

the FLAME

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

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

A Word From Our Mayor



Mayor Mike Amyx

I want to use this edition of the newsletter to share information on a couple of current topics in our community.

Myth: The Internet is making public libraries obsolete.

Fact: The Lawrence community is filled with avid users of our library. Over the last eight years, the library has seen record setting numbers for circulation and attendance. In 2006, the library expects to have more than one million items checked out from its collection. We are seeing growth in the use of our library.

The library also provides online access to the community. Traditionally, the introduction of a new information technology compliments the existing technology rather than replacing it. For example, in the 1950s, people speculated that TV would eliminate radio and today both continue to grow.

The existing library building restrains the increase in programming that can be offered. The children's room, young readers' section and the computer lab

cannot be expanded in the existing structure. In addition, the opportunity to provide community meeting space is limited.

The expansion of the Lawrence Public Library in Downtown would also continue to build the civic, government and cultural center of our community.

Myth: The Wakarusa Water Reclamation Facility will create flooding in the area.

Fact: The Wakarusa Water Reclamation Facility will not influence flooding in the area. A benefit of selecting a site in the floodplain is being able to serve a large area by gravity. Because the facility will be in the floodplain, when it is constructed, the city will follow its floodplain requirements which are more stringent than FEMA's. The city's floodplain requirement states that the construction of the facility cannot raise the elevation of the base flood. These requirements will mean the city will take steps to mitigate the potential impact. Possible examples of mitigation include land purchased off-site and not developed, excavation of adjacent area, replacement of lost area in floodplain, and channel improvements to the river. The specific mitigation plan has not yet been determined because the plant design is not far enough along to know the exact point of discharge or definite site impacts.

Myth: The Mayor's sales tax proposal would represent a significant tax increase for Lawrence residents.

Fact: When considering a sales tax, I want to use a portion of the

revenue to lower property tax rates, therefore shifting an individual's tax responsibility from property tax to sales tax while capturing revenue from users of city services that may not be currently contributing to the city's revenue stream.

I asked the City Commission to discuss a sales tax as a way to begin the exploration of revenue streams that move beyond the traditional property tax model. My idea should be a starting point for a discussion on ways to fund city services while delivering those services at the standard that our community expects.

Myth: The city raised my 2007 property taxes.

Fact: This city's 2007 operating and capital budget held the mill levy at the 2006 rate (the 2006 mill levy was reduced from the 2005 mill levy rate). Four governments levy property tax: the school district, the state, the county and the city. For 2007, the city, county and state have not increased their mill levy rates.

A factor that does impact property taxes is the assessed value increase that property owners may experience. Most residential property owners will see an average growth in their assessed valuation of 4.8 % for 2007. For the owner of a home in Lawrence with a market value of \$160,000 this assessed value increase means a city property tax increase of \$23.28 over 2006, or \$1.94 a month.

October 2006

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Myth: There is no parking Downtown.

Fact: There are more than 1,500 parking spots available Downtown. New Hampshire and Vermont Streets provide parking lots with two hour free parking and on street parking. These lots are behind Massachusetts Street and many stores have back entrances off these parking lots. The parking garages at Ninth and New Hampshire and at Sixth and New Hampshire offer two hour free parking and long term parking.

People might perceive there is little parking Downtown because store front parking is limited along Massachusetts Street. However, when you recognize the parking behind stores and in nearby parking garages, you realize the large volume of parking available Downtown.

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.

Lawrence History on Display on Street Signs

Why do some Lawrence street signs have two street names?

Streets in the original town site of Lawrence have two names; the old and the current. The change of street names from the original town site of a city is unique. That uniqueness inspired today's street signs in neighborhoods of Old West Lawrence, Oread and East Lawrence to have street signs with both names.

Old West Lawrence resident Angela Candela was reviewing a map of the original town site and she learned that her current street was once known as Berkley, a name thought

to be a hero of Lawrence's founding fathers. The map of the original town site labels current numbered streets with names. Her interest in local history led her to an Old West Lawrence Neighborhood Association meeting where she presented the idea of street signs capturing a bit of history.

The neighborhood association approached the city for project support. The city was the funding source and contributed the efforts of city crews. Once Candela completed her research using a 1870 map of Lawrence at Watkins Museum and

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New development code in place

Presents additional options for affordable housing

On July 1, proposed developments began following a new zoning code. The 40-year-old code which indicates the types of activities that can occur in locations and the physical layout of the property was updated in April when the City Commission adopted the new development code.

