

Message from Mayor Morrow

Before we discuss all the cool fun taking place this summer in Gardner, let me address an issue coming before Gardner voters this September.

In this edition of "Inside Gardner" you will read about our upcoming election to extend the city's half-cent sales tax. Please take the time to carefully read this information. The current half-cent sales tax was approved in 2005 and was used to fund the Gardner Aquatic Center and Celebration Park. These are quite popular and very heavily used amenities. This September we will be asking residents to decide whether or not to extend this half-cent sales tax to cover the costs associated with repairing, preserving and maintaining our 205 lane miles of roadway and sidewalks in Gardner. Our streets are necessities for all our residents and visitors alike.

In each of the last three citizen surveys, our residents proclaimed, overwhelmingly each time, that the city services that should receive the most emphasis are:

- 1) overall flow of traffic in the city; and,
- 2) maintenance of city streets/buildings/facilities.

Based on this repeated citizen input, an exhaustive study was performed to assess the condition of our streets, sidewalks and trails. Due to the results of that study, the City Council and I are asking the citizens of Gardner to decide whether or not the city should undertake a comprehensive program to ensure every street in Gardner gets the attention it requires over the next 10 years.

Please study this issue carefully, and cast your mail-in ballot this upcoming September.



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Special sales tax renewal helps fund needed infrastructure improvements throughout the city

On Tuesday, Sept. 15, a special election will be held asking Gardner citizens to renew a half-cent sales tax to fund infrastructure projects.

The half-cent sales tax originated in 2005 as a special purpose tax to pay for the construction of Celebration Park and the Gardner Aquatic Center. It expires on Dec. 31 of this year, with both projects being paid in full by early spring. If voters approve the renewal of the .5 percent retailers tax, it will be repurposed to help fund the construction and rehabilitation of many street, sidewalk and trail projects.

As Gardner continues to pursue economic development and serve as the gateway for future businesses, it must maintain an infrastructure system that will allow for additional growth in population, development and traffic. Gardner consists of 205 lane miles, and currently, based on pavement management standards, nearly 210,000 square-feet of Gardner's residential streets are rated as "very poor" or "worst" and that number is rising. A further delay in addressing these infrastructure concerns means conditions worsen and the costs to maintain Gardner's infrastructure system escalates. An approval of the renewal of the sales tax will provide an estimated \$1 million per year to improve roads, curbs, sidewalks, trails and pedestrian bridges.

Gardner residents must register to vote by Aug. 25, 2015. Ballot delivery by mail begins on Aug. 26, 2015. The ballot question will consist of the following language:

Shall the following be adopted?

Shall the City of Gardner, Kansas be authorized to renew the levy of a one-half of one percent (0.5%) retailers' sales tax within the City of Gardner for the special purpose of funding City infrastructure, including the construction, repairing, rebuilding, rehabilitating, upgrading and improvement of streets, curbs, sidewalks, pedestrian bridges and walking, jogging, and biking trails; such retailers' sales tax shall take effect on January 1, 2016, or as soon thereafter as permitted by law, and will replace the current one-half of one percent (0.5%) special purpose sales tax currently in place which expires on December 31, 2015, and shall end ten years after its commencement; such tax shall be levied pursuant to K.S.A. 12-187, et seq.?

All ballots must be returned to the Johnson County Election Office by noon on Sept. 15, 2015. Please contact Finance Director Laura Gourley at lgourley@gardnerkansas.gov for questions.

Message from Mayor Morrow (continued)

Summertime is here. Gardner is a great place to spend your summer days and evenings! Whether you are enjoying the city's great parks, the cool confines of the Gardner Aquatic Center, or any of a number of special events, there is something for everyone!



This year we have continued our free "Summer Movie Series" and added a new "Bands in the Park Summer Concert Series." At the Gardner Aquatic Center you can stay cool all afternoon and evening long, and this year our teenage and pre-teen residents enjoyed their own nighttime events at the pool!

In June, another successful "Festival on the Trails" event was held with two nights of live music highlighted by a Saturday night performance by country superstar Mark Chestnutt, which drew an enormous crowd. This year's festival was a great success. Many thanks are due to the festival committee, and its volunteers and sponsors.

