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# **UG Commissioners Cut Property Tax for 3rd Straight Year**



The Unified Government Board of Commissioners has approved a 2019 budget which cuts property taxes by 5% for KCK home and business owners.

That's on top of an 8.8% reduction over the last two years for a total property tax cut of nearly 14% since 2017. At the time of consolidation in 1996, the owner of a \$100,000 house paid \$1,116 in city/county property tax. More than 20 years later in 2019, the owner of a \$100,000 house will pay \$884 in UG property tax. That's a reduction of \$232, or nearly 21% less in property taxes since the Unified Government was formed.

"So much good is being accom-

plished by our staff and employees and I believe we have allocated our limited resources well," said Mayor David Alvey.

The budget moves the KCK property tax rate from 40 mills to 38 mills. KCK ranks 13th out of the 25 largest cities in Kansas, meaning 12 of those cities have higher property taxes than KCK. In 1997, KCK had the highest tax rate of the state's biggest cities. The Wyandotte County property tax rate is 95th out 105 counties, meaning 94 Kansas counties have a higher tax rate. For a majority of KCK residents, the UG property tax is less than half the total tax bill at 47%. Public schools, the KCK Community College and State of Kansas make up the other 53%.

This budget uses \$6.2-million of the \$12.4-million in paid-off STAR Bond sales tax revenues from the Village West Tourism District for property tax relief, \$4.2-million for capital construction projects, and \$2.0-million for new program initiatives. The STAR Bond sales tax revenues allow the Unified Government to increase public safety spending, launch the SOAR blight reduction effort, increase

See **CUT TAXES** Page 2

#### Pay Taxes with myWyco App

2018 Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Bills are now available on the Unified Government's myWyco App.

powered by PayIt™

Available on desktop & mobile at mywyco.wycokck.org or download the app!

Start or or Google Play

Townload on the AppStore

Townload app of Wyandotte County.

Paylt has sent email notifications notifying property owners that their 2018 tax statements are available for payment.

Paper copies of property tax bills were mailed at the end of November.

For questions about email notifications or tax bills, residents should contact the Treasury Office at 913-573-2821 or Paylt Support at 816-343-8095.

The myWyco App is available on desktop & mobile devices at mywyco.wycokck.org or download the app from the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

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#### **Stay Connected** with the UG

County • Kansas Website More than 2.7-million people a year use the Unified Government Website to stay informed and do business with their local government. Check it out at www.wycokck.org

**UG ENews Source** Every week the Unified Government sends an informative electronic newsletter to your email inbox. Sign-up by going to the UG Website and click on the "I Want To" drop down box.

**UGTV** UG Commission meetings, Standing Committee meetings and Budget workshops are broadcast on UGTV, along with lots of other information and programs about the community. Tune to Channel 2 on Time Warner cable and Channel 141 on Google TV.



Facebook The Unified Government is officially on Facebook with it's Kansas City, Kansas Unified Government page. It's easy to take part. Just go to www.Facebook.com/cityofkck. Click the "Like" icon and you'll be a member of the Kansas City, Kansas Official FB Page of the Unified Government.



**YouTube** The Unified Government's efforts to communicate Tube with citizens and promote the community don't stop there. The Unified Government Channel on YouTube displays a number of videos about interesting and important issues and events as well. Just go to www.YouTube.com/officialwycokck to see our videos.



Social Media In addition to the UG Website, Facebook, UG ENews, UGTV, YouTube and The Citizen Newsletter, the Unified Government also helps you stay connected through Next Door

The Citizen Newsletter is published by the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, 66101. It is mailed to every residential address in Wyandotte County. Due to postage costs, copies are not mailed outside Wyandotte County. An electronic version is posted on the official Unified Government website at www.wycokck.org. Comments or questions can be sent to Mike Taylor, Public Relations Director at mtaylor@wycokck.org.