The new code provides direction on topics such as pedestrian and vehicle access, landscape standards

and neighborhood notification. The code offers a more streamlined process with administrative review, flexibility with smaller lot districts and flexibility with housing types. Although amended and revised numerous times, this is the first complete revision to the 1966 code.

The new development code has a number of potentially helpful provisions for affordable housing development. Two additional districts allow

for smaller lot areas. It will also allow for some property owners to build an additional house on original town site lots that were previously considered too small. The new code includes attached dwellings as allowable housing options in some residential districts. The option will be available as a special use in small lot districts that can allow for row houses or some mixed housing types. The new code also provides an opportunity to

develop an accessory dwelling if one unit will be owner-occupied. To provide options for creating more green space, the code allows for more mixed-uses and for cluster housing as another option for subdivisions with five or more detached dwellings. While the overall density would not increase in a cluster development, homes could be arranged to minimize development costs.

Providing Excellent City Services

To: Dave Corliss

Dave, this is a note to commend the work of Sandra Day. I rarely become involved in city matters and/or public meetings. As a resident of East Lawrence I recently became involved in supporting the Krause rezoning request which is before the Planning Commission.

Sandra called my cell phone this morning to verify part of a letter I faxed to the city on August 17 as my fax machine apparently cut off a good part of the content. I've resent that memo at her request.

In a day when customer service and follow-up is sorely lacking in most of the business world, how

refreshing it is to observe someone doing their job really well as Sandra displayed this a.m. In fact, my few contacts have always been given the attention I expected, and better.

I suspect people in these positions, yours included, don't get enough credit for the good work you do. Consider that today someone attempted to correct that. Thank you both for your service to the City of Lawrence.

Scott & Annie Tichenor

I've lived all over the USA. I moved here in July. On a Monday in early July I sent an e-mail about a bush on a corner that blocked the view of oncom-

ing traffic when you stopped at the "stop" line. I didn't work on Tuesday. To my amazement on Wednesday as I came to the stop the bush was trimmed back.

My last job was with the City of Kansas City, Missouri. One of my Department Divisions was the one responsible for cutting the bushes blocking traffic view. We prided ourselves on getting to citizen's requests / complaints within two weeks. Lawrence should be proud of how quickly the public works responded and I want them to be congratulated. Thanks.

Alan Welles

Margene, Larry and Tony,

Thank you so much for meeting with me and sharing your information on Lawrence's housing rehab program. You were able to give me a lot of really good information and gave me the "jump start" I needed in designing our program. I really appreciate you all taking time out of your schedules to meet with me and answer my questions. I look forward to sharing a prospective program design with you soon!

Sincerely,
Leslee Fonseca

**The above are e-mails and letters the city has recently received.*

City Budget

Focus on Revenues

The city's general fund, the principal fund that accounts for many of the city services and programs, relies primarily on revenues from sales tax, property tax, fees and fines.

City Sales and Use Taxes makes up 44% of the revenue that supports the 2006 General Fund. In 2005, that amounted to \$12,765,697 and in 2006 it is estimated to reach \$12,800,000.

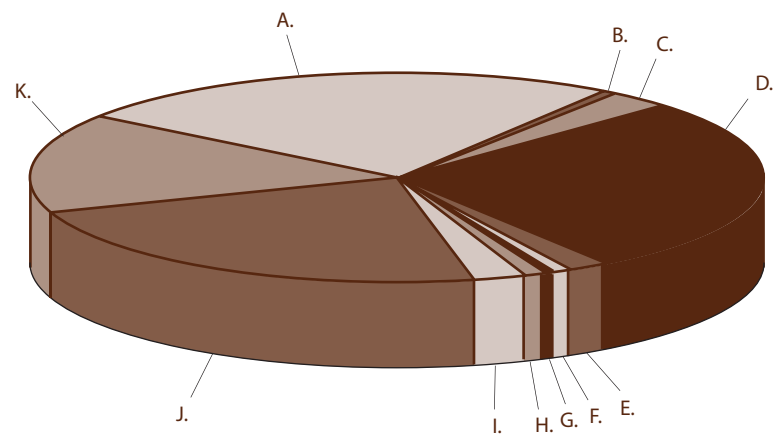
Property Taxes make up 20% of the General Fund and the city's 2006 mill levy of 15.85 is expected to generate \$11,500,000.

Franchise Fees are charged to utility companies – electric, cable, phone and natural gas - for use of the public right-of-way. For 2006, franchise fees are estimated to generate \$3,847,000.

