

# CITY of OTTAWA ANNUAL REPORT



## Greetings!

This annual report is intended to bring awareness to the many activities and accomplishments that happened in Ottawa in 2011. We produce this report as a way to inform you, tax-paying citizens and business owners, about the activities of your local government and City staff. You have chosen to make Ottawa your home and/or place of business. It's our job to do our best to preserve the small, hometown



atmosphere while fostering an environment for growth, opportunity and economic development.

With a population of 12,649, Ottawa is the county seat and the largest city in Franklin County. Ottawa is a thriving city that has managed to grow, yet maintain its small-town culture. Ottawa respects diversity and tradition, and takes positive steps to protect both. Commissioners and employees of the City of Ottawa take great pride in providing services to the citizens of Ottawa, and work to continue to improve the city that we call home. Here are some of the highlights of 2011:

- Richard U. Nienstedt, our City Manager, was honored by his Kansas peers and awarded the Buford M. Watson Award, a professional recognition equivalent to a Lifetime Achievement Award.
- The 15th Street Sidewalk Project began, and provides sidewalks on 15th Street from the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail west to Eisenhower and fully financed by a KDOT Transportation Enhancement grant.
- Kanza Park Accessible Playground - the playground Ottawa built was completely financed and constructed by our community!
- The Airport Advisory Board was created to seek ways of more fully utilizing and improving aviation facilities in Ottawa.
- Ottawa competed in the 2011 Take Charge Challenge, a regional energy-efficiency contest coordinated by the Climate and Energy Project (CEP) and sponsored by the Kansas Energy Office.
- 18 City employees were recognized for milestone work anniversaries of a combined total of 365 years of service.

2011 was a year of challenges and opportunities, and 2012 looks to be even more so. It will be stressful. Budget restraints will continue to be a challenge for the coming year. Please review this annual report and learn more about the services the City provides and the ongoing community projects that make Ottawa a great place to live.

  
Gene Ramsey, Mayor

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# 2011



# City Manager's Office

## Richard U. Nienstedt, City Manager

I continue to be pleased and honored to be your City Manager. As you read this report of the 2011 activities, I hope you will agree that your City Commissioners and employees are dedicated to creating a vibrant, growing community which is a great place to live, work and play in every day of the year. We are dedicated to maintaining a strong and sustainable community for not only the current citizens but also for those of the future. This annual report is a brief "behind the scenes" look at some of those activities.



2011 continued to be a year of economic uncertainty and declining revenues at the local, state and federal levels. Because of a team approach between the Commission and employees of the City, we continued to address current needs such as street maintenance, sidewalks, utility lines and job creation with limited resources. I continue to be grateful for the dedication of the City Commission and employees as they approach the daunting task of addressing both current and future needs of our community which adds significantly to the continued stability of our great community. An example of this is that the new City Commission started their terms with a retreat to establish goals for not only themselves but also for City staff. Those goals are economic development, street

and sidewalks and citizen communication. During 2012, you will be seeing reports on how each of these are being addressed with specific actions.

Whatever successes the City Commission and employees have during the year are a direct result of committed and supportive citizens and business owners that work as volunteers in order to build the strength and vitality of our City on a daily basis. You stay aware of local and regional issues; many of you participate in community forums such as Legislative Coffees and regular City Commission meetings. You graciously welcome guests and visitors, including those who attend some of the great Ottawa events, such as the Over the Road Gang's Ol' Marias River Run and the Power of Past Antique Engine and Tractor Show. The combined efforts and attitudes of all components of the City of Ottawa (citizens, business owners, City employees and our elected officials) come together to create an atmosphere of sharing, participation and fellowship – a true sense of community. I am proud to say that I am an Ottawan and belong to a community that cares about every citizen.

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# Human Resources

## Melissa Fairbanks, Director

The City of Ottawa believes our employees are our most valuable resource in providing services to citizens, property owners and visitors. The Human Resources Department provides the following services: recruitment; compensation and classification; personnel policy development and administration; employee evaluation procedures; regulatory compliance; employee benefits and activities; employee training; administrative projects; and provides various support services. The department also handles Risk Management functions including loss control, tort claims, safety and workers' compensation.

