By EDWIN BIRCH
Unified Government

“Hello! Wyandotte County 3-1-1 Information… This is JoAnna, how may I help you?” “Can I have Division 10 please?” “Sure I can connect you.”

It’s a little past 4 p.m… the day is winding down for JoAnna. She has taken nearly 100 phone calls today. This particular call took less than 30 seconds.

On April 7 the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas (UG) became the first in the state of Kansas to launch the new 3-1-1 Call Center network. The Call Center is a unique customer service initiative to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of deliverable services to citizens in Wyandotte County.

Have you ever called to find out where to go to pay a parking ticket? Have you had questions regarding your property taxes and got caught up in the endless amount of transfers? Or maybe even left on hold? This is an experience Helen Barnes says she is too familiar with when calling for information pertaining to municipal services. “I usually put on hold and transferred to several places,” she says. Barnes is in town taking care of her elderly mother and called to inquire about the process to apply for a Quit Claim Deed. “It was fast alright,” explaining her description of the new 3-1-1 service. The ultimate goal of the 3-1-1 system is to make these kinds of frustrating encounters an experience of the past.

Customer Service Representatives (CSR) are taking an average of 600 to 1,000 calls a day. Monday and Tuesday are the days with the highest call volume. The majority of those calls have been related to questions concerning municipal court and public works. Now since the public announcement of the 3-1-1 system, the call center is prepared for a substantial increase in the volume of phone calls.

Grover Dowell has lived in Wyandotte County for eight years and hasn’t had to call downtown that often. However, he says this recent experience has been different.

KCK Crime Drops

The number of murders in KCK dropped 45.7% in 2007. There were 25 homicides last year compared to 46 in 2006. That is the lowest number of homicides since 1986. Overall violent crime also dropped in 2007, with a 5.5% decrease in such crimes as aggravated assault, rape and battery.

KCK Police Officials say several factors contributed to the decrease, including some of the initiatives started by the Department. Those initiatives include the Nighttime COPPS Unit, the re-establishment of a Narcotics Unit and the S.C.O.R.E. Unit. The K-9 Unit was utilized more in 2007 by district patrol officers than in previous years. The increase in School Resources Officers is also credited with helping.

Mayor Reardon Calls for Casino Money To Cut Taxes

Mayor Reardon says Opportunity Abounds in Wyandotte County

By MIKE TAYLOR
Unified Government

Mayor Joe Reardon outlined an aggressive plan for cutting property taxes, building new streets and sidewalks and sending students to college in his 2008 State of the Unified Government Address. Reardon declared the state of the Unified Government strong after 10 years of consolidation and told the crowd opportunity abounds in Wyandotte County.

Reardon delivered his 2008 State of the Government Address to an audience of nearly 300 people at the Reardon Convention Center in downtown Kansas City, Kansas. This is Reardon’s third State of the Government Address since being elected Mayor/CEO of the Unified Govern-
Birch Named PIO for Unified Government

By MIKE TAYLOR
Unified Government

The Unified Government announces Edwin Birch is joining the Public Relations Department as the Public Information Officer.

Birch will handle media relations and communications such as The Citizen Newsletter and the UG ENews Source, a weekly electronic newsletter. Birch will also assist with UGTV, the Unified Government’s public information cable television channel.

Birch is the former Director of Public Information for the Kansas City, Missouri School District. He also worked as producer and journalist at KMBC-TV in Kansas City. Birch brings more than 11 years of experience to the UG with a background in journalism and public relations. He is a lifelong resident of Kansas City, Kansas.

“This is a great time to be not only a resident of Wyandotte County, but also an employee of the Unified Government. It’s the best of both worlds,” says Birch. “I am looking forward to working with Mayor Joe Reardon, the Board of Commissioners, the UG staff, and residents to continue the progress of building a world class city that we all can be proud of.”

Public Relations Director Mike Taylor welcomes Birch.

“Edwin has exactly the kind of media and journalism experience we were looking for. His expertise will assist the media in better covering important issues and it will benefit our community by enhancing our efforts to keep citizens informed about their local government,” says Taylor.

Birch is filling the position held by Interim PIO Emerick Cross. Cross assisted the UG with public information duties the past year.

