



PARTNERING ON SUSTAINABILITY

RETIREMENT FAREWELLS

GET TO KNOW D'ANGELO WILLIAMS &  
RUSS RICHARD

DEPARTMENT NEWS

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES



## Surpassing sustainability milestones takes a team effort!

The City's Office of Sustainability is mean and lean. It consists of Director Erin Gill and Project Manager Brian Blackmon.

They get a lot done, but surpassing the City's goal of reducing municipal emissions by 20 percent by 2020 – and saving taxpayers more than \$2 million a year in street lighting costs – required a group effort.

It took a buy-in by many City departments and the ingenuity of a lot of people.

“We try to catalyze conversations and foster collaboration, but it's our partners who deserve the credit for the City's sustainability leadership,” says Gill. “We wouldn't be where we are today without a great team of folks across all City departments who have worked with us to tackle big ideas and implement new approaches.”

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**On Dec. 3, City Council approved the purchase of four electric buses for KAT.**

## Mayor's Message



**Mayor Madeline Rogero**

Welcome to the fall / winter edition of City Works.

My term ends on Dec. 21, and I will be handing the baton to Mayor-elect Indya Kincannon. Please know that every day for the past eight years, I have felt honored to work alongside such an incredible team of conscientious, hard-working and dedicated people.

I am grateful for your can-do attitude and your willingness to tackle all challenges with vigor and professionalism.

In this edition of City Works, we say goodbye to three veteran directors who are retiring: Jim York, Avice Evans Reid and Janet Wright.

Also, you can learn more about D'Angelo Williams, Recreation Specialist at Milton Roberts Recreation Center, and Employee of the Year Russ Richard, Survey Project Manager for the Civil Engineering Division.

Many departments and their award-winning employees are represented in the News and Notes column.

And Sustainability Director Erin Gill summarizes how it took a total team effort, by all of us, to surpass our goal of reducing municipal emissions by 20 percent ahead of schedule.

Thank you again for what you've given to the City and to our residents. I am grateful for your work and proud of what we have achieved together.

 [Facebook.com/MayorRogero](https://www.facebook.com/MayorRogero)

 [Twitter.com/MayorRogero](https://twitter.com/MayorRogero)

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The City closed out the year by completing the \$15.8 million retrofit of 28,500 City streetlights to LED technology – a project that pushed the City past its 20 percent by 2020 emission-reduction goal.

Because LED bulbs operate so much more efficiently than high-pressure sodium bulbs, the retrofit (which required daily collaboration between Sustainability and Engineering) has cut the City's annual \$4 million light bill in half, allowing a simple payback of less than 8 years.

Paying to keep the lights on is an expense in every household and business. What additional line items

has the City identified to help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and costs to taxpayers?

From its beginning, our Sustainability team has taken a serious look at fuel usage. City vehicles of all varieties – KPD cruisers, fire engines, department sedans, Parks and Rec vans, and the like – traditionally run on gasoline or diesel. But other fuels, like propane and compressed natural gas (CNG), run cleaner.

Fleet began converting its industrial mowers from gasoline to propane in 2015, and now 18 of its 25 commercial mowers are fueled by propane, making Knoxville's fleet the

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## Employee Anniversaries

### 10 years

Jennifer Ellen Ball  
Rebecca Clabough  
Kristen Blake Cox  
Jason Bradley Cunningham  
Michael Christopher Dabbelt  
Sean Michael Ford  
Jason Eugene Gardner  
Douglas Ray Hollander  
Christopher Lee Hutton  
Jason Charles Kalmanek  
Roger Lynn Kelley  
Justin Wayne Kellione  
Carl Preston Kennedy  
Danny Lynn Marshall  
Dusty Clyde Miller  
Cory Lee Nicholson  
Matthew Paul Peters  
Terence Clayton Prater Jr.  
William Lee Romanini  
Nathanael Alan Skellenger  
Nicholas Albert Spine III  
William Anthony Thompson  
Kevin Wayne Varner  
James William Vesser  
Donald James Zerillo

### 15 Years

Brian Lee Baldwin  
Clifford Bowen  
Robert Corum  
Hakan Dururvurur  
Brandon Anderson Glover  
Beth Goodman  
Russ Jensen  
Anthony B. Johnson  
Jeremy Lynn Moses  
Timothy Edward Riddle  
Tony Lee Spoon  
Johnny Mitchell Strader  
Christina Nichole Westrup