In accordance with the Department of Justice regulations, the Unified Government's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEOP), is available on the Unified Government website at www.wycokck.org.

#### **CUT TAXES**

street and road maintenance, and enhance other community services.

The 2019 Unified Government Budget totals \$376-million with more than half of the budget designated for public safety. The budget funds Police, Fire, Sheriff, courts, parks and

recreation, health services, wastewater, and general government functions, as well as improvements to roads and public facilities. The budget includes a 2% cost of living adjustment most employees with a 3% increase for Police and Sheriff personnel.

The 2019 Budget is built on the Strategic Plan and Goals set by the Unified Government Commission as determined through retreats, a survey of thousands of Wyandotte County residents and operational studies. For complete details on the 2019 Proposed Unified Government Budget go to www.wycokck.

#### 2017 Tax Rate Summary **Kansas Cities of the First Class** TOTAL CITY LEVY

City	Total City Levy	Rank
Newton	60.326	1
Parsons	54.714	2
Atchison	53.959	3
Liberal	51.795	4
Pittsburg	51.467	5
Dodge City	48.755	6
Manhattan	48.357	7
Fort Scott	48.195	8
Junction City	48.095	9
Coffeyville	46.974	10
Hutchinson	44.123	11
Emporia	42.575	12
Kansas City	40.003	13

NOTE: Total mills levied in city by all units category represents the total average mill levy in the city.

#### KCK Municipal Court & Parking Control **Tackle Parking Violations**

To meet the needs of our current and future customers we have begun an educational and enforcement campaign to increase the accessibility of public parking. Being able to safely park for work, to attend classes, and do business is critical in the achievement of our community goal of improving the quality of life for all who live and work in Wyandotte County. Municipal Court and the Parking Control Department are committed to do our part to meet that goal.

In 2016 KCK Municipal Court began a 3-year approach to improve its enforcement and citizen notification of violations of City Ordinance 35-595. This plan included dismissing old and unenforceable parking citations and improving the quality of the court record. Parking tickets are, in most cases, issued to an unattended vehicle and filed with the Court with only a vehicle license number. This can pose a significant barrier in alerting the registered owner of the ticket. In 2018 the Court entered into a partnership with the Collections Bureau of Kansas (CBK) to assist with owner notifications for parking tickets issued between 2014 and 2016. CBK had the ability to match vehicle license plates with registered owners and provide notification to that person of an outstanding parking ticket. CBK was able to do in days what would have taken the Court months.

CBK assists the court with research, collections and disputes.



KCK will start using a parking "boot" on cars with a large number of unpaid parking tickets.

Here are some commonly asked questions from those who have been contacted regarding overdue parking citations.

#### I received a letter from the Collections Bureau of Kansas, now what?

Please contact CBK for payment, information about the case or to dispute the charges. 785-228-3636 or 866-858-3636 www.collectks.com

#### But this is not my car and I believe the ticket is not mine.

You should start by contacting CBK. You can request copies of the Court record and file a dispute directly with them.

No. Collections Bureau of Kansas is a partner with the Kansas City, Kansas Municipal Court and they are contacting you due to an unpaid parking

#### Will I have an arrest warrant because of these cases?

No. KCK Municipal Court does not issue bench warrants for parking citations issued to an unattended vehicle.

#### Will this affect my credit score?

No. CBK is not contracted to file any notice with the credit reporting agencies.

#### Why can't I pay the Court instead of CBK?

You could be charged more. The Court removed all late fees associated with the citations before sending them to CBK. If you attempt to pay with the Court, you could be charged these late fees which many times are higher than the collections agency fee.

#### How do I know if I have any other parking tickets with the Court?

The best and most convenient way to do this is to access the public court records through www. municourt.net and search by your vehicle tag number with an unknown last name.