On Independence Day, the city hosted an explosive Fourth of July Celebration at Celebration Park. There was live music, food vendors, playground equipment and inflatables for the kids, and a fireworks extravaganza.

Before you know it, the Johnson County Fair will be upon us. It lasts July 26 through Aug. 2, with the Fair Parade on Aug. 1, at 10:30 a.m.

Summertime is fun time in Gardner, so please be safe, keep cool and enjoy it!

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Morrow".

Did You Know?

One common cause of home damage is sewer overflow resulting from grease blockage. That's because the grease that comes from cooking fats and oils sticks to pipes, often resulting in sewage overflow, high maintenance costs and contact with disease. Instead of pouring grease down drains, it's important to throw it away instead.



City reminds property owners to mow, avoid fines

This season's unusual amount of rainfall has many lawns throughout the city in dire need of attention. This lack of attention has spurred many citizen complaints of unmowed lawns and noxious weeds growing near their surroundings.

Gardner Municipal Code says grass/weeds cannot be longer than eight inches tall. Anything exceeding eight inches is considered a nuisance.

"The city code is in place for several reasons. Aesthetically speaking, we want to keep Gardner looking its finest," Code Compliance Inspector Kerri Butler said. "But there's also a health and environmental safety component. Tall grass and weeds often serve as a refuge for rodents. We don't want this to become an issue for property owners or those who live by these unmanaged areas."

Butler says when she receives a complaint, she will inspect the area to verify it. If the complaint is valid, code requires her to send a "notice to abate nuisance," providing property owners seven days to mow their lawns and cut their weeds.

"If a property owner fails to comply, the city will mow the lawn and assess the cost against the property, then mail a billing notice to the

owner," Butler said. "It can become pretty expensive for them, so it's best if property owners mow their own properties to avoid the unnecessary costs."

Butler says she encounters 10 to 20 violations a week regarding uncut lawns.

"I am always willing to work with property owners who may not be able to meet that seven-day period to get their property mowed," Butler said. "They just have to contact me to let me know their progress on working toward abatement."

Contact Butler at kbutler@gardnerkansas.gov or at 913.856.0913 for questions about Gardner Municipal Codes.



Often times homeowners are faced with vacant lots adjacent to their homes not being mowed. Although the lot is vacant, it still must be mowed—whether by the developer or an individual who has purchased the property to later build upon. Contact the city's Code Compliance Inspector should you incur this problem.

Police bike unit aims to improve community connection



Bike patrol has many other benefits in addition to community relations. Bikes can be used in heavily congested areas—downtown areas seem to be the most common. Bike patrol officers can also respond much quicker than a patrol car in these types of settings. They are also utilized to patrol outdoor festivals, fairs and other public events. Another advantage is officers' stealth and speed when conducting surveillance investigations.

The City of Gardner Police Department's recent addition of bicycles intends to enhance community relations. This new transportation mode allows officers to patrol local neighborhoods and business areas, interacting with residents and furthering community policing efforts in the process.

"If you see the officers in your neighborhood, I encourage you to reach out to them to discuss any crime or quality of life issues you have in your

neighborhood. Or, feel free to just say hello and introduce yourself," Police Chief James Pruetting said. "We want citizens to know their law enforcement team, and we want to know the citizens whom we serve."

The new unit consists of four riders at a time, working both daytime and nighttime hours. This extensive patrol not only strives to enhance the safety of residents as another method of transportation and access, but it also aims to build trust throughout the community. The bike unit hopes to improve

communication between the police force and residents.

"This is just the beginning of our efforts to build our relationship with the residents and businesses of Gardner as we strive to provide excellent police service," Pruetting said. "Having this new bike unit will help to build that partnership, and together we can keep Gardner one of the safest cities in Kansas."



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Messages may also be left for any Council Member or the Mayor at 913-856-0939

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City receives GFOA's distinguished budget presentation award

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada has named the City of Gardner a recipient of the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its fiscal year 2014-2015 budget.