## Employee Anniversaries

### 20 years

Lisa Jean Bradney  
Robert Lee Cameron  
Deena Chase  
Tiffany Nicole Eisenhower  
Dwayne Otis Miley  
John Joseph Coward  
Tammy Michelle Debow  
Jeffery Alan Holmes  
Jeffrey Dean Hopkins  
Tracy Hunter  
Glen F. Morrell  
Scott Gordon Noe  
Terry Dewayne Pate  
Darrell Wayne Sexton

### 25 years

Savannah Ayub  
Arlene ReSherra Bennett  
Kenno Edward Carlos  
Michael Wynne Chase  
Victoria Cheesman  
Shelley Deann Clemons  
Lynn Edward Clemons, Jr.  
Barry Scott Coffey  
D.J. Corcoran  
David Martin Gray  
Kevin Levan Hoffman  
Joseph Huckleby  
Teresa Johnson  
Carla Renee Jones  
Tracy Dawn May  
John Michael Mays  
James Michael McCarter II  
Scott Dean Owens  
William Victor Wilson  
Marcus Yarbrough

## Departmental News & Notes

### Leadership Recognition



**David Brace**



**Avice Reid**

■ The City is proud to have two members in Leadership Tennessee's seventh class – Deputy to the Mayor and Chief Operating Officer David Brace and Sr. Director of Community Relations Avice Evans Reid. The 46 members of the statewide class are tasked with collaborating and engaging in nonpartisan dialogue on a range of important Tennessee issues.



**RJ Montgomery**

■ Congratulations to Urban Wilderness Coordinator Rebekah Jane Montgomery on being named to the 2019 Knox.biz 40 Under 40 class. RJ is a landscape architect, and her role as Urban Wilderness Coordinator includes working with the City's partners in managing a network of wonderfully diverse amenities. She also helps foster new partnerships and projects that both expand and further connect the pieces of the Urban Wilderness.



**From left to right: Traci McDonell, Kittrin Smith, Justin Bailey, JaJuan Hamilton and Matthew Gentry**

■ Kudos to the five City employees who are members of the CAC Community Leadership Class of 2020:

- Justin Bailey, Master Firefighter, KFD
- Matthew Gentry, Police Officer, Knoxville/Knox County CIT and Accreditation Supervisor, Knoxville Police Department
- JaJuan Hamilton, KPD Officer and Lead Recruiter
- Traci McDonell, Webmaster and Photographer
- Kittrin Smith, Finance Department Financial Analyst

## Departmental News & Notes

### Public Service Lives Up to it's Name

“Service” is in the department’s name for good reason. Public Service crews are always appreciated for lending their muscle and expertise whenever needed.

But their participation in #KnoxGives, and their skill in building the Market Square outdoor ice-skating rink, generated lots of thank-yous in the community.

Read these nice write-ups [here](#) and [here](#).



#### Sustainability: continued from page 2

largest propane mower fleet in Tennessee.

Those mowers see a lot of action, regularly cutting grass on 400 acres of parks and annually maintaining 1,947 overgrown lots.

Nick Bradshaw, Deputy Director of Fleet Services, attests to the added efficiency of the propane mowers. Not only do the vehicles emit fewer carbon emissions – which are directly connected to air pollution and climate change – but they are easier to maintain.

In October, Fleet received the 2019 Green Leadership City Award from the Propane Education & Research Council, a national nonprofit organization. The award is given to one community each year in recognition of a commitment to the health of its citizens and the environment.

Needless to say, Fleet plans to continue transitioning its equipment to propane. But where do they, and other City departments, go from here?

Earlier this year, the Mayor and City Council set a new goal for City operations to reduce emissions 50 percent by 2030. One way the City of Knoxville can continue to

find significant emission reductions is by continuing the phase-in of electric, hybrid and alternative-fuel City fleet and transit vehicles.

Earlier this year, Fleet purchased two all-electric Nissan Leafs for the City Fleet Pool. Affectionately called “Sparky 1” and “Sparky 2,” they’ve become some of the top-requested vehicles in the City fleet pool.

