mission

To improve the quality of life by providing recreational, leisure, and aesthetic opportunities for all citizens, and by conserving and enhancing the environment.

We will accomplish this mission by providing quality programming, making the best use of existing resources, developing a supportive and influential constituency, developing effective collaborations and partnerships, and acquiring and preserving natural features.

year in review

Dear Friends of Parks and Recreation:

As we move into 2010, it’s appropriate to look back at last year’s accomplishments. 2009 was a busy and challenging year for Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation. We have all felt the impact of our country’s struggling economy and, as a result, have had to deal with significant change. At Parks and Recreation, we have experienced reduced staff, lowered levels of service in our parks, and revisions in operating hours at our facilities.

In spite of these setbacks, we were able to continue servicing our community’s youth with enhanced recreational and educational programming specific to their needs. We also amplified our marketing efforts through the use of social media. The KCMO Parks and Recreation Facebook page went live in October. I hope you have all had the opportunity to become a fan!

Another achievement we proudly attained was the reaccreditation of our department for the third time in ten years making us one of only 78 nationally accredited parks and recreation agencies in the country. As you read through this Year in Review booklet, you will find details regarding additional 2009 accomplishments.

Although these are trying times, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners and our staff will continue to provide quality programs, excellent parks, trails, recreational amenities and cultural activities for our community in 2010 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Mark L. McHenry, Director

2009

2009

Mark L. McHenry leads the Blazing Paddles Racing Team at the annual Dragon Boat Festival & Races.

Photo Credits: Paul McMillian; Shannon Dooley, Heidi Downer, Jesse Frazier and Melinda Minks, KCMO Parks and Recreation Marketing & Special Events
In 1907 a dream began. City activists declared an idea to “create the largest zoological garden in the United States. There will be nothing better in the world. Swope Park is an admirable site for this purpose…”

The Parks Board set aside 60 acres in Swope Park in 1908 for the Kansas City Zoological Gardens. Fundraisers, lectures and parades followed resulting in The Bird and Carnivore House, the first Zoo building. In December 1909, the Kansas City Zoological Gardens officially opened with four lions, three monkeys, a wolf, fox, coyote, badger, lynx, eagle and other birds.

In 1948, a children’s zoo, Touchtown, was launched that featured a petting zoo with domestic animals and freestanding structures. In 1948, a children’s zoo, Touchtown, was launched that featured a petting zoo with domestic animals and freestanding structures.

In 1961 the Hallmark Company donated the “Birthday Pavilion” for birthday parties. A puppet theater opened in Touchtown in 1964; it was remodeled in 1970 to become the Education building.

The Dairy Barn, funded by the Kansas City division of Mid-American Dairymen, was built in 1971. The Dairy Barn housed cows and milking equipment, and children were encouraged to participate in milking.

In 1972, the Kansas City Southern Railroad donated a miniature railroad, and construction began on a two-mile track.

Local philanthropist Delbert Dunmire financed Prairie Dog Town in 1987. It added to the small animal exhibits and offered another example of a species indigenous to North America.

In the early 1990s, the Zoo experienced a massive reconstruction and development. The Zoo Railroad was also shortened to its current 1-mile route.

In January 2002, an historic partnership between the Kansas City Zoo and Friends of the Zoo was made to enhance the quality of exhibits and continually improve the Zoo experience for the visitor. Under the agreement, Friends of the Zoo, a non-profit, membership-based organization, manages all Zoo operations in agreement with the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners.

Today, a 202-acre nature sanctuary, the Kansas City Zoo is the most useful and accessible resource in the region for bringing urban and suburban families in touch with the diverse habitats, cultures and animals of the natural world. A visit to the Zoo is a journey around the world, an interactive experience that utilizes all the senses to entertain, educate and engage visitors of all ages. For many, the Zoo serves as the only link to animals and habitats that remain wild on our planet and opens hearts and minds to the importance of preserving the natural world for generations to come.
Kansas City's oldest public fountain, the Women's Leadership Fountain was rededicated in early June of 2009. The fountain along with other historic landmarks located in The Paseo's median between Ninth and Twelfth Streets— including the Meyer Monument, The Terrace and the Fitzsimon's Memorial—underwent a major restoration that began in 2008. Susan Richards Johnson & Associates, Inc. (SRJA) was hired to do the complete restoration.