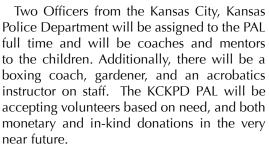
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#### **KCK PAL Opens on Strawberry Hill**

The Kansas City Kansas Police Athletic/ Activities League (PAL) opened in November

2018 in the long empty church at 5th and Ann. The PAL will serve the youth of KCK by providing extracurricular activities free of charge.

The PAL is a time-tested approach to youth development. It will serve schoolage youth, Monday through Friday evenings throughout the school year with the hopes of expanding the hours in time for summer break 2019.



Today, there are over 300 PAL Member Chapters nationwide either within law enforcement agencies or operating as a 501 c 3 Not for Profit organization, servicing various cities throughout the United States, including the U.S. Virgin Islands, serving youth, ages 5 to 18. The National Association of Police Athletic/Activities League, Inc. exists to aid in the preventing of juvenile crime and violence by providing mentorship, civic/service, athletic, recreational, enrichment and educational

opportunities and resources to PAL Membership Chapters.

The Kansas City, Kansas Police Athletic/Activities League (PAL) will be housed at 800 North 5th Street, Kansas City, Kansas, in the former St. Mary's Catholic Church. The Church has been renovated with the help of donations, both monetary and in-kind, as well as the award of the Unified Government Casino Grant. The KCKPD PAL is a 501c(3), not-for-profit organization that is man-

aged by an Executive Director who is overseen by the Board of Directors.

Below is the KCKPD PAL Mission and Vision Statements:

#### **Mission Statement**

The Police Athletic League of Kansas City offers youth the opportunity to interact with police officers in a positive setting while participating in academic, cultural, mentoring and sports programs.

#### **Vision Statement**

The Police Athletic League of Kansas City will serve the Kansas City area by providing a safe, caring and supportive environment. Members of the Kansas City Kansas Police Department and citizens of the Kansas City will work together to facilitate a community free from fear and violence.

For more information please visit palkck. com.



#### A Message from Fire Chief Michael Callahan

On behalf of the dedicated men and women of the Kansas City, Kansas Fire Department, with whom you entrust your lives, the lives of your family members, and your property, I would like to extend a sincere thank you for your unwavering support of our department.

As our community continues to evolve, so does our mission to continually advance and improve our department, to ensure that the citizens we serve are consistently receiving the highest level of emergency services available. We have a very enthusiastic membership that spends a tremendous amount of time training, developing, and refining their skills to efficiently and effectively mitigate the emergency situations to which we respond. We take great pride in being able to offer this advanced level service to our community, I pledge to continue to train and support our members so that we can continue to serve you in a swift, safe, and professional manner.

Our community has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of a 3/9 with 99% of Kansas City's citizen's property. This rating is often utilized to set insurance rates. The lower the number, the better the rate. We serve over 128 square miles of territory in the city, as well as providing mutual aid to other cities and townships when requested. We are committed to providing the utmost standard of fire suppression, Advanced Life Support transport emergency medical services, hazardous material mitigation, technical rescue,

fire prevention, arson investigation, and public education in the region. Our dedicated Firefighters respond to an average of over 20,000 emergency responses annually, and that number is growing every year.

We are here for you, and I feel very strongly about our Department being involved in our community. You will see our apparatus and our members at various public events throughout the year; from festivals, church parties, parades, and even youth sporting events. Our fire station doors are always open to our neighbors, the public, and we welcome and encourage visitors anytime. Please feel free to stop by, introduce yourselves, and get to know your public safety neighbors, who have sworn an oath to utilize their specialized expertise, talents, and time to serve and protect you.

As your Fire Chief, it is always pleasure to work with such dedicated and concerned personnel, who continually strive to improve their skills in an effort to provide the highest quality of service to the community. I am proud to have the opportunity to lead this organization into the future for you, the citizens of KCK. If there is ever anyway that I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully, Michael Callahan Fire Chief

# Parks and Recreation News

At a time of year when some people think that our work would be slowing down, there is more to do and celebrate with The Unified Government of Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas Parks and Recreation than ever before. From our new Dog Park at St. Johns, to new restrooms at Leo Alvey to our Royal's Charities grant and not to mention our Fall and Winter programs. Beyond the programming itself, let's thank the professional men and women of our Parks & Facilities staff whose efforts ensure that our venues are fully operational to support these great events and activities.