We’re also making moves on the transit part of that initiative: On Dec. 3, City Council approved the purchase of four electric buses for KAT with the option to purchase up to a total of 25 electric buses over the next several years.

Battery technology has matured in recent years, making it possible to invest in electric buses that can run all day without stopping for a charge. The fleet of four electric buses are set to begin routes on Southerland Avenue in 2021.

As we offer residents greener daily commutes through cleaner public transportation, we’re also making the options of walking and biking safer through improved sidewalks and increased bike lanes. We’re also building strategic greenway connections, so more people can use them to



*“Battery technology has matured in recent years, making possible to invest in electric buses that can run all day without stopping for a charge.”*

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get to school, work or other destinations.

Another way we'll reach our future goals is through continued strategic investment in high-efficiency equipment and improved operations.

Blackmon works directly with Facilities Manager Steve Dyer and his team to navigate the energy management software and equipment that help reduce energy usage at City buildings. Public Service Facilities staff are often on the front lines of maintaining green building technologies that have been incorporated at City properties, including solar panels and electric-vehicle charging stations.

City residents will help us meet our communitywide long-term goals by reducing energy use in their homes. Our Plans Review and Inspections Department requires that all homes and buildings built within the City of Knoxville comply with the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), a code adopted by many states and municipal governments in the United States for the establishment of minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency. By enforcing the IECC, Plans Review helps ensure that new buildings are designed in ways that can help keep future energy expenses more manageable.

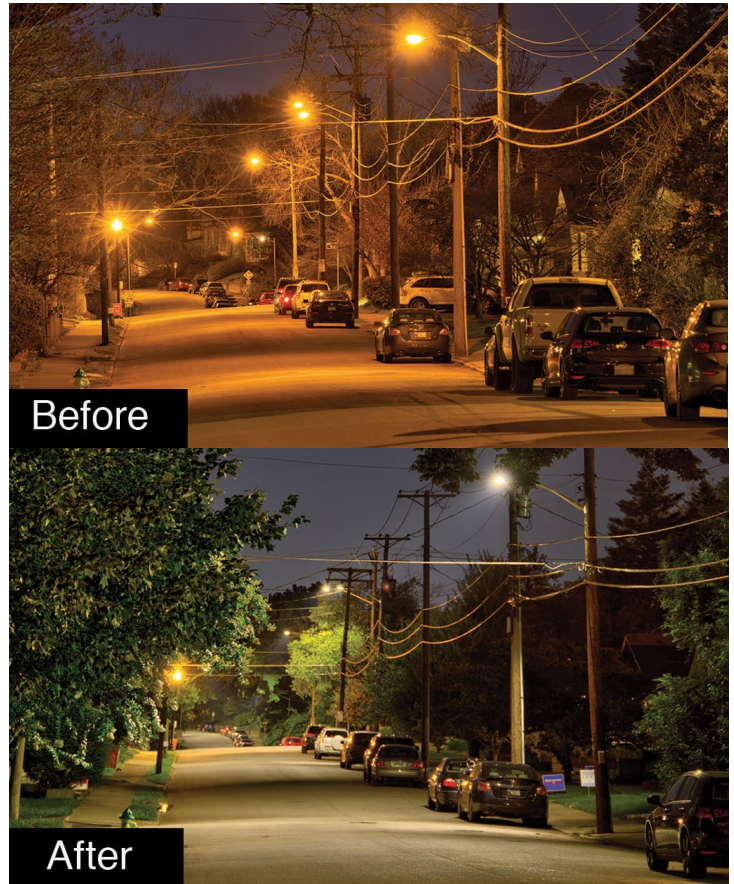
These and other energy-efficiency guidelines apply to all housing built by the City's housing partners like KCDC and through Community Development's housing programs. Community Development has, for over a decade, been on the forefront of incorporating energy efficiency into affordable housing.

Greener operations are quite literal when it comes to the City's trees. Leadership by Urban Forester Kasey Krouse and his Urban Forestry team is helping the City and its

residents preserve and expand Knoxville's tree canopy.

Our team efforts are paying off – for taxpayers (in the form of lower fuel and lighting bills), and for residents (who are saving money and living in an environmentally healthier community that is more walkable and bikeable).