Edwin Birch can be reached at 913-573-5544 or at ebirch@wycokck.org.

Prescott Plaza Under Construction

A large crowd gathered at the construction site of the Prescott Plaza in April to celebrate the groundbreaking of what Mayor Joe Reardon described as a new day at 18th Street Expressway and I-70.

“Today we’re sending a new message about our urban core,” says Mayor Reardon. “Today is about letting a place in our community realize its full potential.”

“This is a good time to be a resident in KCK,” says Gregory Fagre, President of the Prescott Neighborhood Association. Take moved to the city just over a year ago from Johnson County and worked closely with the UG and the developers on the project. “I’m so proud of the community investment and to have our neighborhood be part of the development.”

Prescott Plaza Shopping Center will consist of a couple restaurants, an ice cream shop, a state-of-art Star Mart convenience store that will sale hot foods, a 42,000 square foot Chas Ball Sun Fresh Market, and several other retail shops.

Residents from throughout KCK attended the groundbreaking ceremony. Corella Mays, President of the Country Side West Homeowners Association located west of the new shopping center on 62nd Parallel, says she is excited about the convenience the new development will bring to shoppers. “A lot of times when I’m traveling from different areas of the city I usually have to go out of the way to go to a grocery store,” says Mays. “This new shopping center and the location are going to be a very nice addition to the city.”

“This is not only about a place just for shopping,” says Michael Fishman, President of Fishman & Company. “It’s about creating a better place to live in this part of the county.”

Fishman & Company and ARO Real Estate are developers of the $20 million project. The 17-acre shopping center will also assist with UGTV, the Unified Government’s public information cable television channel.

Strawberry Hill Gets Makeover

The newly renovated 5th Street has been dedicated in a ceremony with bands and color guards. The restoration of brick sidewalks, a resurfaced street, new streetlights with posts designed in an antique style, the installation of curbs, gutters, and concrete speed tables are just a few of the new improvements made on the 5th Street corridor from Splilog to Armstrong Ave.

“What a beautiful addition the street has made to our community,” says Carole Diehl, President of the Strawberry Hill Neighborhood Association. “It makes coming into the downtown district from I-70 much more appealing and welcoming to the people not familiar with our community.”

Established in the late 1800’s, Strawberry Hill is an historic neighborhood located downtown. Immigrants from Croatia and Slovenia settled on the hillside overlooking the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers.

“It has a touch of the old 1920’s with a touch of the new 21st century,” says Diehl. The project covered more than 2000 ft. and cost approximately $1,066,028.80.
In 2006 the only landfill in Kansas City, Kansas was closed. Currently there are only three landfills in the KC metro area. When these landfills close, trash fees will increase dramatically if the waste needs to be transported out of the metro area. Having a curbside recycling program will help residents minimize what is thrown away.

As part of Mayor Reardon’s Green Initiative, Kansas City, Kansas will be implementing a curbside recycling program scheduled to begin in Summer 2008.

All homes, up to a four-plex, who receive residential trash service from Deffenbaugh, who reside in Kansas City, Kansas and Bonner Springs, Kansas will have curbside recycling. This program does not include apartments or businesses.

Residents must have a green recycling bin in order for them to participate in curbside recycling. Residents will be able to pickup a free recycling bin in May 2008.

When curbside recycling begins, place your recyclables in your green recycling bin and place the bin at the curb weekly on your regularly scheduled trash day. The green recycling bin signals the truck to stop, as Deffenbaugh will have a truck picking up trash and recycling on the same day. The recycling trucks will look similar to trash trucks; but all recyclables will be picked up together at the curb and taken to a facility where they are separated and processed. This is called single stream recycling.

You do not have to separate your recyclables, just place all your recyclables into the same green bin, this makes it easy and convenient for you. There is no limit on how much you recycle. You can place extra recyclables in other containers, cardboard boxes or paper bags and put them next to your bin and place cardboard under your recycling bin.

