance, as well develop and deliver trainings on a wide range of local government environmental topics areas, with a primary focus on water, wastewater and stormwater. This position will be an integral component to the Center’s outreach efforts and would lead on a variety of projects and programs including managing a variety of client types and support staff.

To apply online for this position, please click HERE or go to jobs.wichita.edu/

WSU EEO Statement: Wichita State University does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, political affiliation, status as a veteran, genetic information or disability.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies: Executive Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita KS 67260-0138; telephone (316) 978-3186. Offers of employment are contingent upon completion of a satisfactory criminal background check as required by Board of Regents policy.

Master Mechanic
The City of Leavenworth is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of Master Mechanic. This position performs supervision of subordinate mechanics and complex mechanical work involving the repair and maintenance of a wide variety of automotive, truck and construction equipment. Minimum Qualifications: Five years of related experience, HS diploma or equivalent, valid driver’s license, CDL w/in 90 days, A.S.E. cert or ability to obtain w/in one year and documented supervisory experience in automotive field. Starting Salary range: $41,549-51,936 plus excellent benefits package. Interested candidates must submit an application to Leavenworth Workforce Development Center located at 515 Limit, Suite 200, Leavenworth KS on or before close of business on Friday, March 25, 2016. Additional information can be obtained at www.lvks.org, click on Employment Opportunities. EOE/AA

Public Works Superintendent
Contact the City Clerk at (785) 325-2284 or visit our website at www.washingtonks.net/Publicnotices.html for a full job description and application. Position open until filled. EOE.

Utility Superintendent
The City of Mankato, Kansas is seeking a qualified person to fill the following position:

Position Summary: The utility superintendent is an administrative and working supervisory position responsible for the electric distribution system, water production and distribution, sewer collection, streets and parks. The utility superintendent sets priorities, directs department personnel in the installation, repair and maintenance of electric, water and sewer lines within the City of Mankato. Applicants should be physically fit, work in extreme weather conditions and occasional overtime work due to emergency. Residency required. The City of Mankato offers a competitive wage and full benefit package. Applications are available at the City Office, 217 South High Street, Mankato, Kansas. Resumes can be e-mailed to Mankato@nckcn.com. E.O.E.

Utility Superintendent
The City of Lyons, Kansas is seeking a qualified person to fill the following position:

Position Summary: Under the administrative supervision of the City Administrator, the utility superintendent is an administrative and working supervisory position responsible for the production and distribution of water and gas service and the efficient treatment of wastewater within the City of Lyons. The employee in this position is responsible for the safe and efficient supply of water and gas service to the citizens of Lyons. The utility superintendent sets priorities, schedules and directs department personnel in the installation, repair and maintenance of water and wastewater lines within the city. This position requires a class 3 certification in water and a class 2 certification in wastewater. The utility superintendent is a non-exempt position.
LEAPS
The League Executive/Administrative Position Search (LEAPS) assists cities in filling vacant executive positions and creating new ones.

Model Personnel Policies
Comprehensive personnel policies and guidelines are not only necessary for setting expectations and encouraging employee productivity, but they also help protect organizations from potential lawsuits.

Employment Descriptions
The League maintains a model-job-descriptions database that is available to all member cities. The League also offers individualized descriptions as part of a fee-based service.

Compensation Analysis
Fair and competitive compensation attracts and retains top talent, while helping you assess your organization’s financial commitments.

Salary Survey
The League’s salary survey is a tool that may be used to determine a variety of statistical data including median and average compensation paid to city employees.

(785) 354-9565   www.lkm.org/services/personnel

Advertise in the Kansas Government Journal. Contact Kate Cooley at kcooley@lkm.org or (785) 354-9565.
Leavenworth: Easter Festivities and Egg Hunt
March 19
Free Easter Egg Hunt and Activities for children under age 12 sponsored by the Leavenworth Parks and Recreation Department. There will be games, activities, petting zoo, bounce house, food vendors and more. Festivities are 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. at 10th Avenue Park, 10th Avenue and Gatewood Streets in Leavenworth. Hunt begins at 2:30 p.m. SHARP. (913) 651-2203 | https://www.lvks.org/department/index.php?structureid=14

City of Bel Aire Spring Festival & Easter Egg Hunt
March 19
Come out to the Bel Aire Rec Center to enjoy an afternoon full of fun from 12-4. Activities will be a bounce house, face painting, food trucks, kite flying, an egg hunt (begins at 2). Special appearances from the Easter Bunny and friends! Don’t forget your Easter baskets and kites. Thanks to our sponsors Revolution Church and Cornerstone Christian Church. (316) 744-2451 | www.belaireks.gov

Haysville: Shamrock Shuffle 5K Run/Walk
March 19
The 9:00 am Shamrock Shuffle is a way for the whole family to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day in a fun, festive and healthy way! This event is open to both runners and walkers and is 3.1 miles (5K) in length. All participants are encouraged to wear green!! Prizes will be awarded to the most “festive” runners. This race will NOT be officially timed. (316) 529-5922

Altamont: Easter Egg Hunt
March 26
Let the kiddo’s come and hunt... eggs. This will be a fun, safe environment for kiddo’s of all ages to easter egg hunt. There will be different age brackets to ensure the kiddo’s have a great time! Egg Hunt: 1:00 pm for 0-2 year olds 1:15 pm for 3-5 year olds 1:30 pm for 6-8 year olds Where: Christ’s Church of Labette Co. 4th & Ness, Altamont, Ks. (620) 784-2112 | www.altamontks.com

El Dorado Half Marathon
April 2
Run the streets of El Dorado in our first half marathon! There will also be a 5K & 1 mile family fun run. See the website for more details. (316) 633-5428 | http://www.eldoradohalf.com/

Osage City: Smoke in the Spring
April 8
Smoke in the Spring is a special community event at Jones Park in Osage City, where barbecue teams from across the Midwest attend to compete and cook food for the public. The Taste of Osage City starts at 5pm on Friday and continues “Until the Food Runs Out”. Patrons can purchase BBQ Bucks (1 BBQ Buck = $1) on-site starting at 2pm. Vending teams only accept BBQ Bucks. Stick around for Live Music that goes until 12pm. Walk around, meet, and talk with some of the top BBQ Pitmasters from around the country. 785.528.4610 | www.smokeinthespring.com

Leavenworth Citywide Spring Cleanup
April 16
Scout troops, churches, civic organizations, clubs, schools and businesses join together with the goal of picking up all the trash in the City of Leavenworth in one day. Participants receive a free T-shirt. Contact Melissa Bower for information at mbower@firstcity.org. (913) 680-2610 | www.lvks.org

Leavenworth: Touch-a-Truck
May 4
Bring children to Leavenworth Landing Park, 123 S. Esplanade, to see the many kinds of trucks working in and around our community. (913) 651-2203 | www.lvks.org

Caldwell’s Chisholm Trail Festival
May 6-7
Annual celebration of the Border Queen City’s Chisholm Trail heritage. Kids games, downtown vendors, beer garden and more.

Minneapolis: Minne-K Day
May 7
Minne K-Day is fun community celebration in downtown Minneapolis, KS. It is a Minneapolis area Chamber of Commerce function, and the main events are sponsored and organized by members of the Chamber. Events run from 7:30am until the Evening Street Dance ends at 10pm http://www.minneapoliskansas.org/

Contact your local independent insurance agent or contact us directly!
Mike Johnson  mmjohnson@bhhc.com  800.488.2930

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• **Annual Contribution Discounts** — Members earn discounts based on safety records and participation in KMIT safety programs.

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For more information, contact:

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