In August 2006, an overwhelming percentage of citizens said “yes” when asked to support a Voter Referendum to allow the sale of a small tract of property at 22nd & Gillham Road. It is these funds that were used to restore the Women's Leadership Fountain and this section of Paseo's monuments to their original glory.

The fountain at Ninth Street and The Paseo was designed in 1898 by George Kessler and John Van Brunt as an entry feature to the then newly created Paseo Boulevard.

After years of service, the fountain deteriorated. A partial renovation in 1990, assisted by the fundraising efforts of The Central Exchange, kept the fountain running for several more years. At that time, it was renamed the “Women’s Leadership Fountain” and dedicated to 13 notable Kansas City women who had made long-lasting contributions to the City. All of these women triumphed over adversity and are forever remembered in the fabric of Kansas City history. Honorees include:

- Madalyn Pinkston Brock - activist, businesswoman, established the Madalyn Brock Foundation;
- Esther Swirk Brown - promoted social justice and equality in education;
- Carolyn Benton Cockefair - English professor who promoted continuing education;
- Phoebe Jane Ess - supporter of women's suffrage, first woman to run for public office in Kansas City;
- Katherine Berry Richardson and Alice Berry Graham - dentist and doctor sisters who founded Children's Mercy Hospital;
- Mary Harmon Weeks - educator, a founder of the Parent Teacher Association;
- Ellen (Nell) Donnelly Reed - seamstress, progressive manufacturer, founder of Donnelly Garment Company;
- Bertha Manheimer Lieberman - first president and honorary life president of the Greater Kansas City Section of the National Council of Jewish Women;
- Nelle Elizabeth Nichols Peters - architect of homes, office, apartment and hotel buildings; Myrtle Page Fillmore - founder of Unity School of Christianity;
- Ada Crogman Franklin - educator, founder of Kansas City Call newspaper; and
- Guadalupe Bribiesca de Garcia - organizer of the Guadalupe Center, Westside Fiesta and community events

A maintenance endowment is in the process of being created to preserve these amenities for future generations.
Thanks to funds raised by the Rose Society from public and private donors, the Laura Conyers Smith Municipal Rose Garden in Loose Park underwent an extensive renovation in 2009.

The project included: improved drainage and irrigation systems; installation of metal edging; improvements to the north shelter; installation of an interior circular walking path; the planting of 1,200 new roses; and the redefining of the flower beds back to the original plans. The newly refurbished garden was celebrated on Rose Day which took place June 7.

The garden’s circular plan was the original concept of the eminent landscape architect, S. Herbert Hare. The garden’s pergolas, gifts from individuals and organizations in early years, bear commemorative plaques.

In 1944, the West Garden was dedicated to the heroes of World War II.

In 1965, the garden was rededicated and officially named the Laura Conyers Smith Municipal Rose Garden. Laura Conyers Smith was one of Kansas City’s most enthusiastic and capable horticulturists and founder of the Kansas City Rose Society. She worked closely with the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners in establishing and planning the Municipal Rose Garden in Loose Park.

In 1989, the garden was honored nationally with the All America Rose Selections (AARS) Bronze Achievement Award.

Through the years, the Friendship and Memory Rose Program has provided funds for the upkeep of the garden. Each year, about $5,000 is spent replacing roses.

The Rose Garden is an accredited All-America Rose Selections Public Rose Garden, one of only 130 nationwide. Annual preview plantings of AARS Award Winners provide rose lovers the opportunity to view the performance of a wide selection of roses grown under Kansas City conditions.

The original fountain was replaced with a new Italian stone replica and surrounding walks were dedicated in 2002—the Year of the Rose. This sparkling centerpiece was made possible by generous contributions from private donors.