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- A. Other Taxes (23.28%)
Revenue sources include local and county-wide sales tax, liquor tax, fuel tax, transient guest tax and motor vehicle tax
- B. Licenses/Permits (0.65%)
- C. Intergovernmental Revenue (2.87%) Federal and State grants or loans
- D. Charges for Service (29.31%)
Revenue sources include farebox collections; charges for water and sewer service; Parks and Recreation class fees; parking meters
- E. Fines/Forfeitures (1.65%)
Revenue sources include over time parking and traffic tickets
- F. Use of Money/Property (1.17%)
Revenue sources include building rental and interest earned

City of Lawrence 2006 Budget Funding Total - \$130,259,630



The city receives revenue from eleven sources.

- G. Miscellaneous (0.29%)
- H. Special Assessment (0.83%)
- I. Transfers In (1.97%) For example, funds transferred from the Utilities Fund to the General Fund
- J. Fund Balance Forward (19.77%)
Carry over from the previous year's revenue
- K. Property Taxes (16.69%)
From real and personal property

FAQ'S

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I go about establishing a neighborhood association in my area?

Any neighborhood, or group of neighbors, may establish a neighborhood association. While the city does not regulate or manage associations, we do keep a registry of associations and contacts. The Planning Department uses these contacts to notify residents about development occurring in the neighborhood and other city departments use the list to contact neighborhoods about

upcoming projects or other issues. To find out if there is already an association in your area, visit the city's interactive map at www.lawrenceks.org and select City Map.

To register your new neighborhood association or to update contact information for an existing association, visit the neighborhood registration page at www.lawrenceplanning.org/index-NH-register.shtml. To access a full listing of all neighborhood associations and their contacts visit the neighborhood contacts page at

www.lawrenceneighres.org/neighborhoodcontacts.shtml.

2. Does Lawrence have a ban on certain breeds of dogs?

The city does not have any type of breed ban and seeks to encourage across-the-board responsible pet ownership. Pet owners are expected to keep control of pets at all times – dogs should be on leashes and owners should carry means for picking up excrement. Dogs designated as 'dangerous dogs' as per city code

are required to be licensed and confined in locked structures at least six feet tall. Penalties for allowing pets to roam the streets at-large range from \$10 to \$500 and may include jail time. To report a potentially dangerous dog or to report a dog at-large, contact Animal Control at (785) 832-7650. The full city code pertaining to animals can be found online at www.lawrenceks.org and select City Code, chapter three.

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Street Signs (Cont. from p.2)

mapped the original and current street names, she turned to design of the street signs. The color scheme was selected to go with the historical theme of the signs. Black and white street signs would have been common in the past in Lawrence.

The city's traffic engineering division

began custom design of the historically themed street signs and spent time over the next year manufacturing and installing them. With city crews working as time away from priority projects allowed within a year the signs were up in Old West Lawrence.

Soon, the project expanded to the Oread Neighborhood and to East Lawrence. Candela's goal was to complete the area represented by the original town site. The next time you are in a neighborhood and see a black and white street sign, take a closer look and learn a bit of

Lawrence history. Truly unique to Lawrence, the street signs include the street names from the original town site.

FAQ's (Cont. from p.3)

3. What is the proper way to dispose of my grass clippings and leaves?

Yard trimmings are collected from curbs every Monday morning. Since 1993, our first year of collecting yard waste separately from trash, our community composting program has diverted over 90,000 tons of organic materials from the

landfill. Cans, carts and compostable yard waste bags are the appropriate containers for Monday yard trimmings collection. Plastic bags are not allowed for containment of grass and leaves.

4. Who do I call about a problem I am having with my neighbor?

If you have approached your neigh-

bors about a problem and they do not respond to your requests to respect those around them, contact city officials. For noise and parking complaints, contact the Lawrence Police Department at (785) 832-7509. For trash, blight or occupancy complaints, contact the Neighborhood Resources Department at (785) 832-7700.

Encouraging neighborly relations

begins with being a good neighbor yourself. Start by welcoming new neighbors with a friendly note or chat. If problems arise later, invite them for a cup of coffee to discuss them. Try throwing a house party once a year to socialize with neighbors.

City Budget (Cont. from p.3)

Fines and Forfeits are collected from traffic and other types of violations. In 2005, \$2,637,520 was generated and in 2006, they are estimated to generate \$2,175,000.

Interest on Investments is dependent upon the economy and as inter-

est rates rise and fall, so does the revenue from this category. Interest earned in 2005 totaled \$1,087,618 however, only \$400,000 was budgeted in 2006.

Licenses, permits and inspections are generated mainly from building

permits and in 2005 amounted to \$1,082,191. The 2006 Budget estimates \$820,000 for 2006. For a more detailed look at the city budget, visit <http://www.lawrenceks.org/budget.shtml>.