Census 2020 hits mailboxes first quarter of this year

2020 is the start of a new decade and is also a leap year, but did you know it’s the year that the U.S. Census takes place? Once a decade, the federal government conducts a census of the entire population to count everyone in the United States. Many may think of the Census as just a head count of people living in different cities, but it’s much more than that. These counts provide a picture of our nation which then helps determine:

- where to build new schools, hospitals, senior centers, businesses and other community facilities;
- how to distribute federal funding through numerous community and citizen assistance programs; and
- how to allocate congressional seats, including number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as the boundaries of legislative districts.

The census also helps see how our communities change over time. A lot has happened in ten years. It’s important to have an accurate count of our community for these reasons, plus more!

To help make sure everyone is counted, the Joplin City Council appointed the One Joplin Count Committee (CCC). Recognizing the significance of counting everyone in our area, members from community organizations have joined the CCC to assist with the education and awareness efforts to encourage our citizens’ participation.

The count determines more than just the population numbers. More than $675 billion in federal funding flows back to states and local communities each year based on census data. It is estimated that a community loses $1,300 per person not counted in the Census. The Census will be completed during the first quarter of 2020. Community education takes place the first two months. In March, households will receive a census invitation, discussing different ways to complete the form. There is an opportunity to respond online as well as replying through the traditional mailed form or by phone. April 1 is designated as Census Day to remind residents to complete the questionnaires in whatever format is best for them.

“Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone. Either way is okay – it’s just important to complete it,” said Ashley Micklethwaite, One Joplin Executive Director and Chair of the CCC. “And your responses to the 2020 Census are safe and secure.”

Micklethwaite noted that answers can only be used to produce statistics – they cannot be used against citizens in any way. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual’s responses with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities for 72 years. Citizens can be assured that their information is confidential.

“With this type of funding at risk, the City encourages ALL residents to please fill out their census form,” said Interim City Manager Dan Pekarek. “It will take about ten minutes of your time, but it is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your community.”

Some people may think that they don’t use federal grant programs, so the census will not affect their livelihood. This misconception can cost the City of Joplin, Jasper and Newton Counties, as well as the state of Missouri a significant amount of funding.

Many grants pay for the programs and services received daily in our community. Including:

- Child and Adult Care Food Programs
- School Lunch and Breakfast Programs
- WIC – Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program
- Adult Education & Special Education grants
- Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment
- Community Services Block Grants
- Head Start
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Special Programs for the Aging
- HUD Department’s Community Development Block Grants
- HOME Investment Partnership Programs
- Labor Department’s Employment Service
- Unemployment Insurance Program
- Workforce Investment Act – covering various services
- Highway Planning and Construction (Federal-aid Highways)

Watch for your invitation to be counted, because every one counts! For more information, contact One Joplin at 417-499-9529 or the City’s Public Information Office at 417-624-0820, ext. 204.
On January 11, 2000, the City opened a modest drop-off recycling center carved out of repurposed land at the Public Works Center. Originally open for four hours per day with a part-time employee, the Center accepted only container glass, plastic bottles, mixed paper, cardboard, newspaper, and metal cans. At the completion of the year, approximately 12,052 vehicles came through and dropped off 279 tons of commodities.

Fast forward to January 2020, the Center now hosts over 30,000 vehicles a year using a six-hour day, two full-time employees, and valuable volunteers. Non-traditional items have been added for collection, such as packing materials, batteries, all metal scrap, household hazardous waste, old electronics, and cooking oil. A free document destruction service was also added. The “reuse” table continues to be a popular attraction. After 20 years, 23 million pounds of commodities have been collected for recycling.

Mary Anne Phillips, Joplin’s Recycling Coordinator describes the Center as more than a place to drop off your recycling. “It’s also a community gathering place where people converse with friends, browse through books on the reuse shelf, and seek advice on all City matters or disposal questions. I especially like watching young readers pick up a used, but ‘new-to-them’ book or throwing their plastic bottles into the collection container.”

