Record

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UG Realigns Departments to Better Serve the Community Changes are the culmination of a recent organizational assessment

Interim County Administrator Cheryl Harrison-Lee announced several structural changes for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS as a result of this summer's organizational assessments. The changes will better align the functions of several departments to county administration as the organization works to identify cost savings and operational efficiencies, a critical next step in closing the budget deficit.

"As part of UG Forward, I am committed to reimagining the Unified Government for the next 25 years as we address many of the systemic and financial challenges facing our organization," said Ms. Harrison-Lee.

Strategic alignment ensures key functions

work seamlessly across Unified Government

The changes, effective immediately, follow the recommendations presented to the Unified Government Commission in July 2022 and include the appointment of a new interim assistant county administrator to provide oversight over all administrative services. The following outlines the new organizational structure:

- Becky Berger, Interim Assistant County Administrator of Administrative Services
- Bridgett Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator of Public Safety
- Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator of Health and Human Services
- Brett Deichler, Interim Assistant County Administrator of Economic and Community

Development

The Purchasing Department, for example, will now report to the Finance Department, a requirement of our charter, and an issue identified by the consulting team following their review as presented in July 2022. Additionally, the budget and strategy team will now report directly to Interim Assistant County Administrator Berger, allowing the Unified Government to more closely align the management of expenditures with revenue projections. Currently these are separate functions within the Finance Department. Throughout this year's 2023 budget process, the Commission has been learning more about the structural deficit in the City of Kansas City, KS general fund, of approximately \$4M, which needs to be rectified for our long-term fiscal health and competitiveness. With inflation and rising costs across the organization and relatively stagnant revenue, the administration hopes to identify a more fiscally sustainable model for the future so elevating budget and strategy will be key to this.

Ms. Berger Announced as Interim Assistant County Administrator

Ms. Becky Berger is the newest addition to the county administration team with the announcement of her interim appointment. Ms. Berger, who joined the Unified Government in January 2022 as Treasurer and Director of Revenue, will provide oversight to all administrative functions of the Unified Government, including human resources, Clerk's Office, 311, Budget Strategy and Research, Finance, and the Appraiser's Office. Ms. Berger brings 15 years of experience in local government management, including serving as the city manager and director of finance for the City of Atchison. By bringing all internal services together under one manager, the Unified Government will be able to continue its work to address areas for improvement in human resources, finances, and general operations.

"We must be internally organized before we

A Look Back

By Rudy Padilla

In the summer before I was to start the seventh grade, we moved to Kansas City KS from the country. We moved to a house on seventh street—between Minnesota and Central Avenue. When the Kroger grocery store was built, it was built right up against our house. So, during the days and evenings there were many people waking by our home on the west side of seventh Street.

This was a very noisy and busy area. Big trucks would drive close by and stop in the back of Kroger's and load or unload merchandise. On hot summer nights, when we lived on 7th Street in KC KS, about every 4th night right after it was dark, a man would be pushing a steel cart on our side of the street. He was selling "Jim's Hot Tamales" the name was on the cart. I am not aware of any Mexican restaurants in KC KS at the time in the early 1950s, so we tried his tamales. They were corn meal with no meat - some hot sauce in the middle. They were "okay" – not good, but Christmas Tamales were a long time away, so we bought them when he stopped by. I believe his business was in KC MO. He would start on Central Avenue then go



north where he knew there were some taverns. I believe they were 10 cents each. The Tamale guy was very nice and looked like "Chester" of the Gunsmoke tv program. Many people sat on their front porches during the hot evenings – no air conditioning during those years.

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Sue's Sudsy Soapbox



By Sue Reich

eems like Lansing Prison has been in the news off and on lately. That one prisoner walked out and was caught on Kansas Ave. and 7th street in KCK. His freedom was short lived. Remember Toby Dorr Young? She was the lady that had the SAFE HARBOR PRISON

DOGS PROGRAM. As the story goes, she and John Manard, an inmate of course, "fell in love" (sure they did.). Anyway to make a long story short, John talked Toby into putting him in a dog crate (with a dog?) and sneak him out. Anyway, they were out 12 days and were caught in Tennessee. He got 12 more years and she got 27 months and served 21. Since all that happened, she was married at the time, hubby divorced her I guess when she was incarcerated. Later she remarried and her life has changed.

