

the town crier

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December 1, 2025

Ellis, Kansas



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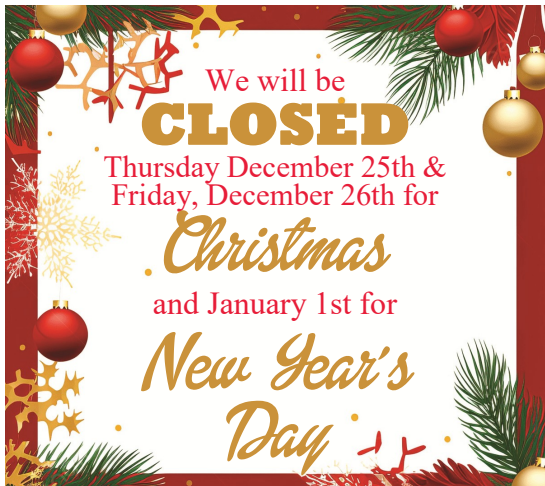
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Mark Your Calendars!

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

It is time to begin the annual sewer rate evaluation period starting with the December meter reading. City Code states each customer's sewer charge must be reviewed annually and adjusted, if necessary, with the April 1st billing. The Code states that **a monthly average of the water used between the December meter reading and the March meter reading is computed. Then the average is applied to a sewer rate table.** The resulting sewer charge will remain in effect for the next 12 months starting with the April 1st billing. Meters are read around the 10th of each month.

New customers will be charged the minimum rate as set by ordinance (currently \$27.49) until they have established usage during the entire three-month evaluation period. Once the evaluation period is completed, the average water usage during that time period will determine your sewer rate charge according to the sewer rate table.

To the right is a brief sampling of the current sewer charges. To view a more detailed chart, visit our website at www.ellis.ks.us > Local tab > Public Works Department > Wastewater Treatment Plant > Sewer Rate Table (PDF).

thousands of gallons of water used	monthly sewer charge
1	\$27.93
2	\$28.37
3	\$28.81
4	\$42.21
5	\$58.04
10	\$92.59
15	\$125.14
20	\$157.69
25	\$180.24



Santa Gift Ideas

Submitted by Dustin Vine, Fire Chief



I doubt anyone has ever asked Santa for a fire extinguisher, but it might be the perfect gift for someone who already has everything. Looking for other safety-minded ideas? Consider a smoke or carbon monoxide detector? Fire blankets also make great stocking stuffers and can be truly life-saving.

One gift we received, and chose to buy more for ourselves and others, was a motion-activated night-light. These lights can be unplugged from the outlet and used as a flashlight, but more importantly, it may be utilized to illuminate your escape route if there's a fire during the night. Hopefully you will never need these items, but historically, house fires increase during winter months.

We could fill pages with fire prevention tips, but this season we'd like to take a moment to reminisce instead. Recently, we have lost some dear friends and members of our fire department family. Their families generously donated the proceeds of their memorials to our department. Keep an eye out for Larry Cox's memorial when you ride the miniature train during the Polar Express this year.

The fire service is always evolving, but the contributions of those who came before us continue to shape our department today.



Personal Service

Submitted by
Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

One of the comments we hear back from residents is, "Why did you send the cops to my door to deliver a paper? Couldn't you have just mailed it to me or called?"

Our method of utilizing our City of Ellis Police Department for personal delivery service is not meant to embarrass or otherwise make residents feel uneasy. It's simple economics and efficiency. Our Police force patrols the city streets every single day, so why not task them with delivering personal notices during this time? We send out *hundreds* of letters each year, whether it be violation letters, returned checks, court subpoenas, or other documents.



Our City Code requires us to personally serve or mail many types of documents certified or registered. The City's cost to mail a letter certified is almost \$10.00 a letter and \$17.00 for restricted! Therefore, we could easily spend thousands of taxpayer dollars just in mailing costs.

