

# VOICE



## Juneteenth Freedom Celebration to be held June 18 in Harmon Park

The Prairie Village Diversity Committee will be teaming up once again with Stand-Up for Black Lives + Prairie Village, the Johnson County NAACP, and Village Church to co-sponsor the second annual Juneteenth Celebration. You're invited to join the festivities from 4-8 p.m. on June 18 in Harmon Park.

The event will be filled with activities for all ages, including live music, local vendors, food trucks, and a poster contest for kids.

Juneteenth, June 19, 1865, is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

On that date, months after the Civil War ended, Union General Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas and read General Order No. 3 informing a quarter of a million African Americans who were still living in Texas that they were free. That December, slavery in America was formally abolished with the adoption of the 13th Amendment.

Juneteenth (June 19th), also referred to as "Freedom Day" has been celebrated by African Americans for the past 156 years. Last year, Juneteenth was officially recognized as a Federal holiday in the United States.

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# A Message from the Mayor

## Elected Officials

### MAYOR

Eric Mikkelson  
913-385-4600 • [mayor@pvkansas.com](mailto:mayor@pvkansas.com)

### WARD I

Chad Herring  
913-383-8752 • [cherring@pvkansas.com](mailto:cherring@pvkansas.com)

Cole Robinson  
785-979-6094 • [crobinson@pvkansas.com](mailto:crobinson@pvkansas.com)

### WARD II

Ron Nelson  
913-602-9003 • [rnelson@pvkansas.com](mailto:rnelson@pvkansas.com)

Inga Selders  
913-648-5804 • [iselders@pvkansas.com](mailto:iselders@pvkansas.com)

### WARD III

Bonnie Limbird  
913-214-6127 • [blimbird@pvkansas.com](mailto:blimbird@pvkansas.com)

Lauren Wolf  
913-735-3837 • [lwolf@pvkansas.com](mailto:lwolf@pvkansas.com)

### WARD IV

Piper Reimer  
816-510-8573 • [preimer@pvkansas.com](mailto:preimer@pvkansas.com)

Dave Robinson  
913-219-3091 • [drobinson@pvkansas.com](mailto:drobinson@pvkansas.com)

### WARD V

Courtney McFadden  
913-381-8089 • [cmcfadden@pvkansas.com](mailto:cmcfadden@pvkansas.com)

Greg Shelton  
913-624-3416 • [gshelton@pvkansas.com](mailto:gshelton@pvkansas.com)

### WARD VI

Terrence Gallagher  
913-642-4163 • [tgallagher@pvkansas.com](mailto:tgallagher@pvkansas.com)

Ian Graves  
816-665-9255 • [igraves@pvkansas.com](mailto:igraves@pvkansas.com)

Unsure which ward you live in?  
Visit [www.pvkansas.com/wardmap](http://www.pvkansas.com/wardmap).



Dear friends and neighbors,

The spring greening of our Prairie Village tree canopy may be my favorite seasonal change. With it brings hope for an ever-better year and future.

With JazzFest, VillageFest, the PV Art Fair, Juneteenth and other beloved events scheduled to return in person bigger than ever, we have much cause to be joyfully hopeful. Our award-winning parks and pools are ready and waiting for your family to create new memories. For the first decade in a half-century, our census population shows we are growing again. After investing more recently in roads, parks and police, our City

overall is in terrific shape.

Spring also kicks off our annual budget process. We start from exceptionally strong financial foundations, including: historically conservative fiscal management; beating our 2021 budget by a large surplus; property values going up again by almost 13% (creating hundreds of millions of dollars of new wealth for our residents); major new business investment underway in our commercial centers; Federal pandemic and infrastructure funding; and re-funding our bonds to save us over \$1.4 million.

Our City property tax rate, which hasn't increased since 2012, is now the second-lowest of all 26 first-class cities in Kansas. Our debt/appraised value ratio is the third-lowest of those 26 peer cities. We have a rare, triple "AAA" bond rating, an ample rainy-day fund, and a well-funded police pension plan. The average Prairie Village homeowner pays about \$70/month for City services, with the majority of that going to your police, roads and parks. Overall, vital City services comprise only 16% of your overall property tax bill in Prairie Village.

