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## June 2024 NEWSLETTER

### Annual Installation Dinner



**Thank you to all the elected officials and municipal staff that attended our Annual Installation Dinner!**

We would like to hear from *everyone* regarding the Annual Installation Dinner. Please take a moment to complete our brief survey [HERE](#).

The installation of Officers and Awards Ceremony was held on Thursday, May 23, 2023, at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel. Outgoing League President Michelle Harris, Mayor of Clayton, served as Master of Ceremonies. The keynote speaker was Dr. Jody Sowell with the Missouri Historical society. Dr. Sowell's presentation highlighted interesting historical facts associated with St. Louis.

The following officers and board members were installed for the 2024-25 year:

President - Mayor Tim Lowery, Florissant  
Vice President - Mayor David Dimmitt, Brentwood  
Finance Chair - Mayor Edward Mahan, Rock Hill

**Additional Board Members include:** Laura Arnold, Mayor of Webster Groves; Darlene Bell, Alderwoman of Moline Acres; Chuck Caverly, Councilmember of Maryland Heights; Mike Clement, Mayor of Manchester; Mark Harder, Councilman of St. Louis County; Michelle Harris, Mayor of Clayton; Robert Hoffman, Mayor of Creve Coeur; Mary Little, Mayor of Overland; Marcieta Reed, Alderwoman of Vinita Park; Mike Roerman, Mayor of Ellisville; Missy Waldman, Mayor of Olivette; and Terry Wilson, Councilmember of Jennings.

Again, we want to thank you and encourage you to attend next year!

## Steve Ables Retires After 40 Years of Service to the League



At the installation dinner, many bid farewell to Steve Ables. Following 40 years of dedication to the Municipal League of Metro St. Louis, serving the municipalities of St. Louis County, elected officials, and Park and Recreation Grants, Steve is set to retire on June 28 to enjoy a life of leisure and travel. Steve's family, both local and distant, joined in the celebration at the Installation Dinner.

***Farewell, and Thank You Steve, for all of your contributions!***

## **Representative Joe Adams Terms Out**

**Representative Joe Adams  
District 086  
Democrat**



**Representative Joe Adams, a Democrat, represents St. Louis County (District 86) in the Missouri House of Representatives. He served in the House from 2014 – 2018 and again from 2020 – 2024. In between he served one term in the Senate.**

**His political career also includes serving as the Mayor of University City from 1995 to 2010, and he has held various board positions, such as the President of the Municipal League of Metro St. Louis in 2008. Joe was actively involved with City Strong, a not for profit formed to help stop the Better Together initiative.**

**Joe has been a great friend to and supporter of local government throughout his political career.**

**Thank you for your service to the community!**

## **Awardees**

**In addition to the installation of new officers, several individuals were honored at the Installation Dinner. The awardees are as follows:**

- **Representatives Deb Lavender and Gretchen Bangert were recognized for their dedicated service as Missouri Representatives.**
- **Mayors Timothy Griffin (Kirkwood) and James Thomson (Richmond Heights) received awards for their mayoral service.**
- **Mayor Michelle Harris (Clayton) was acknowledged for her role as President of the Municipal League in 2023.**
- **The Buzz Westfall Award was presented to the family of Terry Briggs in recognition of his exceptional leadership and dedication to the league and the St. Louis Region.**

## **Legislative Update**

**The legislative session officially ended on May 17, at 6:00 PM, although the Senate adjourned at 10:30 AM that morning following their opening prayer and Pledge of Allegiance. Things ended just as they were for most of the session - in turmoil and controversy.**

**Below is a list of bills truly agreed to and finally passed that impact local government. Given the political atmosphere of this year's session, the negative impact to municipalities was kept to minimum. Through a collaborative effort, we were able to stop numerous bills that would have eliminated the sales tax on food. Chances are, this issue will be back next year, but best to take one win at a time.**

### **Bills of interest:**

**SB 1359 – Streamlined process for municipalities to solicit banking services.**

**HB 2057 – Eliminate all taxes and fee on video service providers.**

**HB 2062 – Was an omnibus bill which included the Land Bank legislation.**

**SB 756 – Attempted fix to the Property Tax Credit for Seniors legislation from last session.**

**SB 872 – Sales Tax Exemption for Utilities, Video Service Providers, Small Cell Sunset Repeal**

## Park Grants Open June 1



**Municipal Park  
Grant Commission  
of St. Louis County**

**It's That Time!!**

**Construction Grant Applications Round 25 open June 1**

**The Municipal Park Grant Commission of St. Louis County, established in 2001, allocates grants for park renovations and new developments such as playgrounds, water parks, golf courses, trails, recreation centers, ice rinks, and various other recreational amenities.**