She’s seen a lot of fascinating items come through the center such as an antique sewing machine and a hard cover book published by the Associated Press regarding the assassination of President John Kennedy. Phillips was pleased that the center now accept household hazardous waste. “People now have a place to safely dispose dangerous items like mercury, and it’s not put into the waste stream.”

During its 20 years, the center was the site for numerous special events such as compost bin giveaways, tire drop offs, document destruction (shredding) days, plastic bottle bird feeder giveaways, and much more. Phillips, who retires in January 2020, organized, staffed, and implemented these events. Each year statistics showed increasing numbers of awareness and utilization of the Recycling Center.

In June 2016, the center became an important component to the City’s residential curbside recycling program by accepting items not available to curbside customers. Recycling creates jobs, saves natural resources, and lengthens the life of area landfills. However, Phillips reminds residents that recycling can also create an awareness of the need to reduce, reuse, and rethink our solid waste disposal challenges.

The Recycling Center is located at 1310 West A Street and is open Tuesday and Thursday from noon to 6 pm, and Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm. The center is open to all regardless of residency. Congratulations to all who have been a part of the Recycling Center and especially to Phillips who developed this community resource through her 22-plus years with the City.
Meet other walkers at LiveSmart-Walk

January is a great time to renew goals to improve your health, and LiveSmart – Walk is one way to kick off the “move more” portion of this goal.

LiveSmart-Walk brings together people with common interest of engaging in a exercise program by simply starting out with walking. This initiative, started by the Community Health Collaborative, One Joplin and other ing organizations in Jasper and Newton Counties. Health officials encourage everyone to walk because of its benefits.

Walking could help address these findings in the Health Collaborative’s recent survey of citizens in Jasper and Newton Counties:

- 26% to 28% of citizens stated they don’t participate in physical activities during leisure time.
- Adult obesity in these two counties affects 32% to 34.4% of the population. One in three children of obese parents are likely to become obese.
- 18.7% to 23.2% of older adults report depression. Walking has shown to improve emotional well-being through increasing social support and accountability.

Organizers of Live Smart-Walk include members of the Joplin Health Department and other health agencies in Jasper and Newton Counties who’ve begun coordinating community walking clubs.

“We are setting up the basics for individuals, groups, or organizations to initiate a time for interested people to come and walk together,” said Cynthia Burnham, Coordinator of Medical Division of Joplin Health department. “Groups have already started in different areas of Joplin and the counties. By joining with others in your area, walkers can choose when the group meets, and which routes or trails they walk. This gives them all of the flexibility, while we help them establish a structure that can improve their health along with their community’s.”

Burnham noted that groups have already been formed in Carl Junction, Webb City and several areas in Joplin.

Learn more at LiveSmart-Walk, community awareness day on Saturday, April 25 at George Washington Carver’s National Monument. More details will be posted on the City’s Facebook page as well as the City’s website, joplinmo.org. The event offers people a chance to learn more about walking groups in their area, or how to start one.

“It really is a simple process to get started,” said Burnham. “We hope to see a lot of interest in this easy, no-cost way to enjoy a little exercise while getting acquainted with neighbors and community members in our two-county area.”

For more information, call the Health Department at 417-623-6122.

LiveSmart was introduced in 2010 as a “Eat Healthy, Move More” initiative to move toward a healthier Southwest Missouri. Goals include increasing public awareness about the importance of balancing food choices and physical activity while encouraging opportunities to engage in physical activities and healthy eating habits.

Sewer rate study shows need for incremental increases in upcoming years

In late 2019, City Council members reviewed a recent rate study for the city’s wastewater treatment plant. The study indicated a rate increase to keep pace with the cost of the wastewater service for all customers on the City’s sewer service. It showed that the average residential bill was $41.91 per month and would move to $43.99 monthly, starting in April 2020.

The rate increase recommended is an average of 5% annually for the next five years. The study showed that this increase aligns with national indexes reporting an average increase of 5% to 6% annually for wastewater services. “This rate increase is based on the cost of doing business for the City’s sanitary sewer system,” said Public Works Director David Hertzberg. “As a regulated service by Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the City is required to meet specific standards. To do this, we’ve recently installed new equipment and repaired lines to reduce the amount of zinc and cadmium in the water released back into the streams.”

