

*For All Seasons ~ For All Reasons*



JOHNSON COUNTY  
PARK & RECREATION  
DISTRICT

2004  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

# THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The District's 20-year Master Action Plan, MAP 2020, had many of its scheduled projects underway in 2004, and key land acquisition goals were achieved. Current parks and future park acreage at the end of the year totaled 8,360 acres, a significant increase of 776 acres, or 10% of total District acreage.

The new master plan for Antioch Park, the District's oldest property, is taking shape. The north and south lakes were dredged, the feeder streams for both lakes were deepened to enhance flood control in the vicinity of the park, and several recreational components, a new Dodge Town and the perimeter fitness trail, are either complete or will be in early 2005.

The addition to the Ernie Miller Nature Center will allow staff to expand interpretive and educational offerings, and provide additional space for exhibits. The Children's Services department in the Recreation Division has expanded After School, Preschool, and Kindergarten enrichment offerings in the Gardner and the DeSoto school districts.

The District had its national accreditation renewed for five years, ensuring the District is meeting stringent management and efficiency standards established for park and recreation agencies.

The District's surveys of park users show you have a tremendous appreciation of your parks and trails. A national rating of counties on quality of life issues, in which Johnson County ranked seventh, shows that living within close proximity to a park or trail is becoming the major factor in choosing a place to live and purchasing a home.

I gratefully acknowledge the continued support of the Board of County Commissioners, the citizens of Johnson County, and the District's Board and staff for a super year. Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts and feedback. I appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Meadors  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
(913) 438-7275  
michael.meadors@jocogov.org

## 2004 HIGHLIGHTS

### DISTRICT PRESERVES MORE GREEN SPACE

The District acquired 776 acres in 2004, ending the year with 8,360 acres. Purchases included 237 acres for a future park site in the county's southeast, and 368 acres in the northwest near De Soto.

A small quarter-acre property in Prairie Village became the first parcel acquired by the District to assist cities in providing park land in the northeastern part of the county. The property is adjacent to the city's Prairie Park. The District's intent is to purchase property within the Interstate 435 loop to lease to local municipalities for development and operation as city parks.

### 2004 CAPITAL PRIORITIES



Implementation of master plan projects at Antioch and Ernie Miller parks (both detailed on Page 3), as well as improvements made at other existing properties, renovated aging infrastructure in 2004. Items included in the \$3.2 million Capital Improvement Plan were prioritized according to whether the project represented a

health and safety improvement impacting public or staff, an enhancement to revenue generation or expense reduction, an aesthetic improvement, or a combination of the three.

The capital plan took a more proactive approach to some long-neglected infrastructure needs and addressed concerns that have not traditionally been taken care of through operations and maintenance budgets:

- \$75,000 for trail overlays and replacements;
- \$50,000 toward landscaping and perimeter fencing;
- \$31,827 for sign updates;
- \$10,000 to assist in the current review of master plan options for Oakridge Stables operations;
- \$100,000 in emergency contingency funds; and
- \$125,000 toward improvements at the Shawnee Mission Park Beach improving handicapped accessibility, shade structures, and landscaping.

Larger-scale projects were:

- \$430,000 for trail development in the Streamway Park System;
- \$175,000 for renovation of the parking lot at the Mid-America Sports Complex; and

Some CIP projects continue into 2005 due to the complexities of the improvements:

- \$200,000 toward a more integrated process for replacement and resurfacing of portions of the 16 miles of roads in District parks;
- \$50,000 for building restorations; and
- \$365,000 at the Tomahawk Hills Golf Course for site studies, ground improvements, and renovations of cart paths, including safety improvements to the paths on Holes 9, 13, and 18.



## FOR ALL SEASONS ~ FOR ALL REASONS

### ERNIE MILLER NATURE CENTER EXPANSION

A 7,000 square-foot addition to the Ernie Miller Nature Center was completed in March 2004. A large portion of the new space is a multipurpose room that can accommodate 150 persons and can be partitioned into two areas. The partitioned room doubles the rooms that had been available for environmental interpretive



programming. The addition vastly improves programming potential and provides flexibility for offerings for schools and large groups. A 30-foot-long stream and small pond with a "bubbler" water feature within the center's courtyard were added to the addition's new wildlife viewing area. A 500-gallon aquarium featuring native species was also added. The nature center also received a \$17,000 Heritage Trust Fund grant to develop a master plan for exhibits.