Some ask why we just can't call them. Several reasons, (1) for most notices our Code requires us to have written documentation in case the situation needs to be elevated to the next level; (2) with cell phones so popular, many of our utility applications are outdated, and we no longer have current contact numbers for our residents; and (3) we simply do not have the staffing to dedicate to telephone notification. Another reason is the ability to get the information into our residents' hands timely. Many of our legal notices have a seven (7) to ten (10) day deadline imposed, so the sooner the information is in the resident's hands, the sooner it can be addressed. Therefore, we feel that having the Police Department personnel serve legal notices whenever possible is the timelier and cost-efficient alternative. This is just another way we are trying to keep our costs down and utilize our staff efficiently.



Legal Beagle

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

Reminder: Dog Tags Are Due January 1st!

To register your dog, bring proof of current rabies vaccination and the applicable fee to the City Clerk's Office. You'll receive a dog tag upon registration. Tags can be purchased without penalty through February 28, 2026.

Fees:

Spayed or neutered dogs: \$5.00 each • Intact dogs: \$10.00 each
Duplicate tags (if lost): \$2.00 each

Late Registration Penalty:

After February 28, 2025, a \$2.00 per month late fee will apply to each tag.

Why Register Your Dog?

Having a current City dog tag ensures that, if your pet is lost, the Police Department can quickly identify and reunite you with your furry friend. Additionally, if your dog is impounded, the following fees will apply:

Administrative fee per dog: \$10.00

Impound fee per dog: \$20.00 per calendar day with current rabies certificate or \$30.00 per calendar day without current rabies certificate

You'll also need to provide proof of rabies vaccination and register your dog (if not already registered) before your pet is released. Registering your dog gives you peace of mind and helps keep pet families together.

Don't wait - get your dog tag today!



Sidewalk Snow Removal

Submitted by Steve Homburg, Public Works Director

It's that time of year again when snow removal becomes necessary. Property owners and occupants of any lot that borders a sidewalk - whether along the front, side, or both - are responsible for keeping those sidewalks free of snow and ice at all times. All snow and ice must be removed. However, if ice or compacted snow cannot be reasonably removed due to its condition, the application of salt, sand, ashes, or similar materials to make the sidewalk reasonably safe for pedestrians will be considered acceptable until full removal becomes possible.



Property owners or occupants responsible for clearing snow or ice from sidewalks adjoining their property must do so within **12 hours after a storm has ended**. If the storm occurs overnight, the twelve-hour period begins **at sunrise**.

If a person fails or neglects to remove snow or ice - or fails to treat it as required - the City Clerk may arrange for its removal. The cost of this removal will be charged to the person responsible and assessed against the property owner.



HOLIDAY TRASH SCHEDULE

Tuesday, December 23
Wednesday, December 24
Thursday, December 25
Friday, December 26
Wednesday, December 31
Thursday, January 1

Tuesday and Wednesday trash routes will be run
Thursday and Friday trash routes will be run
NO trash pickup - **City Closed for Holiday**
NO trash pickup - **City Closed for Holiday**

Wednesday and Thursday trash routes will be run
NO trash pickup - **City Closed for Holiday**





TNR Program

Submitted by Rachel Pfannenstiel, Clerk II

Did you know that the City of Ellis has a program that addresses the population growth of community cats within our City? The Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program not only includes the benefit of population control, but can also reduce nuisance behaviors, such as spraying, fighting, and yowling.



The TNR process is simple - community cats are humanely trapped, spayed or neutered, given the rabies vaccine, and then have their ear tipped before being released back into the community. If you have a colony of community cats, which are unowned, free-roaming cats that live outdoors, then you may qualify for the TNR Program!

The first step in becoming a participant in the program includes filling out a simple application in the City Clerk's Office. After we have an application on file, your next step is to take pictures of the community cats and send them to clerk@cityofellisks.gov. Please keep in mind that the veterinarian we work with will not accept pregnant, sick, or injured cats for the program. Once we receive the pictures and your application in the Clerk's Office, we will contact you with a date for your trapping.