Once curbside starts, we will be picking up paper, paperboard, plastic containers labeled #1 and #2, aluminum and steel cans, and corrugated cardboard. Please separate your green recycling bin 3-4 feet from your garbage if possible. Examples of paper that will be picked up will be newspapers (including inserts and ads), office paper, junk mail, magazines, and catalogues. You can place your paper recyclables into a paper sack, not a plastic bag, and place it in or to next to the recycling bin each week. Using paper sacks will help to prevent blowing paper.

Paperboard refers to the packaging material used to make cereal, cracker, beverage, shoe boxes, etc. Breakdown your paperboard and place them in a paper grocery bag along with your newspapers, paper, junk mail and magazines for your convenience.

We will only be collecting plastics labeled #1 or #2. Examples of PETE #1 plastic are bottles for soft drinks, water, juice, sports drinks, beer, mouthwash, catsup, and salad dressing as well as food jars for peanut butter, jelly, jam and pickles. Examples of HDPE #2 plastic are bottles used for milk, water, juice, cosmetics, shampoo, dish and laundry detergents. A rule of thumb for plastic is that the container must have a threaded neck. Please remove all lids or caps and throw lids & caps into garbage.

Empty beverage aluminum cans are accepted for collection. You should rinse out the cans and flatten the aluminum cans before putting them into your recycling bin. Empty soup, fruit, vegetable, food, and beverage steel cans are also accepted. Please rinse and clean the steel cans and place the lid inside the can and crimp close before placing them into your recycling bin.

Corrugated cardboard refers to shipping boxes that have the “wavy middle layer”. Boxes should be flattened and cut to pieces no larger than 2 feet by 2 feet. Place on ground under the bin or fold and stuff multiple boxes into one box and set next to the recycling bin.

Some items that will not be accepted with the curbside program is no glass; no plastic bags; no margarine or yogurt cups; no shredded paper; no hardback or soft back books; no pizza boxes; no tissue; no paper towels; no paper plates; no Styrofoam; no disposable diapers; no plastic cups, no tableware; no motor oil containers.

For more information feel free to contact 311 or visit the website at www.wycokck.org for curbside recycling.

### “Recycling is the right thing to do.”

In the United States in 2005, according to the EPA, 54% of trash was land filled, 34% was recycled or composted, and 12% was incinerated. Some of the benefits of recycling are that: (1) Recycling saves landfill space. (2) Recyclables are used as raw materials for new products. (3) Recycling saves natural resources. (4) Recycling saves energy and reduces greenhouse gases. (5) Recycling also creates jobs and strengthens our economy.

Recycling saves landfill space.

For example, recycling one ton of plastics saves 30 cubic yards of landfill space, recycling one ton of aluminum saves 10 cubic yards of landfill space, recycling one ton of paper saves 3-4 cubic yards of landfill space, and recycling one ton of steel saves 4 cubic yards of landfill space. Forest View Landfill located in Kansas City, Kansas was closed in 2006.

Recyclables can be used as raw materials to make new products. For example, recycled plastics can be made into bottles, carpeting, T-shirts, and lumber. By recycling paper, manufacturers can make it into newspapers, food packages, insulation, and mulch. Aluminum can be used to make new cans, pie pans, house siding and appliances. In the spring of 2007, Pete Grogan of Weyerhaeuser Recycling said that the United States is the Saudi Arabia of paper. Unlike Saudi Arabia who takes advantage of their natural resource of oil, the United States annually throws away $3-$4 billion worth of paper alone.

Recycling also saves natural resources. For example, recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees, it saves 6,953 gallons of water, it saves 463 gallons of oil, and it saves 4,077 kilowatts of energy.

Recycling saves energy and reduces greenhouse gases. Recycling one ton of aluminum uses only 8 BTU’s of energy. In contrast, using bauxite ore to make aluminum takes 229 BTU’s of energy. It takes 28 times more energy using the natural resource bauxite ore versus recycled aluminum. When using recycled aluminum it reduces the gas of sulfur dioxide which is created by using bauxite ore. Sulfur dioxide helps to cause acid rain.

Recycling also helps to strengthen our economy. In a study done for the National Recycling Coalition in 2001; at that time, 1,121,804 people were employed by 56,061 businesses. These businesses had $36.7 billion in annual payroll and had $236.3 billion of annual revenues. “Recycling is the right thing to do.”