**This year, the Construction Grant Application has a new submission deadline: Friday, August 30, 2024, by 3 PM. Similar to previous years, we are happy to review your application up to two weeks prior to the deadline. Please ensure to submit a review request before finalizing your application.**

**Applications are available on the Park Commission website at:  
[2024 Grant Application - \(muniparkgrants.org\)](https://muniparkgrants.org)**

**Pre- Application Workshop Scheduled  
for the Municipal Park Grants**

**The pre-application workshops for the 2024 Municipal Park Grants, Round 25, have been scheduled.**

**We invite all prospective grant applicants to attend. Valuable knowledge and additional points are up for grabs!**

#### **SCHEDULE:**

**Workshop 1: Wed., June 12th - Brentwood Community Center - 9AM**

**Workshop 2: Thurs., June 13th - Maryland Heights City Hall - 9AM**

**Workshop 3: Thurs., June 20th - Normandy City Hall - 4PM**

## **Planning Grant Changes**

**Planning grants up to \$10,000 are available to assist in developing master plans for future park developments or specific construction project planning. Applications for planning grants are open year-round and can be accessed [here](#). If you're contemplating a project for the upcoming year, starting the planning process early is advisable.**

**The Park Commission acknowledges that not all municipalities possess professional public works, engineering, or parks staff to manage construction grant applications and oversee projects. This has occasionally resulted in incomplete or inaccurate applications and project delays. Consequently, the Commission has instituted a policy mandating that any municipality lacking professional staff must secure a planning grant prior to applying for a construction grant. The Commissioners believe this policy will ensure projects are well-planned and executed efficiently and on schedule.**

**For inquiries regarding this policy, please reach out to the Municipal League staff at [staff@stlmuni.org](mailto:staff@stlmuni.org) or call 314-726-4747.**

## **Training Academy**



**You spoke. We listened.**

**In collaboration with Cunningham, Vogel, and Rost, our June offering is a "Special Interest Class" inspired by audience suggestions. The class, focusing on Community Engagement, will be instructed by Kara Roberson, Strategic Communications Officer for the City of Wentzville and 2022 3CMA Communicator of the Year.**

**Look out for the invite next week!**



# Cyber-Attack Threat To Municipal Landscapes

By Joe Harris, Global Enterprise Sales at Chameleon Integrated Services, St Louis

## Municipalities and the Threat Landscape

Because of resource constraints, the fact that they house large data sets and have a low perspective of the risk, municipalities are a huge threat for cyber-attacks. Employee count and budget constraints can equal a difficulty in reacting to and taking preventative measures to stop the victimization of cities and counties infrastructure and data. Because they likely have billing information for the citizens, they are in many cases a prime target, not to mention the access to critical resources like power and water. It's also possible that like many small business' municipalities can have a general perception that they are not the main target for cyber criminals, however this is not backed up by the data.

For example, in 2019, Riviera Beach, Florida the city government was crippled by hackers who encrypted critical systems, including those controlling utilities and email. The attack disrupted city operations for weeks, forcing officials to resort to pen and paper for tasks. The city ultimately refused to pay the ransom and eventually restored systems from backups, but the incident highlighted the vulnerability of smaller municipalities. Another example is Atlanta, Georgia (2018), when it faced a large-scale data breach. Hackers gained access to a city database containing personal information of millions of residents, including names, social security numbers, and birthdates. The breach exposed the city to lawsuits and damaged public trust. While Atlanta did not pay a ransom, the attack resulted in significant financial losses and reputational damage. The estimated cost of this attack is \$17 Million.

But there is certainly hope even for the smallest of governments. The first step is to realize that there is a problem. There is no doubt that modern times have taught us that the question of a cyber-attack is not if, but when. Understanding that we all are targets and can be victims is the first step. Opening your mind to preventing and building a plan to react to these attacks is paramount. You can do so by forming good partnerships, looking for companies that understand your needs and have the expertise to help, even if they are just auditing your current infrastructure and policies. Sure, this is not going to be a free service, but it's money well spent, so find a company that has a great reputation.

Securing data with long term goals should be at the forefront of any municipality that wishes to stay ahead of the game. Be sure that you are staying up to date and training employees against cyber security threats. Even if you are not as regulated as a hospital or Financial Institution, you can still secure yourself by the same standards. There

are ever changing technology and procedures for this. Be sure to have a technology advisor or director who understands the challenges and can help you find solutions to offset the loss of data when possible.

## Municipal Job Postings

Be sure to check The Municipal League of Metro St. Louis website for Municipal Job Postings. Click [here](#).

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