

# THE COLUMNS

A Publication for the Residents of Mission Hills

Winter 2012

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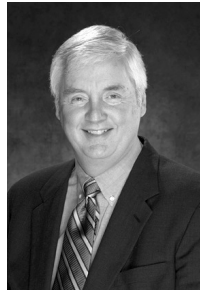


*The Verona Columns Concert was a hit with residents of all ages.*

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## Best Suburban City in Kansas



**Rick Boeshaar**  
Mayor

I hope you saw the article in the paper in late September! Mission Hills was ranked as the “best place to live” among suburban cities in Kansas and top 15 in the nation. The comparison was made after reviewing 11,000 suburban cities nationwide by Coldwell Banker and Onboard Infomatics. The comparisons were made on the following criteria: Crime rates, household spending on meals, commute times, proximity to local conveniences and amenities (such as gas stations, grocery stores, and banks), home improvement and decoration investments and other criteria important to suburban lifestyles.

We are in good company in northeast Johnson County as Leawood, Prairie Village, Westwood, and Fairway were ranked #2, #3, #4, and #5 in the State. In Missouri, Weatherby Lake was the only suburban city near Kansas City to make the top five. It is nice to receive such recognition, but we already know that our City is a wonderful place to live for many reasons!

Election season is behind us (for a few months) and the rhetoric and campaign ads have been quieted. Even though I am writing this prior to Election Day, I know from the August primary results that Kansas will have a majority of like-minded people in charge of both houses and the governor’s office. We are embarking on at least two years of a very different environment. Based on what has been proposed but not enacted in the past, it is very likely that some legislation will be put forward that would be detrimental to our City. Please become as informed as you can during the next year and communicate with our new elected representatives. A knowledgeable and involved citizenry will be very important!

Most of our City’s construction projects are also behind us and we are all moving more freely through the City now that barricades have mostly come down. The large stormwater improvement project behind City Hall and the Lutheran church to the south will be finished very soon. We will have a wider and more structurally sound bridge on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and a creek and drainage pipes able to handle heavy storms such as the one in 1998 that saw water topping and closing State Line Road, Tomahawk Road, and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street for periods of time.

The Google fiber project in Kansas City, KS and Kansas City, MO has received a lot of publicity and interest around town. We are participating in discussions, along with other Johnson County cities and the county, with Google regarding availability in future years. Google is making very few commitments to other communities until they make more progress with the initial plans. However, individuals are encouraged to show their interest in receiving the high speed services by signing up for information and updates at [fiber.google.com](http://fiber.google.com) and clicking on “Sign Up”.

The Holidays are approaching and I hope you will join in the festivities of the season. Your elected officials and the City’s staff join me in wishing you a most joyous holiday season!! ■

For more information, visit [www.missionhillsks.gov](http://www.missionhillsks.gov)

## Destructive Emerald Ash Borer Arrives in Kansas City

As you may already have read, the Emerald Ash Borer reached the Kansas City area in late July, near Parkville. To our knowledge, the borer has not yet reached Mission Hills. The Emerald Ash Borer has killed more than 50 million U.S. Ash trees in the last 10 years. Although the Emerald Ash Borer can fly short distances on its own, much of its spread is due to humans transporting it in firewood, logs and tree debris. Experts are urging consumers to use other native tree species, rather than Ash trees, in their landscape plantings and to purchase firewood harvested near their destination.

The City of Mission Hills stopped planting Ash trees about 5 years ago. We are in the process of developing an inventory of all the Ash trees planted in City parks and rights-of-way (ROW). As recommended by our arborist and experts on this issue, the best defense is to keep Ash trees as healthy as possible with regular pruning, watering and care, and to remove any Ash trees that may be declining as the borers gravitate toward weaker specimens. There are annual insecticide treatments, but they can be quite expensive, depending on the diameter of the tree. Something that is particularly difficult about this issue is that the effects of the borer can take several years to become apparent and by then it is often too late to save the tree. Some cities have taken extreme measures, such as clear cutting their Ash trees, in anticipation of the arrival of the borer. We are not recommending any such approach at this time. Because treatment is expensive, and not proven to be reliably effective, we are keeping an eye on the City Ash trees planted along the streets and are proceeding on a case-by-case basis (i.e. removal if weak or infected, or treatment if the tree is one we would really like to preserve). As always, the City Arborist is willing to consult with residents on their private trees, so if you have any questions about the Emerald Ash Borer or any other tree related issues please call City Hall and we will put you in touch with our arborist. A list of frequently asked questions about the Emerald Ash Borer can be found on the City's website at [www.missionhillks.gov](http://www.missionhillks.gov). ■