In 2011, 22 vacancies occurred. Twelve full-time positions and 8 seasonal positions were filled, 1 remains unfilled, and 5 positions remained vacant throughout 2011 due to the hiring freeze. One police officer position was not filled due to the loss of grant funding. The Assistant Park Superintendent and Streets Maintenance Crew Chief positions were filled with an entry-level Equipment Operator position in each division.

Seven employees retired from the City of Ottawa in 2011. Carl Elder, Utilities Water Distribution/Wastewater Collection

Maintenance Worker after 35 years of service; Bonita Nicewander, Deputy City Clerk, retired after 16 years of service; Cliff Badders, Utilities Warehouse Worker, retired after 11 years of service; Rick Geist, Police Department Master Police Officer, retired after 30 years of service; Charlie King, Public Works Maintenance Crew Chief, retired after 26 years of service; Joe Moody, Assistant Parks Superintendent, retired after 23 years of service; and Rick Howard, Master Police Officer, retired after 23 years of service.

The following trainings were provided in 2011: Revised Personnel Evaluation Form; Emergency Response Operations Drill; Tornado Drill; Employee Motivation; Chronic Drug Therapy Management (CDTM); Consumer Driven Health Plans (CDHP), Health Savings Accounts (HSA), and Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRA); Kansas Workers Compensation Law for supervisory personnel; Americans with Disabilities Act/Sensitivity and Awareness; hearing tests; Use of Technology to Stalk; Competent Person for Excavation & Trench Training; Confined Space Entry; and Kansas Eastern Regional Insurance Trust (KERIT) Site Surveys.

# Finance/City Clerk

Scott Bird, Director of Finance • Carolyn Snethen, City Clerk



The mission of the City Finance Department is to promote the effective and efficient use of financial resources; to protect City assets and to provide administrative, clerical and record-keeping support for the City.

This department provides information and recommendations on matters relating to taxation and licensing, implements adopted legislative measures and provides administrative support to carry out priorities as established by the Governing Body. This department acts as a collection point for all City revenues and distributes payment for all City expenditures. Major department functions include: accounts payable; accounts receivable; debt issuance; utility billing; meter reading for 6,300 electric and 5,100 water customers; utility collections; fines and fees; enforced collection; processing applications for Utility Assistance; registration and licensing for retail sale of cereal malt beverage, alcohol and tobacco; animal registrations; itinerant vendors; taxi services; pawnbrokers and for the first time, payday loan licenses.

The Finance Department supports all activities of the City of Ottawa, not only by maintaining accurate bookkeeping and accounting, but also by participating in a variety of ways related to donations and grant opportunities, which brought in over \$500,000 in 2011 and promise to exceed that in 2012. Some of those opportunities include working with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) to assist in paying for street repairs, sidewalks and pathways. In 2010 and 2011, the City partnered with ECKAN to bring almost \$600,000 to the community to assist with the improvement of local properties. The Federal Aviation Administration will provide 95% funding for a \$2 million Municipal Airport improvement project, and the Finance Department will facilitate the financial side of the project. One of the most heartwarming projects the Finance Department supported in 2011 was the renewed interest in the City's parks and playgrounds. While the dollar amounts do not compare to streets and runways, the results are just as important. One only has to walk by Kanza Park on a sunny day to see how important coordinated funding efforts can be. In addition to the nuts and bolts of accounting, the Finance Department also supports National Night Out and educational presentations to groups such as the Leadership Franklin County, First Friday forums and the newly developed City/County Budget Forum.

Within the Finance Department, the City Clerk Division records official proceedings for all meetings of the Governing Body; maintains custody of minutes, resolutions, ordinances

and other official records; prepares reports for and communicates with the City Manager and the Governing Body; coordinates the development of tax exemption applications; and tracks special assessments and impact fees. In addition, this division

provides access of open records information to the general public, works with individual citizens as well as local community groups, and assists in the development and receipt of petitions related to various community matters.

This department works with financial advisors to find the best opportunities to establish long-term financing for projects such as the main hangar at the Municipal Airport. Other financial options continue to be considered for capital needs such as streets, parks, utilities and others. A major effort in 2011 included the development of a plan to finance sewer improvements on the east side of the community.