There will be a coupon for a free recycling bin in your April BPU bill. Take it with you to get your free bin at the following locations:

- Recycling Center, 3241 Park Dr., Thursdays and Saturdays from 8 am to 1 pm and Fridays and Sundays from 11 am to 4 pm.
- Neighborhood Resource Center at Liveable Neighborhoods in the lower level of 4601 State Avenue, Monday-Friday, 8 am. to 5 pm.
- Rosedale Development Association, 1403 S.W. Blvd. Monday-Friday 9 am. to 5 pm.
- UG Annex, 8200 State Avenue using western entrance. Monday-Friday 8 am. to 5 pm.
- In May 2008 contact 311 or look on the website at www.wycokck.org to find other locations where you can pickup a free recycling bin.
Annual Community
Most economic indicators for the Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas area show growth and stability.

**Population Change, 1970-2000**

- Wyandotte County’s July 2006 thru June 2007 average employment total, for employees covered by unemployment insurance, was 80,500. This total is 3.4% higher than the figure for the preceding 12 months. During this period, Retail and Food employment increased by 1,000 jobs primarily due to the Village West and Legends shopping area.
- The largest job categories for this period were service employment with approximately 20,000 jobs and government employment with approximately 15,000 jobs.

**Unemployment Rates**

- Between 2000 & 2007, the Wyandotte County unemployment rate peaked at 11.1% in 2003, up from 6.3% in 2000. Since 2003, the unemployment rate has decreased the next four years to 7.4% in 2007.

**Property Tax**

- In 2007 the total assessed value of property in Wyandotte County exceeded $1 billion for the fourth year in a row. Total valuation increased by $84 million or 7.2 percent from 2006 to 2007.
- Real property was 82 percent of total valuation in 2007.
- Personal property valuation decreased by 16% from 2006 to 2007 primarily due to legislation that exempted machinery & equipment purchases after July 1, 2006.

**2007 Property Taxes for Taxpayers in USD #500**

- The combined local property tax rate for Kansas City and Wyandotte County ranges from 44 percent to 49 percent of local taxes, depending upon the school district.
- The combined share of local property taxes for City and County services provided by the Unified Government in Unified School District #500 was 46% of the tax bill for 2007.

**Major Kansas City, Kansas Developments in 2007**

- Gill Studios Inc $1,000,000 Building Remodel
- First State Bank and Trust $1,997,706 New Bank
- Providence Medical Center $3,432,000 Building Remodel
- Country Inn Hotel $3,729,625 Country Inn Hotel -117 rooms
- Gill Studios Inc $1,000,000 Building Remodel
- State of Kansas $1,170,500 Tenant Finish - Medical Office
- KCK #500 Schools $1,000,000 Building Remodel
Report to Citizens

Kansas area moved in a positive direction or remained stable during 2007.

**KANSAS CITY, KANSAS SINGLE FAMILY PERMITS**
- New single-family permits issued in 2007 totaled 333. This is the first year in the past five that total single-family permits have fallen below 400 per year. However, the decade still has seen more new single-family building permits (2,861) than any other prior decade going back to the 1960s.

**CONSTRUCTION REMAINING AT HIGH LEVEL**
- The construction value of these permits exceeded $43 million. In 2007, the average new home value was $130,000, while the median home was $107,000. Values of new homes in 2007 ranged up to $533,000.

**VILLAGE WEST AND KANSAS SPEEDWAY ECONOMIC SUMMARY**
- As of December 2007, 111 Village West businesses were open employing nearly 5,900 persons.
- Currently, Village West parcels are appraised at nearly $386 million (includes vacant parcels and those with businesses; figure includes real and personal property).
- The 2007 personal and real property taxes levied for this area were approximately $13 million.
- Thru December 2007, Village West Businesses and the Kansas Speedway generated nearly $46 million in local and state sales, use and transient guest tax collections.