Per our program policy, we are only allowed to take the cats for which we have pictures on file for, so if our traps catch undocumented cats, they will be released and not taken to be sterilized. The City of Ellis encourages you to participate in this program if you have a colony of community cats in your neighborhood.



2025 League Convention

Submitted by David R. McDaniel, Mayor



The League of Kansas Municipalities held the 2025 Annual Conference October 9-11, 2025 in Overland Park at the Convention Center. Attending from Ellis were City Clerk Ashley Scheibler, Council Member Jolene Niernberger and Mayor David McDaniel. The Kansas Mayor's Association met Thursday for their business meeting in conjunction with the League and elected officers, amended by laws and announced the 2025 Mayor of the Year Michael Padilla of Topeka.

Many networking programs were presented on Friday and Saturday. A scheduled event Friday was the highlight of the day, a trade show with 130 Booths of vendors dealing with all aspects of city services. From insurance information, engineering firms, tourism, to dump trucks and other public works equipment for hands-on inspection were displayed. Actual "tiny homes" were displayed and proved to be a popular item among any cities with housing issues.

Educational opportunities were offered throughout the three days. Some topics included: Economic Development, What the League Can Do for You, Budget Boot Camps, Property Tax, Housing Challenges, Supporting Child Care Access, First Amendment in Action, Engaging Gen Z in Local Government and other topics.

The weekend event ended with the League Business Meeting and Convention of Voting Delegates. Each city had a vote to finalize the Statement of Municipal Policy as the guide for priorities in the upcoming legislative session.



UTV/Golf Cart Renewal

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

It's time to renew your UTV or golf cart tag with the City of Ellis. All 2025 tags will expire on December 31, 2025. To remain in compliance with UTV Ordinance No. 1450 and Golf Cart Ordinance No. 1499, please schedule an inspection appointment with the Ellis Police Department.

After your inspection is complete, **bring the inspection forms** to the Ellis Clerk's Office to renew your tag. The annual registration or renewal fee for a UTV or golf cart is \$50.00.

To view the ordinances, visit the Ellis City Government website at www.ellis.ks.us, navigate to City Office > City Government, then scroll to the bottom of the page to download UTV Ordinance No. 1450 or Golf Cart Ordinance No. 1499.



calendar

DECEMBER

- 1 City Council 6:30 pm
(Elected Officials Sworn In)
- 5 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 15 City Council 6:30 pm
- 19 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 24 **Christmas Eve** - City offices open
- 25 **Christmas Day** - City offices closed
- 26 **City Offices Closed**



JANUARY

- H A P P Y
New Year
- 1 **New Year's Observed**
City offices closed
- 2 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 5 City Council 6:30 pm
- 5 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 16 City Council 6:30 pm
- 19 **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
Planning Comm 7:00 pm
- 26

FEBRUARY

- 2 City Council 6:30 pm
- 6 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 14 **Valentine's Day**
- 16 **President's Day**
City Council 6:30 pm
- 20 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 23 Planning Comm 7:00 pm





Are You Yeti to Read?

Submitted by Tracy Andrews,
Ellis Public Library Director

The Ellis Public Library (EPL) invites you to join our **Winter Reading Challenge** this December! Participation is simple:

- ☆ **Read** for 30 minutes
- ☆ **Log** your reading time
- ☆ **Visit** EPL to sign up for the prize you'd like to win

The more you read,
the more chances
you'll have to win!

Prizes are available
for all ages - toddlers,
school-age children,
and adults.



In addition, EPL is now offering **Toddler Tuesdays** every other week at 10:30 a.m. Enjoy a short story and activity then stay to visit and play.

Stay informed about library events through the *Ellis Review*, our library sign, Facebook page, or by picking up a paper calendar at the library.



And the Winners are...