**For additional information  
please call 785-229-3600  
or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov)**



## Municipal Auditorium

Shonda Stitt, Administrative Manager

Construction began in 1919 on the Ottawa Municipal Auditorium to honor those who lost their lives in World War I. Its continuing mission is to serve the community as a cultural, entertainment and educational facility. Ongoing activities include country music artists, both local and national, the Ottawa Police Department's McGruff Club events, local job training activities, private parties and receptions, school programs and more. Revenues to cover operational and maintenance expenses are predominantly derived from City property tax, supplemented by ticket sales and rental fees.

In 2011 the Auditorium was full of activity, hosting productions that included Ottawa High School's fall and spring productions, as well as the OHS band and vocal concerts. The Auditorium hosted the Living Last Supper, the FFA Annual Greenhand Conference, the Franklin County Children's Coalition Spring Fling and Winter Adventure activities, dance recitals and Grace Gospel Church services, twice a week all year long. In 2011 the auditorium hosted 50 rentals, 182 days of usage with 19,249 patrons using the building throughout the year.

The Auditorium is available for many types of private events as well as public performances.

**For additional information, please call 785-242-8810  
or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov)**



# Public Works

## Andy Haney, Director

The Public Works Department has 24 employees and includes the Streets Division, the Parks and Cemeteries Division, and the Fleet Management Division. The Ottawa Municipal Airport and Flood Control are facilitated by the Public Works Department, but are not staffed by City divisions.

2011 was a great year for the parks and green spaces of Ottawa. A tree was planted at Eugene Field Elementary School to celebrate Arbor Day and to recognize Cory Hack for winning the City of Ottawa Arbor Day poster contest. Cory's poster was also the winner for the northeast region of Kansas. Streets Division staff planted flowers at two corners on First Street. All other downtown corners were adopted by the Ottawa Main Street Association. Flowers that had been purchased in advance for the corners were turned over to the OMSA for their use. The effort completed by these volunteers throughout the year was remarkable, and the results achieved added value to the appearance of downtown Ottawa for all its citizens.

Park crews removed two jungle gyms to prepare the sites for new equipment at Freedom Park and Forest Park. City crews prepared the site for the new playground at Kanza Park – the first accessible playground in our community, and funded completely by grants and community donations. Subsequent improvements to Kanza Park by City staff included concrete pads for picnic table and benches. A large BBQ grill, donated by the Power of the Past, was installed at the Brick Shelter in Forest Park, and crews installed two additional grills in other areas of Forest Park.

A total of 7 pet waste stations were installed in Forest Park, Heritage Park, Kanza Park, on the PSRT and at Roadside Park – all were grant funded.

Other park amenities were also improved. An accessible ramp and hand rails were added to the tennis courts at Forest Park. Parks crew members and volunteers from the Horseshoe Club worked together to repair/replace concrete surfaces at the horseshoe pits in Forest Park. Forest Park hosted several major events through the year, including: the Extreme Makeover Home Edition BBQ, the Power of the Past Antique Tractor and Engine Show, the Ol' Marais River Run, and annual Veterans Day activities.

The Municipal Airport received a KDOT grant for 50% of the project costs for an airport credit card fueling system. The Airport is now capable of credit card fuel sales 24 hours a day. Much preliminary work was also done on proposed runway improvements; the Federal Aviation Administration will fund 95% of the project. These improvements will add many years to the life of our airport.



Street rehabilitation efforts were limited during 2011 due to budget constraints. KDOT offered 2011 funds to support local projects. The City received some of these funds to support the City's share of a resurfacing project on K-68 west of the river bridge, and resurfacing of a municipal parking lot. City staff has been working with KDOT to improve the intersection of Davis Road and K-68 by adding turning lanes to the intersection. City staff drafted an application for KDOT funding to assist with the construction of this future project.

**For additional information, call 785-229-3630,  
or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov).**



# Utilities

## Jim Bradley, Director



The Utilities Department provides wastewater collection and treatment, electric generation and distribution, and water treatment and distribution services to the City of Ottawa. The Department also operates a warehouse that supports these services. Benefits of the City-owned utilities include better and local control over rates, responsiveness to the public, quality control, coordinated planning efforts with other City functions, and subsidization of some public services and activities using utility revenues. Combined, the utilities have 48 employees.

### Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The wastewater plant, which began operating in 2004, continues to meet and exceed all State and Federal regulations. With a 2011 combined budget of \$1.56 million, the 2.6 Million Gallon per Day (MGD) plant averaged treating .695 MGD. The WWTP added a fifth raw sewage pump and the Rock Creek lift station. The Collection Division continues to make improvements to the collection system by replacing 1,000 feet of sanitary sewer lines and making emergency repairs, as well as assisted in the Cured-in-Place Piping repairs of 1.25 miles of sewer lines. The crews have cleaned and performed video inspections of over 8 miles of sewer lines during 2011.

### Water Treatment and Distribution

The City of Ottawa provided over 593 million gallons of treated water in 2011 to residences, business, three Rural Water Districts, and the City of Princeton. Staff takes pride in the fact that there have been no violations of State or Federal regulations since the plant opened in 1980. Plant staff continues to make upgrades to the plant in an effort to extend the life of the facilities. The Distribution Division continued to make improvements to the system by replacing and upgrading water lines and preparing for growth by providing inspection services to new subdivisions to ensure proper installation of the water infrastructure. During 2011, the Distribution crews replaced 4,212 feet of waterline throughout the City.

### Electric Generation and Distribution

The Electric Distribution Division has provided for growth by extending services and undertaking an aggressive overhead line clearing program to help eliminate outages during storms; the addition of a backyard easement bucket will help facilitate this program. Nearly 142 million kilowatt hours were provided to our consumers, with over 99.9% reliability during 2011. The Power Plant operated its generation units over 784 hours during 2011. A major project completed by Power Plant personnel



have been the replacement of numerous outdated protective relays with new digital relays. In 2011 the Electric Utility completed NERC audits in Critical Infrastructure Protection and Transmission Reliability with no reportable findings.

### Utilities Warehouse

The Utilities Warehouse maintains an inventory of spare and replacement parts to support the electrical, water distribution and wastewater collection systems.

**For additional information, please call 785-229-3710,  
or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov)**





## Volunteerism in Ottawa

2011 was a fantastic year for volunteerism in our community. Many significant volunteer events, activities and programs brought the community together and produced outstanding results. While cameras rolled on the Extreme Makeover Home Edition site southwest of Ottawa, a wonderful showing of support was seen at the companion barbecue event held in Forest Park. Some activities, like the Power of the Past Antique Engine and Tractor Show, the Ol' Marais River Run Car Show, D.A.R.E. Camp for incoming 6th grade USD 290 students, and the Youth in Government program add strength and vitality to our community on an annual basis. Events from 2011 we hope to see continue annually include the National Night Out event and Ottawa Play Day, as well as the care and cultivation of the beautiful planters and flowers for all to enjoy on the corners of our downtown historic district. And because Ottawans jump in wherever they are needed, projects like the construction of the Kanza Park Playground and painting and refreshing the Skate Park are easy to accomplish.





*Thank you, Ottawa, for giving to the community for all to enjoy!*



# Fire Department

## Jeff Carner, Chief

During 2011, the Ottawa Fire Department (OFD) responded to 1,260 calls for service, down from the previous four years. The greatest decrease in calls for service was in the area of emergency medical and rescue calls, down from 919 in 2010, to 836 in 2011. Building fires were down from 21 in 2010, to 15 in 2011, with the community experiencing an estimated \$282,000 in total fire loss.

A key element to a successful fire service is the type and level of training. Fire personnel receive their training and education in many ways and from a variety of sources. During the calendar year, OFD members participated in 3,712 hours of training. The fire service in general has evolved from an organization whose primary responsibility was fire suppression to an emergency services organization that provides fire suppression, fire prevention, fire code enforcement, fire investigation, fire inspection, plan review, emergency medical services, hazardous materials mitigation and specialized rescue operations. Training and preparation for all type of incidents has a distinct impact on operational outcomes.