**Homicides**

**KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 10-YEAR TREND**

**Violent Crimes**

**KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 10-YEAR TREND**

**Non-Residential Construction Value**

**Johnson Co. (Shawnee)**

**Village West and Kansas Speedway**

**Wholesale**

**State of Kansas**

**Personal**

**Real Estate**

**Utilities**

**Government**

**Services**

**Restaurant & Lodging**

**warehousing**

**Manufacturing**

**Wyandotte County Employment by Category**

**Wyandotte County**

**KCK #500 Schools**

**City + County Mill Levy Comparison 1**

**City + County Mill Levy Comparison 1**

**Wyandotte Co. (KCK) & Sedgwick Co. (Wichita)**

**Tax Rates for Kansas Cities of the First Class, Fiscal Years 2002 - 2008**

**Tax Rates for Kansas Cities of the First Class, Fiscal Years 2002 - 2008**

**Wyandotte Co. (KCK)**

**Sedgwick Co. (Wichita)**

**Note:** Annual changes were made to mills and untaxed dollars of revenue to accommodate changes in assessment valuations and changes in property values.

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BPU Receives High Marks on Finances

The Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (BPU) received three confirmations recently of its excellent financial status and sound business practices.

The Legislative Auditor of the Unified Government reported that BPU is basically financially sound and that the utility is in good condition to take on additional debt. Unified Government Commissioners unanimously approved the issuance of $57.7 million in revenue bonds and refunding of $19.6 million of older debt for BPU. Then, Moody’s Investors Service Inc. affirmed BPU’s bond rating of A1, and confirmed that the utility’s rating outlook is stable.

The bond transactions will not raise utility rates for BPU customers, but will be repaid from future utility revenues, with a payback schedule of 25 years, according to Lori Austin, BPU Manager of Accounting & Finance/Chief Financial Officer.

“We are in a downward trend in our debt obligations now,” Austin said. “Our maximum principal and interest payments peaked in 2007 and our debt obligations now,” Austin said. “We are in a downward trend in our debt obligations now,” Austin said. “Our maximum principal and interest payments peaked in 2007 and our debt obligations now,” Austin said.

“The bond financing will be used for BPU capital improvements such as:
• A new electric substation in the Volcott area. The facility will provide redundancy for the Piper Substation and will serve the new development in western Wyandotte County, including a new water treatment plant for Water-One.
• A replacement substation in the Fairакс industrial area. This project will upgrade the power transmission from 69 kilovolts to 161 kilovolts.
• Capital improvements at BPU’s two power plants that maintain the ongoing safe, reliable and efficient operation of the generating units.
• A new two-million-gallon elevated water storage tank on Gibbs Road.

Moody’s Investors Service listed BPU’s strengths as, independent rate-setting authority and demonstrated willingness to adjust rates as needed; bi-annual rate rider allows for recovery of all fuel and purchased power costs; BPU’s power resource mix is diverse, and is comprised of coal, natural gas, wind, hydro and purchased power.

BPU has excellent bond ratings with the other two major bond rating agencies, as well: Fitch and Standard and Poor’s give BPU an A+ rating.

Highway Construction Season is Here

The Kansas Department of Transportation has a number of highway projects planned for this spring and summer. Be on the look out for construction zones.

I-435

Crews will be doing an asphalt overlay on I-435 from Kansas Avenue to Leavenworth Road. Traffic will be restricted to one or two lanes in each direction during construction. Ramps will be closed for short durations during the overlay process.

The I-435 bridge over Parallel Parkway will be repaired in the northbound lanes. Work is set to continue during April and May. A minimum of two lanes will remain open at all times. The loop ramp from eastbound Parallel Road to northbound I-435 will remain closed throughout the project. The ramp from northbound I-435 to westbound Parallel Road will be closed during part of the project. This traffic will detour via northbound I-435 to Leavenworth Road to southbound I-435 to westbound Parallel Road. All other ramps will remain open through construction.

I-70

The westbound side of I-70 over the 18th Street bridge will be under construction from late April through June. Construction crews will be patching the bridge surface. At least two lanes will remain open to traffic at all times, but expect traffic slow downs and delays between the I-670 merge and I-635.

US-69

A major reconstruction of the 18th Street bridge over the Kansas River will close 18th street for six extended weekends, from Friday night to Tuesday morning for each weekend closure. This project isn’t expected to begin until late Summer of early Fall.

