



THE LEAGUE News

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT DAY 2018

We're looking forward to seeing many of our members on **Wednesday, January 24** for Local Government Day! We're co-hosting this event again with Kansas Association of Counties as a way for local government officials from across the state to gather for an exciting and informative day in Topeka with state legislators.

Senate Majority Leader Jim Denning, Senate Assistant Minority Leader Laura Kelly and House Majority Leader Don Hineman will speak during our legislative update. If you have questions you want us to pose to the legislators, please send them to [Trey Cocking](#) by Tuesday, January 23.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Abandoned Property (HB2506):

On Tuesday, January 23, the House Local Government Committee will have a hearing on [HB2506](#), a bill on abandoned housing. The bill will be similar to SB31 which was worked by the Senate last year and sent back to committee. Please look at [this link](#) for information on Senate Bill 31, and [previous testimony from the League and member cities](#). For more information on the House Local Government Committee, [see this link](#).

We need your support on this bill! Please e-mail [Trey Cocking](#) and let him know if you wish to testify at the hearing. Please share your support of this bill with your legislators and within your community. The infographic to the right can be used along with some talking points below on this topic. This is an **Action Item** for the League of Kansas Municipalities and, as you can see, a significant issue for Kansas' cities.

K.S.A. 12-104 (HB2505):

This week, the League introduced HB2505 amending K.S.A. 12-104. This bill defines when a mayor is considered a member of a city's governing body. Over the last couple years, the League has seen an increase in questions about the current statute. While often times interpreting the current statute is easy, at others, it can leave even the best city attorney scratching their head. When the League was notified about a request for an Attorney General opinion interpreting this statute, we decided it was perhaps time to consider updating this statute to make it work for our cities. The language we are proposing redefines when a mayor is considered a member of the city's governing body while giving cities the ability through local control to modify the general rule to best suit their situation.

The Effects of BLIGHTED PROPERTY

89% of member cities identify abandoned or blighted property as a significant or very significant concern in their communities.*

4+ years The median length of time a property was reported as abandoned was **four years**. One-third of responding cities noted some of the properties had been **abandoned for 10 or more years**.*

Abandoned property affects the health, safety, and welfare of the entire community - taxpayers, property owners, and residents. Other concerns associated with abandoned property include **increased police calls** for theft, prowlers, drug issues, and squatting. Additionally, cities reported an **increase in fire calls** responding to accidental fires and arson.*

Code enforcement issues related to abandoned property include **overgrown vegetation, dilapidated structures, wildlife, illegal dumping, and additional demand for sanitation services**.* Abandoned properties have a strong potential to become dangerous structures as they continue to deteriorate.

Unpaid property taxes on abandoned properties **creates a higher tax burden** on others to provide necessary city services. As these properties fall further into disrepair, the neglect can cause a blighting effect and result in **loss of property values of surrounding properties**.*

Abandoned property and blight is a welcoming **environment for pests and vermin** as well as a potentially **dangerous nuisance** for a neighborhood.

* The League completed several member surveys about the impact of blighted and abandoned property. The median population of responding cities was 2,500.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Asset Forfeiture (HB2459):

HB2459, a bill amending the Kansas Standard Asset Forfeiture Act and establishing the Kansas Asset Seizure and Forfeiture Repository Act, will have hearings next week on January 24 and 25. This bill is the result of significant work by the Kansas Judicial Council. The resulting bill creates stricter reporting requirements, establishes a central repository for forfeiture and seizure data, and clarifies guidelines for law enforcement agencies' tracking and use of forfeiture proceeds. While this bill is not perfect, the League feels it is a good compromise and will be testifying in support.

Expanding the Hours of Sale of Alcoholic Liquor by the Drink (HB2482):

HB2482 seeks to change the hours a public venue, club, or drinking establishment would be allowed to begin the service of alcoholic liquor from 9 a.m. to 6 a.m. The bill will be heard in the House Commerce Committee Tuesday, January 23.

Each week, the League publishes a *legislative calendar* in League News with hearings/meetings that may interest our members.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAW BOOK READY TO SHIP!

The updated Kansas Local Government Law Handbook (2018) by Mike Heim is considered an essential publication for individuals who interact with local government on a regular basis. The handbook provides an analysis of new election laws shifting local elections from spring to fall; the open meetings law and the open records law changes including new penalty provisions and new enforcement authority for the Attorney General and local prosecutors; new city and county tax lid information; budgeting, cash basis law, auditing, accounting, public funds, deposits and investments, and municipal bond updates; the latest Kansas Tort Claims Act, Section 1983 and other federal civil rights laws updates; preemption of local governments' ability to regulate the open carrying of knives, firearms and handguns and the concealed carrying of handguns; employment-at-will, due process, and free speech of public employees updates; city and county Home Rule powers, planning and zoning, and a new section dealing with economic development tools and public incentives. The Sixth Edition is available to order [online](#).



MUNICIPAL TRAINING INSTITUTE: MUNICIPAL FINANCE (CORE)

This course is designed to provide participants with an overview of municipal finance issues in Kansas. It will help city officials address the responsibility of fiscal operations at the local level to ensure effective service to your community. In today's particularly challenging fiscal climate, local leaders must understand the parameters required to set local budgets. This course has been set for February to encourage municipalities to start their 2019 budgeting process earlier due to implications from the tax lid. This course will focus on:

- Cash basis law, cash forecasting and investments;
- Revenue sources, appraisals and assessments;
- Budgeting basics;
- Tax lid impacts on the budget process; and
- Budget monitoring, internal controls and public purpose doctrine.



We encourage the following city officials attend this course: city managers/administrators, elected officials, city budget/finance staff and/or city clerks. The course will be a coordinated effort taught by Eric Smith, Deputy General Counsel, League of Kansas Municipalities and finance professionals from Kansas cities. This course will be submitted for IIMC credit. This course will be offered in two locations:

February 2, Pittsburg (co-presenter is James Clarkson, City of Pittsburg)

February 23, Manhattan (co-presenter is Hillary Badger, City of Manhattan)

This MTI will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost to attend this course is \$75 for members, \$100 for nonmembers. Lunch and materials provided. Your city will be invoiced after the class is finished. [Register online](#).