Sister Gayle and I used to go to Lansing to sing for a memorial program they used to do for the guards that had died while on duty. It was a sad event. One reason we did it was because our cousin Duane Hurd was a guard and was murdered while on duty. Duane was a 1959 graduate of Argentine High school. But, he wrote up an inmate and it really made the inmate mad and he had a shiv, came up behind Duane and slit his throat from ear to ear and

almost decapitated him. Really devastated our family. He was 40 years old and left his wife and 2 grade school aged sons. The inmate was sent to another prison and we were told he started a riot and a fire in that prison. Can't remember the Warden's name that was there then but he gave Gayle a handmade truck made by an inmate. I really feel sorry for the guards, they have a heckofa job. Well dear people, be careful, stay alert. Lvya all, your little ol' gal from Argentine/Turner, Sue

Betting in Kansas is Now Legal. By Sue Reich

Governor Laura Kelly got to be the first one to make a bet at the Hollywood Casino at the Kansas Speedway the Kansas Speedway. Our Sunflower State is coming out of the Dark Ages and joining the rest of our country. If you go try your luck, I will give you my address.

UG Realignment...

can be externally focused," said Ms. Harrison-Lee. "This is one of many efforts moving forward to look at how we work as the Unified Government to ensure that we can deliver quality customer service. I believe this team will be instrumental in helping us identify additional opportunities for cost savings, innovative best practices, and other improvements in how we work."

Chief Financial Officer announces her departure later this year

In other staff news, Chief Financial Officer Kathleen VonAchen announced her plans to leave the Unified Government. Ms. VonAchen will work closely with the interim County Administrator to facilitate the transition for the Finance Department.

Since the unification of the City of Kansas City and Wyandotte County by public vote 25 years ago, there has not been a comprehensive assessment of our operations as a unified government. For more information about UG organizational realignment, as well as other UG Forward initiatives, please visit our websitewycokck.org/UGForward.

AG Derek Schmidt: New app a welcome tool for youth suicide prevention in Kansas

Kansas Attorney General Schmidt announced today the launch of a mobile app, as a new tool to prevent youth suicide by providing information about warning signs and direct access to help for youth in Kansas. Schmidt made the announcement this morning at the Kansas Suicide Prevention Headquarters Breakfast for Hope in Lawrence, coinciding with National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, National Suicide Prevention Week and Saturday's upcoming observance of World Suicide Prevention Day.

The free app, called "Kansas – A Friend AsKS," was developed in partnership with The Jason Foundation, a national suicide prevention organization, and can be found in both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. The app connects youth to tools and resources to help a friend, or themselves, who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. The app also offers the option for users to call or text the 988 mental health crisis line, which was launched in Kansas in July.

"The need for prevention is larger than ever, as we see suicide as a leading cause of preventable death in the United States and in Kansas," Schmidt said. "I applaud the efforts of all who are working in the area of suicide prevention, and we are proud to be adding this new tool to the toolbox of prevention measures available in our state."

The State Child Death Review Board reported, in the most recent data available, that in 2019, 28 children in Kansas between the ages of 10-17 died by suicide. Between the years of 2015 and 2018, suicide deaths for Kansas youth, ages 10-17, increased by 70%. This disturbing trend led Schmidt, along with the Tower Mental Health Foundation, to form a Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force in spring 2018. In 2019, the Task Force issued a report, which among other recommendations, included the recommendation of creating a youth-focused app that would connect Kansas youth to critical resources and information, as well as creating the position of Youth Suicide Prevention Coordinator within the Office of the Attorney General. The position has focused on the coordination of multidisciplinary and interagency strategies to help communities, schools, and professionals to synchronize efforts to prevent and address youth suicide.

If you or a loved one is contemplating suicide, please connect with the Kansas suicide and crisis lifeline by dialing or texting 9-8-8, in order to be connected with a trained crisis counselor who can provide support.

More information about the attorney general's youth suicide prevention efforts and links to download the app are available at https://ag.ks.gov/asKS.



Jon A. Males
Owner/Publisher/Editor

Policy On Opinion

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By Sharon Hoover

guess the stars didn't align like I thought they would. Poor Artemis did not make it off the ground. The next launch could happen the latter part of this month or sometime in October. Better be safe than sorry.

Yesterday I attended the first meeting of Turner Library's "Share the Love Book Club". I met several nice ladies whose interests varied from

Comin' & Goin' Turner Style

fantasy to autobiographical. Instead of reviewing a book, we discussed our favorite authors and came away with new authors to try. I admit I get tired of reading the same authors and look for variety in my reading material. The group meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 1:00 pm at Turner Recreation Center.

You still have time to visit the "History of Rosedale" display at the Rosedale Development Association building, 1403 Southwest Blvd until September 17. It was curated by the Wyandotte County Historical Museum and was featured there this past spring.