OTTAWA FIRE RESPONSES	2011	2010	2009
Building fires	15	21	14
Vehicle fires	16	12	13
Other fires	32	31	34
Over pressure rupture, overhear	6	3	2
Rescue & emergency medical	836	919	886
Hazardous conditions	86	74	69
Service calls	46	50	63
Good intent calls	118	166	170
False alarms	101	106	99
Severe weather natural disaster	2	0	3
Special type incident	2	1	0
<b>TOTAL CALLS</b>	<b>1260</b>	<b>1383</b>	<b>1353</b>

	2011	2010	2009
<b>Estimated fire loss</b>	<b>\$282,025</b>	<b>\$269,250</b>	<b>\$370,305</b>



One of the best ways to combat fires is to prevent them from occurring in the first place. A significant amount of OFD resources are used for fire prevention activities. Fire prevention has the objective of reducing the risk from fires through incident reduction and control, and through the limitation of fire severity. During 2011, the OFD presented over 150 fire and life safety education programs throughout the community. The lives and property of everyone in a community can be threatened by fire, and the OFD believes that everyone can play a role in fire prevention. These education programs encompass a wide variety of topics to help educate the community about the risk of fire and ways to prevent them and reduce the severity of an incident. Included in these programs is an emphasis on the importance of having and maintaining an adequate number of smoke detectors. **SMOKE DETECTORS SAVE LIVES.** The OFD continues to offer a program providing free smoke detectors; installation is also available.

Another significant component in our goal to minimize the risk of life and property loss from fire is conducting fire safety inspections. Inspections provide an opportunity to educate the owners or occupants of a building about fire safe behavior and the need for adequate fire and life safety conditions in the areas under their control. All facilities within the City are inspected on at least an annual basis. During 2011 the OFD conducted 723 inspections. It is our strong belief when inspection programs are properly designed and put into practice, benefit is achieved through public education and awareness.

**For additional information, please call 785-229-3700  
or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov)**

# Police Department

## Dennis Butler, Chief



During 2011, the Ottawa Police Department operated with an authorized strength of 26 sworn police officers and 5.5 civilian employees, using a budget of \$2.04 million a budget decrease from the year before. Primary services include: 24-hour police patrol, criminal investigations, a school resource officer (more about that below), D.A.R.E. program, animal control and crime prevention. During 2011, our continued efforts to identify alternate sources of funding allowed the use of \$279,000 in grant monies for a variety of projects for the Police Department and Elizabeth Layton Center. Since 2005, the Police Department has applied for \$3.4 million in grant funding and has received awards totaling more than \$1.4 million.

Ottawa is much safer since 2004, with overall Part I crime declining by 52% over the eight-year period. Serious crime rates (Part I crime as reported to the FBI) in Ottawa dropped 12% compared with 2010. It is noteworthy that Part I violent crime was down 55% while Part I non-violent crime decreased 8.7%. These Part I crime categories include arson, aggravated assault, battery, burglary, murder, rape, robbery, theft and auto theft. All crime is reported the same way, regardless if it was successful or only attempted. During 2011, all reported crime categories combined (includes Part I crime and less serious crime) increased by 6.4% when compared to 2010. Other, less serious crime increased 13.6% over 2010 reports, the second consecutive annual increase. Calls for service, such as investigating crimes, traffic accidents and serving warrants, increased by 7.5% in 2011, a continued upward trend over the past two years. Measurable police services and activities have trended upward and increased by 28.4% since 2004, a trend we expect to continue.

Declining sources of funding impacted two significant programs. The Domestic Violence Unit of the Ottawa Police Department continued its aggressive efforts to reduce family and intimate partner violence, and will continue to do so despite non-renewal of federal funding in support of these services. In 2009, state revenue cuts to USD 290 and the City threatened to eliminate the School Resource Officer at Ottawa High School and Middle School, but a federal grant retained this valuable service for two years. This grant expired in July 2011.



We are disappointed that no new funding sources have been identified; therefore, the SRO program has been eliminated for the first time since the 1990s. The Police Department and City plan to reinstate this initiative when the opportunity arises.

Mini-grants allowed the department to purchase new equipment, such as ballistic vests and traffic enforcement equipment without using City funds. Working together, the Ottawa Police Department and Franklin County's Sheriff's Office and Department of Emergency Management were awarded a \$139,000 federal grant to replace an aging 1987 Special Tactics and Rescue (STAR) vehicle, as well as acquire additional related equipment to improve the effectiveness and national response rating of the STAR team.