### ANTIOCH PARK RENOVATION, PHASES I AND II

Since its dedication in 1968, Antioch Park has been one of the most-visited parks in the metro area and annually receives more than 800,000 visitors. The popular park is receiving much-needed improvements.

The park's new master plan calls for \$4 million in improvements spread over four phases. Phase I, scheduled for completion in the spring of 2005, alleviates erosion along the shoreline of the south lake and around the picnic shelters. The two lakes were dredged to remove heavy silting from upstream and the cause of past water quality concerns. The north lake's feeder stream channel has been deepened to assist in storm water drainage. Boardwalks will improve wildlife-viewing opportunities on both lakes. A new walking path will encircle the entire park.

The largest single item in the District's 2004 Capital Improvements Plan was \$707,000 for Phase II renovations, which began in August 2004. This phase will nearly double the Dodge Town playground and separate age-group areas. Seating benches and covered picnic pavilions will also be added. The shade structure around Building A has been removed, restoring most of the original architecture of the old estate home. The park's entry road has been realigned for more convenient access and parking.

### STOLL PARK SLATED FOR NEW MASTER PLAN

The District Board voted in mid-2004 to use capital improvement funds to complete a new master plan for Thomas S. Stoll Memorial Park and to allocate \$100,000 to begin implementation of the plan in 2005. This followed the unanimous rejection of a request from Johnson County Community College to exchange the park for another property or properties of equal value. Park neighbors strongly opposed the exchange.



Patti Banks & Associates was hired in late 2004 to organize a series of public meetings to help develop the new master plan. The District also committed to budget for greater maintenance of the park and to plan improvements to the picnic areas, perimeter walking trails, roadways and parking lots.

A seven-acre temporary dog off-leash area was also fenced in the park during 2004. It represents the District's fourth off-leash area and the first in the central part of the County.

### ACCREDITATION RENEWED, OTHER HONORS RECEIVED

In October, the District learned it had been successful in seeking national re-accreditation. The District was first accredited in 1999, and like other accredited agencies, must renew its accreditation every five years to ensure compliance with the 155 standards that have been set by the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. In its re-accreditation efforts, the District met all but two of the 155 standards. The effort involved an extensive self-evaluation and visit by an outside review team.

The Shawnee Mission School District's Work Experience Program named the District as its **Employer of the Year**. In addition, Assistant Teacher Victor Wyler, a Shawnee Mission East graduate who has worked in the Diemer Elementary After School program, was named the program's **Employee of the Year**. Through the Work Experience program, the school district works with local companies to make sure students with special needs can find employment, develop job skills, and make positive contributions to the community.

The District's Ernie Miller Nature Center was honored with the Kansas Wildscape Foundation's "**Most Creative Event Site**" award. The award recognized the El Grande Birding Fiesta, which took place on April 24, 2004, in association with Outdoor Kansas Kids Day.

### 2004 BOARD OF PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSIONERS

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District is governed by a seven-member Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners appointed to three-year staggered terms by the Johnson County Commission.

**Dr. Mike Jurkovich, 2004 Chair**  
**Paul E. Alvarado, Jr.**  
**Jack M. Epps**  
**Mark G. Stingley**  
**Vickie Truitt**  
**Nancy Wallerstein**  
**Dr. Marvin E. Wollen**

# THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

## PARK USER SURVEY RESULTS HIGHLY FAVORABLE

Park exit surveys were conducted during May and June and reflected highly on park maintenance, safety, and quality. Surveys were conducted in Ernie Miller, Heritage, Kill Creek, and Shawnee Mission Parks, and the Mill Creek Streamway Park.