The WYCO Sheriff's Patrol and the KCKPD are hosting a Family Day at Piper Creek Elementary School, 13021 Leavenworth Rd, September 17 from 10am-1pm. Visit with officers and deputies, hotdogs/hamburger

lunch, field games, equipment & vehicle displays and meet recruiters. If you missed the events held at Pearson and Matney Parks, you can catch this one.

I have mentioned this before, but it may bear repeating: the United Government is hiring! Call 913 573-5660 or go to www.wycokck.org. From the list I saw, there are openings in every department.

A reminder: the next Hazardous Waste Disposal day is September 17 and the last one for the year is October 15. Hours are 8:30am-1:00 pm. 2445 S. 88th St. Fall is a good time to get rid of all those paint cans and other noxious items. We've been trying to take one day each weekend to clean out our garages. One down and one to go-shooting for the October date.

Concerns about the overuse of fertilizer being washed into our

storm sewers and entering our local waterways has prompted the UG to provide free soil tests to Kansas City, KS residents. Fertilizer in our water system can cause the overgrowth of algae plants to the large scale fish kills. More information can be found at www.wycokck.org/stormwater.

Bonner Springs is having a city-wide yard sale beginning on Saturday, September 24. The fee for listing is \$5 and deadline for participating is September 21. Printed booklets will be available at the Community Center. An electronic copy will be available on their Facebook page on the Friday before the sale. Happy shopping.

Until next time stay safe and be kind to those around you. Please pray for those who have lost loved ones and continue to pray for the brave Ukrainians fighting for the right to remain free.



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Consumer Corner: Watch out for utility scams

By Kansas Attorney General **Derek Schmidt**

Although summer is winding down, high temperatures and dry conditions linger, which strains power systems' ability to keep up with electricity demands. And as much as reliability can be an issue, so can scammers who are always on the prowl to defraud residents by demanding payment and threatening to shut off power.

Utility companies across the state have reported an increase in customer calls alerting them of imposters, who are out in force. Scammers call residents threatening to shut off water or utility services within days or mere hours, unless the citizen pays mation, your best solution is to hang the caller. These scammers insist they must receive payment and have access to the customer's financial information to keep the lights on or the air conditioner running. In some cases, the scammer insists that a consumer's check bounced and demands payment with a pre-paid credit card or gift card. Other callers say they are simply trying to update credit card or banking information they have on file, and ask residents to reveal that personal information.

Our office has also received these complaints. As always, when folks you do not know call you and ask for money, payment, or personal inforup. If you have questions about the status of your utility bill payments, call the company directly at the phone number printed on your bill.

Furthermore, scammers may claim the COVID-19 crisis has affected the company in addition to its customers, and that they cannot currently process check or card payment. Rest assured, this is not how legitimate companies will operate. Do not pay cash to anyone on the spot who says they are from your utility company, even if the person has a uniform or an ID that looks real. Even if the situation seems legitimate, call your utility company at the number printed on your billing statement to confirm they are authorized to visit your home.

Another new wrinkle this summer has been the appearance of solar panel installation companies going door-to-door seeking to sell residents solar power systems. These companies may claim to have established a partnership with your electric provider. Aggressive salespeople lead customers to believe that the solar panel systems will eliminate their electric bill, and they attempt to lock buyers into financing terms that will last longer than the expected life of the system.

Customers who receive such sales pitches should do their own research on solar panel systems and to report any suspected scams.

You can help stop such scams by alerting your friends, neighbors and family. Remember, if you receive a call from a scammer just hang up. Better yet, if you don't recognize the number, don't answer the phone.

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Anyone who believes in the mission of The League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC is eligible to join us. Being part of the conversation will bring us together with all of society.

Wikipedia:

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is

the largest and oldest Hispanic and Latino civil rights organization in the United States.[2] It was established on February 17, 1929, in Corpus Christi, Texas, largely by Hispanics returning from World War I who sought to end ethnic discrimination against Latinos in the United States. The goal of LULAC is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of Hispanic people in the United States. LULAC uses nationwide councils and group community organizations to achieve all these goals. LULAC has about 132,000 members in the United States.

Council 11085 has LULAC members in the counties of Douglas, Johnson and Wyandotte (Kansas) - Clay and Jackson (Missouri).

Join us in monthly Zoom meetings – the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.

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Managing Stress

By Bryan Golden

Do you ever feel stressed? Is stress a regular component of your lifestyle? What exactly is stress? What causes it and what can you do to manage and reduce it?