There have been upgrades to our parks and facilities, one is a Dog park at St. John's Park. Which is nearing completion, stay tuned for more updates and grand opening details! Special thanks to Forever Fencing, Inc. for working with us on this project! We also like to announce that our new west office at 3488 West Drive, Kansas City Kansas 66109 is now open, and the Restroom construction is now complete at Leo Alvey and Heathwood Park. In addition, the renovation to Quindaro baseball field project is complete. Stay tuned for more details on opening day. The new HVAC unit project for Kensington & Joe E. Amayo is projected to be completed at the end of September.

We are super excited to announce that in celebration of the Kansas City Royals' 50th season, Parks and Recreation has been awarded a \$50,000 grant to renovate field #3 at City Park. The check was presented at Kaufman Stadium on the field on September 16th. We'd like to thank the Royals Charities and all those who have supported us!

We are currently in our 6th round of mowing on UG owned properties—there are about 4,000 lots that the Parks department is responsible for maintaining. Using the same rotation and procedures that were put in place last year, we've continued to see a decrease in complaints from the public.

Sports programs being offered by Parks and Recreation include volleyball for grades 2-3 & 4-9th, soccer for ages 5-7, 8-10, 11-13, 12-14, and flag football for grades 1-5. For more information on all our programs, please visit our Facebook page Wyandotte County/KCK Parks and Recreation or call the main office at 913-573-8327!

Lastly, Parks and Recreation would like to invite the community out for our Donuts with Santa at Kensington Community Center on Saturday, December 15 from 9am-12pm. Event details include a hot cup of cocoa and some delicious donuts, while the kids get the opportunity to visit with Santa. A photographer will be on hand to take photos of your kiddos with Santa. A 4X6 photo will be provided for each child. This is a Free event.

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#### **Land Bank Rehab Program Wins State Award**



The Wyandotte County Land Bank Rehab program was created to address tax sale eleigible and often blighted homes that do not sell in the tax sale. Before the program, these homes sat in "purgatory", often vacant, blighted and worsening every day with no tools to fix them.

The Land Bank Rehab program addresses this issue by accepting homes, wiping away the delinquent taxes, selling them to qualified rehabbers for a low cost, and allowing rehabbers to invest their own time and money into fixing up the homes for resale.



After about one year, about a dozen renovated homes quickly sold on the market and an additional 21 homes are being rehabbed. The Land Bank Rehab Program is innovative and unique. UG rehabbers take the risk with their own investment for being able to make their own

profit. This way, the UG is not required to pay upfront costs.

The program was recently awarded an Inspire. Create. Innovate. Community Award for Economic Development by the League of Kansas Municipalities.



### **CHIP Program Boundaries Expanded**

The UG Community Development Department offers the Community Housing Investment Partnership (CHIP) Down Payment Assistance Program for eligible homebuyers. We are excited to announce that the boundaries for the program have now been expanded to include homes within the entire city limits of Kansas City, Kansas!

Eligible applicants may receive up to \$14,999 (funds are subject to availability) in down payment assistance as a forgivable loan through a second mortgage. The loan will be forgiven if the homebuyer lives in the property for the term of the second mortgage (5 years), remains in good standing on the first mortgage, remains current on all property taxes and has no property code violations during the mortgage term. (Please note that eligibility is based on household income and other restrictions).

# Safe Routes to Schools Update

Kansas City, Kansas is investing in the safety of our neighborhoods and building sidewalks arounds schools with the Safe Routes to School program.