The Rose Garden is a very popular place for weddings with about 250 couples tying the knot among the roses each year.
More than 5,000 area residents came out to play all day and into the night at Party in the Park on July 11 in Swope Park. The inaugural event—held in celebration of National Park and Recreation Month—featured free or low-cost, family-friendly activities at Swope Park’s attractions throughout the day.

Swope Park is the crown jewel of the Kansas City, Missouri park system and home to many of Kansas City’s finest attractions including the Kansas City Zoo, Lakeside Nature Center, Swope Memorial and Heart of America Golf Courses, Kansas City Wizards training facility, Southeast Community Center and Starlight Theatre. Each of these amenities played an important role in the success of the Party in the Park.

The day began with a two-mile health walk in the park led by the staff of the Southeast Community Center. The party kicked into high gear with Blues & Breakfast at Starlight Theatre. The concert, presented by EPIC Entertainment, showcased the Starlight Stars and local blues singers, the Wild Women of Kansas City.

A multitude of events were available to participants throughout the day and throughout the park including demonstrations and rides on the ERTA Trail; herb walks in the Beanstalk Children’s Garden at Kansas City Community Gardens; stories, crafts and a nature hike at the Lakeside Nature Center; health screenings presented by MAST; handcycling demonstrations by the National Sports Center for the Disabled; fishing with the Sol Pro Bass Club at Lake of the Woods; tree climbs with Tree Climbing of Kansas City; and Kansas City Cricket games on Lewis Road fields. Additionally, the Battle of Westport Museum was open for tours.

The new Southeast Community Center was a hub of activity with a photography exhibit by Paul McMillian, a dedication of the Master Gardener’s Demonstration Garden, and Culture Box Displays by the Ethnic Enrichment Commission.

The Kansas City Zoo shared in the fun with a Kids Fun Fest and Kids Conservation Club.

Attendees were able to cool off at the KCWE Free Swim Pool Party presented by Children’s Mercy Family Health Partners at Swope Pool. A capacity crowd enjoyed fun in the sun, swim contests and healthy snacks.

The day concluded with a Concert in the Park by the newly renovated Bandstand. The show featured a variety of local talent presented by Hot 103 JAMZ!

The second annual Party in the Park will take place Saturday, July 24, 2010.
In order to showcase the new trail system in Swope Park, the 6th Annual Kansas City Cup Challenge cycling event weekend was held September 19-20 at Camp Lake of the Woods.

More than 300 bicycle racers participated in Swope Park’s first mountain bike race and enjoyed a brand new, perfectly groomed, single-track course.

Kansas City Cup events included a cyclocross race on Saturday with 165 participants. One hundred and twenty-five racers competed in Sunday’s Mountain Bike race which specifically highlighted the newly constructed Swope Park single track trail network. Kids’ Races were held on both days.

The cyclocross course kept everyone’s speed in check with multiple turns and barriers. The inaugural mountain bike race on the new trail system included a dramatic flyover from the A-10 Thunderbolt’s, fast flowing single-track, technical sections and over 400’ of climbing per lap to keep riders pushing themselves hard to the finish.

In addition to almost 300 racers, the Kansas City Cup also attracted 300 plus spectators. A fund raising event for the Swope Trails network, the Kansas City Cup Challenge generated more than $1,000 towards the continued development of the trail system.

Within Camp Lake of the Woods the single track trail system is comprised of six phases. The total anticipated mileage in this area should exceed 12 miles with an expected complete build out in 2012. An additional 7 miles of trail around Swope Memorial and Wildcat Hollow is to follow for a total of approximately 19 to 21 miles of world class hiking and mountain bike trails within Kansas City’s largest park.

The Kansas City Cup was managed and promoted by Heartland Sports Promotions (HSP) in partnership with Earthriders Trails Association (ERTA). Since 2000, HSP has promoted 40 cross country series races, 20 ultra endurance races, and five festivals. The events have drawn more than 12,000 racers and spectators and are made possible by the work of more than 50 volunteers each year.

