



INSIDE GARDNER

Your Community

January-February 2010

2010 Budget Begins as Continued Fiscal Challenges Face the City

The City of Gardner begins its 2010 budget year facing continued fiscal pressures and lack of funding for a variety of capital improvements. In both 2009 and 2010, no City employee will receive a raise. The City also reduced its contribution to health insurance premiums for all employees during 2009. As an additional measure, the City has implemented flex time requirements and limited overtime. This strains the organization's ability to maintain service at 2008 levels.



In the City's main fund for services, the General Fund—which covers Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Finance, Community Development, and Administration departments—the 2010 budget has been reduced to 2% less than the 2007 budget, 14% less than the 2008 budget, and 7% less than the 2009 budget. The 2010 budget eliminated six vacant positions from the City's authorized staffing, bringing staff levels below the number in 2007.

A 0.5 mill increase was approved by the City Council as part of the 2010 budget after additional reductions were made to close a \$209,000 gap during the budget process last summer. The additional cost for an average home valued at \$163,625, is \$9.41 per year, or 78 cents per month.

In the City's Water and Wastewater utilities there were two vacant positions eliminated, and the City had to start transferring money from operating revenues (i.e. water bill payments) to debt service to cover declining revenues from anticipated new construction fees. Consequently, the budget includes a 5% water rate increase and an 8% wastewater rate increase. The average impact for both increases would be approximately \$56 a year or \$4.67 per month for an average household in Gardner.

Gardner Receives Innovation Awards

In December 2009, the City of Gardner was presented with two "Innovation Awards" at the Kansas Association of City/County Management Conference. The awards were in recognition of extraordinary contribution and innovation for creating the new city website, and for launching a new leadership training program in 2009.

The City Administration Department developed a program to provide further leadership development for the supervisory team starting in December 2008. Due to financial constraints and after researching available options, the Administration Department determined that starting a targeted in-house training program would best serve the needs of the organization. There were also notable side benefits to doing the program in-house, such as providing for a team learning environment on a common set of principles for the organization to review and evaluate its performance and allowing supervisory staff to prepare and present training sessions. Numerous topics were covered in the program ranging from Leading the Work Team, Creating a Climate for Motivation, Managing Change, Safety Concerns, Budget and Performance Measurement, Ethics, and Providing Quality Local Government.

Another objective for the City of Gardner was to enhance its ability to connect with its residents and businesses. The City realized that residents are using social networking sites since our average citizen's age is 31. Thus, the City looked for a new website design that would allow residents to post an interesting article or upcoming parks and recreation event to their Facebook or Twitter, and then the City would be able to spread the word electronically much faster with our residents than through our newsletter or website. The new site has an average of over 1,100 unique users per day, which is up from 500 on the old site.

Winter Driving Tips from Public Safety

Driving in Snow and Ice

The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. Don't go out until the snow plows and sanding trucks have had a chance to do their work, and allow yourself extra time to reach your destination. If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure your car is prepared, and that you know how to handle road conditions. It's helpful to practice winter driving techniques in a snowy, open parking lot, so you're familiar with how your car handles.

Driving safely on icy roads

Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you. Brake gently to avoid skidding. Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists. Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills. Don't use cruise

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A newsletter published for the residents of the City of Gardner
City Hall • 120 E. Main St.
Gardner, KS 66030 • 856-0939

Mayor's Message to Gardner Residents



To my fellow residents,

The generosity of our community was extraordinary this past year. The Christmas for Children and Mayor's Christmas Tree programs served over 400 children from 130 families. I am always grateful, but not surprised by the spirit of giving of our community. There were more donors than we had children this past year. The

Multi-service Center announced that they will not be managing this program any longer, but we will make sure that it continues.

2010 brings us a new year and the start of a new decade. There is still a long road to recovery, but I am optimistic that we will see gradual improvement in our economy, and we will grow stronger as the year progresses. Coleman opened in 2009 bringing new jobs to the area. Property tax from the facility will show up in 2011 revenues. We are very hopeful for more growth in the Midwest Commerce Center as well.

