

CITY OF GRAIN VALLEY

# CITY VIEW

SPRING & SUMMER 2021



**INCLUDING GRAIN VALLEY  
PARKS & RECREATION ACTIVITY GUIDE!**

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE: STATE OF THE CITY 2021

*Hello Grain Valley! Please join me in welcoming Spring...I hope this finds you happy and healthy. Due to the current circumstances and our inability to meet together at community events, as we typically do, I will be presenting the State of the City in written form in this publication.*



The last year has been the most challenging we have seen from a personal standpoint, but also for the City and our business community. We have seen the City come together in new and wonderful ways, with neighbors helping neighbors, our teachers going above and beyond to keep students engaged and more kindness and patience with each other. I've never been more proud to be part of Grain Valley as I have over the last year, witnessing the strength of our citizens. City staff and officials worked together to distribute masks and disinfectant to citizens to help keep them safe during the pandemic. Staff members learned more about what local businesses can provide, such as Heartland Solutions and Liquid Soap Products. We thank them for their generosity of time and disinfectant

products. We also have seen relationships and communications with surrounding jurisdictions and agencies such as the Central Jackson County Fire Protection District and the Grain Valley School District prosper. This has allowed for more efficient access to the resources they offer to citizens.

My first term as mayor started late, due to the delay of the election from April to June, but I came in with both feet on the ground, ready to go! The pandemic forced us to do a "fiscal reset," as we re-prioritized how city funds would best be utilized to benefit citizens. The City has maintained a stable fiscal position for many years with overall steady revenue streams continuing. We completed the refinancing of the Series 2011 General Obligation bonds that significantly lowered the interest rate and restructured the debt to pay it down faster resulting in an overall savings to the City. Our strong financial position has been maintained during these trying times. The City kept its AA- credit rating from S&P Global and has been recognized for its strong financial management, good financial policies and practices, and very strong budget flexibility. In addition, the City received the highest possible opinion from its independent auditor, Trout Beeman, this year.

The need to give citizens more options to conduct City business from home became evident in the early months of the pandemic. Cares Act funding gave staff the opportunity to coordinate the development of a new website and app to improve communications to citizens and offer more opportunities for citizens to connect with city staff and resources. New technology came into play in 2020 with the addition of a fixed base

# COMMUNITY NEWS

water meter reading system. The information collected from these reads will eventually be accessible to citizens, which will help them to monitor usage and know when they have a potential leak sooner. The fixed base system also saves Public Works staff time so that they are able to focus resources on other projects.

The Board of Aldermen and I meet twice a month with additional workshops that are added to our schedules throughout the year. These meetings are imperative to moving Grain Valley towards the future. Since I took office, one of the main focuses for myself and the Board was to incorporate more funding into our budget to expediently begin road repairs. After conducting a pavement assessment, it became evident that many of our roadways were in need of immediate attention. Nearly \$2 million in-total has been dedicated to improving road conditions in the city. Road improvements began in Fall of 2020 and will continue this year.

County mandates halted business for periods of time, but support by this community and some federal funding made it possible for new businesses to continue to develop and business retention closely matched that of years' past. It has been exciting to see dirt moving north of I-70 as new eateries are expected to open soon. Over the past year we have seen the opening of QuikTrip, Taco Bell, Domino's Pizza, Captain's and coming soon, Iron Kettle Brewing. We look forward to additional businesses opening, including Dell's Power Sports and more. There were 196 residential home permits applied for in 2020 – up from 2019. We also will have the addition of the Lofts at Old Towne, which will include 154 apartments on the former Patricia's grocery store site and a mixed-use indoor amenity center.

Parks & Recreation has been hard at work improving the connectivity throughout our community, which helps the safety of those who walk recreationally and students who walk to school. Blue Branch Creek Trail

is in a shaded, wooded area where you feel a part of nature. This trail project will continue this Spring with the addition of a pedestrian bridge to connect the Sni-A-Bar Farms neighborhoods to the Grain Valley High School campus. The Dillingham Trail project has been a great addition for homeowners in the Northern part of town and another phase was also completed in 2020.

The Police Department continued to serve the community as they always have even with extra precautions in place. Despite the pandemic, they filed the usual numbers of reports and cases and were able to maintain the same level of care. They also enacted “zone coverage” which assigns officers on each shift to have a specific area of town in which they work. This allows officers to engage with citizens in their zone more frequently with better overall coverage as the majority of the time, officers are in all three zones.

Census 2020 was completed (after a few COVID related delays) in late October. This 10-year census will yield interesting information about our community as it continues to grow every year and may have an impact on the allocation of some government funding. I appreciate you for your responsiveness to the Census as we ended up with a 79.2% self-reporting rate, almost 15% above the 65.9% rate for Missouri!

It is an honor to serve this community. I enjoy hearing from you and can be reached at [cjohnston@cityofgrainvalley.org](mailto:cjohnston@cityofgrainvalley.org), the “Mayor Chuck Johnston” Facebook page or by calling 816-847-6278.