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## Home Occupation - More Clearly Defined

At its October meeting, the City Council adopted an amendment to the City's Home Occupation Ordinance. Previously, the ordinance only included a broad definition of home occupation but no standards to assess whether or not the definition of home occupation was met. The recent amendment to the ordinance includes standards that can be used to determine if a home occupation exists within the established parameters. A synopsis of the standards follows; however, if you would like to review the standards in detail please call City Hall to request a copy or visit the City's website, [www.missionhillks.gov](http://www.missionhillks.gov). As always, the City does not require home occupations to be registered or licensed in the City of Mission Hills. Enforcement of the ordinance is typically only pursued if the City receives concerns from residents. All home occupations must be conducted within the following standards/limitations:

1. The primary use of the dwelling unit shall remain residential.
2. There shall be no change in the outside appearance of the building or premises, or other visible evidence of the conduct of the home occupation. (i.e., no signage, no outside storage, etc.)
3. No vehicular traffic or parking of vehicles that is greater than what is normal for the neighborhood. Deliveries to and from the home occupation should only be received from parcel post, express delivery or similar parcel service vehicles (i.e., no deliveries from semi-trucks, etc.).
4. No noise, vibration, smoke, odors, heat or glare resulting from the home occupation, which would exceed what is normally produced by a single family residence.
5. Inside storage of toxic materials for resale or use in the home occupation is prohibited.
6. No home occupation shall interfere with the reasonable use and enjoyment of adjacent residential properties.
7. The use and/or storage of equipment or materials that would exclude the residential structure from the Type R3 International Building Code is prohibited.

# Snow and Ice Control on City Streets

by Jennifer Lee, Assistant City Administrator

Please remember the following regarding the City's snow and ice control efforts:

- Every snow/ice event is unique and the plan for each storm is directly related to the duration and severity of the storm.
- When we have enough warning and it is appropriate, the City streets are pre-treated.
- Plowing will generally begin after 2" of snow has fallen.
- All streets in the City have been prioritized for snow/ice removal. Priority one streets are the arterials and will be cleared first. Arterials include: 63rd Street, Mission Drive, Tomahawk Road, Mission Road, Belinder, State Line Road and Indian Lane (Mission Road to 63rd Street).
- The remaining streets and cul-de-sacs will have one lane cleared after the priority streets are completed, and then generally within 8 hours after a 3-4 inch storm has ended these streets should be cleared curb to curb. In the case of heavy snowfall, it can take longer than 8 hours to plow the snow on every street in the City. ■



## What should I do with that snow on my driveway?

With almost no snowfall last winter, we thought you might be out of practice so we wanted to take the time to share with you some information regarding snow removal.

- When clearing snow from your driveway, do not place the snow from your driveway back into the street as it causes problems for drivers on the street and is a violation of City ordinance. Additionally, if you have a private contractor remove the snow from your driveway and they push the snow to the street opposite your driveway please ask them to be sure and clean up all snow left on the roadway.
- Similarly, if you are using a snow blower to clear your driveway or sidewalk, please do not blow the snow onto the street, as this too is a violation of City ordinance.
- When snow is expected, we always encourage residents to park their vehicles in the driveway and do not allow vehicles to extend into the roadway. Cars in the roadway slow snow removal operations and results in cars being buried behind the plowed snow. If parking on the street is unavoidable, please park on the side where the addresses are odd numbered (on some streets the fire hydrants are on the odd numbered side of the street so you will have to park on the even numbered side). Having cars parked on just one side of the street will allow the plows to at least clear one lane.