82.7% of park users were from Johnson County, 92.5 % were from Kansas, and 7.5% were from Missouri. 30.3% of users said they visit the parks more than once each week. It was a first time visit for 9.8%.

95.2% of visitors rated the parks excellent or good. 94.8% rated the park maintenance excellent or good. 96.7% state that they feel very safe or safe while in the parks.

According to survey results, the most frequent park activities are:

|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| Hike/walk/stroll     | 31.4% |
| Use off-leash area   | 18.9% |
| Sit and relax        | 16.7% |
| Cruise/Drive through | 10.6% |
| Cycling              | 10.6% |
| Jog/Run              | 8.8%  |
| Picnic               | 7.9%  |
| Use Playground       | 7.1%  |

## NEW FRIENDS GROUP MOVES AHEAD

Friends for Parks & Recreation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving, growing, and enhancing the region's parks and recreational amenities, began organizing in 2004 with the assistance of the District.

The concept for the parks-focused group took root when volunteers began to address growing concerns that public funding was not keeping pace with community needs for acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of parkland and recreational amenities.

Modeled after similar successful programs – a growing trend in communities all across the country – Friends for Parks & Recreation partners with public agencies, private organizations, companies, and individuals to create a vital support system.

Prior to the development of this new group, the Parks and Recreation Foundation of Johnson County has been the District's primary non-government partner in land acquisition efforts for more than two decades. For more information, call 913.894.3329

## KANSAS CITY SENIOR GAMES LAUNCHED



The 50 Plus Department conducted the District's first-ever Kansas City Senior Games, on Sept. 10-12. Also sometimes known as Senior Olympics, Senior Games already take place across the country. The initial local games had 100 participants and utilized venues on both sides of the state line.

The Senior Games movement is a good example of how today's seniors are much more active than those of years past. The senior games also feed younger and more active seniors into the District's 50 Plus programs.

The National Senior Games Association sanctions 18 events. Events held as part of the initial Kansas City games included golf, shuffleboard, tennis, horseshoes, a 5 kilometer race, bowling, and billiards.

The National Senior Games Association is a not-for-profit agency affiliated with the U.S. Olympic Committee. Following annual local games, as well as regional competitions, National Senior Games take place every two years. Regionally, Senior Games are already in place in Topeka and Salina, Kansas, in Des Moines, Iowa, and in Columbia and St. Louis, Missouri. The 25-year-old St. Louis games is the largest in the nation with about 1,600 participants per year.

## DISTRICT AFFILIATES WITH THE ALI KEMP EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The District in 2004 began to administer a self-defense program for girls and young women that is expected to grow regionally and nationally. The agreement with The Ali Kemp Educational (T.A.K.E.) Foundation will raise awareness and contribute to a living legacy in honor of Ali Kemp, a 19-year-old Leawood resident who was murdered while working as a lifeguard at a residential subdivision pool in the summer of 2002.



The idea for the program originated with a Kemp family friend and was presented to representatives from the District. Under the direction of Jill Leiker, Corporate and Community Wellness Manager, the program is aimed primarily at ages 12 and up. In initial offerings, about 80 percent of participants have been mothers and daughters taking the course together.

A website for the program went online in early 2005 at [www.takedefense.org](http://www.takedefense.org) and is expected to be the first in the nation to bring together a collection of self defense programs on this scale. People anywhere in the country will be able to see if self-defense programs are offered in their communities and will be able to contact the Foundation and express interest in having the program in their community.

# FOR ALL SEASONS ~ FOR ALL REASONS

## CULTURAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The Theatre in the Park program received a \$5,000 grant from the Francis Families Foundation in 2004. The grant marked the first time the theater has applied for or received funding from the Francis Families Foundation, which, among other priorities, supports cultural programs within the Kansas City area.



The Theatre in the Park had a total attendance of 43,712 for the 2004 musical season of four productions. Gate proceeds for the 2004 season totaled \$159,307. In addition, another 5,131 people and \$18,377 in revenues were realized from the Theatre Troupe production of "Fame". This was the second year for a production by the Troupe, which is made up of area high school and college students.

