

For All Seasons ~ For All Reasons



JOHNSON COUNTY
PARK & RECREATION
DISTRICT

2003
ANNUAL
REPORT

THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friend of the Johnson County Park and Recreation District:

This is a tremendous opportunity to say thank you to the many individual citizens and community groups who spoke on our behalf at the Johnson County Commission's budget hearings during 2003. With their support, the budget subsequently approved by the County Commission provides the funding to substantially increase acquisition and upgrade maintenance in existing parks in accordance with the Master Action Plan, MAP 2020.

My fellow board members and the District staff are also to be commended for the many projects already completed or underway within the District as a result of the County Commission's support.

The District achieved a long-sought goal when the County Commission approved the 2004 District budget that included a nearly 2-mill levy level allowed by statute and approved by voters in 1986.

The implementation of the District's long range Master Action Plan, MAP 2020, gained substantial ground during 2003. The District was able to acquire land for future regional park development and a unique opportunity was created and presented to the Northeast Council of Mayors for proposals to seek land for the northeast area of the County and lease it to the cities for their development, maintenance and operation.

My sincerest thanks go to the citizens and organizations that actively participated in master site plan meetings held by consultants for the District to upgrade and improve Antioch, Shawnee Mission, Heritage, and Ernie Miller parks. The plans provide guidance to the Board and staff for future development and resource maintenance.

On behalf of the entire District Board, thank you.

Sincerely,



Mark G. Stingley
2003 Chair
Board of Park
and Recreation Commissioners

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROJECTS

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, ACQUISITION

During 2003, the District vigorously addressed the goals of its 20-year Master Action Plan (MAP 2020). This included public meetings and development of master site plans, pursuing the preservation of available open space, planning and creating additional parkland and facilities, and making and scheduling improvements to existing properties.



The District grew in 2003 by approximately 500 acres, ending the year with approximately 7,583 acres. Purchases included a former quarry of approximately 100 acres adjacent to the southwest corner of Shawnee Mission Park, 200 acres in west Olathe for the future Regional Park along Cedar Creek, 98 acres for future development of the Kill Creek Streamway Park, the Johnson County Girls Athletic Complex, and the 15-acre White Fox Manor adjacent to Heritage Park. Careful consideration by the District Board and staff assessed the long-range advantages of each purchase.

In addition to the District's operating budget, the Johnson County Commission approved \$4.8 million during the 2004 budget process to assist with parkland acquisition. The \$4.8 million included \$2 million to debt finance an estimated \$26 million in parkland acquisition over the next three years and \$2.8 million for improvements at existing park properties.

PRESERVING OPEN SPACE IN THE POPULATED NORTHEAST

Realizing that acquiring land for parks in the densely populated northeast part of the County is both a need and a potentially expensive proposition, the District allocated \$2.1 million in 2003 for this purpose and sought help from area cities. Five northeast cities submitted proposals and a first purchase, a small property adjacent to Prairie Park in Prairie Village, was completed in early 2004. While the District is not equipped to maintain small neighborhood parks, the intent is to purchase the land and lease it to the cities for development, operation, and maintenance. As a result, green space will be preserved in the northeast portion of the County. While the District has participated in cooperative efforts with area municipalities in the past, this is the first time this type of parkland lease has been offered.

PUBLIC INVOLVED IN MASTER-PLANNING PROCESS

"3 Plans for 3 Parks" was a process to update the master site plans for Shawnee Mission, Heritage, and Ernie Miller parks. The process, led by LandPlan Engineering, included extensive public meetings and forums from May through September of 2003 to identify issues of most concern to the public ranging from the development of sports facilities, to natural resource management, to public safety. Citizens were also encouraged through news releases and website



postings to submit comments in writing to the consultants. The result was a mix of improvements to features in each park that the public voiced a part in, and which restores or protects the resource.

The new master plans were recommended in MAP 2020 and were approved by the District Board in February 2004.

FOR ALL SEASONS ~ FOR ALL REASONS

ANTIOCH PARK GETS OVERDUE RENOVATION



Though the District's parkland acquisition emphasis is on regional parks, the District Board and administration are also aware of an obligation to maintain its few community parks.