Hertzberg noted that Joplin’s mining history has impacted the area, causing the City to take extra measures to provide a cleaner output. The sewer fund covers costs of the additional equipment needed for this, as well as emergencies for equipment failures and other repairs to the sanitary sewer system throughout the City. Joplin provides wastewater treatment to all residents along with several other neighboring communities and 29 industries. Customers outside of Joplin pay a 30 percent surcharge in addition to the in-city rates.

“It’s a large system that operates 24/7, 365 days a year,” said Hertzberg. “Because of this, it’s important to have reserve funds available to readily address any type of interruption of service.”

The study was conducted by Burns & McDonnell engineering firm from Kansas City, Mo. For more information about the rate study, contact Public Works at 417-624-0820, ext. 584. For questions regarding your sewer bill, call Finance at 417-627-2955.
Start the new year off right with a good plan to get involved and stay active through Joplin’s Parks and Recreation. Below are some upcoming activities you and your family may have interest. For more information about these postings or to register, call Joplin Parks & Recreation at 417-625-4750 or visit www.joplinparks.org.

**Fun activities for your family**

**Kids Garage Sale**
Calling all mini entrepreneurs between the ages of 5 and 12! Bring your gently used toys, games, sports equipment, books and any other items to our Annual Kids Garage Sale! The sale will be set up at Joplin Senior Center on Saturday, March 7 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Each registered participant will have a 10 foot by 10-foot space to sell their items. It’s a great way to clean out the closets and make a little cash! Vendors pay only $10 per booth (in advance of the garage sale) to reserve a spot.

**Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt**
Hop on over on Friday, April 3 to the Gene Bassman Softball Complex, located within the Joplin Athletic Complex, to participate in our Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt! Hunt begins at 8:30 p.m. with more than 10,000 filled eggs to find by flashlight.
Cost is $3 per child until April 1. Late registrations will be accepted after April 1 at $5 per child. Children must be 3-10 years of age to participate for liability reasons. Children need to bring a flashlight and basket to collect eggs.

**Reserve a shelter for your next event**
Joplin Parks & Recreation reserves picnic shelters for small, private gatherings throughout Joplin. Reservations are for the entire day from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and cost $40 per day to reserve.

**Reserve an Aquatic Facility for your summer event!**
A limited number of pool party dates are available for the 2020 swim season! Reservations open for the summer season at 8 a.m. Monday, April 6. Dates are first-come, first-serve. Rental prices vary depending on party duration and location. Contact us for pricing, hours, and more.

**Apply now for seasonal job openings with Parks & Recreation**

**Various positions needed for the summer**
We’re hiring cashiers, recreation instructors, lifeguards, and seasonal laborer positions at the Athletic Complex, Joplin’s three aquatic centers, Schifferdecker Golf Course, and the parks in general.
These are a great summer jobs for those in high school and college! Applicants must be 16 years or older by start date; Laborer positions need to be 18 years or older.
A pre-employment drug screening and a criminal history check are required for all positions. Depending on the position, some weekends, evenings, and holidays will be required.

**Lifeguards Needed**
We are seeking applicants to fill open lifeguard positions at the pools for the 2020 swim season. “Summer is rapidly approaching, and we are currently looking for 100 lifeguards to staff our pools,” said Jessica Johnson, Recreation Coordinator, “It takes a large staff to safely open and operate our pools throughout the summer. We open Memorial Day weekend, so we start early for hiring and training our staff to ensure we’re ready for a great summer at the pools.”
Applicants must be at least 16 years of age, pass written tests, be able to swim 300 yards continuously, tread water for two minutes without using their arms, and complete a timed event (including swimming, diving, and retrieving a 10-pound object). They must also successfully pass a background check and drug screen.
The Department conducts and pays for the training, which typically costs more than $200. Lifeguards are responsible for paying their licensing fee and half the cost of their swimsuit. There are several training dates offered in March, April, and May.