That's a place from which most cities only dream about starting their annual budget process. We do face some economic headwinds however. Nationally, inflation is running over 8%; prices we pay for construction, fuel and other expenses are not immune. Police and staff recruiting and retention remain challenging everywhere. We took aggressive steps already in 2022 to continue to attract the best here. We can responsibly and efficiently overcome those challenges and also further reduce that City sliver of effective tax rates.

Police, roads, infrastructure and parks investment will remain the "nuts and bolts" of our 2023 budget. We look to adopt a new five-year parks plan this year. By continuing to get those basic needs right, we create opportunities to improve. New opportunities and projects such as improving and supporting the arts, events, recreation, aquatics, diversity, affordability, sustainability, City Hall, Civic Center, our Ukrainian Sister City, and our local Foundation's charitable work become viable. Courageously seizing opportunities like these is what continues to take us from good to great...and onward to exceptional.

I'm honored to be your neighbor and Mayor in our exceptional Prairie Village. Thanks for allowing me to serve you.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Mikkelson".

-Eric



## Save the Date - JazzFest

Plans by the Prairie Village Jazz Festival committee are underway for a September 10, 2022 event. The festival will be held from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. in Harmon Park. Please save the date, and stay tuned for more details in future editions of the Village Voice and on the website at [pvkansas.com/jazzfest](http://pvkansas.com/jazzfest).

## Dates to Note

Date	Event	Time	Location
5/2	Council Meeting	6 p.m.	City Hall
5/3	Planning Commission	7 p.m.	City Hall
5/16	Council Meeting	6 p.m.	City Hall
5/30	Memorial Day - City offices closed	All day	All City offices
6/6	Council Meeting	6 p.m.	City Hall
6/7	Planning Commission	7 p.m.	City Hall
6/18	Juneteenth Festival	4-8 p.m.	Harmon Park
6/20	Juneteenth observed - City offices closed	All day	All City offices
6/21	Council Meeting	6 p.m.	City Hall

## Pool passes on sale now

Pool passes for the 2022 season are on sale now. To purchase your membership or see pool rules and hours, visit [www.pvkansas.com/pool](http://www.pvkansas.com/pool). The pool complex is scheduled to open May 28.



## Celebrate Independence Day at VillageFest 2022

Mark your calendars for the annual VillageFest celebration on July 4. Kick off the holiday with a pancake breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. and enjoy free, family-friendly activities from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Crowd favorites returning this year include the giant slip n' slide, pie baking contest, petting zoo, pony rides, bounce houses, climbing wall, children's bike parade, Mr. Bones, children's crafts, musical entertainment, face & hair painting, historic exhibit, food vendors, and much more. All events take place on the municipal campus located at 77th Street and Mission Road. Event details can be found at [www.pvkansas.com/VillageFest](http://www.pvkansas.com/VillageFest). And of course, remember to nominate your favorite PV resident or business for a Community Spirit Award. Nominations are due by May 15.

## Calling all bakers!

It's time to break out the rolling pin and brush up on your baking skills. The annual pie baking contest will return to VillageFest on July 4!

- No entry fee required
  - Cash prizes awarded
  - From-scratch pies (crust & filling) only
- Registration is limited, with walk-ups accepted only if space is available. Advance registration is available at [www.pvkansas.com/VillageFest](http://www.pvkansas.com/VillageFest)