## CULTURAL ARTS & CRAFTS

An estimated 10,000 people attended the combined Merriam Turkey Creek Festival and the District's Summertime Arts & Crafts Show in Antioch Park. Pleasant weather helped as the attendance for the annual event was one of the best ever experienced. The City of Merriam provides numerous family-oriented activities and exhibits for the community event.

## NATURE CENTER HOSTS KANSAS ART EXHIBIT

The expansion of the Ernie Miller Nature Center enabled adequate space for a Kansas Flint Hills-themed traveling art exhibit during October and November. Titled "Homage to the Flint Hills," the exhibit featured pieces of art from artists throughout the Midwest. The majority of the pieces were paintings in various styles and sizes depicting Kansas' wide-open spaces and seemingly endless skies. The exhibit was well-received and has prompted requests for the center to consider similar exhibits.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES



A number of changes for the District's Children's Services Division took place when school opened in the fall of 2004. Included was the District's much-anticipated first venture into the Gardner School District. Gardner Elementary hosts what is being called a "mega-site" for Children's Services. Programs there include Preschool, Before School care, Kindergarten

enrichment, and After School care.

Children's Services expanded in the De Soto School District as well, where the District opened an After School location at Mize Elementary for the 2003-04 school year. The District expanded after school programs in 2004 to three additional De Soto elementary schools: Clear Creek, Prairie Ridge, and River View. Within the Shawnee Mission School District, Children's Services closed its preschool site at South Park Elementary School and its After School site at Crestview, while continuing to offer an After School program at South Park. The District offered 16 after school programs in the Shawnee Mission School District, and operated 21 after school programs and five preschools throughout the county.

## PARKS & FACILITIES ACRES 2004

|                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Antioch Park                         | 43.48          |
| Athletic Training Center             | 1.13           |
| Big Bull Creek Park (Future)         | 1,351.06       |
| Blue River Streamway (Future)        | 13.98          |
| Bull Creek Streamway Park            | 19.65          |
| Camp Branch Park (Future)            | 54.18          |
| Cedar-Niles (Future)                 | 852.40         |
| Ernie Miller Park                    | 116.18         |
| 207 <sup>th</sup> and Nall (Future)  | 9.38           |
| Heritage Park                        | 1,238.50       |
| Kill Creek Park                      | 907.74         |
| Kill Creek Streamway (Future)        | 232.09         |
| Kill Creek Streamway Park            | 29.33          |
| Merriam Future Park                  | 2.11           |
| Mid-America Sports Complex           | 86.66          |
| Mid-America West Sports Complex      | 39.57          |
| Mill Creek Streamway Park            | 548.73         |
| Mill Creek Streamway Park (Future)   | 2.03           |
| Nursery/Streamway Maintenance        | 20.24          |
| Oakridge Farm                        | 363.50         |
| Prairie Park Addition                | 0.24           |
| Rieke Lake Future Park Site          | 367.65         |
| Roeland Park Aquatic Center          | 3.44           |
| SE Area Future Park Site             | 236.79         |
| Shawnee Mission Park                 | 1,236.19       |
| Shawnee Mission Pk Addition (Future) | 155.31         |
| Stanley Park                         | 40.26          |
| Sunflower Nature Park                | 57.16          |
| Swarner Park                         | 2.67           |
| Thomas S. Stoll Memorial Park        | 78.96          |
| Tomahawk Hills Golf Course           | 238.04         |
| Tomahawk Hills Golf Course (Future)  | 12.21          |
| <b>TOTAL ACREAGE:</b>                | <b>8360.86</b> |

## VISITATIONS

|                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Antioch Park                    | 606,708          |
| Ernie Miller Park               | 121,415          |
| Mid-America West Sports Complex | 311,263          |
| Heritage Park                   | 1,363,481        |
| Heritage Park Golf Course       | 284,872          |
| Kill Creek Park                 | 160,545          |
| Mid-America Sports Complex      | 222,015          |
| Shawnee Mission Park            | 2,271,046        |
| Stanley Park                    | 35,826           |
| Stoll Memorial Park             | 296,321          |
| Streamway Park System           | 699,940          |
| Sunflower Nature Park           | 38,861           |
| Tomahawk Recreation Complex     | 427,346          |
| <b>TOTAL VISITATIONS</b>        | <b>6,839,638</b> |

