

the FLAME

“We Have
Tomorrow -
Bright Before
Us, Like A Flame.”
-Langston Hughes

City information is available on-line at lawrenceks.org and on cable Channel 25. The FLAME is published by the City Manager's Office, 832-3400.

A Word From Our Mayor

The two months since I began my term as mayor have flown by. I want to share my thoughts on the coming months. My top priority and the city's continued priority will be the delivery of city services. The City of Lawrence is working hard to deliver the services that our community expects. It is no small task to run



Mayor Mike Amyx

an operation that is as diverse as street sweeping and nature centers. Providing fire protection and solid waste collections within the same organization means that a group of experienced professional staff are working everyday.

A second area that will receive much of my attention is our infrastructure. Infrastructure, perhaps an overused word, is simply defined as all the things that a community must have for residents and businesses. It is the streets, the pipes – both water and wastewater – and the storm water system that we need in place in our community to handle our growth. These things aren't the most exciting to discuss, however, they are very important and I am focused on addressing our infrastructure needs and on finding ways to improve our streets, sidewalks and utilities.

In the next three or four months, we will remain in a transition period and transition periods can be difficult. “Nobody likes change” is the old saying. But keep in mind that as the City Commission works to hire a city manager, business will go on as usual. The Interim City Manager will ensure that city services will continue to be in place, decisions will continue to get made and actions will continue to be taken. Business will go on.

The City Commission will use an executive search firm to assist with the search for a new city manager. During the interview, it was clear the firm understands the importance of the position of city manager in our community. Commissioners Schauer and Hack and I looked at all the search firms and considered the firm's

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familiarity with best practices in the executive search process, qualifications and reputation as an experienced consultant in executive search services for municipal organizations and the cost of services.

The Commission will work with the firm to articulate the issues and challenges facing the organization and the specific accomplishments demanded of the

position. The firm will then go out and recruit and identify the best candidates. I hope to review many, many applications for the position. The community can expect a sound recommendation from the firm to the City Commission.

Lawrence is a great place to live and a new city manager has the opportunity to put a thumbprint on the community. He or she can make an impact and enhance the life of Lawrence residents by carrying out the City Commission priorities. The city operates on public tax dollars and the Commission is expected to create a full service city that meets the needs of the community.

Each week, the City Commission faces hard decisions. The items that make up the weekly agenda may impact a single Lawrence citizen or an entire community and each decision receives my full attention. This type of commitment puts us in the shoes of all the people involved in an issue. It might be easier to not listen to ideas or to only skim the supporting material, but that isn't the approach that we take. We know that the Lawrence community is depending on us and we take our duty seriously. We read the background, ask questions, listen to residents. We do our due diligence.

My personal approach to making priorities starts with gathering and reviewing the background. Once I understand the issue, I turn to the sound planning that has occurred in the last several years. And I am always listening to citizen input to help establish priorities. Often times, communities have a needs lists and a wants lists. Here in

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Lawrence, we have to compare the two lists.

As a commissioner and two time mayor in the 1980's, I see a geographically bigger Lawrence today and I see a larger population in Lawrence today. I appreciate the feedback I receive from the community – the phone calls, visits in my shop, emails and the on the street conversations. I also appreciate hearing requests from the community. In the near future, I will be asking the community to tell me more. You will be asked to talk about our community needs and the community priorities. The Commission will be tackling the library expansion proposals, growing infrastructure and so many more things in the coming months. We will need to hear from the community about your views of the community's needs and priorities.

The City Commission will have the opportunity to express our priorities in the current budget process.

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o u r m i s s i o n :

We are committed to providing excellent city services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence community.

Wakarusa Water Reclamation Facility

Planning for people...Providing community solutions

The City of Lawrence is planning for the construction of a water reclamation facility along the Wakarusa River, south of Lawrence, a recommendation of the 2003 Wastewater Master Plan. Last October, the city began

studying potential sites for a water reclamation facility to serve the city's wastewater needs as it grows to a population of 150,000.