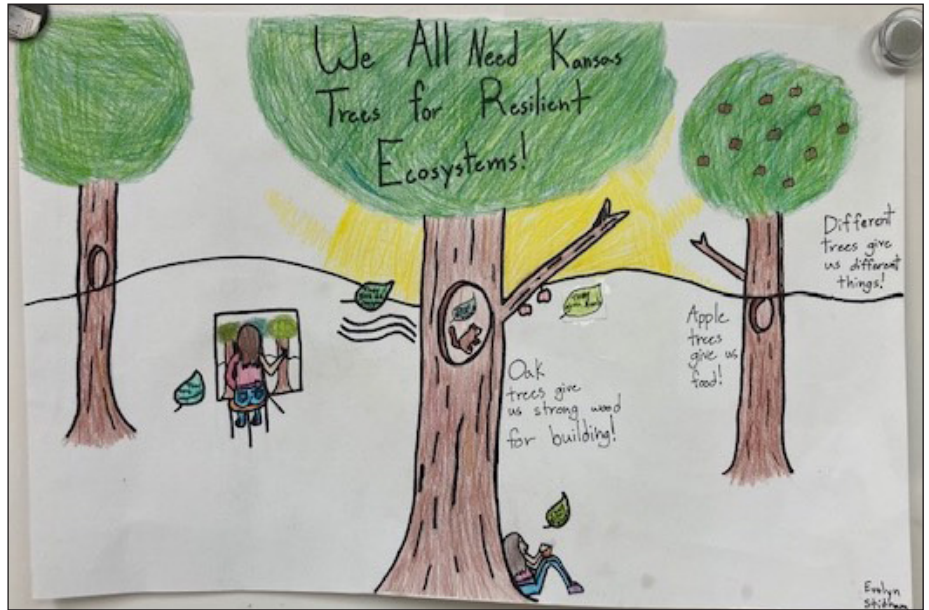




## Ask a Gardener coming soon to Wassmer Park

Ask a Gardener Days will be held at the Johnson County Extension Demonstration Garden in Wassmer Park beginning in May. On the third Monday of the month beginning in May and ending in October, Johnson County Extension Master Gardeners will be in the garden between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. to answer questions. All are welcome. Save the dates: May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, September 19, and October 17.

See what's in bloom  
"How to" demonstrations  
Ask questions



## Stidham wins Arbor Day poster contest

Evelyn Stidham, a fifth grade student in Peggy Lawler's class at Highlands Elementary School, was named the 2022 winner of the Arbor Day poster contest by the Prairie Village Tree Board in February. This year marks the 150th Anniversary of Arbor Day (1872-2022). The theme of this year's contest was "We All Need Kansas Trees for Resilient Ecosystems!"

The Tree Board looked at several criteria in judging entries including artistic merit, correct spelling, neatness, and how well a work communicated the poster theme.

Mayor Eric Mikkelson called on Ms. Lawler's class to congratulate Evelyn, and she was presented with a certificate by the City.

Evelyn's poster has since been selected the winner in the Northeast District of Kansas, and then went on to be selected the overall statewide winner in Kansas! Two trees will be planted in Evelyn's honor at McCrum Park, and all her classmates will receive tree seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation.

## Inaugural Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration held in Prairie Village

The Prairie Village Diversity Committee kicked off 2022 by co-sponsoring an inaugural Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, with the theme "I Have a Dream (Home)". The committee worked in collaboration with Stand-Up for Black Lives + Prairie Village, the Johnson County NAACP, KC Race Project, and Village Church for the event.

The program included artistic performances by youth singer Troy Sanders, vocalist Ruby Kirkwood who was accompanied by pianist Timothy Bailey, original poetry by Dr. George Williams, and drum and dance performances by the LINC Mighty Wild Eagles from Smith-Hale Middle School.

Guest speakers included Dr. King's great-nephew, Elisha Williams; co-founder of UMKC's Center for Neighborhoods, Dr. Jacob Wagner; and Mayor Eric Mikkelson.

Virginia Sewing was awarded the first ever Civil Rights Pioneer award for the work she and her late husband, Donald Sewing, put forth as realtors working to integrate Black families into Johnson County. Not only were they the first Black family to purchase a home in neighboring Fairway, they also helped over 60 Black families purchase homes in Johnson County.

View the program at <https://youtu.be/pRhKNVTDAGQ>.



# Nixon named 2022 Arbor Day Honoree

Prairie Village resident Deborah Nixon was named the 2022 Arbor Day honoree by the Prairie Village Tree Board.

In her nomination, Nixon's friend and neighbor Lisa Nason remarked on the "countless ways Deb has served the city over the years."

One way that Nixon continues to serve the city is as a team member in the planning, installation and maintenance of the Johnson County Master Gardeners demonstration garden at Wassmer Park. "The space has brought peace and joy to countless people during the pandemic," Nason wrote.