Submitted by Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

On November 4, 2025, voters in the City of Ellis headed to the polls to elect representatives to serve in our local government. The positions up for election included Mayor, City Treasurer, and three City Council seats. These positions were previously held by Mayor David McDaniel, Treasurer Faith Scheck, and Council Members Terry Zervas, Devin Henderson, and John Walz.

This year's election brought some changes to city leadership. The Mayor's seat was contested, while the City Treasurer position was unopposed. For City Council, three individuals filed for the three open seats, resulting in no contested races. The County Election Officer has released the following official election results:

Mayor:
Martin LaBarge – 212
Devin Henderson – 115
Write-In Totals – 74

Council Members:
John Walz - 322
Kevin LaBarge – 280
David McDaniel – 255
Write-In Totals - 43

City Treasurer:
Amanda Shannon - 384
Write-in Totals - 6

All of the newly elected officials will be sworn into office at the December 1, 2025 Council meeting. Please join me in congratulating Martin, Amanda, John, Kevin, and David on their election win!



Preparing for Snow

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

When winter weather hits, it's important to keep both sidewalks and streets safe and accessible. The following items help keep our community safe for everyone:

1) Street Parking During Snowfall:

To assist City crews in clearing essential roadways quickly, please remove vehicles from primary snow removal routes. If off-street parking isn't an option, park vehicles on the **north or east side** of the street. This allows crews to clear main streets more efficiently. Once snow routes are cleared, the **south and west sides** of streets will become available for parking.

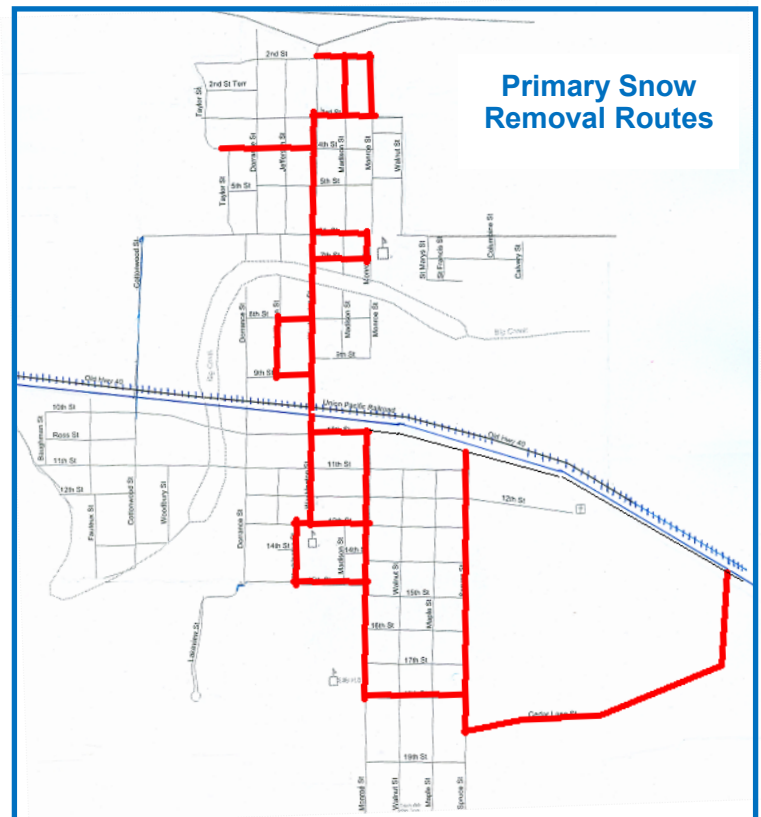
3) Snow Removal Guidelines:

City crews will clear side streets after main routes are addressed, blading each side street only once. After the snowplow has passed, place any snow you shovel onto your lawn rather than back into the street. Snow pushed into the street can create icy ridges that are difficult to remove, even with heavy equipment.

4) Mail Delivery Access:

Keep pathways to mailboxes clear of snow and ice. Letter carriers may delay or withhold delivery if sidewalks or mailboxes are blocked or deemed unsafe.