Special thanks are extended to the Swope Trails Crew, Joe Folse and ERTA for providing concessions, Midwest Mountain Bike Patrol for recruiting volunteers, 360 Racing for sponsoring the cyclocross race, Harvest Graphics, and Alex Grigsby for photography.

As a result of its success, the Kansas City Cup Challenge will remain in Swope Park. The 2010 event is scheduled for September 18-19 at Camp Lake of the Woods.
Kansas City has 132 miles of spacious boulevards and parkways that wind their way through the city. Much of the system, designed by George E. Kessler, was constructed from 1893 to 1915. The historic Parks and Boulevard System is a defining feature of Kansas City’s character.

Extending the parkway and boulevard system in areas of the city that lack connections to the existing system is part of the department’s Master Plan. As such, several parkway extension projects, located north of the river, were completed in 2009—Briarcliff Parkway and Shoal Creek Parkway.

These Northland parkways were designed to balance the need to move traffic with the desire to maintain a “city within a park.”

Briarcliff Parkway was extended approximately one-half mile from Briarcliff Road to North Oak Trafficway. The improvements consisted of reconstruction of the roadway to unique parkway standards with all the amenities. To minimize the negative effects to the adjacent property owners, the right-of-way was reduced to absolute minimum to allow construction of two lane facilities with curb, gutters, and sidewalks on the north side. A new waterline was constructed and all other utilities were placed underground.

Additional amenities consisted of a landscaped island at Briarcliff and Grand Avenue, Gateway Sculptured Neighborhood Markers at both ends of the project, a state-of-the-art modular block retaining wall, special street lighting fixtures, and tree plantings throughout the length of the project. The one-half mile project was completed in September of 2009.

Two lanes of Shoal Creek Parkway were constructed from North Woodland Avenue east to North Olive. The 700 feet of improvements included grading, storm drainage, curb and gutters, sidewalks, asphalt paving, and street lights.

Additional improvements on Shoal Creek Parkway included construction of 4-lanes from Clubhouse to Northeast 96th Street and round-a-bout construction at the intersection of Northeast 96th Street and Shoal Creek Parkway. This included construction of two Con Span bridges, grading, storm drainage, curb, gutters, sidewalks and trails, asphalt paving, and street lights. The project length was 4,720 feet.
weekends
Car Free Weekends on Cliff Drive
march 6
Do Not Feed the Geese Sign Planting
march 10-13
MO Parks and Recreation Assoc. Conference hosted by KC Parks
march 14
Brookside St. Pat’s Warm-Up Parade
march 17
St. Patrick’s Day Parade on Broadway
march 21
Day of Play! at all Community Centers
April
National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD) Wizards Soccer Camp
April 14
KC North Community Center 50th Anniversary
April 25-26
Chalk Walk on The Concourse
April 30
Zoo Tropics Ribbon Cutting and Opening
May
Women on Wheels Bicycle Expo in Loose Park
May 2
Arbor Day Planting in Loose Park
May 6
KC Parks Employee Departmental Service Awards Breakfast
May 16-17
National Center for Indigenous American Cultures Pow Wow at Line Creek Community Center
May 16-28
Downtown Farmers Market in Ilus Davis
May 21
Hollywoof: Take Your Dog to the Movie Night in Penn Valley
May 23
Celebrate Urban Birds at Lakeside Nature Center
May 26
Memorial Day at Liberty Memorial
June
Movies in the Park
June 2
Women’s Leadership Fountain Dedication
June 6
National Trails Day
June 7
Rose Day at Loose Park Garden Center
June 22
Family Swim Party at The Springs
June 23
Zoo Tropics Ribbon Cutting and Opening
June 28
Children’s TLC Duck Derby on Brush Creek
July
National Parks and Recreation Month
July 3, 10, 17 and 24
Hyde Park Children’s Film Festival
July 10-12
US Tennis Assoc. National Husband & Wife Hard Court Tennis Tournament
July 11
Party in the Park
July 11-September 11
Swope Park, A Photographic Essay by Paul McMillian Exhibit at Southeast Community Center
July 14
National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD) Wizards Soccer Camp
July 22-28
Mayor’s Night Kicks Tournament
July 27-28
2009 PDGA Disc Golf World Championships
August
Polar Bear Exhibit Groundbreaking
August 13-14
NSCD Family Fun Nights at Camp Lake of the Woods
august 21-23
30th Annual Ethnic Enrichment Festival