At open houses in November 2005 and January 2006 participants

were asked to complete exercises designed to solicit the community's ideas about what's important in siting the facility. Participants care most about the following factors as the city considers siting the Wakarusa Water Reclamation Facility:

- Aesthetics, odor, noise and area surroundings
- Impact to the river, wildlife and wetlands
- Costs

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Leading the way...

...it's what we do.



Wakarusa Water Reclamation Facility

www.lawrenceutilities.org/wwrf

Fire Medical Station Number 5 opens

Emergency crews operating out of newest location

Located at nearly the geographic center of Lawrence, the recently completed Fire Medical Station #5 sits at 19th and Stewart Avenue on land owned by KU Endowment.

An open house will be scheduled this summer giving the public tours of the equipment bays, sleeping and wellness areas for the crews and administrative offices.



Lawrence Douglas County Fire Medical Station #5, 19th and Stewart Avenue, opened in April.

Sealing cracks has big benefits

Street maintenance has spring and summer story

City crews and contractors spent the spring looking closely at the cracks in the road. Cracks in city streets and the seam where pavement meets the curb were filled with a heated

asphalt product. The process, known as crack sealing, prevents water from getting under the pavement and creating damage during freeze and thaw cycles.

The 2006 program budget was \$500,000, nearly five times as large as past efforts. Streets throughout Lawrence received 375,000 pounds of material in cracks this spring and

there is more crack sealing planned for October. The process works well in cooler temperatures when the material cools quickly, allowing cars to drive over it.



Prepping for summer paving

City crews will be on streets in advance of paving contractors this summer to help extend the life of paving. Fixing curbs and repairing gutters will help create a paved surface that pre-

vents water penetration and freeze damage. Comparing the street inventory to streets scheduled for paving, city crews will target concrete repairs before the pavement goes down.

A City of Lawrence Public Works street crew paves the approach at the intersection of Walnut St at N. 6th St. Crew members from left to right: Chris Wika, Terry Fursman, Chad Rodriguez, Mike Hadl. Evert Barnes is operating the loader.

City Budget

Focus on Property Tax Rates

Property tax funds help support the following five funds.

1. General Fund is the principal fund that accounts for many of the city services and programs. Receives 21.15% of revenues from property tax.
2. The Library Fund provides 90% of funding for the Lawrence Public Library's annual operating budget.
3. The Public Transportation Fund, fare box revenue and state and federal funding support Lawrence

Transit System's fixed route and paratransit services.

4. The Recreation Fund supports recreational programs and services and receives 9.5% of its operating revenue from property taxes.
5. The Bond and Interest Fund is used to retire bonds issued to finance long-term capital and community improvements. This fund receives resources from property and motor vehicle taxes and special assessments.

Calculating property taxes

For residential property, the city tax bill equates to approximately **\$3.03** for each **\$1,000** of the fair market value. To calculate your City Property Tax bill for 2006:

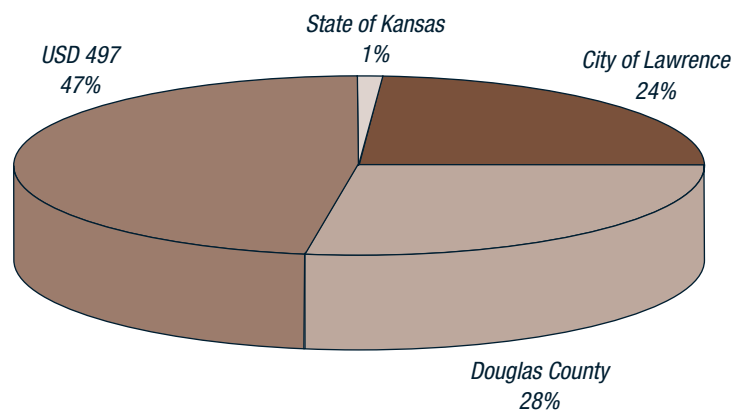
1. Determine the assessed valuation for your residential property by multiplying the market value of home by **11.5%**:

For example: Market value of home = **\$125,000** x **11.50%** = **\$14,375**. This is your assessed valuation.

2. Multiply assessed valuation by the 2006 mill rate levied by the city and divide by **\$1,000**. The result will be your property tax amount.