By working together, we can keep our sidewalks and streets safe during winter weather!



City of Ellis **MISSION STATEMENT**

The City of Ellis efficiently promotes infrastructure and beautification programs, supporting community growth while preserving its intrinsic small town charm.

City of Ellis**VISION STATEMENT**

A truly unique Kansas community, Ellis celebrates its rich heritage of friendly people that value family and strong work ethics while actively promoting quality education and public services.



City of Ellis Updates Procedures to Comply with KORA Changes

Submitted by Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

The City of Ellis has recently updated its City Code to align with the latest changes to the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA). These updates are designed to ensure compliance with state law, promote transparency, and provide fair and consistent access to public records while keeping costs reasonable for requesters.

What Changed

Under the revised KORA provisions, public agencies must ensure that any fees charged for record requests reflect only the actual costs incurred in fulfilling those requests. In response, the City of Ellis has updated its fee structure and administrative procedures to better reflect this standard.

Key Points of the City's Update

- **Actual Cost Basis:** Fees will now be calculated strictly based on the actual staff time and materials needed to fulfill a records request.
- **Cost Notification:** If a request is expected to require more than five (5) hours of research or result in costs exceeding \$200.00, the City Clerk's Office will contact the requester before proceeding. This allows the requester an opportunity to refine or narrow the request and help mitigate costs.
- **Lowest-Paid Qualified Staff:** Whenever possible, research and record preparation will be performed by the lowest-paid employee capable of completing the work, helping to prevent unnecessary expense to the requester.

Commitment to Transparency

The City of Ellis remains committed to maintaining an open and transparent government while being mindful of the cost to both the requester and taxpayers. These procedural updates ensure that the City continues to comply with state law while providing fair, efficient, and accessible service to all who seek public information.

Residents with questions about KORA or how to submit a records request can contact the City Clerk's Office for guidance.

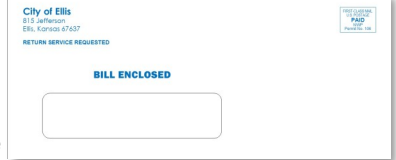


New Billing Look

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

Due to delays with our vendor being unable to deliver the pre-printed press-n-seal utility billing forms in time for the November 1st billing cycle, we elected to use a pre-printed perforated form inserted into an envelope for utility bills. This method is more cost-effective for the City, and moving forward, customers will continue to receive their first-of-the-month billing statements in an envelope. The envelopes will be marked BILL ENCLOSED.

Late notices will still be printed on our remaining stock of press-n-seal forms. Once this stock is depleted, late notices will also transition to the pre-printed perforated form, printed in red ink, and mailed in an envelope.



Phase I Wrapped Up!

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

The City of Ellis and Hernly Associates, Inc. held the final public meeting for the Downtown Historical District Phase I project on November 5, 2025. Phase I focused on surveying 60 properties within the boundary mutually agreed upon by Hernly Associates, Inc. and the City Council.

At the meeting, the recommendation was to establish two small historic districts - one north of the tracks and one south of the tracks. Hernly Associates identified eight properties that may be eligible for individual listing on the National Register and two properties that may be eligible for individual listing on the State Register.

Establishing a Downtown Historical District would provide downtown business owners with additional financial options to assist with property repairs. Because much of the downtown area lies within the floodplain, creating a designated district would also allow for needed variances when repairing these historic structures.

The City Council voted to move forward with Phase II, which involves submitting a detailed application to the Kansas Historical Society for approval of the two proposed districts. Grants will be pursued to help offset the project costs.



Seeking Volunteers

Submitted by Dustin Vine, Fire Chief

The Ellis Volunteer Fire Department is currently accepting applications. If you or someone you know are interested in serving the community and becoming part of a dedicated team, we encourage you to apply!

For more information or to express interest, please contact the City Clerk's Office or reach out directly to Chief Dustin Vine at D & B Body Shop.