We certainly understand that snow removal can be a challenge, but helping us keep additional snow off of the roadway ensures safer travel conditions and eliminates additional snow removal costs. ■

### Holiday Cards/Gifts for Deffenbaugh Driver

Many residents show their thanks to the Deffenbaugh driver for his excellent service by leaving checks or cash taped to their trash/recycling bins during the holiday season. Unfortunately, over the past several years, many envelopes with financial gifts have been stolen from the cans. In an effort to curb this type of theft, the City has offered to allow residents to drop off holiday cards and gifts for the Deffenbaugh driver at City Hall. City staff will hold the gifts for the driver to pick up at his convenience.

# Out on a Limb: Tree Talk

by George L. Eib, City Arborist



George L. Eib

This drought we are experiencing is being compared to the drought of the 1930s that was so destructive to farmland. In addition to the drought, we have had extreme temperatures, above 100 degrees, for long stretches of time. As we enter October, we should be looking forward to 60 degree days and yet we will have

several days in the 80s. This combination of drought and high temperatures has affected most plant materials. All are stressed, many have died and the damage to those surviving plants, including trees, will not be fully assessed for several years. What we are currently experiencing with trees is “limb drop”. This is the dropping of large limbs due to lack of moisture in that limb. It is very important for the survival of your private plant materials, as well as the City’s street trees in front of your homes, that you not shut down your irrigation system or put away your hoses too soon. The trees and other plant material need to go into winter dormancy with plenty of moisture stored. I recommend watering twice a week for at least 45 minutes each time with an oscillating sprinkler or 1 inch of water each time you water if you do not use a sprinkler. This added moisture has a secondary benefit of protecting your foundation so water those foundation plantings throughout the fall as well as all trees.

As I write this article, we are having some species such as Magnolias, Crab Apple, Pears, Azaleas and Forsythias that are blooming a second time this year. This may affect their flowering in the spring. In most cases, I recommend waiting until spring to see if the plant material leafs out before pruning out the deadwood or removing the plant.

As autumn leaves fall, it is a good time to remember that it is a violation of City ordinance to blow or dump leaves into the street or into drainage channels because leaves block catch basins, lines, and channels. If you have a lawn service, please remind them of this ordinance. Also remember you can set out your yard waste on Mondays for pickup by the City’s contractor, Deffenbaugh. Please do not set out yard waste prior to 3 p.m. on Sunday out of politeness to your neighbors.

If you have questions, I am willing to advise you on the care of City trees or your private trees. You may leave a message for me at City Hall and I will make an appointment to address your concerns. ■

## Fall & Winter Checklist

- ☑ Plant spring blooming bulbs. It is important to water spring blooming bulbs that you plant this fall during dry periods this winter and into spring.
- ☑ It is important to have a chimney sweep check to make sure you do not have creosote buildup that can cause a fire. It is important that you not burn pine.
- ☑ Do not forget to disconnect your hoses from your faucets once freezing temperatures arrive in order to prevent freeze damage to your plumbing.
- ☑ Keep gutters clear of debris that can cause water to spill or pool which may cause dams. Dams will cause water to backup under shingles resulting in interior leaks.



*The City is experimenting with “gator” bags, a slow release watering system for new trees that allow for deep water saturation with no run-off or evaporation. Using the bags saves time and water, and reduces transplant shock. Currently, these are only being used on traffic islands, but the City is considering asking for the permission of property owners to utilize them when the City plants street trees.*

# Scam Prevention

by Matt Boggs, Crime Prevention Officer  
Prairie Village Police Department

According to the Investor Protection Trust, 20 percent of Americans over the age of 65 have fallen victim to financial scams. Here are some typical scams to look out for.

**You're a Winner** – You receive a call or letter saying you've won a prize or a lottery, but in order to receive it, you need to wire money for taxes, fees or shipping. No legitimate contest will have you wire money prior to receiving the prize. **Do not** send any money to any organization that promises a prize or lottery money in return. If you did not enter a lottery or drawing, then you cannot win one to begin with.

