

Contact: Andrew Lawson  
Phone: (620) 441-4415  
Fax: (620) 441-0869  
[alawson@arkansascityks.gov](mailto:alawson@arkansascityks.gov)

City Manager's Office  
City of Arkansas City  
118 W. Central Ave.  
Arkansas City, KS 67005



# News Release

## Special Arbor Day celebration planned April 28 at Wilson Park

*Residents invited to night of food, music, tree planting, free 'Lorax' showing*

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (April 20, 2017) — Residents are urged to come to Wilson Park on April 28 for a special Arbor Day celebration that will double as the “groundbreaking” of the Wilson Park Master Plan.

The event — sponsored by the City of Arkansas City, the Beautification and Tree Advisory Board, the Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Arkansas City Convention and Visitors Bureau — will feature food, music, a free movie and the planting of three trees in the northeast part of the park.

“We hope everyone will join us in the park as we plant the first new trees identified in the Master Plan,” said Public Information Officer Andrew Lawson. “They will be planted in the only park area that won’t be disturbed by construction in the next few years as the plan takes shape and becomes a reality.”

The event will be from 5 to about 8:30 p.m. at various locations in the park, 701 N. Summit St.

The Charlie’s PizzaTaco truck will provide food from 5 to 8 p.m., just east of the rotunda. To highlight the environmentally friendly theme of the night, the City’s recycling trailer will be moved to the park.

Entertainment options for the night include:

- The **Cowley College Singers**, under the direction of David Smith, will perform from about 5:10 to 5:30 p.m. on the V.J. Wilkins Memorial Stage under the rotunda.
- The **trees will be planted** around 5:30 p.m., north of the Docking Memorial Garden area.
- Following the tree planting, **Cody Griesel** will play his banjo from 5:40 to 5:55 at the rotunda.
- The final musical act will be **Eric Swanson** on the acoustic guitar, from 6 to 6:30 p.m.
- The **full flythrough video** of the Master Plan, narrated by City Manager Nick Hernandez and produced by Ark City Daily Bytes, will be shown around 6:45, prior to the movie. The plan was financed by and produced in cooperation with the V.J. Wilkins Memorial Foundation.
- **“The Lorax,”** based on the popular Dr. Seuss story and starring Danny DeVito, starts at 7 p.m.

**For immediate release**

*more*

“If you haven’t yet had a chance to see the Master Plan video, this will be the best opportunity since it was first unveiled,” Lawson said. “We also will have brochures for those interested in volunteering.”

The flythrough video also will be shown, along with the other videos in the “City Matters” series, at the City’s booth Saturday under the rotunda at Cowley’s Outdoor Market, sponsored by 1025 The River.

“We appreciate our community partners, the Chamber of Commerce and CVB, for helping to make this event possible,” Lawson said. “Hopefully, it will be a night of fun, great weather and a little learning.”

### **About the Wilson Park Master Plan**

In 2015, the City of Arkansas City was awarded a \$33,500 grant from the V.J. Wilkins Memorial Foundation to develop a master plan for Wilson Park and the vacant City-owned lot just to the north.

The scope of the plan included looking at the potential for a cultural events center and possibly expanding the park into the recently vacated hospital property at Birch Avenue and First Street.

A steering committee of citizens and affiliated representatives was formed to direct the process.

The Wilson Park Master Plan steering committee members are:

- City Commissioner Charles Tweedy III — originally appointed as a planning commissioner;
- Jill Wineinger — Arkansas City Beautification and Tree Advisory Board vice chair;
- Pam Crain — Arkansas City Convention and Visitors Bureau tourism specialist;
- Kristi Old and Brittany Carder — Arkansas City Farm and Art Market coordinators;
- Blanche Schmidt — Arkansas City Public Library Board of Trustees president;
- Angie Bruce, Richard Hensley and Dr. Nick Rogers — citizens at large.

Also present at most of the meetings were V.J. Wilkins Foundation board members Otis Morrow and Karen Zeller, as well as Hernandez and Lawson.

LK Architecture, of Wichita, was retained by the City to assist with developing the master plan and related materials. The architects who worked on the project were Jeff Best, director of landscape architecture; Aaron Smith, design architect; and William Wells, landscape architect.

The steering committee met four times in 2015 — on Sept. 29, Oct. 14, Nov. 2 and Dec. 7 — to discuss and develop the master plan. The plan was finalized at a meeting June 6, 2016, for presentation to the Wilkins Foundation last July in Denver, Colorado. A rollout planning meeting was held March 13.

## About the Outdoor Friday Family Movie Series

The 2015 Outdoor Summer Movie Series was a huge success in the debut season for the new V.J. Wilkins Memorial Stage at the rotunda, with particularly large crowds viewing “Big Hero 6” and “Frozen.”

The projection equipment, sound system and stage all were made possible by a grant received three years ago from the V.J. Wilkins Memorial Foundation, in order to promote arts throughout the city.

A special fall showing of “Inside Out” drew more than 300 people to the rotunda in November 2015, despite colder temperatures. Plans were launched then for more autumn showings in 2016.

Various weather conditions impacted attendance often last spring and summer, but the season’s highlight undoubtedly was in June 2016, when more than 700 people packed Paris Park Pool for a special doubleheader, consisting of “Finding Nemo” and “Jaws,” during a free swim-in night at the pool.

During the last three years, the City of Arkansas City has shown a wide variety of movies, including:

- ’80s classics — “Back to the Future,” “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off,” “Ghostbusters,” “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade” and “Three Amigos!”
- Classic Disney films — “The Fox and the Hound,” “The Jungle Book,” “Mary Poppins” and “Pete’s Dragon”
- Disney animated features — “Big Hero 6,” “Frozen,” “Zootopia” and “Moana”
- Disney live-action remakes — “Cinderella” and “Maleficent”
- Disney-Pixar animated collaborations — “Finding Nemo,” “The Good Dinosaur” and “Inside Out”
- Marvel Cinematic Universe films — “Doctor Strange”
- Other animated films — “The Lego Movie,” “Minions” and “The Secret Life of Pets”
- Summer blockbusters — “Jaws,” “Jurassic Park,” “Jurassic World,” “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” and “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows”

The Outdoor Friday Family Movie Series only has been possible with the assistance of many generous donors, including:

- Civic and service clubs such as the Arkansas City High School KAY Club, the Kiwanis Club, and the Optimists and Soroptimists of Arkansas City;
- Local businesses such as Ark City Daily Bytes, Ark Valley Credit Union, Community National Bank & Trust, Elite Advertising, Grass Clippings, Mitch Reichle—Farm Bureau Financial Services, Munson Insurance, Plumber Bob’s, RCB Bank, Reedy Ford, Rogers Family Dentistry, The Stock Exchange Bank, Union State Bank, and WB Meats;
- Governmental entities such as the Arkansas City Convention and Visitors Bureau, Arkansas City Public Library, and City of Arkansas City;

*more*

- Nonprofit organizations such as the Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Fraternal Order of Police, Newman's Quest and the Young Professionals of Cowley County.

For more information on becoming a sponsor for an upcoming movie, call Andrew Lawson at (620) 441-4415 or email [alawson@arkansascityks.gov](mailto:alawson@arkansascityks.gov).

###