Applications are available in the Human Resources Department located on the first floor of Joplin City Hall, 602 South Main Street or online at http://www.joplinmo.org/jobs.
During severe weather, dogs should be let out only to relieve themselves. Cats should be kept indoors at all times.

Remove ice, salt and caked mud from your pet's paws and coat immediately.

Before walks, put Vaseline or doggie shoes on your dogs' paws to protect him/her from sidewalk salt and chemicals; wipe the Vaseline off when back inside.

Make sure your pet's bed is not on the floor in a cold or drafty area of your home.

Indoor dogs typically receive less exercise during cold weather and therefore may require fewer calories. Feed smaller portions in order to avoid weight gain. Keep them busy with indoor play activities.

**Preschool Sports Programs**

Two youth instructional programs will be offered to area 3-4 year olds this Spring. Both programs introduce children to the value of sportsmanship, focus on developing each child’s skills, and instill self-confidence in a non-competitive atmosphere. There are no practices, teams, or formal games.

Offered at the Joplin Athletic Complex, the cost is $38 per child, per sport. Each child will receive a jersey and an award for participating.

**Little Kickers Soccer**
- Registration Deadline: March 23
- Sessions: Begin the week of April 6. Parents can choose Tuesday or Thursday nights at 5:45 or 6:45 p.m.

**Little Hitters Baseball**
- Registration Deadline: April 27
- Sessions: Begin May 14. Parents can choose between 5:45 or 6:45 p.m. sessions.

**Youth Sport Programs**

**Youth Developmental Soccer** is offered for children ages 6-14 years old. Each child receives a jersey, shorts, and socks. Registration ends March 2. Cost is $40 per player. Practices begin the week of March 16 and times are determined by each coach. Games will be on Tuesday or Thursday nights, depending on child’s age, beginning the week of March 30.

**T-Ball** for children ages 5-6 years old begins in May. Practices start May 5 and games will be on Tuesday evenings starting May 19. Each child receives a jersey, hat, and an award for participating. Cost is $40 per player. Deadline to register is April 20.

**Adult Sport Programs**

Adults looking to get a little exercise and have some fun this spring are encouraged to register for the Adult Softball and/or Soccer Leagues held at the Joplin Athletic Complex. Team registration is open until the first of March, with leagues beginning soon after.

All players must be 18 years or older. The first place teams will receive a championship t-shirt. Softball team entry fee is $275; soccer team entry is $310.

**Daddy Daughter Date Night!**

We cordially invite all dads and their daughters to our 20th Annual Daddy Daughter Date Night! Dads are welcome to treat their favorite gal(s) to an evening of music, dancing, games, buffet dinner, and prizes. A complimentary photograph is included in the ticket price to commemorate the evening. The event is open to daughters, ages 3 to 12.

**Date:** Friday and Saturday, February 7 & 8
**Time:** 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
**Location:** Memorial Hall
**Fee:** $35 per couple; $15 additional child
**Maximum Couples:** 100 couples per night

**Outdoor Pet Tips**
- In severe weather, allow your pet to be in your house or garage.
- Outdoor pets typically need more food in cold weather because they must burn more calories to keep warm.
- Check for frostbite, especially on paws and ears.
- Make sure your pet’s water is never frozen.
- Keep an eye out for and clean up all antifreeze spills — one lick of the sweet-tasting fluid can be fatal to an animal.
- Cats have been known to climb onto vehicle engines for warmth. Knock on the hood of your car before starting the engine if you suspect your cat could be inside.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia — weak pulse, dilated pupils, decreased heart rate, extreme shivering, pale or blue mucous membranes, body temperature below 95 degrees, stupor and unconsciousness. Consequences of extreme hypothermia may include neurological problems including coma, heart problems and kidney failure.
- If you have additional questions or concerns about how to care for your pet in subzero temperatures, please check with your veterinarian.

