

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



SAVE THE DATE: The Back to School Safety Fair is coming up on August 17!

The safety fair is a fun way to wrap up the summer and get students ready for a happy, safe and healthy school year! Many community organizations will be on hand leading interactive games and learning opportunities for children from pre-school through high school.

More information will be shared on the City's social media and website prior to the event. For now – make sure the date is blocked off on your calendar!

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

City information is available at lawrenceks.org and on cable Channel 25.

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Get to know City Leadership: Luis Ruiz

Ruiz joined the City in May 2024 as the Director of Parks, Recreation, Arts & Culture – an updated department formed to meet the Unmistakable Identity goals of our strategic plan.

Prior to joining our team in Lawrence, Luis Ruiz served as the Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation overseeing Commercial Facilities in Mesa, Arizona. While there he spearheaded operations, programming, budgeting and strategic management for a diverse portfolio of facilities, outdoor amenities and special events, including the Mesa Convention Center, Mesa Amphitheatre, Mesa Cemetery and the Dobson Ranch Golf Course.

He brings to Lawrence many years of public service, specifically leveraging arts, culture, parks and recreation to enrich communities.

"Coming here was a unique opportunity for me to combine my experience and work with seasoned experts toward one common goal: Lawrence's Unmistakable Identity," said Ruiz. "I see immense potential in leveraging our parks, recreational programs, arts, and cultural assets to strengthen Lawrence's identity and enhance the quality of life for all its residents."

His career of public service is guided by his desire to contribute to the common good and to help shape communities in ways that

reflect and honor their unique identities and values.

"I appreciate and thrive in an environment where decisions have a direct impact on the lives of those we serve," said Ruiz. "I am honored to serve as the Director of this department and to work collaboratively with residents, strategic partners and City leadership to advance Lawrence's strategic goals while preserving and celebrating our community's distinctive character."

While his first month has focused on getting to know his team as well as the facilities, parks and events of our community, he's also had time to dive into a couple initial projects, including the completion of the new Parks, Recreation, Arts & Culture comprehensive plan and the start of planning renovations to the Outdoor Aquatic Center (more information on the renovations is on the back of the newsletter).

More information about the comprehensive plan is available on the City's website at: lawrenceks.org/community-engagement/lprd-comp-plan.

JULY IS MOVING SEASON IN LAWRENCE!

Easy tips for a low-stress move

Hourly meter readings now available

As part of the H2O Smart Program, which the City of Lawrence initiated in 2020, hourly water meter readings are now available in your online customer portal.

With the H2O Smart Meter program, the City of Lawrence has upgraded water meters across town to smart meters. The new meters give customers information that helps you be more water-efficient in your home and/or business. It is also a cost-savings program that sends your water use directly to the City, reducing manual meter reading and providing proactive leak detection to help catch wasteful water leaks sooner.

To access hourly water meter readings within the customer portal, click on "Hourly Water Usage" on either the Account Overview or Usage pages.

In addition to viewing the data within the portal, customers can sign up to receive notifications of daily, weekly or monthly usage thresholds as well as notifications of potential leaks. Within the customer portal, simply go to Settings, then User Profile to sign up for notifications.

Please note: The hourly water meter readings are not provided in real-time. They can take up to 24 hours to appear in the portal.

The City is preparing to launch an enhanced customer portal in Fall 2024 and will share more information about the new system ahead of that change. The new system will be more user-friendly, and it will provide more self-service options.

More information on the H2O Smart Program is online at: lawrenceks.org/h2o-smart.

Many apartment leases in Lawrence will turn over at the end of July, which means moving season is in full swing!

While moving can be complicated, we have a few tips to keep in mind. Please remember: By taking the time to plan ahead, you can make your move a much better experience for all involved!

Go online for utility requests

Due to an increase in the number of moves compared to the rest of the year, the summer months are extremely busy for our Utility Billing team. To help with the high call volume, our team recommends utilizing online service requests when possible.

Online assistance is available for starting, stopping and transferring services, as well as restoring service. You can also go online to pay your bill or to set up automatic payments.

Visit the utility billing web page at lawrenceks.org/utility-billing to learn more.

Reuse, recycle and safe disposal

Reduce the amount of waste generated with packing supplies by using reusable or recyclable padding, like towels or

newspaper, to pack your boxes instead of purchasing Styrofoam peanuts or plastic wrap. Stop by a grocery store or bookstore and ask for free cardboard boxes to use.

Donate gently used clothing and household goods to local charities, hold a moving sale, or post to online Buy, Sell, Trade groups. Donate non-perishable food to food banks, pantries and shelters.

Recycle old electronics, cardboard boxes, newspapers, plastic bags and any other recyclable materials. Search the online Recyclable Materials Directory at lawrenceks.org/swm for local options.

Dispose of paint, automotive products, household cleaners, pesticides and other potentially hazardous chemicals properly at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. You must schedule your appointment in advance online at: lawrenceks.org/swm/hhw.

Schedule a pick-up for bulky items that are no longer usable, such as couches, appliances and automobile tires. Call our Solid Waste team at 785-832-3032 or fill out the online form to schedule a pick-up: lawrenceks.org/swm/trash.

Renovating the Outdoor Aquatic Center

It's been nearly thirty years since the Outdoor Aquatic Center last saw a renovation. Time has taken its toll and the City is gearing up to give it another renovation and partial makeover in the coming years.

Things got started this spring/summer with a planning phase in which we examined the current conditions and listened to the community about what you all need and want in this facility.

We're using this feedback to address maintenance needs and craft some new design ideas. We anticipate having

concepts for the community to review by the end of summer. Then, we'll coordinate with contractors and start the actual construction. It's an exciting time to reimagine and enhance this popular community space!

Please note: The City has allocated \$6.1 million for design and construction. We anticipate that much of the funding will be used for identified maintenance issues and needs. The balance will support a prioritized range of amenities. Up-to-date information on the renovation is online at: lawrenceks.org/community-engagement