august 22
Westport Roanoke Community Center Grand Re-Opening

august 25
USA Swim Make A Splash Breakfast at Gregg Klice

august 29
Concert in Jarboe Park

september 4-6
KC Irish Fest in Washington Square Park

september 6
Concert in Troost Park

september 9
810 Sports Radio Dippin’ Dogs Swim Party at The Springs

september 14
Gates/Enshriner’s Golf Tournament at Swope Memorial Golf Course

september 13
Tour of Missouri Stage 7 and Health Expo in Washington Square Park

september 16
Kansas City Beautiful Awards at Liberty Memorial

september 19
Zoo Run

september 19-20
Kansas City Cup at Camp Lake of the Woods

september 24
NSCD Golf Classic

october 1-11
KC Cancer Center Pink Fountains

october 2-4
US Tennis Assoc. Missouri Valley Outdoor Tennis Tournament at Plaza Tennis Center

october 3-4
KC Indian Art Market & Cultural Festival

october 6-november 17
Dog Park Open Houses

october 9-10
Magic Woods at Lakeside Nature Center

october 10
Harvest Festival at Shoal Creek Living History Museum

october 17
Kansas City Marathon

october 17
Fox Hollow Trail Run at Lakeside Nature Center

october 24
WaterFire Kansas City on Brush Creek

november 1
The Cliffhanger Run on Cliff Drive in Kessler Park

november 2
Be Bright at Night in the Loose Park Rose Garden

november 7
The Wilderness Run at Shoal Creek Living History Museum

november 11
Veterans Day Observances at Liberty Memorial and Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial

november 21
Turkey Bowl at Line Creek Community Center

december 4
NOEL at Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center

december 4
Santa’s Wonderland in Gillham Park

december 5
HOLIDAZZE at Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center

december 5
Santa’s Wonderland in Penguin Park

december 5
Paws Meet Claus at Penn Valley Off-Leash Dog Park

december 11
Santa’s Wonderland at The Parade

december 12
Kris Kringle 5K Run

december 12
Santa’s Wonderland in Swope Park

december 13
Paws Meet Claus at Penn Valley Off-Leash Dog Park

december 13
Santa’s Wonderland at Longview Tract

december 16
KC Parks Employee City Service Awards Breakfast

december 19
Skate with Santa at Line Creek Ice Arena

december 26-31
Celebration of Kwanzaa
**Construction Projects**
The Black Archives of Mid-America Kansas City at 17th Terrace & Woodland Maplewoods Parkway Phase II A Cliff Drive Restoration Phase II Longview Tract Excavation Winner Park Shelter 2007 Pedestrian Lighting & Electrical Package 2009 Water Access Plan Shelter Plan for Troost Lake & The Grove Searcy Creek Parkway Project Shoal Creek Parkway Section A Shoal Creek Parkway, Club House to 96th Street Briarcliff Parkway, Briarcliff Road to North Oak Murray Davis Park Improvements Linwood Boulevard from Paseo to Forest Waterwork Park Entrance Road Swope Memorial Drive near Clubhouse Sidewalks leading to Northland Fountain Sidewalk and slope repair, 5127 Swope Pkwy. San Rafael Park Trail Ashland Park Walkway Improvements Sycamore Park Trail Loose Park Lake Renovations Loose Park Main Garden Renovations Indian Creek Greenway Trail from 99th Holmes to Lydia Avenue Tiffany Springs Baseball Complex, Infield Improvements

**Planning and Master Plans**

**San Rafael Park Master Plan**

**Ivanhoe Park Master Plan**

**Grant Funded Projects**
Cliff Drive Interpretation Phase 2 – National Scenic Byways Organization / MoDOT Cliff Drive Restoration Phase 2 – Transportation Enhancement / MoDOT Santa Fe Trail - National Park Service Amity Woods Nature Park – Platte County Outreach Grant/grant match Friends of Amity Woods Nature Park