**Indoor Pet Tips**
- During severe weather, dogs should be let out only to relieve themselves. Cats should be kept indoors at all times.
- Remove ice, salt and caked mud from your pet’s paws and coat immediately.
- Before walks, put Vaseline or doggie shoes on your dogs’ paws to protect him/her from sidewalk salt and chemicals; wipe the Vaseline off when back inside.
- Make sure your pet’s bed is not on the floor in a cold or drafty area of your home.
- Indoor dogs typically receive less exercise during cold weather and therefore may require fewer calories. Feed smaller portions in order to avoid weight gain. Keep them busy with indoor play activities.
Assistant Chief Sloan promoted to Police Chief

Meet Joplin’s new Police Chief Sloan Rowland. Chief Rowland was promoted to Chief from his former position of Assistant Chief, effective January 4, 2020. Major Rowland has more than 31 years of experience in law enforcement. He’s served with the JPD for 16 years. During his tenure here, Sloan has served as a Warrants Officer, Patrol Corporal, and Sergeant in Internal Affairs, Patrol, Training and Investigations. He spent 12 years on the department’s SWAT Team as a Team Leader, Tactical Supervisor, and Team Commander. In 2012 Rowland was promoted to Lieutenant and then moved up to Captain, serving as the commander of the Patrol Division. Major Rowland has received over 30 awards and commendations while serving with the department. Prior to joining the Joplin force, he previously served 15 years for departments in Kansas.

Major Rowland has an associate and a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice. Currently he is working on dual master’s degrees in criminal justice and Homeland Security. He is a graduate of the Missouri Police Chiefs Command College, FBI LEEDS, and the FBI National Academy. Major. Rowland served in the United States Army and the U.S. Naval Reserve with a combined 28 years of service. He served on numerous deployments stateside and overseas while assigned to the Naval Criminal Investigation Service.

This promotion followed the recent retirement of Police Chief Matt Stewart who gave 20 years of service to the community.

Local Rotary Clubs help bring sculptures to Mercy Park

If looking for something to do, and the weather is cooperative – pack up the family and head to Mercy Park! Located on the southeast corner of 26th and McClelland Boulevard, citizens of all ages will enjoy the beautiful landscape and the park’s newest additions – nine bronze sculptures.

The idea of adding sculptures to Mercy Park was brought to the City by community activists who had traveled to Loveland, Colorado and experienced their sculpture garden and noticed what it does for a community. Joplin’s two Rotary Clubs supported this effort. Their members, including Bob Headlee, chairman of the Rotary Sculpture Garden Board, raised funds for this new feature in Joplin. The Board includes representatives from Rotary Club of Joplin, Joplin Daybreak Rotary Club, City staff, and local arts community.

“This has been a tremendous effort by citizens who were inspired by other communities’ parks,” said Parks Director Paul Bloomberg. “It’s been a joy to work with this group and we appreciate their dedication to making Mercy Park a destination for citizens and visitors of Joplin.”

The sculpture garden includes nine sculptures that have all been donated by citizens in the community. Installation was done through the funds raised by the Rotary groups. Bloomberg noted that the group plans to add more sculptures as they can acquire them. Currently the park’s sculptures include animals such as a rabbit, cat, deer, and birds, as well as other subjects. A new sculpture is already in the works to be added in the spring.

“This is a private-public partnership that benefits everyone. The sculptures really add to this unique park, and we truly appreciate everyone who has worked on this project.”

Citizens serving on Boards & Commissions recognized for their service

Thanks to the many citizens volunteering to serve on a City Board or Commission. During the December 16, 2019 Council meeting, we recognized several who have completed their term. We appreciate their service to help their community and recognize their leadership to assist City officials and fellow citizens by addressing issues important to keep Joplin thriving. Citizens honored were:

- Paula Callihan, Historic Preservation
- Keenan Cortez, Planning & Zoning Board
- Tim Forker, Airport Board
- Stephen Fuller, Solid Waste Commission
- Crystal Harrington, Building Board of Appeals
- Nancy Morton, Historic Preservation
- Fred Osborn, Joplin Redevelopment Corp.
- Dustin Parker, Parks and Recreation
- Peter Ramsour, Historic Preservation
- Sherry Surface, Personnel Board
- Chris Tucker, Tax Increment Financing Board
- Sarah Vargyas, ADA Committee
- Melvin Walbridge, Airport Board
- Ervin Wilson, Traffic Commission and Building Board of Appeals

If you’re interested in serving on a Board or Commission, we encourage you to apply. Citizens must be a registered voter of the city, and some boards may have specific requirements for its members. Applications are kept on file for one year. The City Council makes appointments to these organizations on an as needed basis.