The Police Department's volunteer unit, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) continued to provide outstanding service to our community. VIPS and reserve police officers volunteered 1,437 hours of unpaid service in 2011, valued at \$25,579 (source Independent Sector website-2009 rates for KS). Focus on community outreach remains strong. The 30th Annual McGruff Club focused on safety programs through live entertainment, and is well attended by both children and parents. 2011 marks the 26th straight year that the department has participated in a Special Olympics fundraiser. For the first time, the City participated in

National Night Out, an event designed to foster better relationships between citizens, all City departments and elected officials. Due to the success of this effort, we plan to repeat it in August 2012. Last summer, 95 incoming sixth graders from USD 290 attended the 26th Annual D.A.R.E. Camp, continuing a trend of high participation.

The Ottawa Police Foundation (OPF) continues to contribute funding for D.A.R.E. Camp. The OPF is a private non-profit corporation 501(c)(3) created to support the mission of the Police Department. Go

to [www.ottawapolicefoundation.org](http://www.ottawapolicefoundation.org) to learn more about OPF plans to provide continued enhancement of City police services.

**For additional information, please call 785-242-2561, or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov).**





# Information Technology

## Chuck Bigham, Director

The Information Technology (IT) Department consists of the Director, an IT Specialist, and a Multimedia Specialist. With this staff, the department was able to fully support all City departments. IT supports well over 175 network-attached devices including PC workstations, notebooks, servers and printers. IT also supports City databases such as storm/event trouble tickets and dispatch, cemetery records, storm water management, pavement management, fire calls and administrative records, building permits, fleet management, police car video and more. The department continued to work with the Franklin County IT Department, including support for the relatively new Records Management System (RMS), including Mobile Computing, utilized collectively by the Ottawa Police Department, The Franklin County Sheriff's Department and Wellsville Police Department.

Because data is valuable and losing it can be costly, we continue to add disaster recovery processes and backup capabilities. We replaced aging network switches at City Hall improving the performance by up to 10x and the reliability of our network. We also virtualized our PC servers replacing most of our separate servers, saving power, space and cost while improving performance and simplifying support. A new trouble ticket help desk was also implemented allowing IT to document, track and manage support.

The multimedia Government Access Channel (GAC) continued to expand programming throughout the year. Film footage of community events continued to be a big part of the GAC, and the DVD collection of area events continued to grow. Community events such as the 2011

Ol' Marais River Run and Antique Engine and Power of the Past Shows are captured with in-house production services, producing professional quality DVDs for event sponsors and public purchase. The community build of new playground at Kanza Park was filmed with a time-lapse camera showing the entire daylong construction project in a matter of minutes.

The City continues to support its own Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/ottawaks](http://www.facebook.com/ottawaks). This has improved our communication with citizens about City services, and allows citizens to ask questions or report concerns to the City in real time. By the end of 2011, the City Facebook page had 534 followers. City website support included further expanding the reach of the GAC to the Web using streaming video. Previously limited to residents with Allegiance Cable service, now anyone with an Internet connection can view Commission Meetings, Legislative Coffees and area events.

2012 will bring further, cost-effective enhancements for the City and its productive use of technology. Through virtualization, consolidating City servers will continue to reduce power, cost and space. Improved efficiency will come from remote troubleshooting and management of workstations and more training opportunities for office applications. Web and GAC enhancements expected in 2012 are enhanced streaming video by streaming the GAC live on the web including support for smart phones. Closed captioning will be implemented for City Commission meetings. Electronic agendas are being developed for use for Study Session and City Commission meetings.

**For additional information, please call 785-229-3641 or visit: [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov).**



# Municipal Court

**James Campbell, Judge • Joyce Hendrix, Prosecutor**



The City of Ottawa operates a part-time municipal court using a part-time Judge, City Prosecutor, full-time Court Clerk, and is aided by volunteers from the VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service). The jurisdiction of the Municipal Court is its authority granted by the City Commission is to hear and decide specific kinds of cases. Municipal Courts has jurisdiction in misdemeanor criminal cases where the maximum sentence is one year in jail and a fine of not more than \$2,500. The municipal court adjudicates misdemeanor crimes, and traffic cases, and is located in the Law Enforcement Center.