After retiring, Nixon began pursuing a degree in horticultural science from Johnson County Community College and became a Johnson County Extension Master Gardener. As an EMG she has volunteered at the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, and the Junior Master Garden programs at Horizon Academy and Corinth Elementary. She has volunteered for years as gardener and caretaker of the island at the intersection of Briar Street and

Rosewood Drive.

Nixon has instructed neighbors and others on the natural conservation techniques she incorporates in her own garden which was included in the Corinth Hills and Leewood Garden Club Garden Tours.

One of her biggest contributions to the community has been as a member of the Prairie Village Tree Board from 2002 until she retired from the board in 2021. Nixon served as board chairman for many of those years. During her tenure as chairman, she led the board in carrying out its mission of promoting policies and events to help ensure the tree canopy is maintained. The Tree Board launched an online map of all the trees in the city's parks while she was chairman and partnered with the Heartland Tree Alliance for the volunteer fall tree planting that has become an annual event. For years, Nixon organized and managed the Tree Board's annual fall seminar, bringing in well-known speakers to talk about a variety of topics related to trees.

The Public Works Department has



Arbor Day Honoree Deborah Nixon is pictured with her family in Wassmer Park.

planted a shortleaf pine at Wassmer Park in Nixon's honor.

The public is welcome to attend an Arbor Day event at the park at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 30, one day after the national Arbor Day Foundation celebrates its 150 year anniversary.



## Panel discusses housing in Prairie Village - past, present and future

In April, the Diversity Committee held its first panel discussion of the year. The focus of the discussion was on housing in Prairie Village.

There was a robust conversation about the impact that racial restrictions and redlining had here in Prairie Village as well as throughout the metro, the effects of which still greatly affect our community to this day.

The panelists discussed the impact that private investment firms have had on the rental market as well as the impact from developers as the community continues to see a surge of teardown/rebuilds. These

have been some of the most significant factors contributing to the loss of our affordable housing stock.

In order to turn this trend around, the panelists discussed the need for community advocates to work together to address housing issues. United Community Services will be recruiting housing advocates this summer to help with this cause.

The panel looked at what our community could do, as a landlocked city, to increase affordable housing in the future. The need to create "missing middle" housing such as multiplexes, accessory dwelling units (ADU's), and cottage courts were looked at

as viable affordable housing options.

Panelists included Director of Education and Planning at United Community Services of Johnson County Kristy Baughman, Prairie Village realtor Keith Johnson Jr., Johnson County Museum Curator of Interpretation and project lead for the new exhibit Redlined: Cities, Suburbs, and Segregation Andrew Gustafson, Co-founder of UMKC's Center for Neighborhoods Dr. Jacob Wagner and KCUR's Health and Legal Affairs editor Dan Margolies.

View the program at <https://fb.watch/ccbQn8QQ8Q/>.



From left: Prairie Village Finance Director Nickie Lee with Arts Council members Shelly, Abby, Trudy, Jessie, and Laurel; artist Robert Castillo and guests observing his artwork entitled 'Portrait of My Father' in the recent Strength in Diversity exhibit at Meadowbrook Park; March-April reception attendees and artist Randall Bennett talks with D.A.R.E. Officer David Poindexter; artist Katherine Bello (center) with Johnson County Commissioner Becky Fast and Prairie Village Mayor Eric Mikkelson.

## Arts Council celebrates return to in-person events

With the freshly-painted R.G. Endres Gallery at City Hall and the brand new gallery space at Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse in partnership with Johnson County Parks & Recreation, the Prairie Village Arts Council is off and running in 2022 with two public artist receptions under its belt.


The Arts Council kicked off the year with an inaugural exhibit at Meadowbrook Park ti-

tled "Strength in Diversity" and an artists' reception on February 16. A March 13 reception at R.G. Endres Gallery marked the end of a two-year, in-person event hiatus at that gallery that deprived the senses of art viewing, with only half a story told via virtual digital art shows at artspv.org. The Arts Council is beyond pleased to renew their tradition of in-person exhibitions and receptions.