Each of the 25 boards represents a specific area of City government, and citizens may designate which board(s) they are applying to offer their service. A full listing of the boards and commissions is available on the City’s website, www.joplinmo.org. Citizens may apply through the City’s website or by email at bgollhof@joplinmo.org. For more information, contact the City Clerk’s office at 417-624-0820, ext. 220 or 221.
In late 2019, the Joplin City Council passed legislation that regulates the sale of tobacco products. Known as Tobacco 21, the local ordinance states that the sale of tobacco or tobacco products can only be done if the purchaser is age 21 or older. This initiative was identified several years ago by the Community Health Collaborative (CHC), a group of representatives from healthcare organizations and agencies in Jasper and Newton Counties, and more recently listed as a recommendation in the Vision Joplin 2022 report. In 2016, the CHC conducted a community health needs assessment with results showing heart disease and lung disease as two primary health issues affecting local residents. In their companion document, the Community Health Improvement Plan, the CHC recommended Tobacco 21 as an initiative to be considered by the City Council.

Tobacco 21 ordinances (T21) are considered by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as effective measures that communities or states can enact to reduce the rate at which youth begin tobacco use. Studies have shown that most individuals who begin tobacco use (including vaping) do so when they are teenagers. Once they begin, it is very hard to stop use, due to the addictive nature of nicotine. T21 Ordinances essentially raise the age at which tobacco or vaping products can be purchased from 18 to 21. It has been shown that many times 18-year olds purchase tobacco products for their younger siblings and classmates. The T21 Ordinances should help to reduce this because 18 and 21 year olds typically run in different social circles. CHC, Vision Joplin 2022 members, and One Joplin (a local group encouraging community collaboration), worked on the ordinance language for Council’s consideration. It was passed on December 16, 2019 and went into effect on January 5, 2020.

As part of this new ordinance, businesses selling tobacco and related products will need to have a permit. There is no fee for the permit, and permits will not be required until April 1, 2020. Informational letters were mailed to businesses that sell tobacco products explaining the new regulations. For questions, contact the City’s Finance Department at 417-624-0820, ext. 246.

Let your furry pal run off-leash, play, and meet new friends at the Parr Hill Dog Park located at 18th and Kansas! Annual passes for 2020 are available for $10 per dog starting February 3. Animals must be at least six months of age, have an up-to-date vaccination record from a licensed veterinarian, and have a current City of Joplin license (available from the Finance Department). Dog Park memberships are issued by the Joplin Parks and Recreation Department at 3301 W. 1st Street. Please bring the documents noted above when purchasing your annual dog park pass. For more information, call 417-625-4750.
Fun events planned at Public Library
The children’s department has mapped out some fun reading days and events for you and your children.

Friday, February 7, 3:30-5 p.m.
Suggested age: K-5th grade

We’re bringing this back by popular demand! Come experience a day in the life of a Hogwarts student. Costumes are encouraged but not required.

Story times for our different age groups offer a wonderful way to introduce reading and the Library to your child.

Movers and Shakers: Ages 0 to 2 meets at 9:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m., and 4 p.m. on Tuesdays.
Tales for 2s and 3s: Ages 2 and 3 meets at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
Fun for Fours and 5s: Ages 4 and 5 meets at 11 a.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
Family Storytime: Ages 2 to 5 meets at 4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
Early Reader Story Hour: Ages 5 to 8 meets at 4 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of the month.

See www.joplinpubliclibrary.org/kids/ for more details or call the Children’s Department at 417-623-7953