Utility Tax Rebate Helps More Seniors

More KCK senior citizens received utility tax rebates this year than ever before. Because of changes made to the program by Mayor Joe Reardon and the Unified Government Commissioners, the number of senior citizens applying for the program increased by 26 percent to nearly 1,300 people. The amount of rebates paid totaled $341,995, an increase of 29% over 2006. The average individual rebate was $266.

The program offers senior citizens a rebate on a portion of the amount paid for utilities. Persons applying must be 65 years of age and live in the city of Kansas City, Kansas. In 2006, the Unified Government Board of Commissioners voted to increase the maximum income level for the rebate program from $10,000 to $25,000. The maximum refund is $300.00.

Get Wired with the UG ENews

Want to be informed about Unified Government business and community issues? The Unified Government weekly E-newsletter – The UG E-News Source – will keep you informed and up to date. It’s sent free to subscribers. Sign up to receive it by going to the Unified Government website at www.wycokck.org. Look for the sign up box near the bottom of the home page.

Schlitterbahn Makes Big Splash with Retailer

By EDWIN BIRCH

Unified Government

Scheels announced it will be the first retail tenant to anchor the 370-acre Schlitterbahn Vacation Village.

Mayor Joe Reardon welcomed the new retailer to the growing development in western Wyandotte County during a news conference held at Dave and Buster.

Scheels, an established sports store with 23 stores in 7 states, plans to bring a retail shopping experience, unlike any other, to Kansas City, Kansas. “Our Scheels’ team is focused on making this the finest retail store in the region and our visitors will find a ‘Customer Experience’ unlike any other,” says the company’s Chief Executive Officer, Steve Scheels.

Imagine riding a 1930’s model 65-foot Ferris wheel, or if you’re a NASCAR fan, buckling into a 750 hp stock car simulator. Even if you’re a basketball, baseball, football, or golf enthusiast, there will be a variety of sports simulators to test your skills too. What if you’re an archer and you’re not sure if the bow and arrow you want to purchase is the right fit for you. There’s a shooting gallery for customers to test out the product.

But that’s just the entertainment part of the store. There will be a golf shop, bike shop, gun and hunting shops, and an area showcasing the largest selection of sports, sportswear, and footwear. All of this divided into several specialty shops inside a 190,000-square-foot store.

The CEO boasted to a crowd of about 100 guests during the news conference last Thursday that Scheels is a place where kids can be kids and parents can shop.

“There is no one else in our industry that brings the expertise, intensity and selection to every category of sports. The combination of the Schlitterbahn Vacation Village, along with the unique retail development anchored by Scheels, creates a sough out destination development that will draw guests from hundreds of miles,” Scheels says.

The sports store is projected to bring an additional 230 jobs to Wyandotte County. Village West continues to attract retailers to the area, which has proven that if we build it they will come, says Unified Government Mayor/CEO Joe Reardon. “This is another destination retailer, which will attract tourist and regional shoppers, which ultimately continues to grow the market.”

The Scheels portion of the development will not be completed until spring of 2011. The first phase of the Schlitterbahn water resort is scheduled to open by 2009.
By Lori Wuebner
KSU Extension Service

It is not uncommon today to read or hear that children and their families need less screen time—whether it’s a computer screen, a television screen or some other piece of technology.

Nowhere is this more evident than at mealtime. Is the television a part of your family meals? If it is, you and your family may be missing out on quality opportunities for sharing, teaching and learning about each other and the things that matter. A study by the Families and Work Institute asked parents and children what they thought children would remember most about the children’s growing up years. While the parents guessed it would be the big family moments—family vacations, special events—the children said it was the everyday family rituals, like family meals, that mattered.

Take the TV out of dinnertime—not only will you find that conversation fills the quiet that is left behind, you just might also find that everyone eats healthier, as well. Research has shown that we eat more food, and remember it less, when we eat in front of the television. (Source: Young Families Newsletter, KSU Extension)

The K-State Extension Office, Wyandotte County can be located at
Young Families Newsletter, KSU Extension
City Hall, you immediately recognize the professional appearance and business like setting of the office. This is serious work says Deichler. The right office chair plays a key role to productivity. CSR’s sit in black leather Ergonomic-style chairs that provide the all-day comfort needed while sitting and handling the volume of calls.