**Grandchild in Trouble** – Someone poses as your grandchild, a police officer, or other law enforcement agency, calls and says your grandson/daughter has been arrested or has been involved in an accident outside the US. They desperately need bond money or money to fix a vehicle or pay for medical costs, etc. **Do not be fooled...** call your grandchild or their parent(s) and verify their well being.

**Get Rich Quick** – You are approached by someone who says they know of a great investment opportunity and need some start-up money. They may even show you a large amount of money that they will “put in” to the investment as well. Creators of “get rich schemes” are likely to spend your hard earned money and you are likely to never receive any returns.

**Revealing Account Info** – You receive a phone call or e-mail from your bank, credit card company, utility provider, etc. and they inform you they suspect fraudulent transactions and ask for you to provide your account info...chances are you have just been duped. There are multiple scams where someone is not who they claim to be and they trick you to access your personal account information. **Never** give out your account information in an unsolicited phone call or e-mail. Make sure you know the person you are talking to is legitimate.

**You Need a New Roof** – You receive a knock at your door and a friendly “contractor” happens to have noticed a problem with your roof while he was driving by, and, of course he can fix the problem on the spot and/or offer a free inspection that turns into unnecessary repairs or an expensive tube of caulk. Do not panic...ask for references and never rush into any agreement.

No matter how anxious you are to get your winnings, score a great return on an investment, help your loved one, or complete the work around your home, remember to trust your instincts and insight while you try to avoid rip-off artists who come knocking and calling this year. If it is too good to be true, it probably is a scam. If you have any questions, contact Crime Prevention Officer Matt Boggs at (913) 385-4613 or [mboggs@pvkansas.com](mailto:mboggs@pvkansas.com). ■

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## City Council Makes Changes to Sign Regulations

The Mission Hills City Council recently made a change to the City's Sign Regulations that affects temporary signs. The City Council increased the dates that three temporary signs can be placed on a lot. Those dates are: February 15 through April 15 during odd-numbered years, June 15 through August 15 during even-numbered years, and September 15 through November 15 during even-numbered years. At all other times, only one temporary sign may be placed on a lot.

As a reminder, no sign can be placed on City property or in the City's right-of-way which is typically ten feet from the back of the curb. All temporary signs can have a sign area no larger than three square feet, can be no more than two and one-half linear feet across, and have a maximum height of three and one-half feet above grade. A temporary sign may be posted for so long as it remains in good condition. Once a temporary sign is tattered or no longer in good condition, it must be removed. You can view the Sign Regulations and the rest of the Code of Ordinances by visiting the City's website at [www.missionhillsks.gov](http://www.missionhillsks.gov) and clicking on “Code of Ordinances”.



6300 State Line Road  
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*The Columns* is published three times a year for the residents of Mission Hills.

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## In-Ground Trash Cans Installed for Dog Walkers

The City recently installed two in-ground trash cans to give dog walkers additional disposal locations. The cans are installed below ground and have a lever on the lid that when stepped on opens the lid for easy access to dispose of items. Mostly hidden from view, the lids of the cans are the only visible part and are black with a white dog image. The locations for the cans were selected to expand into areas of the City not already served by a dog waste receptacle. If these two in-ground cans fare well during the changing seasons and are well received by residents, the City may consider additional in-ground cans in the future. The cans are located at: 1) Nymph Island (Romany and 69th Terrace, near the center of the island along the sidewalk) and 2) Sunken Garden (Mission Drive and Overhill Road, in a large planting bed along Mission Drive).



## City Calendar

*At a Glance*

- November 22-23** Thanksgiving Holiday  
CITY HALL CLOSED
- December 24-25** Christmas Holiday  
CITY HALL CLOSED
- December 31 & January 1** New Year's Holiday  
CITY HALL CLOSED
- January 21** Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday  
CITY HALL CLOSED
- January 24** Annual Joint Homes Association Meeting @ Indian Hills Country Club @ 6:00 p.m.