The award represents a significant achievement by the city. It also reflects

the commitment of the governing body and staff to meet the highest principles of governmental budgeting.

In order to receive the budget award, the city had to meet nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess



how well an entity's budget serves as:

- A policy document
- A financial plan
- An operations guide
- A communications device

Gardner's budget had been rated "proficient" in all four areas and the 14 mandatory criteria within those categories to receive the award.

The GFOA is a major professional association that serves the needs of more than 18,000 appointed and elected local, state and provincial-level government officials and other finance practitioners. For more information about GFOA, visit www.gfoa.org.



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Mark your calendars



City Council Meetings:

- July 20 at 7 p.m.
- Aug. 3 at 7 p.m.
- Aug. 17 at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 8 at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 21 at 7 p.m.

*View more meeting dates at
www.gardnerkansas.gov.

DON'T FORGET....

Bands in the Park

There is one final Bands in the Park summer concert on Saturday, July 18, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Soca Jukebox will be the featured band, performing the styles of Island rock, calypso soul and reggae.

Johnson County Fair

The Johnson County Fair runs from July 26 through Aug. 2 at the Johnson County Fairgrounds located at 136 E. Washington St. in Gardner. This year's theme is Favorite "Fair e Tails." Plan to attend, and don't miss the parade on Aug. 1!

Movies in the Park

There are still three more movie showings scheduled for the remainder of the summer. If you love to swim and love movies, you'll love our next one. Join us at the Aquatic Center to watch "Soul Surfer" July 23, at 8:45 p.m. Cost is \$3. The remaining two movies will be at Cornerstone Park. More information below.

Chiefs Tickets for Sale!

For just \$35 per ticket, you can attend a Kansas City Chiefs game and also support your city. Visit www.gardnerkansas.gov/Chiefs for more game details.

14th Annual Prairie Punisher Duathlon

Are you ready for The Prairie Punisher? Is it ready for you? The Prairie Punisher Duathlon consists of a 5k run, a 34.5k bike ride, followed by another 5k run. The event will take place on Saturday, July 25, with a 7 a.m. start time. The event will be held at Celebration Park, located at 32501 W. 159th St. Visit <http://www.gardnerkansas.gov/duathlon> for entry fees and deadlines. A 5k run, 10k run and 5k walk will be held in conjunction with the Duathlon. Not a runner/walker? Volunteers are also needed. Call 913.856.0936 to learn more.

Upcoming Gardner Parks and Recreation Activities and Events:

Youth Programs:	Date:	Registration Deadline:	Age/Grade:	Costs:
Tiny Tigers/Karate for Kids	Aug. 3	July 30	3 and Up	\$40
Youth Soccer	Aug. 29	July 17	Pre-K-8 th Grade	\$65
Micro Soccer	Aug. 29	Aug. 7	2-4 years	\$55
Kid's Fishing Derby	Sept. 12	Sept. 7	12 and Under	\$5
Flag Football	Late Sept.	Aug. 21	1 st -6 th Grade	\$60
Cheerleading	Late Sept.	Aug. 21	1 st -6 th Grade	\$60
Middle School Volleyball	Sept. 20	Sept. 4	7 th -8 th Grade	\$65
Babysitting Clinic	Oct. 12	Oct. 2	11-16	\$55
Youth Volleyball	Oct. 17	Sept. 4	3 rd -6 th Grade	\$55
Adult/Family Programs:				
Moonlight Glow Swim	July 10	NA	All ages	\$2
Scrapbooking	July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 18	Thursday before crop	12 and Up	\$5
Bands in the Park	July 18	NA	All ages	Free
Movie in the Pool	July 23	NA	All ages	\$3
Duathlon/10K/5K	July 25	July 24	18 & Up	Varies
Bike Rodeo	Aug. 8	Aug. 3	12 and Under	\$5
Movie in the Park	Aug. 8	NA	All ages	Free
Adult Softball	Sept 6/10	Aug 21	18 and Over	\$450.00/team
Movie in the Park	Sept. 12	NA	All ages	Free