Persons who receive a traffic ticket may plead guilty and pay the citation without a court appearance unless a court appearance is mandated by the officer on the ticket. Tickets may be paid by mail or in person at the Municipal Court Clerk's Office at the

Law Enforcement Center, 715 W. 2nd Street. Persons who wish to plead not guilty to the charge or charges or plead guilty but explain the circumstances, should appear in court on the date of appearance indicated on the citation.

City police and other staff filed 2,945 cases in 2011, compared with 2,842 in 2010, a 3.6% increase. The court operated with a 2011 annual budget of \$145,118, a decrease in budget from the year before. In 2010, the municipal court implemented a court management software system that continues to benefit court operations, including allowing personnel costs to be reduced by eliminating one full-time employee. The court receives administrative and operational support from police employees.

**For additional information, please call 785-242-5333, or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov).**

# Planning & Codes Administration

## Wynndee S. Lee, Director



Most years, the major activity of the Planning & Codes Department is development, whether subdividing, developing new commercial or industrial sites, or applications for all sorts of building permits. While economic conditions were still sluggish in 2011, several new projects in the community were underway, including the Juvenile Detention Center, the Loves Travel Plaza project, Astro Truck Covers and Mac Fasteners. Total permits issued for new construction or remodeling permits were valued at \$14,170,500. New residential building permits continued to be low, with only three single-family units and no multi-family units constructed.

Sidewalk, bike and trail projects were highlights of 2011, engaging staff in the writing, administering and design work for these projects. West 15th Street was selected for a KDOT Transportation Enhancement grant for sidewalks and bike paths on both sides of the street from the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail to Eisenhower Road. The design was completed in early 2011, easements were acquired in the summer and construction began in October. At the end of 2011, the project was underway and scheduled to finish in early in 2012. Another big grant award for our community is a collaborative plan between the City of Ottawa, USD 290 and other community partners for Safe Routes to School projects. The grant was awarded in 2011 for four sidewalk construction sites near local schools in these locations: 900 and 1000 blocks of South Ash Street west side; 1500 block of Osage Drive, west side; 1000 through the 1200 blocks of North Cherry Street, east side; and Thirteenth Street, north side, between the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail and College Street. The City was awarded \$250,000, the maximum funding available for these projects; construction is expected to begin in the summer 2012.



In 2011 a new endeavor, the Curb Appeal Award, recognized three projects, 405 S. Willow, 434 S. Willow, and 521 N. Cherry. The award identifies projects that not only remodel a residence, but improve the look of their neighborhood. In addition, the annual National Community Planning Month photo contest was held in October and 35 photos showcased some of the best of Ottawa. This has become a continuing event, so start taking photos now of favorite places, seasons and locations in Ottawa!

**For additional information,  
please call 785-229-3620,  
or visit [www.ottawaks.gov](http://www.ottawaks.gov).**



## Ottawa Library

Ottawa Library strives to inform and enrich the community by providing access to information and opportunities to the public through use of our materials and programs. NExpress, the online shared circulation system, has increased the speed of receipt of requested material from the other libraries, as well as allows patrons to check account status and renew books online. The NExpress Shared Catalog currently includes a network of 38 Kansas libraries which share material between one another. Total circulation of materials was 122,197 items in 2011. Interlibrary Loan materials, materials borrowed from or sent to non NExpress libraries, totaled 24,262. At year end we had 13,976 registered Ottawa Library card holders.

The Ottawa Library renovation was completed in 2011. With that renovation, we were able to add 11 additional patron computers, bringing our total to 28. Staff work spaces were improved as well as the display of magazines and newspapers in our reference area. The young adult area, "The Cave", has been a very popular hangout for teens. Adults love the space, too, and are encouraged to enjoy it during school hours.

Ottawa Library continually upgrades and improves our technology to provide the best service possible. The library provides access to Kansas EZ Books, which connects users to audio books and eBooks. Our website provides links to: applying for unemployment, Learning Express Library, IRS tax forms, Kansas tax forms, as well as several other online research tools. Our website also keeps patrons current on our many library activities and programs.