The first (and current) group of artists showing at R.G. Endres Gallery in 2022 waited patiently for this moment. Three artists with local roots were represented in the beautifully curated show. Katherine Bello's paintings celebrate color in bold and uninhibited abstraction. Randall Bennett's luminous landscapes highlight skill with pastels and paint, both a testament to his awards

and membership in Artists for Conservation. Hasna Sal's novel glass pieces tell a meaningful story, or combine color and organic form in a remarkable, distinguished design.

The current show at Meadowbrook (April - June) and the upcoming show at R.G. Endres Gallery (May - June) both feature photography. We hope you can visit both galleries this spring and summer.



2023 budget planning is underway now. Visit [www.pvkansas.com](http://www.pvkansas.com), or check out our social media for information on how to get involved.

BUDGET PLANNING

## Yard waste reminders

In Prairie Village, yard waste is picked up weekly on trash day. Yard waste can be in bio-degradable yard waste bags, tied in bundles or in trash cans/rigid container of 33-gallon capacity or less. Residents are allowed 12 yard waste items per week, year round.

Cans must be marked "yard waste," have holes drilled in the bottom to allow water to drain, and must have a lid. All items must be inside the container, not sticking out the top.

Do not put sticks and branches in rigid containers. They should be tied in bundles no larger than four feet in length, less than 18 inches in circumference, and less than 50 pounds. Bundles must be tied together with twine. Individual branches within the bundle cannot be more than three inches in diameter. Logs are not accepted.

Items picked up include only natural yard waste, i.e. grass, leaves, tree limbs, flower or garden plants (without their pots), walnuts, crabapples, Christmas trees, etc. All materials collected are taken to a licensed compost facility. This recycling facility does not allow for ANY trash, landscape, or construction materials. Animal waste is not collected.

## Parade of Hearts

If you haven't heard of the Parade of Hearts yet, you've likely still seen the large, colorful fiberglass hearts placed around the KC Metro. Prairie Village is lucky enough to have received five hearts, and here are their locations. You can also view the entire map of Hearts throughout the KC region by downloading the Parade of Hearts app on your smartphone.



### "WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER"

**Dennis Stanton**  
7301 Mission Rd.



### "SPECTRUM OF LOVE"

**Whiskey Design**  
EYE CARE & SPECIALTY SURGERY, 7400 State Line Rd.



### "MOVING FORWARD"

**Michaela Riley**  
WELTNER PARK, W. 78th St. & State Line Rd.



### "JAZZIN' KC NIGHTS"

**Wanda Vehlewald**  
MEADOWBROOK PARK, 9101 Nall Ave.



### "BROKEN HEARTED"

**Brooke Jiskra**  
CORINTH QUARTER, 4117 W 83rd St.



## Join Citizen's Academy

The Prairie Village Citizen's Police Academy is a community-involved program designed to provide citizens with firsthand knowledge of the day-to-day operations of a modern police department.

The goal of the academy is to improve the relationship between the community and its police officers by personalizing the department. The academy achieves this goal through lectures, visual aids and hands-on field work to give the attendees the ultimate insight into the functions of the Prairie Village Police Department.

Citizen's Police Academy is a 10-week course and meets one day a week. It is scheduled for each Wednesday evening and will run from September 14-November 16.

If you are interested in attending the Citizen's Police Academy, apply online at [pvkansas.com/citizensacademy](http://pvkansas.com/citizensacademy), or contact Sgt. Joel Porter at 913-385-4623 or [jporter@pvkansas.com](mailto:jporter@pvkansas.com) for further information.

# PREVENT THEFT

## FROM YOUR HOME OR VEHICLE

IT'S TIME TO LOCK UP

#9PMROUTINE

BE PART OF THE 9 P.M. ROUTINE

- ★ Remove valuables (electronic devices, wallets, money, etc.) from your vehicle
- ★ Ensure that vehicle doors are locked
- ★ Check that all exterior house doors and garage doors are closed and locked
- ★ Turn on exterior lights
- ★ Share your 9 P.M. Routine by posting on social media using #9PMROUTINE

# Staff Spotlight

Name: **Adela Diaz**  
 Position: **Court Clerk**  
 Years with the City: **21**



Responsibilities: **Responsibilities of my position include preparing and processing court dockets, processing fine payments - both in person and via mail, processing citations issued by City personnel, preparing bench warrants and receiving bond payments, preparing daily deposits and disbursing bonds accordingly, and responding to inquiries regarding citations in person, via mail, and e-mail.**