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Administrative Offices

7900 Renner Rd (913) 438-7275

### Registration & Reservations

6501 Antioch (913) 831-3355

# THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

## OAKRIDGE FARM CONCEPT PLAN



A new concept plan that will retain a horse boarding operation at Oakridge Stables was developed in 2004. The plan, if approved, will relocate the operation to the site of the former stable

barn and change the operation from one based on pastures to one based on paddocks and turnout areas. The next step will be a feasibility study that will further refine the concept plan, estimate construction costs, and determine fees.

As proposed, the stable operation would be able to accommodate up to 58 horses, actually up from the present recommended capacity of 55. Paddocks would consist of fenced corrals; include water and shade structures, and accommodate 12 to 15 horses while affording each animal between 200 and 300 square feet as recommended by the extension service. The turnout areas would total between 13 and 16 acres of pasture.

Other features considered under the new plan include: a show ring, sick pen, quarantine area for new arrivals, hard-surface parking for borders and about 12 spaces for horse trailers, which are expected to be assigned on an annual lottery basis and to generate additional revenue. To help boarders realize an interest in educating the public about horses, there are also plans to include a multiuse trail skirting the operation allowing the public to get closer to the animals.

## VOLUNTEERS GAVE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS A MUCH-NEEDED MAKEOVER

The Earth Riders Mountain Bike Club of Kansas City recently volunteered to renovate and reconstruct the mountain bike trail in Shawnee Mission Park. The club also worked with the District to develop mountain bike trails at Kill Creek Park. The group's goal in reconstructing the trails is to make them follow the contour of the land and therefore be less susceptible to erosion and more sustainable. The District provided staff support, raw materials, and hand tools.

### 2004 Enterprise Fund

The Enterprise Fund maintains a fee-support philosophy in which direct program costs are absorbed by user fees paid by the participants who benefit the most from the program quality and value, rather than by the general taxpayer.

|                                 |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Budget .....                    | \$17,182,620  |
| Actual revenues .....           | \$13,603,181* |
| Actual operating expenses ..... | \$13,007,549* |