The Council will face another challenging budget session in the coming months. We will be evaluating establishing a ward system in Gardner, as well as increasing the number of Council members. It is our plan to conduct several focus group sessions to gain citizen input on this dramatic change in how we select our government. If there is sufficient interest, any changes in the form of government would be placed on the ballot in April 2011 for your consideration. We will also be revisiting our Downtown Enhancement program. Your input is very important on these matters, and I encourage you to contact me and each of the Council members to weigh in on these or any issue facing our community.

It has been my honor to serve our community as Mayor in 2009, and I look forward to 2010 and what lies ahead.

Sincerely,

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

Calendar of Meetings*

Jan.	11	City Council Work Session—6:30 PM Planning Commission Meeting— 7 PM
Jan.	18	City Hall Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King Day
Jan.	19	City Council Meeting—7 PM, (Date Changed Due to Holiday) Electric Utility Work Session—7 PM
Jan.	25	Planning Commission Meeting—7 PM
Feb.	1	City Council Meeting—7 PM
Feb.	4	Electric Utility Board Meeting—7 PM
Feb.	8	City Council Work Session—6:30 PM Planning Commission Meeting—7 PM
Feb.	15	City Council Meeting—7 PM Electric Utility Work Session—7 PM
Feb.	22	Planning Commission Meeting—7 PM

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control or overdrive, and be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first, even at temperatures above freezing. If the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.

Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.

Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.



Johnson County to Build 191st Street to Service BNSF Intermodal

The County has agreed to build 191st Street from Four Corners to the 188th Street connection at Gardner Road. This is being done in support of the Intermodal Project that is slated to be annexed by

Edgerton. This route will be the main entrance and exit for the Intermodal and Logistics Park until such time as the State of Kansas builds a new interchange south on I-35. No date or funding has been identified for the interchange project.

This improved roadway will provide quick access to I-35 from the Intermodal site, and is intended to keep truck traffic off of 56 Highway/Main Street, and other streets in the City of Gardner. It is also a requirement prior to the State making the interim improvements to the Gardner Road Interchange.

For Gardner's portion of the road (2,900 Feet), the City will be responsible for snow removal, street sweeping, storm inlet cleaning, and debris and dead animal removal, while

Edgerton will be responsible for annual crack sealing, patching, and major repair for five years after substantial completion of the roadway or until Gardner develops property in this area. The roadway improvements could be made as soon as 2010 if BNSF receives grant funding from the federal government. BNSF has now received its 404 permit from the Army Corp of Engineers which allows BNSF to start construction at anytime.

City Council Approves Fiber Project to Connect City Facilities

USD 231 recently installed a fiber optic trunk for their facilities. As part of that system, the City was offered the use of some of the fiber lines. In order to realize actual savings for the City, fiber lines will need to be extended from the trunk line to several City facilities. The facilities to be served by the added extension would be:

- Public Safety Building #1
- Public Safety Building #2
- The Aquatic Center
- Gardner Electric Energy Center
- Public Works Maintenance Shop
- The 183rd Street Water Tower
- Parks & Recreation Maintenance Shop

Additionally, Celebration Park and the Kill Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant would be served via other USD 231 fiber optic lines.

Costs and Benefits

The cost to extend the fiber lines to the above seven locations is \$50,362.74. However, the City estimates that in approximately 1.5 years the City will be saving money by eliminating monthly service fees and redundant technology cost due to a lack of connectivity. This saving does not include increased efficiencies for personnel across City departments.

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2010 Budget Begins as Continued Fiscal Challenges Face the City, cont.

In the City's other funds, there are also significant impacts, especially in the areas of capital improvements. There are no park projects planned since monies designated for park improvements are being used to offset declines in sales tax revenues for the debt payments for Celebration Park and the Gardner Aquatics Center. Moonlight Road is funded but it will require using additional funds from the City's Special Highway Fund to make the payments, since excise tax collections on newly platted property have been considerably reduced due to slow growth. All future Capital Projects have been reduced or placed on hold until such time as funds become available. There are only limited dollars available for road maintenance, but no funding for new road construction or widening over the next five year period. There are also limited dollars available to address stormwater issues.