A major renewal program is underway at 44-acre Antioch Park, the District's first developed park. Following the completion

of a master planning process in April, 2003, extensive improvements began in October to the park's North and South lakes including dredging and deepening the lakes and rebuilding the dam on the South lake to assist in water quality and storm water drainage for the area surrounding the park. A longer walkway will encircle the entire park and boardwalks will improve wildlife-viewing opportunities on both lakes.

The annual visitation to Antioch Park averages around 800,000 persons. In all, this first phase of improvements will involve \$1.2 million to upgrade and renovate the park. Completion is expected in the summer of 2004. The second phase of the plan for Antioch Park begins in late 2004.

The master planning process, conducted by Theis Doolittle and Associates, ensures a balance of the needs of the users and preserves the park's remaining natural areas. A series of public meetings and consultations with park users gathered information for the consultants to make the final recommendations.

THIRD PHASE EXPANSION OF NATURE CENTER

A 7,000 square-foot addition to the Ernie Miller Nature Center began in the spring of 2003 and was completed in March 2004. The addition vastly improves programming potential and provides flexibility for offerings for schools and large groups. A large portion of the new space is a multipurpose room that can accommodate 150 persons and can be partitioned into two areas. The expansion doubles the space that had previously been available for environmental interpretive programming.



A themed exhibit room is included in the expansion. "Changes in the Land" has a wildlife viewing room facing the nearby woods, and a 500-gallon aquarium featuring native fish. It is hoped a professional designer can be hired in the near future and donations and grants can be raised to plan and implement the nature center's new exhibit space.



The nature center opened in 1985 with 2,000 square feet and was expanded by 3,200 square feet in 1992. The recent addition has been anticipated since then, but was delayed repeatedly because of budget cutbacks.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends;

Historically, the effort by staff has been to publish an annual report that is more than an accounting of funds and series of columns and numbers. Our goal each year is to present a professional perspective on the state of parks and recreation in Johnson County.

The District achieved one of its long-sought goals in 2003 when the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners approved a 2004 District budget that included nearly all of a "second mill" of budget authority allowed by statute and approved by voters in 1986, but never previously realized. Additionally, this annual report will detail the progress of the projects begun and completed in 2003.

The support and implementation of the District's long range Master Action Plan, MAP 2020, grew substantially during 2003. The District was able to acquire land for future development and implement an initiative to meet the needs of the northeast portion of the County.

During 2003, countless citizens and organizations were actively engaged in site plan recommendations made to the District Board for four parks: Antioch, Shawnee Mission, Heritage, and Ernie Miller. The plans provide guidance to the Board and staff on future development and resource maintenance.

I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Board of County Commissioners, the citizens of Johnson County, the District Board and staff for a super year. The District accomplished much in 2003 by the involvement and resourcefulness of all.

If you have need for more information on MAP 2020, click on Planning and Development located on the homepage and at the bottom of every section on the District's website, www.jcprd.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Meadors".

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

THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

PARKS & FACILITIES ACRES 2003

Antioch Park	43.48
Athletic Training Center	1.13
Big Bull Creek Park (Future)	1,349.04
Blue River Streamway (Future)	13.98
Bull Creek Streamway Park	19.65
Camp Branch Park (Future)	54.77
Cedar-Niles (Future)	852.40
Ernie Miller Park	116.18
Heritage Park	1,238.50
Johnson County Girls Athletic Complex	39.57
Kill Creek Park	884.83
Kill Creek Streamway (Future)	172.08
Kill Creek Streamway Park	29.33
Mid-America Sports Complex	86.66
Mill Creek Streamway Park	550.12
Nursery/Streamway Maintenance	20.24
Oakridge Farm	363.50
Roeland Park Aquatic Center	3.44
Shawnee Mission Park	1,236.19
Shawnee Mission Park Addition (Future)	81.18
Stanley Park	40.26
Sunflower Nature Park	57.16
Thomas S. Stoll Memorial Park	78.96
Tomahawk Hills Golf Course	238.04
Tomahawk Hills Golf Course (Future)	12.21
Total Acreage:	7,582.90

VISITATIONS

Antioch Park	740,853
Ernie Miller Park	98,373
Heritage Park	1,404,158
Johnson County Girls Athletic Complex	237,127
Kill Creek Park	123,660
Mid-America Sports Complex	234,416
Shawnee Mission Park	2,323,342
Stanley Park	51,132
Streamway Parks (All)	800,713
Sunflower Nature Park	56,249
Thomas S. Stoll Memorial Park	260,171
Tomahawk Recreation Complex	454,257
TOTAL VISITATIONS	6,784,451

