



City of Lawrence

The Flame | August 2021

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

Langston Hughes

City hires new Director of Information Technology

In May, City Manager Craig Owens announced the hiring and immediate appointment of Michael Aldridge as the new Director of the Information Technology department at the City of Lawrence. Michael has been with the City's IT department since 2019 and previously served as a security architect.

Before coming to the City of Lawrence, Michael was the Chief Information Officer for Johnson County, Kansas government.

As the City's Director of Information Technology, Michael oversees 14 employees who support the technical infrastructure upon which all City operations depend, including server and storage maintenance, desktop computers and other network devices, IT helpdesk, Geographic Information System (GIS), fiber infrastructure, telecommunications and cyber security.

"Michael brings a wealth of technical expertise and experience from both the public and private sectors," said Owens. "Through his work on the Strategic Plan, I've seen the benevolent impact of his leadership on our organization. Most importantly, Michael brings a strong desire to improve our organization and make our community a place where all enjoy life and feel at home."

Get to know Michael Aldridge

We asked Michael a few questions to help introduce him to the community.

Hometown: Technically it's Kansas City, Kansas, but I've lived in Lawrence since 1985 and I claim it as my hometown.

Places you have lived: Kansas City, Kansas; Denver, Colorado; Corsicana, Texas; Palmyra, Missouri; and Lawrence

Education: I earned my Master of Business Administration from Baker University, my Bachelor of Science in Management from Baker University and my Associate in Applied Science from Kansas City Kansas Community College.

Favorite sports team(s): Jayhawks, Chiefs and Sporting KC

The last book you read: Factfulness by Hans Rosling

The last thing you listened to: 80's playlist

The last thing you watched: Gone in 60 Seconds (1974 version)

Favorite holiday: Christmas

Favorite summer activity: Pool or beach

Bucket-list vacation: Wiltshire, England (where my family is from)



Your favorite way to spend a day off: Spending time with my wife and kiddos

What you're most excited for as the Director of Information Technology: I am most excited to bring all that I've learned in my career to help make the City I love a better place.

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Taking a dive, helping her community

On May 13, Lawrence resident Marilyn Hull, 64, applied to be a City lifeguard, and on June 12 she worked her first shift.

At the time she applied, our Parks and Recreation department was in desperate need of new lifeguards in order to open the Outdoor Aquatic Center for the 2021 season. A member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Marilyn wanted to do everything she could to make sure our community would not lose this summer's opportunities to swim!

Marilyn started sharing updates on becoming a lifeguard on her Facebook page and soon dozens of community members were cheering her on during her journey to certification. From the swim skills pre-test to in-pool training to whistle practice, Marilyn has been documenting her efforts and encouraging others to join her along the way.

Read our story to learn how Marilyn's journey is inspiring others to suit up: lawrenceks.org/2021/06/21/taking-a-dive.



Get involved in local food recovery efforts

Want to get your helping hands a little dirty? As a volunteer with the food gleaning program, you can support food waste reduction and recovery of edible food while feeding people in need. Volunteers are invited to sign up throughout the growing season to help glean fields (harvest unsold produce from local farms) and deliver food. Individuals and groups are welcome. Sign up today at <https://bit.ly/DouglasCoGlean!>

Between March and June 2021, Lawrence-Douglas County gleaning efforts recovered 800 pounds of produce from five local farms, and volunteer gleaners clocked 20 hours of work recovering produce that included spinach, lettuce, kale, chard, garlic scapes (stalks), broccoli and cabbage. The program also recovered hundreds of starter vegetable plants from local farms. At the end of June, program staff started recovering at the Tuesday Lawrence Farmers Market and will expand to some of the other farmers markets as well.

To grow the program, the Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office is continuing to connect with local farms interested in gleaning. They're also looking for more nonprofit agencies that might be in need of food donations. At the end of June, participating farms included Moon on the Meadow, Mellowfields, Sacred Sun, Juniper Hill, Star Field Abbey, Maseuakualli Farms, Peters Family Farm, Tuckwin Farms and KC Farm School. Recovered produce has been delivered to local organizations including Just Food, Sunrise Project, the Lawrence Community Shelter and Food Not Bombs.

For more information on how to get involved in food recovery efforts, please contact our Food Waste Reduction Specialist, Jamie Hofling, via email at jhofling@douglascountyks.org. If you or your group would like to be on the list for notifications about upcoming volunteer gleaning opportunities, sign up at <https://bit.ly/DouglasCoGlean!>



Keep our water clean!

We need your help to keep Lawrence stormwater clean. Most residents and businesses may not realize their everyday practices can pollute our local streams, creeks and rivers.

When rain hits an already saturated ground, it doesn't get soaked up; it can travel across bare earth, driveways, sidewalks and streets into the nearest storm drain. Untreated water then goes through pipes that discharge into our local waterways.

Below are some easy tips to follow for both the home and workplace to help us keep our stormwater clean:

- Use pesticides/fertilizers sparingly
- Repair car leaks immediately
- Dispose of household hazardous waste, like paint, auto fluids and batteries, before they accumulate
- Clean up after your pet
- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on an unpaved surface
- Sweep up (instead of hosing) yard debris and compost it, or set it out for City yard waste collection
- Clean paint brushes in a sink indoors
- Sweep and properly dispose of construction debris

Overall, the common pollutants in Lawrence's storm sewer systems include vehicle pollutants (oil, gas and antifreeze), home and business pollutants (fertilizers, detergents, paint, pesticides and pet/yard waste) and construction pollutants (soil sediment, trash and debris).

Please be aware of these pollutants and be sure to dispose of them properly. More information is on the City website at lawrenceks.org/mso/stormwater

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We create a community where all enjoy life and feel at home.