- Paige M. Travis



*Before and after photos of a street in the 4th and Gill neighborhood showing the retrofit of new LED street lighting.*



**Knoxville is a leader, and leaders always move forward.**

We are proud of our progress, but Knoxville shouldn't settle for "that's enough."

With 2020 around the corner, we're setting two new goals for 2030 and 2050 that aspire to unlock bold, innovative action to ensure a sustainable future that protects our environment while also creating inclusive economic opportunities and improving quality of life for all our citizens.

## Employee Anniversaries

### 30 Years

Shane Barrier  
Patricia M. Nicley  
Daniel Keith Paidousis  
James Henry Tucker

### 45 Years

James Waggoner

## Departmental News & Notes

### Police

■ Congratulations to July and August Officer of the Month honorees **Anthony Estrada, Luke Johnson, Ryan Ayers, Donald Mullins, Jonathan Gomez, Kevin Varner, Brian Mullane** and **Dona Carberry**. KPD also presented the Meritorious Service Medal to Lt. **Tammy DeBow, Sgt. Rodney Patton** and **Officer Nathanael Sanders**. [Click here](#) for details on their exemplary service that prompted recognition by Chief Eve Thomas and Mayor Rogero.

■ In September, West District Patrol Officer **Ethan Grantham** was presented with the First Responder Recognition Award from the Tennessee Office of Homeland Security in Nashville. Officer Grantham, one of two KPD April Officers of the Month, was selected to receive the First Responder Recognition Award based on his proactive efforts to work drug complaints and interdiction on his beat in West Knoxville while also answering the high volume of calls for service received by evening shift units. For more details, [click here](#).

■ The Office of Neighborhoods has named **Officer Eric Parks** the recipient of its inaugural Officer Liaison of the Year Award. Officer Parks was nominated by four residents of the Norwood neighborhood, who emphasized his regular attendance of Neighborhood Watch and Norwood Homeowners meetings, his willingness to answer calls and respond to questions even when he is off duty, and his overall dedication to the community and its residents. [Details here](#).

■ Mayor Rogero and Chief Thomas last summer also recognized KPD's April Officers of the Month and April Employees of the Month while presenting the **Property Management Unit** and **Drug-Related Death Task Force** with Unit Commendation Awards.

**Becky Kreisa** and **Diane Lewis** were the employee honorees, while **Grantham** and **Dylan Bradley** were April Officers of the Month.

Meanwhile, Lt. **Chris McCarter** and KCSO Deputy **Brian Rehg** were presented with a Life-Saving Award.

[Complete details here](#).

## Purchasing

■ In September, Mayor Rogero and the Purchasing Department honored small, women- and minority-owned businesses at the fourth annual Diversity Business Enterprise (DBE) Awards ceremony.

The awards also recognized City departments and staff for their commitment to reaching out to DBEs with procurement opportunities and contracts.

Sustainability, Plans Review & Inspections / Codes Enforcement, and the 311 Center for Service Innovation were honored with Advocate Awards for their commitment to outreach to women- and minority-owned businesses.

**Ben Buckner**, Public Service's Logistics and Supply Manager, was saluted with an Employee Advocate of the Year Award for his work with minority- and women-owned businesses; over 50 percent of his department's total spend went to DBE businesses.

**Linda Blackburn**, Senior Buyer in Finance, was also recognized with an Employee Advocate of the Year Award for her exceptional work over the years in assisting DBE businesses.

For more details, [click here](#).

# Retiring directors: 60-plus years of combined experience



## Jim York

For more than 31 years, Jim York has guided the financial planning for the City of Knoxville – for the last 11 years, as Finance Director.

But he's never craved the spotlight. Next to the door to his corner office, you won't find his Senior Director title or even his name. The nameplate simply reads

“Treasurer.”

“I've been called a lot worse things,” he says, smiling.

York views his department's professionalism and budgetary transparency as the chassis that supports the services that City government provides.

“We are the back office, but if we don't do our job, no one else can do their job,” says York.

Fortunately for the citizens of Knoxville, York has not just done his job, but done it well.

The Finance Department has an unbroken 30-year string of national awards. And the City's bond rating is at its historic all-time best.

