

BUFORD M. WATSON JR. PARK  
CITY OF LAWRENCE

"We Have  
Tomorrow —  
Bright Before  
Us, Like A  
Flame."

Langston Hughes



# City of Lawrence

The Flame | August 2019

## GET TO KNOW: NEW CITY MANAGER CRAIG OWENS

Lawrence's new city manager loves following Chiefs football, canoeing during the summer and watching "Boss Baby" with his kids. Right now, he's most excited to get fully immersed in his new home. Learn about all that and more in our introductory Q&A with Craig Owens, the new City of Lawrence city manager.

### *Where are you from?*

I was born in Marquette, Michigan, but grew up in Overland Park, Kansas.

### *Where did you go to school?*

I got my undergraduate degree from Knox College in Galesburg, Ill and I received my Master's of Public Administration degree from the University of Kansas.

### *What other states have you lived in?*

I've lived in Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Texas.

### *Your favorite summertime activity?*

Getting outside and going swimming or canoeing

### *What is your favorite sport to watch?*

Chiefs Football and Jayhawk Basketball are my top two, but I'm also looking forward to supporting Sporting KC now that I'm in the area!

### *What's currently on your Netflix queue?*

While waiting for new material from Stranger Things, I was tuned in to House of Cards and Ozark. I also started watching Portlandia and Ken Burns' Vietnam series. Finally, I'll blame it on my kids, but I also enjoy watching Boss Baby.

### *What are you most excited for as city manager of Lawrence?*

I'm eager to get fully immersed in the culture of Lawrence and to get to know the great professional team working for the City.

### *What is something Lawrence residents might be surprised to know about managing a city?*

I think it surprises people when they think about the wide diversity of services we provide that require so many different kinds of skills and talents. From providing clean water, to creating recreation opportunities for people ranging in ages from eight months to 88 years, to restarting hearts, to planning a 50-year future of the city, to intervening in domestic violence. . . the job has variety.

It takes a wide range of people to get the job done, so it requires a city manager to have a large vocabulary as well as breadth and depth of knowledge of all of the disciplines that she or he must lead. So much runs in the background of people's lives, but the city is constantly working for them, 24/7.



# NEW UTILITY BILLING SYSTEM

The City of Lawrence utility billing office is always exploring new ways to improve the customer experience. As you may have read in your July utility bill notice, the utility billing office is implementing a new billing system starting in fall 2019 for all City of Lawrence utility customers.

The new billing system will provide a much improved self-service experience for utility billing customers. It has an enhanced online customer portal, which will enable account holders to make or schedule online payments, view detailed payment history, view water usage data, view or print bills, and modify contact information.

Customers should also note that there are a few important changes that may impact them when the new billing system is launched this fall:

- All customers will receive a new account number and a new customer number.
- There will be a new look and feel to the utility bill.
  - When available, a video walk-through of the new bill will be posted online here: [lawrenceks.org/utility-billing](http://lawrenceks.org/utility-billing)
  - When available, a video walk-through of the new customer portal will be posted online here: [lawrenceks.org/utility-billing](http://lawrenceks.org/utility-billing)

Those customers who receive an electronic bill will need to re-register for e-billing through the new customer portal using their new account number and customer information.

- For security reasons, all accounts which were previously scheduled for auto-payment online will need to be enrolled through the new customer portal.
- Customers utilizing their bank's online bill payment system or other payment service will need to provide the updated account number to their banking or payment institution.

After the new billing system is live, the utility billing office will send all customers communication about their new account number and customer number. That communication will also include information about the new portal and how to sign up.

For several weeks after launch, we anticipate longer than normal wait times while staff become familiar with the new system. We apologize for any inconvenience this new upgrade causes our customers and we appreciate your cooperation and patience during this transition period.

If you have questions, please call our customer service team at (785) 832-7878.

## SEVERE WEATHER SEASON IS HERE

A great way to be prepared when severe weather strikes is to stay informed. Douglas County Emergency Management suggests these weather alert options:

1. Sign up for weather alerts through IRIS to receive a call, text, and/or email alert when severe weather threatens the area. Sign up online, here: [douglascountyks.org/depts/emergency-management](http://douglascountyks.org/depts/emergency-management)
2. Tune into your local radio or television station for the latest weather news.
3. Connect with official organizations, like Douglas County Emergency Management, on social media for severe weather information and updates:



**Douglas County, KS -  
Emergency Management**  
[facebook.com/dgcoem](https://facebook.com/dgcoem)



**@dgcoem**  
[twitter.com/dgcoem](https://twitter.com/dgcoem)

## Get a K-12 Fall Bus Pass

Riding the bus is a fun and easy option for getting around Lawrence, and the K-12 Fall Bus Pass is a low-cost way for students to ride the bus throughout the season.

The K-12 Fall Bus Pass can be used on any Lawrence Transit bus route, so students are free to visit attractions throughout town, including parks, the library, shopping, and more.

The K-12 Fall Bus Pass goes on sale on Monday, August 19, and can be purchased at The Merc as well as any Dillons or Hy-Vee store in Lawrence. Bus passes can also be purchased at City Hall and in Parks and Recreation facilities, including the Indoor Aquatic Center, Holcom, East Lawrence Community Building and Sports Pavilion.

The K-12 Fall Bus Pass costs \$10 and can be used for unlimited bus rides from September through December 2019.

For more information about the K-12 Fall Buss Pass:

- Visit: [lawrencetransit.org](http://lawrencetransit.org)
- Call: (785) 864-4644



## GO PLACES!

SEE YOUR CITY ON THE BUS

**K-12 STUDENT  
SEMESTER  
BUS PASS**

**\$10.00**

**FALL 2019  
SEPT / OCT / NOV / DEC**

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*Committed to providing excellent city services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence community*