New sidewalks are planned along 44th Street and Gibbs Road near Noble Prentis school and 10th Street and Sun Tree by T.A. Edison. Construction is scheduled to begin in April. Sidewalks are also being designed for Welborn Lane near William Allen White Elementary School and West Middle School and on Orville Avenue near Francis Willard Elementary School.

In addition to infrastructure, the Safe Routes to School project includes a "Walking School Bus" program and safety education in schools. The "Walking School Bus" involves students and adults walking together on popular routes. Fourteen schools are actively participating in the Walking school Bus program on a daily or weekly basis.



Allstate Insurance unveiled the 2018 America's Best Drivers Report naming Kansas City, Kansas as the second safest driving City in the Nation. Drivers in KCK are 23.8% less likely to become involved in a collision compared to the National Average.

Job growth in Wyandotte County increased 2.2% from June 2017 to June 2018 ranking it 1st in the Kansas City metro and 76th out of the 349 largest counties in the country.

# SOAR - Stabilization, Occupation, And Revitalization

Did you know? The Unified Government is working to improve Kansas City, Kansas

# SOAR Work Already Completed:

- Completed 3,482 individual property improvements out of the 5-year goal of 10,000.
- Established the Land Bank Rehab Program to rehabilitate and occupy previously vacant and blighted homes.
- Improved boarding processes to better secure vacant homes and keep neighbors safe.
  - Increased mowing frequency of parks and UG-owned property.

has already accomplished some of its SOAR goals and plans to do much more over the next 5 Help us improve the safety and appearance of Kansas City, Kansas. The Unified Government years, but we need your help! If everyone can be a good neighbor, we will improve the quality of life in Kansas City, Kansas. Launched an open data portal at yourdata.wycokck.org.

Report vacant property, especially if it is not properly boarded and secure, to the myWyco Mobile App through appearance, safety, and communication. Find out more at See how you can help by looking over this diagram! wycokck.org/SOAR SOAR

myWyco mobile app. Just search "myWyco" on any App store to download. You can also Report suspicious activity to 911. call 311 (913-573-5311) or visit 311.wycokck.org. THIN GOVERNMENT

out which neighborhood area Engage with your community neighborhood group! Find you live in by contacting by participating in your

**Find** tenant information at wycokck.org/Rental-Licensing if you're

Livable Neighborhoods at

put out your trash Find which day to

way the UG can provide necessary

services and improvements to

residents.

paint, roof, siding, home (including **Maintain** your

and gutters).

Take care of your pets! Make sure

vaccinated, and licensed with the

leashed, or in your home at all city. Keep your pets fenced,

times. (Animal Services –

your pets are spayed/neutered,

mobile app! Taxes are the only

do so quickly on the myWyco

Pay your property taxes. You can

and recycling and more information

at wycokck.org/

(free of weeds,

your yard Maintain

ckpd.org/animal-services.html)

furniture, and trash, indoor

overgrown

grass).

913-573-8737.

renting.

sewer lines. Check for repairs to water and from expensive see:

coverage with your insurance agent or

homeserveusa.com/ mail/wyandotte.

#### **UG kNOw LEAD KCK**

Lead-based paint is especially hazardous when chips, flakes or dust from scraping or sanding are released into the air. Everyday activities that cause friction on surfaces, such as opening windows or doors, may also release lead dust.

Children under the age of six are most at risk for lead poising. Contamination most commonly occurs from eating or inhaling lead dust that gets on their hands and clothes.

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS is excited to announce that the Lead Hazard Control grant is now ready to assist KCK families! This three-year program is a valuable resource to fill the void and address lead poisoning in our community which is vital for the well-being of our families.

Applications for assistance are available at the Community Development Office, 701 N. 7th Street room 823 or the Wyandotte County Health Department 619 Ann Ave.

For more information please call Community Development at 913-573-5100.