While municipalities across the country make headlines for financial instability, York has focused on keeping Knoxville insulated from the “swings” due to cuts in state funding and the “second largest economic downturn” in U.S. history.

During York's tenure with four mayors, the attention that he and his team devote to detail hasn't gone unrecognized.

There are the expected “bean counter” quips. But the fact is, York's penchant for precision – and his institutional knowledge – are somewhat legendary.

York explains his job simply: “Everything that involves money runs through us.” From a philosophical perspective, York believes it is important for cities to “keep moving forward,” looking at the long-term horizon and recognize who they are in terms of realistic expectations and authenticity.

York joined the City in the late 1980s after working

with City and County governments in Florida, Iowa, and Washington state. Knoxville's Finance Department currently has about 44 positions, but only a few employees have a longer tenure here than York.

One of those, Linda Blackburn in Purchasing, will also be retiring this year.

York is originally from Lexington, Ky., and he earned a master's degree in public administration from Indiana University. He and his wife, already retired, have plans to travel and enjoy the flexibility that retirement offers.

## Janet Wright



Janet Wright built on a career at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Westinghouse, Wang Laboratories and other places when she joined the City in the late 1990s and became Director of Information Systems.

During her time with the City, she has launched numerous new processes and capabilities. She oversaw

issues such as Y2K security (planning for the year/number 2000 with aging computer systems), the launch of the 3-1-1 system, the recent KAT smart-phone app and more.

Wright's background includes a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in computer science.

Process improvement and working with departments on how they approach their business is a large part of Wright's work. She recognizes that her position and 30-person team cover much more area than just the thousands of personal computers that employees use daily.

Wright's team and the people at the City are one of the things she'll miss the most when she retires at the end of the calendar year. Wright specifically mentioned the engineers who like to discuss possible ideas and solutions as one of her favorite parts of the job.

“I learn something every day,” she says.

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While Wright has traveled extensively, she and her husband -- who has been retired for many years -- plan additional travel and spending time in South Carolina. Wright plans to stay active in the community and pursue her love of pickle ball.

**Avice Evans Reid**



Avice Reid already had a strong career at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in process improvement and programming when she was recruited from the board of the Police Advisory Review Committee (PARC) to be the Executive Director.

After eight years at PARC, Mayor Rogero asked Reid to fill the position of Senior Director for Community Relations. In her roles with TVA and the City, Reid said she “has enjoyed being able to be equally analytical and intuitive.” In both roles, she appreciated the challenge to provide solutions to

problems.

While she still plans to be actively engaged in the community, Reid said her fellow employees and community partners are what she will miss. “Compassionate partners and all of the people making a positive impact” are the reason she has enjoyed coming to work every day, she says.

Reid has a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and a master’s and a doctorate in Biblical counseling. Her role as a mediator and a listener has served her well in Community Relations.

Travel will be a big part of Reid’s future. She has a goal to visit all seven continents and has already been to three.

She will join her husband, already retired, in spending more time with children and grandchildren in Chattanooga and the Atlanta area.

-Fiona McAnally

**Linda Blackburn retires with 40+ years of service.**



It’s rare when a City employee hits the milestone of 40 years of service.

Linda Blackburn, Senior Buyer in the Finance Department, is wrapping up a distinguished 44-year career this month.

She is one of just 27 City employees to have retired with 40 or more years of service in the past decade.

The City salutes her expertise and conscientiousness! Just last September, she was recognized with the Employee Advocate of the Year Award at the fourth annual Diversity Business Enterprise (DBE) Awards ceremony. Blackburn was praised for her exceptional work over the years in assisting small, women- and minority-owned businesses and for her leadership in reaching out to DBEs and assisting with procurement opportunities and contracts.

**Russ Richard takes City Employee of the Year Award**



Known for his work ethic, honesty and readiness to help his colleagues, Survey Project Manager Russ Richard has been named the 2019 City of Knoxville Employee of the Year.

Richard is a land surveyor and vital member of the Civil Engineering Division of the Engineering Department. He is the third recipient of the annual award.

Mayor Madeline Rogero presented Richard with the award and announced finalists’ names at the annual Mayor’s Employee Appreciation Picnic and Benefits Fair in October.