The 3-1-1 management team met with departments across the UG to educate them on how the incorporation of the 3-1-1 network will enhance the UG’s overall organizational performance. The first phase of the project has been completed. The system allows for easy adjustments and software upgrades based on trends from the citizen’s demands on municipal services.

The implementation of the new 3-1-1 network will raise the bar on the UG’s customer service interface. The Unified Government is the first local government in the State of Kansas to launch a 3-1-1 Call center.

By proposing a communitywide college scholarship program. Starting in 2010, Reardon wants to earmark new revenue generated from slot machine gaming at The Woodlands RaceTrack to pay for a scholarship program for graduating seniors at KCK high schools. The plan would allow the Unified Government to deliver a $2,000 college scholarship to each graduate starting with the class of 2010.

“Yet another resource we need to reduce property taxes or any other source needed to deliver fundamental services to our citizens. Rather, it amounts to an investment in our children to take the next step in their education and a program to attract new families to become a part of our community,” Reardon declared, adding that, “the program would act as an economic development tool by attracting new families to live in our community.”

The State of the Unified Government Address also outlined plans for increased environmental measures including development of the UGreen Tax Rebate for all new homes built in Kansas City, Kansas that achieve Energy Star certification. Under the proposal, homeowners who meet Energy Star standards would receive a one year rebate of the city/county property tax paid. The property tax rebate would also apply to rehabs of existing homes that implement Energy Star products and techniques. Mayor Reardon also used the speech as a ceremonial launch of communitywide curbside recycling, handing out recycling bins to members of the audience.

Residential curbside recycling will start in KCK this spring.

Reardon is making government efficiency and effectiveness a key part of his 2008 initiatives, calling on Unified Government administration to implement cost saving measures throughout municipal departments and agencies. And he touted the launch of 3-1-1, a one stop center for citizens dealing with the Unified Government.

Mayor Reardon concluded the address by asking citizens to join him in moving forward a progressive agenda for the future, uniting in building a livable community today and one of promise for our future generations.


TV Dinners are Healthier Without the TV

Cut Taxes cont. from page 1

spent $100-million on infrastructure improvements in the past two years, but Mayor Reardon is calling for an even larger investment. He is calling for all of the sales tax revenues generated by the Village West area to be spent on infrastructure once the area’s paid off.

To analyze trends in service requests, and the timeliness and effectiveness of service delivery to residents. The Director of the 3-1-1 Call Center says this is important data that can be very useful during the budget planning process. “As we capture these calls we’re going to have measurements of progress,” says Brett Deichler. “It’s the future technology.

The Unified Government is the first local government in the State of Kansas to launch a 3-1-1 Call center.

The CSR’s had an intense 5 day training schedule. The early start in February provided an opportunity to learn the Customer Relation Management software module before the call center went live to the public.

“This system is very user friendly and self explanatory. There aren’t too many drop fields,” says JoAnna. The computer software contains a section for specific calls, which list categories for departments, UG topics, and types of calls received. According to JoAnna who has had previous customer service experience, this makes it easier to navigate through the system and reduces the time it takes to assist the caller. Just one of eight Home & Family

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HOME & FAMILY

TV Dinners are Healthier Without the TV

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It is not uncommon today to read or hear that children and their families need less screen time—whether it’s a computer screen, a television screen or some other piece of technology.

Nowhere is this more evident than at mealtime. Is the television a part of your family meals? If it is, you and your family may be missing out on quality opportunities for sharing, teaching and learning about each other and the things that matter. A study by the Families and Work Institute asked parents and children what they thought children would remember most about the children’s growing up years. While the parents guessed it would be the big moments—family vacations, special events—the children said it was the everyday family rituals, like family meals, that mattered.

Take the TV out of dinnertime—not only will you find that conversation fills the quiet that is left behind, you just might also find that everyone eats healthier, as well. Research
Officials from the county of Limerick, Ireland were greeted with a warm welcome from Mayor Joe Reardon, the Board of Commissioners and UG staff this Spring. Mayor Joe Reardon presented them with “Keys to the County” during a formal ceremony held in Huron Park. The Irish Flag and the Flag of Limerick County were raised to celebrate the visit and beginning of a new relationship between both counties.