Value of Your Gardner Property Tax Dollar

The following lists examples of City services provided for the \$38.58 a month tax on an average home valued at \$163,625 for 2010:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Fire Protection | Police Protection | Parks |
| Snow Removal | Animal Control | Governmental Administration |
| Traffic Signal and Sign Maintenance | Municipal Court | Planning |
| Road Maintenance | Street Lighting | Drug Prevention Education |
| Community Activities | Recreation Programming | Code Enforcement |
| New Road Construction | Engineering | |
| Storm water | | |

For comparison purposes, these items denote common monthly expenses for a Gardner family:
 Two 16-gallon tanks of unleaded fuel at \$2.44/gallon = \$78.08
 Expanded Basic Cable and high speed internet = \$81.36
 Monthly mobile phone service with 500 anytime minutes and unlimited text= \$60.91



City of Gardner
120 E. Main Street
Gardner, Kansas

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New Format for Parks and Recreation Activity Guides

In mid December the Gardner Parks and Recreation Department introduced a new format for their Activity Guide. In the past, the guide was a 28-44 page booklet published twice a year, covering 6 months of activities and events. The new format will be a large, tri-fold brochure published quarterly and featuring a calendar of activities and events. A separate brochure will be published in the early spring with information about the Gardner Aquatic Center, including a full listing of swimming lessons and aquatics classes.

This will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to provide the most current program information as well as providing a format that is simple and user friendly. The change in format will not only significantly reduce the cost of printing for the project, but also significantly reduce the amount of paper used. The overall goal of the format change is to still provide information to the public while directing them to the City's website for further details and information about the City's parks and programs.

2010 Summer Job Opportunities

The Gardner Parks and Recreation Department is currently accepting applications for seasonal positions for the 2010 summer season.

Applications will be accepted through February 1, 2010. For further information and an application form, call 913-856-0936 or visit www.gardnerkansas.gov. Completed applications should be returned to Gardner Parks and Recreation, 120 E. Main Street, Gardner, KS 66030.



Pool Passes on Sale

Gardner Aquatic Center Season Passes are currently on sale. Purchase your pass by May 3, 2010 and receive \$20.00 off any Family Pass or \$10.00 off any Individual Pass. Restrictions apply. Visit www.gardnerkansas.gov/season_pass/ for more information, or call 913-856-0936.

Passes can only be purchased or renewed at the Gardner Parks and Recreation Customer Service Center located at City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Passes cannot be purchased or renewed online or over the phone.



New Customer Service Number for Gardner Energy

Beginning January 1, 2010, Gardner Energy will make contacting the utility easier when reporting electric service issues by providing ONE number to call, day or night. Customers are

encouraged to call 913-856-6802 any time (7 days a week, 24 hours a day) to report these issues.

This is another step in Gardner Energy's ongoing efforts to improve the level of customer service and satisfaction.

Rate Changes Approved for Wastewater and Water

The City Council approved rate changes for water and wastewater at its September 21, 2009 meeting. For your usage in January 2010, wastewater rates will increase 8%, and water rates will increase 5%. These changes will be reflected in your statement starting February 2010. The following is a summary of the rate changes by utility:

Wastewater Rates

Wastewater rates will be increasing 8%. The monthly service charge will increase from \$8.75 to \$9.45. The usage charge will go from \$5.57 per thousand gallons to \$6.00 per thousand gallons of water used. The average increase for a residential wastewater customer is \$2.58 per month.



Water Rates

Water rates will be increasing 5%. The monthly service charge will increase from \$9.40 to \$9.90. The cost for the first 40,000 gallons of water will go from \$4.25 per thousand gallons to \$4.45 per thousand gallons. The average increase for a residential water customer is \$2.08 per month.



United States[®] Census 2010

It is time for the US Census. Help Gardner by being counted in 2010.

For information visit www.gardnerkansas.gov.