\* 2004 Audit

## 2004 PROGRAM PARTICIPATIONS

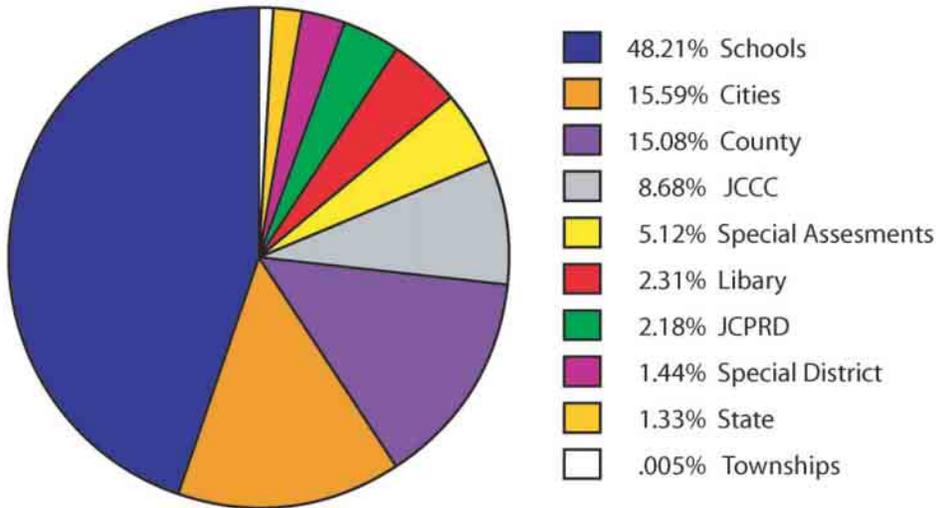
|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b>Adult Sports</b>                             |                  |
| Mid-America Sports Complex                      | 207,748          |
| Mid-America West Sports Complex                 | 130,546          |
| Other Softball fields                           | 59,140           |
| Roeland Park and Tomahawk Domes                 | 105,954          |
| <b>Aquatics</b>                                 |                  |
| Swim and Water Safety lessons                   | 14,019           |
| Roeland Park Aquatic Center                     | 58,436           |
| <b>Children's Services</b>                      |                  |
| Preschools, Afterschool Programs, Day Camps     | 272,348          |
| <b>Instructional Athletics</b>                  |                  |
| Youth and Adult                                 | 22,167           |
| <b>Corporate and Community Wellness</b>         |                  |
| Fitness and Exercise Classes                    | 3,724            |
| Athletic Training Center                        | 26,508           |
| KC Corporate Challenge                          | 44,961           |
| <b>Dance, Performing, Fine Arts</b>             |                  |
| All Ages  | 14,262           |
| <b>50 Plus Program</b>                          |                  |
| Travel, Leagues, Aquatics                       | 1,732            |
| Olathe, Overland Park, Roeland Park Centers     | 110,433          |
| Senior Clubs, Special Events, Volunteers        | 5,293            |
| <b>Golf Courses: Rounds</b>                     |                  |
| Heritage Park Golf Course                       | 43,482           |
| Tomahawk Hills Golf Course                      | 44,424           |
| <b>Environmental and Interpretive Programs</b>  |                  |
| Environmental & Cultural Education Programs     | 41,698           |
| Ernie Miller Nature Center Visitors             | 23,477           |
| Instructional Outdoor Skills Programs           | 47               |
| Special Events                                  | 7,729            |
| TimberRidge Adventure Center                    | 1,424            |
| <b>Competitive Athletic Events</b>              |                  |
|   | 3,422            |
| <b>The Theatre in the Park</b>                  |                  |
|   | 68,888           |
| <b>Special Populations and Special Olympics</b> |                  |
| Special Populations                             | 3,430            |
| Special Olympics - "The Rangers"                | 4,764            |
| <b>Youth Sports</b>                             |                  |
| Gymnastics                                      | 12,721           |
| Heritage Park Football                          | 25,660           |
| Heritage Park Soccer                            | 90,151           |
| Thomas S. Stoll Park Soccer                     | 44,061           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>1,492,649</b> |