**Monuments and Fountains Conservation**
American Legion Memorial / Rogers Art Conservation / (KC-GO)
Adam and Eve Fountains Conservation Analysis Venetian Wall Relief Conservation Analysis Major Murray Davis Monument Restoration Women’s Leadership Fountain, Meyer Memorial & Fitzsimons Memorial Restoration

**Boulevard Curbs and Sidewalks**
Rockhill Road from 65th to Locust Meyer Boulevard from Main to Wornall Road Ward Parkway from 76th Street to 79th Street Linwood Boulevard from Paseo to Forest Waterwork Park Entrance Road Swope Memorial Drive, near clubhouse Sidewalks leading to Northland Fountain Swope and slope repair 5127 Swope Parkway Ward Parkway curb repair from 76th St. to 79th St.

**Parking Lots**
2007 Parking Lot Improvements Anita Gorman Park Parking Lot

**Stone Wall & Stair Repairs**
51st & Brookside Stone Wall Repair Garrison Community Center Stone & Stair Repair Southmoreland Stone Wall Repair

**Tennis Courts**
Plaza Tennis Court Repair

**Facility Maintenance and Repairs**

**Acquisition**
Easements and Properties along Indian Creek and Blue River Greenway San Rafael Park Sunset Park
parks partners

Kansas City Parks and Recreation has formal partnerships established with neighborhood, community, business and non-profit organizations. These partnerships allow our department to leverage resources and generate city-wide interest and support for our system facilities, programs and events.