**–Chuck Johnston, Mayor**

## **ON THE COVER:**

Blue Branch Trail with entrances located at Rock Creek Lane (south of Dollar General) and the dead end of Cross Creek Dr.

## STRATEGIC PLAN FOR GRAIN VALLEY

*The City has undergone significant growth and changes since the turn of the century, which has presented great opportunities, but also some new challenges.*

City staff has worked to develop a 5-year Strategic Plan which will guide the City as it moves forward into the future. The strategic plan is best described as a method in which all departments come together to establish objectives which include an evaluation process and goal setting. It defines where the City wants to be and how to get there. The plan incorporates both City staff experience and information garnered from past citizen surveys.

The City's focus for 2021-2025 will be on economic development, developing a clear identity and community sustainability. Economic development is a strategic intervention with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life in a community through

business retention, business attraction and strengthened funding. The goal is to attract businesses which will better serve the community with additional amenities and conveniences.

Community sustainability is multi-faceted and includes embracing the foundations that have built the Grain Valley we know and moving forward in a way that expands on that which is existing. Sustainability will be evidenced through improved technology, citizen satisfaction with city planning, fund diversification, employee longevity and improved City communications.

The City will develop a new brand identity in order to help define who we are and what makes us unique. The brand will link things such as economic development, education and civic pride to create a unified feel and look, culminating to create the City's identity. For more information about the strategic plan send a message to [info@cityofgrainvalley.org](mailto:info@cityofgrainvalley.org) or visit our website: [www.cityofgrainvalley.org](http://www.cityofgrainvalley.org).

## UPCOMING ELECTION...



*The General Municipal Election will take place on April 6th.*

Visit [JCEBMO.org](http://JCEBMO.org) for information about what items will be on the ballot and for your polling location.

## NEW GRAIN VALLEY WEBSITE AND APP

*The City of Grain Valley has launched a new and improved website [www.cityofgrainvalley.org](http://www.cityofgrainvalley.org) and a new app to increase communications with citizens.*



*New City of Grain Valley Website.*

It is more important than ever that citizens have easy access to information that is pertinent to Grain Valley and for “virtual” access to be optimized. The new site and app make it easier to access convenient services for citizens, such as paying water bills, contacting Aldermen,

registering for Parks & Rec programs and finding forms that are helpful. The site has an intuitive search bar that will allow visitors to easily navigate throughout even if they are unsure about which department may offer the information they need. A new FAQ’s section is searchable by subject matter or keyword. The new site offers citizens an opportunity to sign up to receive email updates regarding upcoming events, information and newsletters. The app, which is a free download on I-Phones and Androids, was developed with the conveniences of “one tap” access to important information and services. Citizens may report issues, with uploaded photos, such as abandoned vehicles, potholes and park equipment problems. The app can be found by searching “City of Grain Valley” in the App Store or Play Store.

## FENCE RESTRICTIONS

*Springtime is a busy time for many homeowners who prepare to make improvements inside and outside of their homes.*

One of our most sought after residential permits is a fence permit. The following are some important reminders to keep in mind as you make plans for your future fence project:

- A fence permit application and plot plan showing the location of the fence must be submitted to the Community Development Department and approved prior to project start. The Community Development Department may be able to provide a copy of the plot plan, if needed.

- 1-800 DIG RITE must be contacted and utilities marked before digging.
- If a drainage way or easement is visible on the plot plans, additional approval by Community Development staff is necessary.
- Finished surface must face outward from the property.
- Typically right of way should be located 11 feet from the back of curbs.
- Fences are not permitted to be in front yards, unless they are split rail, picket or wrought iron and no higher than 4 ft., with minimum 2 in. of spacing.

Call Community Development for more information at 816-847-6225 or visit [cityofgrainvalley.org](http://cityofgrainvalley.org) for more details and for the fence permit application.

## ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

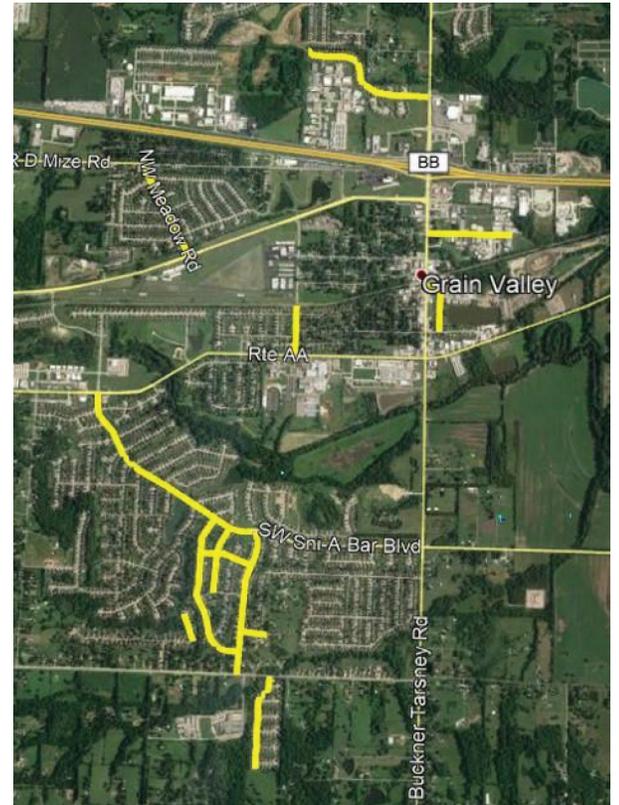
*The City of Grain Valley, especially the residential sector, has experienced exponential growth since the late 1990's.*