Come be a part of something meaningful - protect, serve, and make a difference in Ellis!

**FIRES
DON'T WAIT,
NEITHER SHOULD
YOU**

VOLUNTEER TODAY!





New Year's Resolution!

Submitted by Verda Flinn,
Assistant City Clerk

VOLUNTEER TODAY

Is your New Year's resolution to get more involved in the community? The City of Ellis offers several opportunities to make a meaningful impact. We have a variety of committees you can apply to join, covering areas such as parks and recreation, public safety, economic development, and infrastructure planning.

Volunteering on a municipal committee is one of the most effective ways to support your community. Our committees include the Tourism Committee, Cemetery Committee, Campground Committee, Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Appeals, Grow Ellis Downtown, and the Senior Citizens Advisory Board. The City also appoints representatives to several local boards, including the Chrysler Museum Board, Ellis Alliance, Library Board, Ellis Railroad Museum Board, and Ellis Industrial Development Corporation.

Committee members collaborate with City officials, offer input on important decisions, and help enhance local services. It's a great way to stay informed, connect with fellow residents, and share your skills on projects that directly benefit the community.

Most committees meet periodically and welcome volunteers from all backgrounds. Whether you have specific expertise or simply a passion for serving others, your participation can help shape the future of Ellis.

If you're interested in volunteering, stop by the City Clerk's office to pick up an application or visit our website at www.ellis.ks.us > City Office > City Government. Scroll to Council, City Officials & Committees and select Volunteer Committee Application (PDF). Please return your completed application to the Clerk's office for consideration by the Mayor.

Your time and talent can help build a stronger, more vibrant Ellis!

City code prohibits vegetation watering between the hours of Noon to 7:00 p.m. year round.



City-Wide Clean-up

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

Participating in the annual city-wide clean-up provides residents with a no-cost opportunity to dispose of unwanted items and have them hauled away. When utilized, this service is an excellent way to help keep our community clean, safe, and well-maintained.

This year's community clean-up was completed the week of October 6, 2025. A total of 38.64 tons of refuse was collected - 14.36 more tons than last year.

The City paid \$2,127.15 to Ellis County for the refuse collected during the event, not including construction and demolition materials.



New Picnic Shelter

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

Thanks to the leadership and support of the Community Foundation of Ellis and community members, Creekside Park now boasts a new picnic shelter and fire pit gathering area. Completed in late summer, this addition provides residents and visitors with a welcoming space to host gatherings, enjoy outdoor meals, and spend time with family and friends.

The picnic shelter is designed for community use and is available for reservations. To reserve the shelter for your event, please complete an Event Request Form at the City Clerk's office. The form is also available for download on our website.

We are grateful to the Community Foundation of Ellis for making this enhancement possible and look forward to seeing the community enjoy this beautiful new space at Creekside Park.



Online Bill Pay an Option

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

We would like to remind customers that online bill pay is now available. Many residents have already taken advantage of this convenient option, and the Clerk's office reports that the process of recording payments has been running smoothly.

If you are interested in paying your utility bill online, visit our website at www.ellis.ks.us. Navigate to City Office > Resident Info/Pay, then click Online Bill Pay to access the KanPay portal. **Please be sure to use this link only - other websites are not connected to the City of Ellis and cannot process your payment correctly.**

When submitting your payment, remember that the Zip Code must match the one on file with your creditor debit card company. If it does not match, the payment will be rejected.



While doing your yard work, please remember that the City's **BURN SITE** is open Mon., Tues., Thurs. & Fri. 7am-3:30pm, Wed. 7am-7pm and 1st & 3rd Sat. 8:30am-11:30am **and accepts ONLY tree limbs, branches and brush.** The site does **NOT** accept grass, leaves, lumber, or miscellaneous wooden items. **Take your grass, leaves and garden waste to the COMPOST SITE**, which is open 24 hours/7 days per week.