2004 facility visitation figures appear on Page 5

## FOR ALL SEASONS ~ FOR ALL REASONS

### WHERE DOES A JOHNSON COUNTY HOMEOWNER'S PROPERTY TAXES GO?

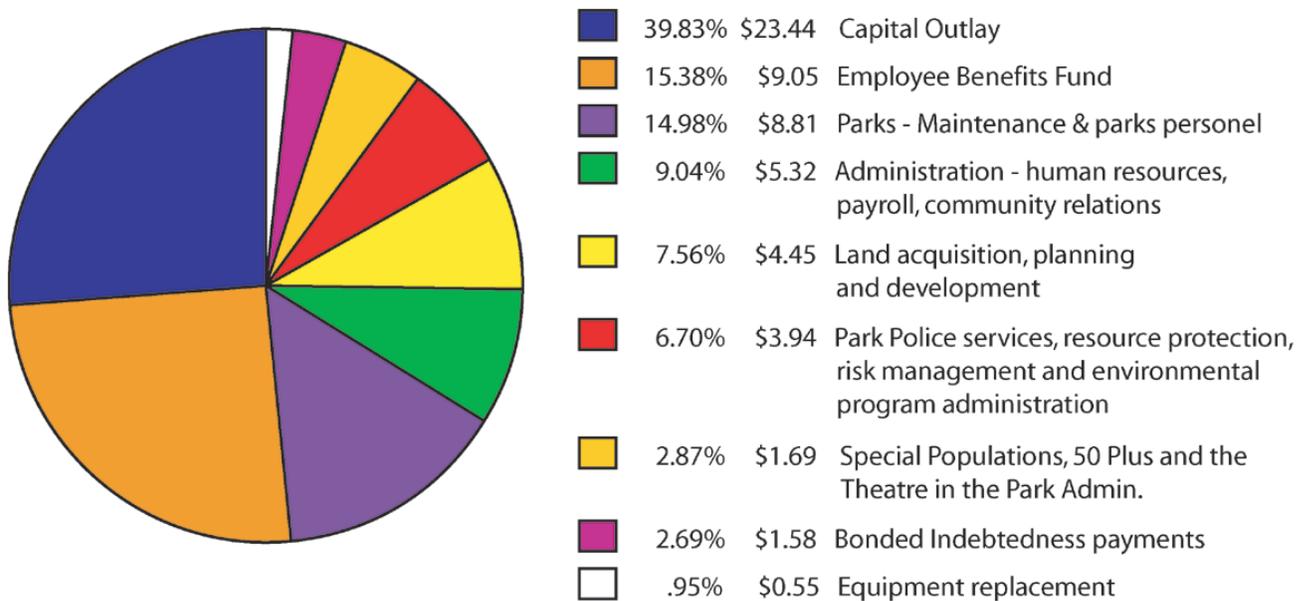
The amount of property tax an individual homeowner pays depends on the budgets set by the taxing units where the property is located. Examples of taxing units are schools, cities, the county, and the state. Property taxes, or ad valorem taxes, in Johnson County for the 2004 budget year were \$703,939,236.02\*. The District's share of those taxes in 2004 was 2.18 percent, or \$15,302,184. The average breakdown per taxing unit countywide\*:



### THE AMOUNT OF TAX TO BE LEVIED AND THE CURRENT ASSESSED VALUATION OF PROPERTY DETERMINE THE FINAL MILL LEVY

A taxing body certifies their approved budgets on or before August 25 each year, and the County Clerk's office computes the mill levy, within statutory limits, for the taxing unit. Based on a countywide average of home values and taxing entities, a hypothetical owner of a \$216,294 home would pay property tax of approximately \$3,000. In 2004, the District's mill levy was 2.365 mills, or \$58.83 in ad valorem taxes per average household.

### WHAT DOES THE DISTRICT DO WITH THE \$58.83?



\*Calculations based on data in the 2003 Abstract of Taxes by the Johnson County Clerk's Office.

# THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

JOIN US IN A YEAR-LONG CELEBRATION!

## THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT CELEBRATES 50 OUTSTANDING YEARS

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1955 establishment of the Shawnee Mission Park District and the appointment of the District's first board of park commissioners. The park district became the Johnson County Park and Recreation District in 1967 when recreation programming was added to its mission and its jurisdiction was increased to all of Johnson County.

The celebration will launch the next 50 years as well. It's a celebration of the past and a celebration of potential, and it will help raise community awareness as to just how instrumental the District has been in Johnson County's development as a community of choice.

Join us as we celebrate the many people, places and programs that have added so significantly to the community.

## JOHNSON COUNTY CELEBRATES ITS 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN 2005

Johnson County Government in 2005 is celebrating the county's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A citizens committee appointed by the Board of County Commissioners is partnering with the District for a fun-filled special event on **Saturday, September 17, 2005**, at The Theatre in the Park, 7900 Renner Road, in Shawnee Mission Park. Watch the local media for details.

Read about the District's History and Check the Calendar of Events on [www.jcprd.com](http://www.jcprd.com).

*Celebrating Fifty!*  
1955 - 2005



JOHNSON COUNTY  
PARK & RECREATION  
DISTRICT



### A SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON AT THE THEATRE IN THE PARK

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Gypsy   | June 3-5 & 9-12      |
| Suessical   | June 17-19 & 23-26   |
| Disney's Beauty and the Beast                               | July 1-4 & 7-10      |
| Singin' in the Rain   | July 15-17 & 21-24   |
| West Side Story presented by The Theatre in the Park Troupe | July 29-31 & Aug 4-7 |

For more information, visit [www.theatreinthepark.org](http://www.theatreinthepark.org) or call 913.631.7050

JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT  
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