The Friends of the Ottawa Library netted \$4,852 in used book sales, and memberships added over \$2,245 in benefits to the Library. The Friends also sponsored our first annual 5K Run/Walk fundraiser and raised \$1,387.

Ottawa Library is a community library that links everyone to free educational, informational and entertainment resources through responsive quality service to support lifelong learning. Please visit the library to check out our new books, movie DVDs, music CDs, and books on tape or to participate in any of our Adult, Young Adult or Children programs.

**For additional information, please call the Library  
at 785-242-3080 or visit: [www.ottawalibrary.org](http://www.ottawalibrary.org).**



# Governing Body

## Gene Ramsey, Mayor

The City Commission is the legislative and policy-making body of the City of Ottawa. All meetings are held at City Hall, 101 S. Hickory. Regular City Commission meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm, and on the third Wednesday at 9:30 am. The City Commission also meets on Monday afternoons at 4:00 pm for a work/study session. All meetings are open to the public.

Five commissioners are elected at-large by the citizens of Ottawa. The Mayor, chosen by the Commissioners each year, serves as “the first, among equals.” The Mayor presides at Commission meetings, serves as the spokesperson for the community, as an ambassador and defender of the community, and as a representative in intergovernmental relations.

The City Manager is hired by the City Commission to oversee the day-to-day operations of the City and serves as the CEO of the City. The Manager supervises all daily activities of the City and reviews and oversees the department operations.

Richard U. Nienstedt, City Manager, and City staff work to ensure the City’s needs are met in an efficient and effective manner. In partnership with the department directors, the City Manager prepares a budget for the City Commission’s consideration; recruits, hires, supervises and disciplines all of the organization’s employees; serves as the Commission’s chief



**2011-2012 Ottawa City Commission: (from left) Commissioner Linda Reed, Mayor Pro Tem Blake Jorgensen, Mayor Gene Ramsey, Commissioner Sara Caylor, and Commissioner Jeff Richards.**

advisor and carries out the Commission’s policies. Together, the Mayor, Commissioners and City Manager form a policy development and management team.

# Youth in Government

## Lisa Rivers, ECKAN Sponsor

2010-2011 YIG Members: Zach George, Jordan Gray, Danon Taylor, Gabby Bowers, Spencer Morgan, Dalton Blankinship, Ty Lutz, and BriAnna Stephenson.

Ottawa’s Youth in Government program (dually sponsored by the City of Ottawa and ECKAN) continued in its mission to increase the level of influence the youth make in their community by assigning members to a board or commission to provide the youth perspective in many areas of leadership, including City Commission, School Board, Ottawa Main Street Association, Library Board, and Ottawa Recreation Commission. YIG members were given “a seat at the table” and asked to supply input from their peers on various topics impacting Ottawans. The Ottawa Library, for example, leaned heavily on YIG member Dalton Blankinship and his communication with local teens as they designed the new young adult center. According to former Library Director Robin Flory, “Dalton was instrumental in naming “The Cave” Young Adult section and in garnering the support of young adults in Ottawa to utilize the library’s services.”

Each year YIG members create a service project. This year, YIG members chose to address a relevant youth issue – “there is nothing to do and nowhere to go in Ottawa.” When surveyed, 8 out of 10 local teens cited boredom as the leading cause of harmful

activities such as drug abuse, sexual activity and vandalism. Months of hard work using Community Youth Mapping had youth canvassing the community in search of places to go and things to do; they then applied a survey tool to gather additional information. These youth identified and promoted recreational opportunities already in place for the teens and produced The Teenager’s Guide to Ottawa, Kansas - a full booklet with activities, separated by season, and includes contact information, addresses and prices. By distributing over 400 of these guides at school enrollment, YIG members hope the guide will help teenagers find productive things to do in the community instead of traveling elsewhere for their entertainment needs or resorting to harmful behaviors.

Another highlight of the YIG year was the National League of Cities Conference in Denver, Colorado where YIG Mayor, Zach George, realized how great of a town Ottawa is. “I was impressed by the initiatives our hometown was making to be a friendly, playful and greener city. But most importantly, I realized that we have a city that respects and supports our youth.”

**For information, please call**

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