Black Archives of Mid-America Inc.
Blue River Watershed Association
Blue Valley Neighborhood Association
Boys & Girls Club
Broadway/Westport Council
Brookside Business Association
Brooksieide Roller Hockey
Brookside Soccer
Bush Creek Community Partners
Budd Park Committee
Carpenters Union of Kansas City Center School District
Center Planning
Chameleon Arts and Youth Development Theatre
Chaurniere Neighborhood Association
Children’s Mercy Family Health Partners
Children’s Mercy Hospital
City of Fountains Foundation
Clay County Parks and Recreation Dept.
Clay County Parks Partners Committee
Clay County Veterans Memorial Committee
Clay-Platte Baseball League Inc.
Cliff Drive Scenic Byway Corridor Management Committee
Dogpark Improvement Group (DIG)
Downtown Council of Kansas City
Earth Riders Trail Association (ERTA)
Economic Development Corporation
Eitas Development Disability Services
The Enshriners
EPIC Entertainment
Ethnic Enrichment Commission
Federal Reserve Bank
First Tee of Greater Kansas City
First Tee of Greater Kansas City
Friends of Amity Woods Nature Park
Friends of Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Ctr.
Friends of Lakeside Nature Center
Friends of Penn Valley Park
Friends of the Zoo (FOTZ)
Friends of Riverfront Park
From Glory to Glory Inc.
Full Employment Council (FEC)
Garden Center Association
Garrison Community Center Youth Advisory Board
Gillham Road Advisory Committee
City of Gladstone Parks and Recreation
Golden Oaks Neighborhood Association
Gracemor Randolph Neighborhood Association
Guadalupe Center Inc.
Heart of America Council/Boy Scouts
Heart of America Shakespeare Festival
Hickman Mills School District of Greater Kansas City
Hills of Walden Home Owners Association
Hispanic Football Soccer Association
Historical Society of New Santa Fe Trailside Center
Home Builders Association of Greater Kansas City
Jackson County Parks and Recreation
Jazz District Redevelopment Corporation
Just Off-Broadway Theater
Kansas City Art Institute
Kansas City Community Gardens
Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association
Kansas City Cricket Club
Kansas City Flying Disc Club
Kansas City, Missouri Police Department (KCPD)
Kansas City, Missouri School District
Kansas City Museum at Corinthian Hall
Kansas City Northern Railroad Inc.
Kansas City Organics & Natural Market
Kansas City Pop Warner Football
Kansas City Rose Society
Kansas City Royals
Kansas City Rugby
Kansas City United Tennis
Kansas City Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Kansas City Wellness Network
Kansas City WildLands
Kansas City Wizards/On Goal
KC Ice
KC North Community Center Advisory Board
KCPD Mounted Patrol
KCWE Channel 29
KPRS Hot 103 J AMZ
Kessler Society of Kansas City
Liberty Memorial Association
Lykins Neighborhood Association
Martin City CID
MAST Ambulance
Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)
Mid-Continent Public Library
Mill Creek Association
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Missouri Department of Transportation
Missouri Highway & Transportation Commission
Missouri Parks & Recreation Association
Mönnett Battle of Westport Fund Inc.
Mosaic Brain
Mountaintop Inc.
National Center for Indigenous American Cultures at Line Creek Inc. (NCIAC)
National Recreation & Parks Association
National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD)
Noble Homes Association
North Kansas City Area Baseball Association
North Kansas City School District
North Suburban Youth Football League
Northeast Inter Soccer League Boosters
Northern Knights
Northland Community Alliance
Northland Girls Softball
Northland Neighborhoods Inc.
Northland Parks Committee
Northland Planning and Development Committee
Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce
Northland Rugby Football Club
Northland Sports Alliance dba SPCAA
Optimist Athletic Association
Park Hill High School Tennis
Park Hill School District
Pendleton Heights Neighborhood
Platte County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Platte County Parks and Recreation
Platte County Parks Partners
Platte County Trails Coordination Committee
Plaza Rotary Club
Police Athletic League (PAL) Blue Valley
Port Authority of Kansas City, Missouri
Riverfront Heritage Trail
Rockhill Homes Association
Ronald McDonald House Charities
Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association
Sheffield Neighborhood Association
Shoal Creek Association
The Sierra Club
Sister City Association
Society for Friendship with China
South Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Southeast Community Center Advisory Board
Southern Community Coalition
Southtown Council
Starlight Theatre Association
Stone Lion Puppet Theatre
St. Pius X High School
The All Kemp Educational (T.A.K.E.) Foundation
Tiffany Springs Parks Partners
3 – Trails CID
3 & 2 Baseball
Tony Aguirre Community Center Advisory Committee
Tour of Missouri Local Organizing Committee
University of Missouri, Kansas City
Union Cemetery Historical Society
Union Station
Verona Hills Homes Association
Vietnam Veterans of America
Vivion Road Gang, Chapter 317
Waldo Area Business Association
Ward Family Foundation
Ward Parkway Homes Association
The Whole Person
Winnwood-Sunnybrook Neighborhood Association
measurements

3,175,069

Total participation

All programs, events & admissions

834,412

Event Attendance

277

Number of Events

w.a.p.e. (Safe, Healthy, Attractive, Public Environments) provides up-to-date information on the overall conditions of our parks and facilities. Inspectors rate and report conditions immediately. In 2009:

- 1409 park inspections conducted
- 190 park sites involved
- park acceptability rating=87%

Volunteers

Number of volunteers: 7,900
Volunteer hours: 641,200
Estimated value: $12,984,300