#### Qualifications include:

- Homeowner of a single-family house in Kansas City, KS
- Home built prior to 1978
- Kids under 6 that reside or spend six hours or more a week in the home
- Pregnant
- Property taxes are current or on a payment plan
- Income eligible:

Family Size Income

- 1 \$44,800
- 2 \$51,200
- 3 \$57,600
- 4 \$64,000
- 5 \$69,150
- 6 \$74,250

#### **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protected**

On May 31, 2018, the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/ Kansas City Kansas Board of Commissioners unanimously amended the City/County nondiscrimination ordinance to include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

This historic action made Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas

the only county in Kansas with Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity protections; although, the cities of Lawrence, Roland Park and Manhattan Kansas have likewise adopted the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity protection laws.

If you have been denied employment, housing accommodations, or

services because of race, religion, color, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin or ancestry, for information about your rights, contact the UG Human Relations Department at humanservices@wycokck.org or call (913) 573-5460.

The Advisory Commission on

Human Relation and Disability Issues welcomes your thoughts and opinion on this matter. Meetings are held at the Unified Government (City Hall) on the 6th floor at 5:30 p.m., every 1st Monday of each month. Come have your voice heard.





Streetlights play an important role in Kansas City, Kansas. They light our roads and sidewalks, plus they make it easier for us to see drivers and pedestrians. While the Unified Government (UG) owns and decides where streetlights are needed, the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is responsible for repairing nearly 19,000 streetlights and over 5,500 private area lights in our community.

**STREETLIGHT REPAIRS** Call BPU at 913-573-9522 anytime to report streetlight issues. Pole numbers help BPU find the location. Please provide a pole number, address or cross streets with a summary of the problem.

**NEW STREETLIGHTS & PRIVATE AREA LIGHTS** The UG and BPU depend on community residents to report when new streetlights are needed or when they are in need of repairs. To request a new streetlight call the UG at 913-573-5700. Private area lights for backyards, alleys and parking lots can be requested from BPU at 913-573-9531.

STREETLIGHT CALLBACK PROCESS BPU's service area is divided into seven zones. Streetlight repair and replacement times can vary for each zone. To let residents know that their repair request is important and has been processed, BPU recently added a callback feature to their phone system.

Once BPU creates a work order for streetlight repair, you will receive a callback message letting you know the problem is being addressed. Once repairs are scheduled, you will receive a second message with the approximate time of when repairs will be completed.

WHAT'S NEXT The UG and BPU are reviewing options to replace current streetlights with LED lights. LED's use 40% less energy, improve visibility, and last longer.

#### KNOW THE NUMBER TO CALL:







Presorted Standard U.S. Postage PAID Mail-Sort, Inc

Wyandotte County Lake in the Fall. Wyandotte County Lake is a jewel in the Unified Government Parks system. The lake is 400 acres in the 2600 acre Wyandotte County Lake Park.

Photo by Dave Reno, Unified Government staff











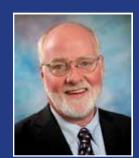
Website: www.wycokck.org



# 3-1-1.

One easy number to contact the Unified Government with questions, concerns, complaints, comments or to pay taxes. Just call, go online or use the mobile app.

# **2018 Unified Government Commission**



DAVID ALVEY
Mayor/CEO
mayoralvey@wycokck.or



MELISSA BYNUM
District 1 At-Large
mbynum@wycokck.org



TOM BURROUGHS
District 2 At-Large
tburroughs@wycokck.org



GAYLE E. TOWNSEND
District 1
gtownsend@wycokck.org



BRIAN McKIERNAN District 2 bmckiernan@wycokck.org



ANN BRANDAU-MURGUIA District 3 amurguia@wycokck.org



HAROLD L. JOHNSON
District 4
hjohnson@wycokck.org



MIKE KANE
District 5
mkane@wycokck.org



ANGELA MARKLEY
District 6
amarkley@wycokck.org



JAMES F. WALTERS
District 7
jwalters@wycokck.org



DR. JANE WINKLER
PHILBROOK
District 8
jphilbrook@wycokck.org