2003 Program participations appear on Page 6

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Want to know more about JCPRD parks, facilities, and programs and why they're so popular? Pick up the current copy of our quarterly ACTIVITIES catalog at any Johnson County Library branch or visit us online at www.jcprd.com

Administrative Offices

7900 Renner Rd (913) 438-7275

Registration & Reservations

6501 Antioch (913) 831-3355

STREAMWAY PARK TRAILS: SHORT CONNECTIVE LINKS INCLUDED IN 2003 TRAIL PROJECTS



Four connective links to existing parks and trails were among acquisition and maintenance projects in 2003. One project is ongoing and assists the City of Merriam in extending the Turkey Creek Streamway Trail north about one-quarter mile, including under Johnson Drive, to the new Merriam Marketplace. Another project

begun in 2003 will create a trail roughly one-half of a mile that connects the Roeland Park Community Center with the city's nearby Nall Park. The remaining two projects connect portions of trails each measuring about one-quarter mile on Indian and Tomahawk Creeks in Overland Park.

An additional Streamway Parks System development in 2003 included the completion and dedication of a segment of the Kill Creek Streamway Park that includes an off-leash dog area.

TRAIL ADDED IN KILL CREEK PARK

Nearly nine miles of unpaved specialized-use trails were opened in Kill Creek Park during 2003. The trails are in addition to the approximately 2.75 miles of paved trails in place when the park opened in late 2001.

Working with local user groups to develop the network of trails, the District was able to add 3.28 miles of unpaved hiking trail, 1.56 miles of all-terrain bike trail, and almost 4.13 miles of equestrian trail.

The new trails are located in the western and northern portions of the park and many are accessible from the paved trails. The trails have been segregated by use and signed for the type of use for which they are intended.

Groups that assisted with development of the new trails were the Earth Riders Mountain Bike Club, hikers with the Kansas City Outdoor Society, and a number of individual equestrian users.

TIMBER RIDGE PROJECTS RE-ADDED

Three components originally part of, but trimmed from, Phase I developments at the TimberRidge Adventure Center, are being re-added. These include a 35-foot-tall climbing tower on the ropes course, a westward-facing curved deck around the back half of the Welcome Center, and a large shelter suitable for corporate gatherings on the north shore of the area's small lakes.



The three projects were removed or downscaled because of budgetary concerns when TimberRidge was originally constructed in late 2001 and early 2002. Through the initial Kill Creek Park Phase I development savings these projects will now be funded.

FOR ALL SEASONS ~ FOR ALL REASONS

IMPACT AND SUPPORT FROM EXTENSIVE USER SURVEYS



During 2003, the District conducted extensive surveys of parks and facilities and evaluations of recreational programs for the first time in a number of years. Park surveys were conducted at Shawnee Mission, Heritage, Ernie Miller, and Kill Creek parks. Evaluations were randomly completed by participants in recreational programs. Additionally, the District conducted a first-ever customer satisfaction survey of users of the Heritage Park and Tomahawk Hills golf courses.

Park users were last surveyed in 2000 and while most recreational programming areas regularly conduct evaluations of their own programs, a comprehensive evaluation of programming across the board had not been done since 1996.

Information gathered through the surveys help staff gauge overall participant and user satisfaction and are used for marketing, class and facility selection, and park and facility development and planning. Comments and recommendations on park facilities were provided to the consultant teams completing the master site plans for Shawnee Mission, Ernie Miller, and Heritage, and Antioch parks.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2003 SURVEYS AND EVALUATIONS:

Ernie Miller, Heritage, Kill Creek and Shawnee Mission Parks

80% of park users are from Johnson County, 87% are from Kansas, 11.5% are from Missouri.

93.9% of visitors rate the parks excellent or good.

93.6% rate the park maintenance excellent or good.

98% state that they feel very safe or safe while in the parks.

The most frequent activities are:

Hike/walk/stroll	21.6%	Cruise/Drive through	15.8%
Use off-leash area	20.6%	Picnic	12.6%
Sit and relax	18%	Play ball	11.8%

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Tomahawk Hills and Heritage Park Combined Golf Courses

96.6% enjoy their golf experience.