Forestry

Trees trimmed: 8,438
Trees removed: 2,839
Stumps removed: 1,797

19,530

Total acreage mowed

awards

- All America Rose Selections Committee Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Maintenance
  Laura Conyers Smith Municipal Rose Garden
- Arbor Day Foundation: Tree City USA
  City of Kansas City, Missouri-21 years
- Economic Development Council Cornerstone Award-Public Projects
  Southeast Community Center in Swope Park-Finalist
- Environmental Achievement Award
  Birmingham Farms Bio-Solid Treatment Facility Tree Nursery
- Historic Kansas City Foundation Preservation Award
  Women’s Leadership Fountain
- Dr. George Ehrlich Achievement in Preservation
  Parade Park Maintenance Building/Black Archives
- Ingram’s Magazine “Best of Business” KC
  Best Charitable Event: Jazzoo, #1
  Best Theater: Starlight Theatre, #2
- Best Family Outing Venue: Kansas City Zoo, #1
- Best Museum or Gallery: National World War 1 Museum at Liberty Memorial, #3
- Best Performing Arts Venue: Starlight Theatre, #1
- Missouri Park & Recreation Association
  Not-for-Profit Citation Award
  Shoal Creek Association
- Missouri Recreation and Parks Hall of Fame
  Frank Vaydik Sr., former Director
- Fellow Award
  Mark L. McHenry, Director
- National Recreation and Park Association
  Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
  Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation
  10 year reaccreditation renewal
- Visitors’ Choice Awards
  Favorite Performing Arts Venue
  Starlight Theatre
  Favorite Kids Attraction
  Kansas City Zoo

3,175,069

Total participation

All programs, events & admissions

834,412

Event Attendance

277

Number of Events

623,721

Youth participation

All facilities and programs

475,899

Customer participation

Community Centers

122,144

Customer participation

Pools and Spraygrounds

176,922

Customer participation

Athletic Facilities and Programs

4,516

Citizens 3-1-1 Action Center

Requests Resolved

2,327

Graffiti incidents removed

475,899

Customer participation

Community Centers

122,144

Customer participation

Pools and Spraygrounds

176,922

Customer participation

Athletic Facilities and Programs

- Kansas City Zoo: 544,316
  WWI Museum: 140,251
  Starlight Theatre: 232,001
  Bruce R. Watkins: 12,565
  Loose Park Garden Center: 12,838

- Trees trimmed: 8,438
- Trees removed: 2,839
- Stumps removed: 1,797

- 1409 park inspections conducted
- 190 park sites involved
- park acceptability rating=87%

- Kansas City Zoo: 544,316
  WWI Museum: 140,251
  Starlight Theatre: 232,001
  Bruce R. Watkins: 12,565
  Loose Park Garden Center: 12,838

- 190 park sites involved
- park acceptability rating=87%

- 171 facility inspections conducted
- 21 facilities involved
- facility acceptability rating=91%
In the late 19th century, Kansas City had few paved streets and even fewer sidewalks, but the town was booming. As the population continued to grow and the city land size increased, the main focus remained on commerce and building places for people to live and work. There was, however, a group of citizens who saw the need for creating a better quality of life and improving the city’s appearance through the development of municipal parks, and later, a boulevard system.

The fledgling park movement continued to gather momentum until one of its firmest supporters, William Rockhill Nelson, moved to town and took up the cause. As the editor of the evening newspaper, The Star, Mr. Nelson used his position to campaign for paved roads and streets. He also advocated for improved sidewalks and sewers, decent public buildings, better streetlights, and more fire and police protection. His most enduring legacy, however, was the city’s park and boulevard system which he promoted with August Meyer, local businessman and president of the 1892 Park Board, predecessor to the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners. The Park Board hired landscape architect George E. Kessler to design a boulevard and park system master plan that would provide for a “city within a park.”

Work on the boulevard system began in 1893 with the development of Independence and Gladstone Boulevards. Acquisition of properties began in earnest when, in 1895, the city approved a charter amendment to give the Park Board power to condemn land, issue bonds and receive special taxes. North Terrace Park (now Kessler Park), West Terrace Park and later Penn Valley Park were among the first developments. A milestone was achieved with a gift of property from Col. Thomas H. Swope, a pessimistic “knocker” of the parks plan. In 1896, Swope deeded to the city more than 1,300 acres, which became the park that bears his name and the largest park in the system. Another important gift to the city was that of Loose Park in 1927, donated by Ella Loose in memory of her husband, Jacob.

Since then, hundreds of additional parks and boulevards have been developed throughout the greater Kansas City area. In 1967, the Park Department and Recreational Division of the city’s Welfare Department were combined into the present-day Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department. Thanks to the foresight of city leaders and advocates, Kansas City is internationally known for its beautiful parks and boulevards system. Today’s Parks, Recreation and Boulevards Department honors the past while continuing to grow and make improvements for the future.