\$14,375 x 2006 City mill rate (**26.362**) = **\$378,954.13** / **\$1,000** = Estimated 2006 City Tax liability = **\$378.95**

Each dollar of property tax is shared by four governments. Property taxes represent 21.1% of the 2006 General Fund revenues or \$12,250,000.



FAQ'S

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does the updated nuisance house ordinance impact my neighborhood?

- A house may be considered a nuisance with two qualifying violations if each occurs at separate events.
- Three qualifying violations by three individuals are considered a nuisance and may arise out of the same situation.
- Diversion of a charge is considered a violation when determining a nuisance.
- Only violations of certain city ordinances or Kansas laws are considered for disorderly house nuisance purposes.
- If a house meets the criteria to be declared a disorderly house nuisance, the owners, occupants and other interested parties will

be invited to attend a nuisance abatement conference to develop a plan to keep violations from occurring on the subject property. Failure to follow the plan or refusal to attend the conference may subject the owners and/or occupants of the property to prosecution in Municipal Court.

2. How do I know if there are restrictive covenants in my neighborhood? Who enforces those covenants?

The Douglas County Register of Deeds, 1100 Massachusetts (785) 832-5282, can tell a home buyer if a home falls under an association or if restrictive covenants are in place.

Homeowners associations are private associations, made up of all related property owners and are not regulated by the City of Lawrence. Restrictive covenants, such as roof

material or fence height requirements, are not enforced by the city. Adherence to covenants is regulated by the association as a contractual matter and is enforceable by the other parties in the contract, in this case, the other property owners.

3. How can I become more involved in the city government process?

The city supports more than 40 advisory boards and committees to continuously solicit input from Lawrence citizens. Volunteers can serve on boards and committees ranging from the Traffic Safety Commission to the Community Commission on Homelessness and the Lawrence Arts Commission. A recently created committee is the Community Cooperation Committee, which provides opportunities for all citizens concerned with homeless issues to get involved. Information

about all citizen advisory boards including any vacancies can be found on the web at <http://www.lawrenceks.org/boards.shtml>.

4. My neighbor's lawn looks like it hasn't been mowed in weeks. What can I do about it?

To protect the health and safety of citizens and to avoid blight in neighborhoods, city ordinance states it is unlawful to allow weeds and other vegetation to grow 12 inches or more above the ground. Trees, shrubbery and ornamental planting are excluded from the restriction. After proper notification, the city may mow or remove the excess vegetation and charge the property owner for the removal. Complaints should be made to the Neighborhood Resources Department at (785) 832-7700.



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Mayor's Column (Cont. from p.1)

As the 2007 budget is created this summer, I encourage you to watch the Commission actions and listen for our priorities. Priorities will be identified in the improvements we make, the planning for streets and implementation of the pavement management system and the ideas we have on staffing levels. The budget process is the one time when the City Commission can make

things happen for the entire year. We allocate funds at one time and the impact is felt throughout the 12 months of the budget cycle.

As Mayor, I have placed a high priority on traffic movement in and around the community. I am very interested in the extension of 31st Street east of Haskell Avenue and a connection into K10. I want to start planning the project now and

tap into the Federal funds that have been allocated to the planning. When we start the discussion, traffic impact and growth in the area will drive our decisions. I want the community to start looking now at options to move traffic around Lawrence along 31st Street.

I feel fortunate to be involved with a community that has so much going

on. We have opportunities today that will impact our community in the next ten, 20 and beyond 50 years. I am excited to be able to be a part of discussions and decisions that will keep Lawrence as a great place to live.

Water Reclamation (Cont. from p.2)

See all 26 factors considered on-line at www.lawrenceks.org.

"We received valuable input from stakeholders and the community to determine the criteria important in selecting a site and I am

pleased the process has engaged many members of our community. We look forward to continuing to receive input as we approach completing the site selection phase of

the project," said Debbie Van Saun, assistant city manager.

Work is now underway to complete on-site investigations to identify issues that could impact schedule, costs or the permitting process.

In the coming months, the City Commission will receive a site recommendation and then facility design.