97.2% consider the experience a good value

91.8% rate the Pro Shop staff excellent or good; the pro shops are rated excellent or good by 71%.

93.4% rate the concession staff excellent or good; the concessions are rated excellent or good by 75%.

80.4% rate the Marshals excellent or good.

Overall Recreation Program Evaluations

66.3% have participated in a District program before.

92.7% indicate they are satisfied or more than satisfied with the program.

93% indicate they are satisfied or more than satisfied with the staff.

97.8% find the registration process easy.



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.

Mark G. Stingley, 2003 Chair

Paul E. Alvarado, Jr.

Jack M. Epps

Dr. Mike Jurkovich, 2004 Chair

Vickie Truitt

Nancy Wallerstein

Dr. Marvin E. Wollen

BOARD AND STAFF RECOGNITIONS

The **District Board** received special recognition from the Midwest Region of the National Recreation and Park Association recognizing the time, dedication, and conservation ethic involved in establishing MAP 2020, the Master Action Plan, which strategically addresses park and open space development and acquisition needs.

STAFF RECOGNITIONS

Payroll and Accounts Payable Manager Linda Bayliss was selected by staff as the District's 2003 Employee of the Year.

Heritage Park Golf Pro Rob Wilken was named the Midwest Section Pro Golf Association's Player of the Year. **Manager of Golf Operations Wayne Montgomery** was named among the 400 top golf teachers in North America by Golf Magazine.

The National Association for Interpretation Region Six presented **Park Naturalist Molly Postlewait** the Meritorious Service Award, recognized **Park Naturalist Chris Pistole** for the Best Workshop Presentation, and selected the **Heritage History Lab** as the Outstanding Program for the second time. The Ecology Encounters program was named the Outstanding 2003 Interpretive Program by the Kansas Recreation and Park Association's Parks and Natural Resources Branch.

The **Roeland Park Early Childhood Development Center** received the Shawnee Mission School District's Friend of Special Education Award.

KC Blazer Head Coach Pete Malone was named among the 25 most influential people in the history of USA Swimming. He was also selected as one of two coaches for the 2004 World Swim Championships in Indianapolis.

THE JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

ALSO WORTH NOTING IN 2003

- The Theatre in the Park had a strong year in 2003. Over 700 people auditioned for roles in the season's four productions, and attendance was 51,951, up from 43,264 in 2002. Revenues at the gate went from \$161,023 to \$178,917. In addition, another 4,215 people and \$14,522 in revenue were realized from the first-ever Theatre Troupe production.
- Antioch Park Worker Ralph Schlagel died suddenly of a heart attack while fishing from his kayak after work at Shawnee Mission Park on June 16. While he had been with the District for less than three years, he made a big impact on staff and the park patrons and will be missed.
- The BB Gun Range at the TimberRidge Adventure Center saw its first use when over 700 cub scouts participated in two camps at the facility during June.
- District Rangers adopted an optional summer uniform consisting of a white cool-max weave shirt, black shorts, and lighter weight shoes.
- A two-mile loop of the Gary L. Haller Trail in Mill Creek Streamway Park below the dam in Shawnee Mission Park received a surface overlay. The original surface of the trail was 12 years old.
- Well known by birdwatchers area-wide, Antioch Park has several acres that attract rarely sighted birds. In January 2003, a pine warbler, a small yellow bird, was sighted in the park. Word spread quickly as birders wanted to add the bird to their life lists before it left.
- More than 20,000 copies of the 2003 edition of the Trail Guide of Hiking and Biking in Johnson County were distributed. The comprehensive guide contains all public trails and parks in Johnson County and was produced by the Planning and Development Division with help from area cities. The trail guide is updated approximately every 18 months.