Favorite thing about working for Prairie Village: **I have met many interesting people as court clerk and all my wonderful co-workers.**

Name: **Steve Mills**  
 Position: **Crew Leader**  
 Years with the City: **31**



Responsibilities: **I'm responsible for supervision of automotive, equipment and building maintenance.**

Favorite thing about working for Prairie Village: **Each day presents different challenges from repairing equipment for snow removal, prepping mowers and lawn care equipment for growing season and keeping the vehicles up and running, and it has been a rewarding experience. From old technology to new technology, there's something different each day.**

Name: **Ivan Washington**  
 Position: **Captain**  
 Years with the City: **20**



Responsibilities: **I am currently assigned as the Staff Services Division Commander. I'm responsible for the management of our dispatch center, records unit, property room, hiring processes, and training program.**

Favorite thing about working for Prairie Village: **I truly believe the Prairie Village Police Department is a progressive organization constantly evaluating ways to improve the overall services provided to the community. The department also provides a very professional and positive work environment for all staff members. This combination makes it a joy to continuing working for the City of Prairie Village.**

Prairie Village Municipal Office  
7700 Mission Road  
Prairie Village, KS 66208

Reader Feedback  
Please send your comments to:  
info@pvkansas.com  
913-385-4674

## Signs throughout Prairie Village mark route of historic trails



While signs of spring were popping up this March, literal signs also began to appear throughout Prairie Village denoting the route of three historic trails in the area: the Santa Fe, Oregon & California trails. The signs also point those interested to a new web page on the City's website at [pvkansas.com/HistoricTrailsPV](http://pvkansas.com/HistoricTrailsPV) where viewers can learn about the history of the area and the trails.

The trail markers and web page are the culmination of four years of work and research by community volunteers. Mark Morgan spearheaded the efforts.

"For years, myself and others in Corinth Hills had known that the historic frontier Santa Fe/Oregon/California trail route went through Harmon Park where the old wagon train 'swale' is still visible today," Morgan said. "That same trail route also went through our Corinth Hills neighborhood, but we just weren't sure where. The initial concept was to identify where the Westport Route Souther Branch of the Santa Fe/Oregon/California trails crossed our neighborhood, and develop appropriate marking/signing for its residents to learn of the historical significance

of the historic trails routing through their neighborhood."

Over the years, the project expanded out of Corinth Hills. Volunteers worked closely with the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association to identify and map all of the three trails' historic trail crossings in Prairie Village. The result was over 30 soft point trail crossing locations over the approximately three-mile route in Prairie Village neighborhoods.

The City funded purchase of the trail markers, and they were hung by Public Works staff this spring. Learn more at [pvkansas.com/HistoricTrailsPV](http://pvkansas.com/HistoricTrailsPV).

## City Contact Information

913-381-6464 ■ [info@pvkansas.com](mailto:info@pvkansas.com) ■ [www.pvkansas.com](http://www.pvkansas.com)

### CITY HALL AND MUNICIPAL COURT

7700 Mission Road  
Wes Jordan, City Administrator  
Jamie Robichaud, Deputy City Administrator  
Meghan Buom, Assistant City Administrator  
Tim Schwartzkopf, Assistant City Administrator  
Adam Geffert, City Clerk  
Nickie Lee, Finance Director

### POLICE DEPARTMENT

7710 Mission Road  
Byron Roberson, Chief of Police

### PUBLIC WORKS (Facility now home to Building Codes)

3535 Somerset Drive  
Keith Bredehoeft, Public Works Director

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you on social media? Follow the City of Prairie Village and the Police Department for the most up-to-date information on City happenings.



### DONATE

If you would like to make a donation to the Prairie Village Foundation, open your smartphone's camera and hover over this QR Code. A page will pop up directing you to the Foundation's website.



### EVERYONE MAY PARTICIPATE

If anyone requires an accommodation to participate in public meetings, contact the City Clerk's office at 913-381-6464 (TDD 800-766-2777) at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting time, if possible, to make arrangements.