Due to this growth, the Board of Aldermen has strategically focused resources towards road improvements. After the Community Development Department conducted a pavement assessment in the Spring of 2020, they were able to prioritize which roads needed more immediate attention, though many were in need of repairs. Due to the rapid growth of the City two decades ago, many of the roads were established at the same time, which is why needed repairs on many became evident at the same time. The pavement assessment helped to create



*Meadow Drive in Fall 2020*

a performance model which identified the optimal timing and rehabilitation schedule. Streets are prioritized by the amount of traffic they carry. The assessment provided a ranking for each individual road, later utilized to determine which roads would need to be addressed first. The assessment helped the City create a pavement management plan which provided the maximum benefit with available funds. It is important to note that streets which are repaired while in good condition will cost less over their lifetime than those left to deteriorate to a poor condition. The annual City budget does allocate funds for road repair, but the Board of Aldermen recognized the need to add nearly \$2 million for road repairs beginning in Fall of 2020, which will continue in Spring 2021. For more information, contact the Community Development Department at 816-847-6220.



*Road improvements 1: Completed Fall 2020*



*Road improvements 2: Coming Soon*

## RESIDENTIAL WATER CONSERVATION

### *Grain Valley Utility Billing often takes calls from concerned citizens regarding their water usage.*

There are several simple things that you can do inside and outside of your home to help save costs on your water:

#### INSIDE YOUR HOME

- Toilets are typically the number 1 water use source in a home. Usage can go up drastically with leaks. Visit City Hall and pick up free toilet tank leak detector strips from Utility Billing to determine if your toilet is leaking. Replacing your older toilet may increase its efficiency greatly.

- Washers for dishes and clothes can be replaced to save approximately 35% water usage.
- Faucets and showers are high water usage. Reduce water waste during daily tasks, such as turning off water while brushing teeth. It is imperative to watch for leaks as even a slow drip can waste as much as 450 gallons of water per month.

#### OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

- Brooms can be used to clean outdoor surfaces such as driveways, instead of hoses.
- Water only when needed. Oftentimes people water plants and yards when it is not necessary. You can also use mulch to reduce the need for watering
- Irrigation system leaks can lead to 50%-75% water loss.

## TRAIN LIKE AN OFFICER

### *Last March, the Grain Valley Police Department offered citizens an opportunity to take part in simulations of real-life scenarios which officers may be faced with any given day.*

The virtual simulation is the same that officers use to train regarding use of force. Use of force is defined as the amount of effort required by a police officer to achieve compliance. The simulations put the participant in real-time situations in which they make the decision whether or not to use their weapon. The simulation program provides several different scenarios in which the participant “engages” with a suspect. The encounters seem lifelike as the suspect speaks directly to the participant and gives him/ her the opportunity to make a quick decision based on the suspect’s actions. Chief Beale expressed the importance of this training for citizens to have a better understanding for the types of life or death decisions officers may be faced with. The first Train Like an Officer event was met with



overwhelmingly positive responses by those who took part. Citizens who participated expressed that the simulation gave them great insight into what officers may go through and it increased their appreciation for officers. Be sure to “like” and “follow” the Grain Valley Police Department Facebook page to stay up to date regarding future simulation events.

# STAY CONNECTED

FOR EVENTS, NEWS AND UPDATED INFO

City of Grain Valley, Grain Valley Parks & Recreation and Grain Valley Police Department are accessible on Facebook, Twitter and at [www.cityofgrainvalley.org](http://www.cityofgrainvalley.org).

## SAVE TIME

### UTILITY BILL PAYING OPTIONS:

- By phone 24/7 - call 866-290-8885
- City of Grain Valley App
- [www.cityofgrainvalley.org](http://www.cityofgrainvalley.org) for paperless billing or to set up recurring payments

## NEW WAYS TO CONNECT

Sign up to receive City updates via email on our website. Simply click on “*Sign up for Emails*” on the homepage. And don’t forget to download our new app!

## GRAIN VALLEY CITY HALL

711 Main Street  
[info@cityofgrainvalley.org](mailto:info@cityofgrainvalley.org)

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
816-847-6250

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
816-847-6220

**PARKS & RECREATION/  
COMMUNITY CENTER**  
816-847-6230

**ADMINISTRATION**  
816-847-6200

**PUBLIC WORKS**  
816-847-0091  
After Hours 816-990-1990

**WATER & SEWER BILLING**  
816-847-6280