



# City of Lawrence

**The Flame | March 2022**

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

*Langston Hughes*

## Keep up with our Sustainability team this spring!

### Electronics Recycling Event on April 2

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County Sustainability are partnering with Teknix Solutions to host an electronic waste (e-waste) drop-off event this spring.

The event will take place on the University of Kansas campus in Lot 301, near the intersection of 23rd & Iowa streets. It will be from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 2.

The event will be organized as a drive-through to minimize personal contact. A list of accepted and not accepted items is available on the event website: [douglascountyks.org/depts/sustainability/electronics-recycling](https://douglascountyks.org/depts/sustainability/electronics-recycling). Alkaline batteries will NOT be accepted and there will be a fee for CRT TVs and monitors. Only cash payments will be accepted on-site.

More information will be shared on the website as it becomes available. If you do not find the answer to your question on the website, you can contact Jamie Hofling, food waste reduction specialist, at: [jhofling@douglascountyks.org](mailto:jhofling@douglascountyks.org).

### Common Ground Community Gardening Program

It's not too early to start thinking about outdoor gardening! The Common Ground community garden and urban agriculture program has opportunities for everyone from beginners to experienced gardeners!

Established in 2012, Common Ground transforms vacant public land into vibrant sites for community food production. There are currently 10 Common Ground sites, including family or individual plots, communally managed spaces, public-pick sites, an orchard, and even

an incubator farm hosting several establishing farm businesses. Many of our sites offer regular work days or seasonal volunteer opportunities for individuals or groups. A couple of our sites are even welcoming lead volunteers to help manage activities through the season.

You can visit our website to connect to any of our sites and to sign up for seasonal updates from our team: [lawrenceks.org/common-ground](https://lawrenceks.org/common-ground).

Do you have ideas about improving or expanding public gardens in Douglas County? Common Ground is currently working on a long-term strategy and development plan. Visit our website to share your feedback with our team: [lawrenceks.org/common-ground](https://lawrenceks.org/common-ground).

### Celebrate Earth Month this April

Due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, our community Earth Day celebration may look different this year. Instead of an in-person event, check out our website for the latest information on what our team and our community members are doing to celebrate Earth Month throughout April.

Visit [lawrenceks.org/earth-day](https://lawrenceks.org/earth-day) for more information.

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**Pictured above:** Borbor 15, sculpture by Will Vannerson, located at 6th & Mass.

**Pictured left:** Community members work in a Common Ground site.



## Affordable Housing Trust Fund Awards

At their December 2021 meeting, the Affordable Housing Advisory Board awarded the recipients of the 2022 Affordable Housing Trust Fund awards. In total, the fund allocated \$850,000 to selected applicants from this round.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Board has a strong commitment to expanding affordable housing to all Lawrence neighborhoods. They also have a strong commitment to racial equity and inclusion in their allocation process. They awarded funds to five projects this year.

**Tenants to Homeowners** was awarded \$400,000 for the Michigan Six project. With the Michigan Six project, Tenants to Homeowners will develop six new

homes and a total of 15 bedrooms in a location that is close to public transit, schools, a grocery store, and other community resources. The new units will be an additional option in our community for low- and moderate-income renters who want to become homeowners.

The **Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority** was awarded \$50,000 for New Horizon Vouchers to help with rent subsidization. The vouchers help some of the most vulnerable families in our community and can be used to rent safe units anywhere in Douglas County.

**Independence, Inc.** was awarded \$50,000 for an accessible housing program that will help low- and moderate-income people with accessibility needs get the improvements they need to make their existing home accessible/visitable or for them to find housing that is accessible/visitable.

**Tenants to Homeowners** was also awarded \$300,000 for their Housing Stabilization Collaborative, which is a voucher program to help with rent subsidization. With the awarded funds, vouchers and corresponding support services will be available to approximately 400 households.

Finally, **Lawrence Habitat for Humanity** was awarded \$50,000 for critical repairs that will help restore five to eight households that are currently in poor living conditions.



## Prepare now for Severe Weather Season

Spring and severe weather season are just around the corner. From damaging winds to large hail to flooding and the threat of tornadoes, individuals and businesses in Douglas County are at risk from severe weather. It's up to each of us to know the right steps to take in order to ensure our safety when severe weather strikes!

Here are steps individuals and businesses can take to make sure they're prepared ahead of severe weather:

- Be alert to the forecast for severe weather and pay attention to changing weather conditions.
- Develop an emergency plan that includes both how to get alerts (identify more than one method) and where to take shelter (lowest level of a building, in an interior room with no windows).
- Build a preparedness kit with basic items to keep in your shelter or to take if you leave your home.

Douglas County residents can sign up for free emergency alerts through the Northeast Kansas Regional Notification System online at [dgcoks.org/notify](https://dgcoks.org/notify).

For more information on preparing for severe storms, visit the Douglas County severe weather safety website at: [dgcoks.org/swaw](https://dgcoks.org/swaw).

## Schedule your annual Backflow Prevention Device Test

If you have an irrigation system (aka sprinkler system) for your property, make sure you have your backflow preventer tested and repaired as needed. City Code requires annual testing of backflow preventers to ensure that Lawrence's drinking water supply remains protected from sources of possible contamination, including lawn chemicals and fertilizers, bacteria, and pathogens.

Backflow is when there is a reversal of the intended flow direction of potable water. This can happen in a number of situations, including water main breaks, maintenance, system flushing, high demand or higher consumer pressure due to gravity, pumps or thermal expansion. It can cause contaminants to enter the public drinking water system.

Many water outlets maintain an air gap

over the fill level to prevent backflow; however some connections, such as irrigation, cannot be air gapped and present a potential contamination hazard. These connections are protected by backflow preventers, which have internal seals, springs and moving parts that are subject to deterioration. Therefore, water customers are required to test all backflow prevention assemblies annually to ensure they are functioning.

Irrigation system backflow preventer testing by a registered certified tester is due by August 1, 2022; however the City recommends having your device(s) tested as early in the irrigation season as possible. This is to identify any potential defects and maximize protection for the full season.

To find a list of certified testers, visit our

website at: [lawrenceks.org/backflow](https://lawrenceks.org/backflow). You can follow these tips to help conserve water and utilize your irrigation system effectively:

- Check sprinkler heads regularly to ensure they are applying water evenly and not wasting water on sidewalks, driveways and streets.
- Irrigate early in the morning or in the evening to reduce evaporation and discourage diseases.
- Water lawns only when needed. Signs you may need to water include if you leave footprints when you walk across the lawn or if the grass has a blue cast.

For more information about backflow, visit [lawrenceks.org/backflow](https://lawrenceks.org/backflow) or call our team at 785-832-7800.

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