2003 PROGRAM PARTICIPATIONS

Adult Sports

Mid-America Sports Complex	239,929
Johnson County Girls Sports Complex	149,841
Other Softball fields	66,540
Roeland Park and Tomahawk Domes	148,062

Aquatics:

Swim and Water Safety lessons	15,943
Roeland Park Aquatic Center	23,807

Children's Services

Preschools, AfterSchool Programs, Day Camps	246,329
---	---------

Instructional Athletics

Youth and Adult	23,999
-----------------	--------

Corporate and Community Wellness

Fitness and Exercise Classes	2,620
Athletic Training Center	29,311
KC Corporate Olympics	25,875

Dance, Performing, Fine Arts:

All Ages	4,870
----------	-------

50 Plus Program

Travel, Leagues, Aquatics	17,955
Olathe, Overland Park, Roeland Park Centers	136,243
Senior Clubs, Special Events, Volunteers	5,549

Golf Courses: Rounds

Heritage Park Golf Course	41,352
Tomahawk Hills Golf Course	45,000

Environmental and Interpretive Programs

Environmental & Cultural Education Programs	40,226
Ernie Miller Nature Center Visitors	22,240
Instructional Outdoor Skills Programs	1,964
Special Events	6,889
TimberRidge Adventure Center	1,298

Competitive Athletic Events

The Theatre in the Park	64,254
-------------------------	--------

Special Populations and Special Olympics

Special Populations	1,935
Special Olympics - iThe Rangersi	4,635

Youth Sports

Gymnastics	11,698
Heritage Park Football	31,911
Heritage Park Soccer	167,112
Thomas S. Stoll Park Soccer	38,423

Total

1,617,627

2003 facility visitation figures appear on Page 4

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.

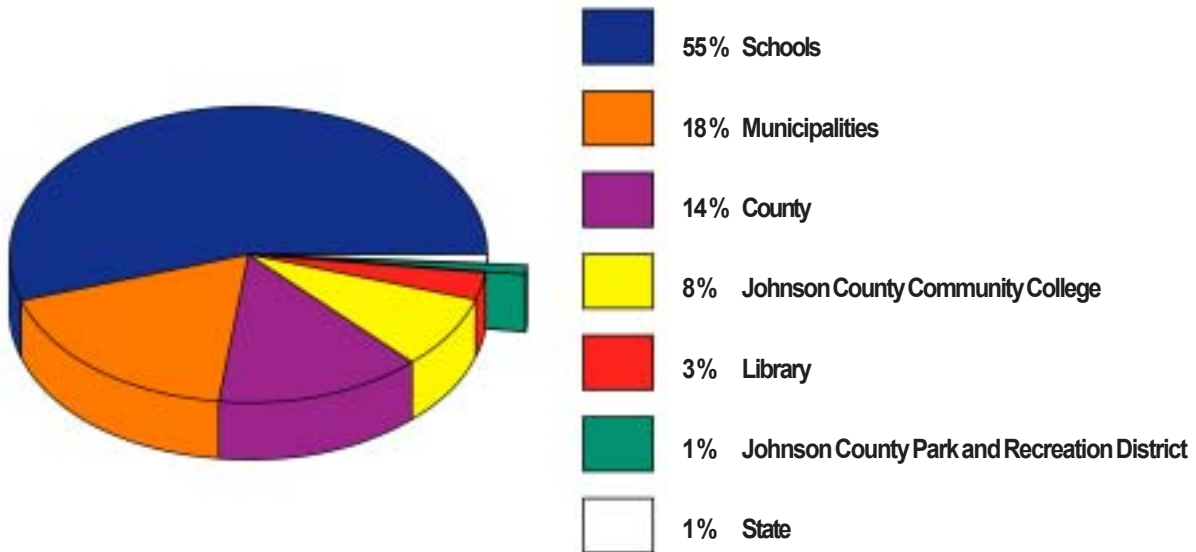
2003 Enterprise Fund

Budget	\$17,240,951
Revenues	\$16,022,120

FOR ALL SEASONS ~ FOR ALL REASONS

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

The average appraised value for a home in Johnson County in 2003 was \$203,000. The amount of property tax an individual homeowner pays depends on budgets set by governing bodies such as schools, the State, cities, and the County. The approximate Countywide average is stated below:

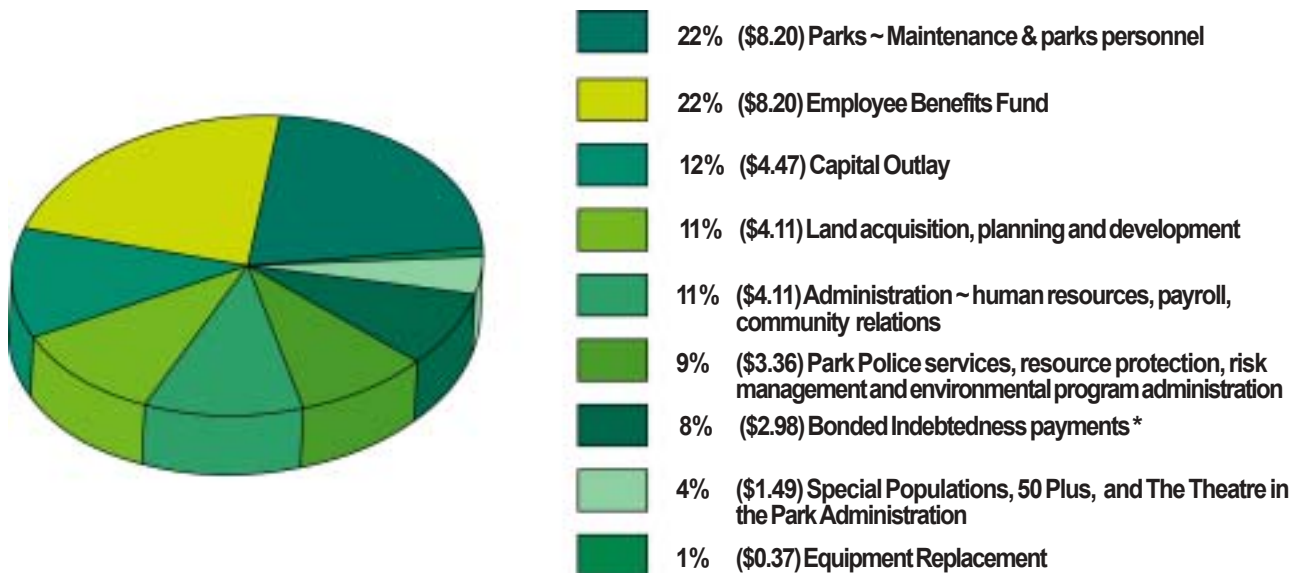


THE DISTRICT'S TAX PORTION IS 1.38 PERCENT

Based on the countywide average of taxing entities, a hypothetical owner of a \$203,000 home would pay property tax totaling \$2,702. The Johnson County Park and Recreation District would receive only \$37.29 of this amount.

WHAT DOES THE JCPRD DO WITH THE \$37.29?

The District utilizes three tax-supported funds which include : Operations and Maintenance, Capital Outlay, and Employee Benefits and Bonded Indebtedness



* Voter-approved General Obligation Bonds for the purchase and development of Heritage Park (1979) and land acquisition for the future Big Bull Creek Park (1998)

JCPRD Unveils Unique New Logo

A unique and dynamic new logo for the Johnson County Park and Recreation District was unveiled in late 2003.

The new logo was created by EAT Advertising and Design and was the result of a creative process that incorporated staff, board, and patron input and took more than three months to complete.

Following interviews with groups representing park patrons, young seasonal employees, and a larger group representing all District divisions, the consultants concluded that the logo would need to cover a broad spectrum as the agency itself represents different things to different people. The one common thread was life, or as EAT's Patrice Jobe put it, "everything under the sun." Thus the central motif of the new logo is the sun portrayed in a stylized manner meant to represent the many aspects of the District.

The new image logo portrays the top two-thirds of the sun rising above the horizon. The sun consists

of nine rays. The first three on the left, portrayed in yellow, represent the beginning of transition and growth. The second three rays are green and are more organic in form, reminiscent of blades of grass or the leaves of lilies or daffodils. These represent nature's presence and speak to the many beauties of the parks. The final three rays gradually fade to blue in the color version and form shapes representing waves of water. Below the sun is a space which becomes the horizon and suggests plains or meadows on the left and hills on the right. Beneath this is a beckoning element which could be viewed as a stream, river, or path. This is meant to create a depth of space that connects the viewer to the source, or sun.



"I think it conveys a contemporary, energetic image that calls out for interaction with the viewer," District Director Michael Meadors said of the new logo. "Every one who sees it knows it's distinctive. There's not another like it. We're excited about making it a part of all our promotional and print and visual communication graphics."

JOHNSON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT
7900 Renner Road • Shawnee Mission, KS • 66219-9723
Phone: 913.438.7275 • Fax: 913.492.7275 • www.jcprd.com