“Russ truly embodies the spirit of a public servant and gladly serves customers and colleagues with the highest possible standard of service,” Mayor Rogero said. “He performs his daily duties in an exceptional manner and goes above and beyond to effectively communicate all the work that the Engineering Department accomplishes.”

Supervisors and colleagues who nominated Richard herald his efficiency and productivity as well as his excellent research capability and institutional knowledge.

Richard has also participated in an international mission trip to Haiti and assists Chinese emigrant students with their English skills by practicing reading with them.

Richard primarily provides surveying services in his work that include property research and coordination

**Employee of the Year  
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**Employee of the Year:**  
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with professional engineering staff in developing capital project construction plans.

He also regularly takes the initiative to help resolve potential design problems during a project's construction phase. Richard performs complex on-site design responsibilities related to municipal construction and maintenance projects, all while successfully scheduling his busy work flow around the schedules of engineers, contractors, inspectors, consultants and department personnel.

The Employee of the Year finalists were:

- Joe Collins, Public Grounds Maintenance, Public Service
- Dervy Romero De Papenbrock, City Court Assistant
- Elaine Frank, Office of Special Events
- Renae Groen, 311 Senior Customer Service Representative
- Rebecca Johnson, Zoning Inspector, Plans Review and Inspections
- Russ Richard, Survey Project Manager, Engineering
- Rodney Wilson, Heavy Shop, Fleet Services

The Employee of the Year program was established in 2017 for non-uniformed City employees by the City Ambassadors, an internal group with representatives from multiple departments focused on customer service and employee engagement. Knoxville Police and Knoxville Fire departments have long-established employee recognition programs. Each non-uniformed department can nominate one employee, and then a review panel of City Ambassadors selects one of those as the overall Employee of the Year.

-Mary Leidig

# The Ten with D'Angelo Williams



**1. Tell us about yourself, D'Angelo. Where are you from?**

I'm 29 years old, and I was born and raised here in Knoxville. I graduated from South-Doyle High School in 2008 and from the University of Tennessee in 2012 with a degree in recreation and sports management.

**2. How long have you been working with the City of Knoxville, and what is your role here?**

I started with the City as an intern in the Parks and Recreation Department in November 2012 and was hired permanently in June 2013. I am currently a Recreation Specialist, working at Milton Roberts Recreation Center.

**3. How did your internship with the City prepare you to become a full-time employee? Also, why did you want to intern in the Parks and Recreation Department?**

Interning with the City prepared me by letting me see the day-to-day work and how things went in the City's recreation centers. My time as an intern was invaluable to me. I was able to learn so much from so many different people, and it helped me create my own style of how I wanted to run my programs.

In my major, an internship is required to graduate. So I needed something related to my field. This was a paid position, so it filled both needs. Once I interviewed and was told more of what the internship was, I thought it would be fun and I'd be a good fit.

**4. How many employees work with you? Tell us about the team you work with.**

At Milton Roberts Recreation Center, there is one other full-time employee in addition to myself: Lisa Wilson. We also have James Mobley, who retired from the department and has come back to help out part-time. I'm extremely blessed to have both of them here with me!

**5. What do you enjoy most about your work with the City?**

I enjoy interacting with the children. We have programs with youth from different ages and backgrounds, and it's awesome to see them all come together playing and having a great time

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The Ten: continued from page 9

**6. For new employees in the Parks and Recreation Department, what would you recommend to them as they start out working for the City?**

Learn to be flexible and be able to adapt and adjust. The best made plans can change by no fault of anyone, and you need to have a plan B, C, and D ready to keep the show going.

**7. Tell us about your family.**

I have a sister and two brothers, and I also have two nieces and a nephew.

**8. You are quite the e-sports fan. What got you interested?**

I've been a big video game player since I was little, and it's grown from there. I mostly stick to sports titles now, but I love the challenge of getting online and testing my skills against someone else.

**9. What other pastimes do you enjoy?**

I recently got into collecting sports cards and memorabilia. I also love watching sports, live music and going out, and playing a good game of trivia when I can find one.

**10. Finally, what has surprised you the most in your work with the City?**

Just how big an operation the City is, and everything the City offers to our citizens. I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Ambassadors program, and it really opened my eyes to how much the City does and the different jobs and fields.

- Mary Leidig



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