What you experience as stress is the result of your reaction to the events, circumstances, and people you encounter. The more you feel frustrated, a victim, helpless, a target, or picked on, the more you feel stressed.

You are surrounded by potential sources of stress. Your job, family, friends, schedule, traffic, and finances are among the many possible origins of stress you encounter on a daily basis.

The key to managing stress is monitoring and controlling the way you react. Stress affects you mentally and physically. Mental manifestations include irritability, sleeplessness, a lack of focus, emotional swings, a feeling of helplessness, and a short temper. Physical symptoms include elevated blood pressure, ulcers, headaches, weight gain, and aches and pains.

Don't underestimate the destructive effects of stress on you. The consequences of stress can be debilitating. Left unchecked, stress can cut years from your life span and severely undermine your quality of life.

Our innate fight or flight response is responsible for the physiological symptoms. Our bodies are designed to run from or combat any perceived source of stress. Modern society, however, prohibits us from doing either. Stress therefore finds an outlet by affecting us mentally and physically.

If you attempt to manage stress by trying to control your environment, you will only succeed in exacerbating your stress level. You can't change people or circumstances but you do have control over yourself. The only effective strategy for managing and reducing stress is learning how to manage your reaction to your environment.

Unless and until you change the way you react to stress, you will keep experiencing the same symptoms. You can't run away because wherever you go there are stress inducing situations. Only by changing your internal stress handling mechanism will you free yourself from the clutches of stress.

One effective method for managing your stress is constructing a written stress management handbook. The first step is to identify and write down everything that causes you stress. Next detail how you react to each of the sources of stress. The handbook is your own private document so be honest about what you react to and how you respond. Different people have varying reactions to the same circumstances. You are only concerned with your own behavior.

For each of your reactions, describe an ideal response that would minimize anxiety. For example, if obnoxious people stress you, your ideal reaction might be to ignore them without getting upset.

Identifying the causes and effects of stress in writing enables you to formulate a stress management strategy. The following are some effective techniques for reducing your stress.

Take responsibility for your life. Don't blame others. You are the only one who has the power to change things. Make sure that you effectively communicate your feelings and desires. Don't assume that others know how you feel or what you think. Don't take personally the actions of others. If someone treats you poorly, it's because they have a problem.

You don't want to allow frustrations and anger to build up internally. Doing so substantially increases stress levels. You need to restructure how you interpret and react to sources of stress.

With practice you can train yourself to successfully manage and reduce your stress level. Doing so will improve your health and enrich your life.

Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact Bryan at Bryan@columnist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com Copyright 2022 Bryan Golden

Tom's Tasty Treats

By Tom Valverde

This week's tasty treat is easy, and no mixer is needed. It really two recipes in one because it may be made as a cake in a 9"?13" pan or used to make wonderful muffins for an early morning treat!

Adjust the spices to your liking!

APPLE CAKE WITH CINNAMON CRUMBLE TOPPING Ingredients:

1 1/2 c light Brown Sugar

1/3 c melted Butter or Canola oil

2 lg. Eggs, beaten

1 c Milk

1 t Vanilla

2 1/2 c Flour

1 1/2 t Baking Powder

3/4 t Salt

1 1/2 t Cinnamon

1/4 t Ginger

2 1/2 c sweet Apples, peeled and chopped.

Topping:

3 T regular Oats, not instant

1/2 c Sugar

1/2 c Brown Sugar

Pinch of Salt

2 1/2 T melted Butter

Set oven to 325°. Butter a 9"x13" baking pan. In a large bowl, combine the brown sugar, melted butter and beaten egg, and stir until blended. Add the milk and the Vanilla and stir well. Next add the flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and ginger and mix together well. Fold in the chopped apples, the mixture will be thick so use a strong spatula for the mixing. Combine the topping ingredients in a small bowl. Pour the batter into the pan smooth top with the spatula.*

Sprinkle the topping evenly over the cake. Bake at 325° for 45 minutes. *Or use the batter to make muffins! Spray the muffin pan and a large scoop with non-stick spray. Scoop the batter and place into the muffin pan. Then sprinkle the topping over each. Bake at 325° for 25 minutes. These are a real treat. Perfect for dessert or as breakfast muffins with a cup of coffee! Adjust spices to your liking. Add chopped walnuts or pecans to the topping or try adding raisins to the batter. So good!

Enjoy!

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Passings...

By Sue Reich

Mitchell Gordon Crabaugh, age 60, passed away on August 12, 2022. He was a 1980 Turner High School graduate.

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