Johnson County Public Engagement:
Public Safety Ballot Initiative

Sharon Watson
Objectives

• Educate public on issues and gather feedback for Commission to decide whether to put issue on ballot.
  • Phase 1: January to May 2016

• Educate residents about ballot initiative on Nov 8 ballot.
  • Phase 2: June to Nov. 8, 2016
Messaging

• Problems w(existing courthouse
• The plan for a new courthouse
• The plan for a coroner facility
• About the ¼-cent sales tax
Messaging

How would a 1/4-cent public safety sales tax impact purchases? It’d add 25 cents onto each $100 spent. Details: jocogov.org/14-cent-sales-

Estimates show that 22% of the public safety sales tax would be paid by non-residents. JoCoPublicSafety.org

Johnson County, KS Government
Published by Amanda Keller JoCo (?) November 4, 2016

Non-Johnson County residents: 22%
Who would pay the sales tax?

Johnson County residents: 78%

1/4-cent public safety sales tax
JOCOGOV.ORG
Existing Courthouse and Expansion
$439 million

New Courthouse
$284 million

Operating expenses
Capital Replacement Program costs
Interest on debt and other costs
Capital cost

Estimates are net present value (today’s dollars)
As a public safety issue, the problems with the Johnson County Courthouse aren’t new.
Print
Print brochure

Partner newsletters

Utility bill inserts
Events

public meetings
courthouse tours
special events
Public Safety Sales Tax: New Courthouse and Coroner Facility

On Tuesday, Nov. 8, Johnson County voters approved a 10-year, quarter-cent public safety sales tax to fund a new county courthouse and coroner facility. The county leadership has studied courthouse options over the past 15 years with recommendations for a new courthouse from numerous consultants, professional staff and citizen advisory groups. Funding the large project prevented the county from moving forward until now. Johnson County does not currently have a coroner facility; it uses a private lab in Wyandotte County. The public safety sales tax approved on Tuesday makes way for the construction of both projects in the next few years.

This public safety sales tax funding will be collected starting in April 2017 and ending in 2027. The courthouse design is expected to begin in 2017 with completion in about four years. Staff is currently developing a timeline for the construction of a coroner facility. Next steps include the Board of County Commissioners amending the county’s Capital Improvement Program to include the courthouse and coroner facility projects. Following that action, the Public Building Commission can approve the projects and sell bonds.
Internal messaging

• **Internal:**
  - Brochures in every county building
  - Employee intranet site
  - County manager presentations
  - Weekly e-newsletter to staff
Social media promotion

- Facebook and Twitter
- Primarily Facebook – promotions of 10 minute video, and then smaller portions of the video
Social media promotion

Today #JoCoKS has over 9 times the residents it had in 1951, when the courthouse was built. JoCoPublicSafety.org

Tour participant asks about the box on the wall in a jury room: is it a heater? No. It's a bug zapper. 😕
Social media promotion

• Joined Nextdoor.com Feb 17 to promote public meetings across the county
Public safety sales tax on Nov. 8 ballot (upcoming media interviews and more opportunities to learn about it)

Johnson County Public Information from Johnson County - 13 Oct

On your Nov. 8 General Election ballot, there will be a 1/4-cent, 10-year public safety sales tax question to fund a proposed new Johnson County Courthouse and coroner facility. We are providing numerous upcoming opportunities for residents to learn more about the proposed sales tax including media interviews:

- In your mailbox, you should have received our latest JoCo Magazine - a special...

View more

Edited on 13 Oct - Shared with all areas in Johnson County in General

Don, Mary, John & Kathy, and 61 others thanked Johnson County

View all 188 replies

Jim M. We hope everyone takes the time to research this public safety ballot initiative as well and we appreciate the engagement of our residents on this topic. We have videos summarizing the issue on ...

View more

Thank
Paul thanked Johnson County

Gavin T. from Elston Park - 12 Nov

Joco Public Information. I had a question on the tax increase for the new Courthouse. I read an article this morning

"By Kansas law, 37 percent of a county's sales tax increase goes to the cities... View more

Edited on 12 Nov
Thank
Travis thanked Gavin
Social media results

- 273 posts
- 661,000 impressions
- 12,561 engagements
- 1,200 comments/questions
It passed by 16,251 votes!

47% NO 53% YES
Key takeaways

– Use video to tell the story
– Frame the message as why it matters to residents
– Rely on elected officials
– Recognize skewed sentiment
– Rely heavily on legal staff
– Respond to every question/comment you can
Contact information

Sharon Watson
Public Affairs and Communication Director
Johnson County Government

Sharon.watson@jocogov.org
SharonLWWatson@yahoo.com

913-636-1732 cell