



Grillin' & Chillin' at THE University Heights Annual Picnic *10/2/2022 4-7p*

Come one! Come all! Come join us for The University Heights Annual Picnic, our traditional neighborhood potluck gathering, on 10/2, a Sunday afternoon from 4-7p in lovely Lewis Park (rain date 10/9). We are returning to the pre-Covid format so please bring food to share (the potluck part) and food to grill (for your family), bring a folding chair to sit on (we'll have some picnic tables too), and enjoy complimentary Anheuser-Busch products and ice cream for all.

This October fall picnic and concert in Lewis Park is a fun family event, with live music, tables to linger at, grills to cook on, and free beer and ice cream for all. It's a special time to meet and greet our new neighbors and see the ones we haven't seen for awhile. This event is sponsored and organized by our University Heights Association – your neighborhood association.

THE Celebration of Halloween in the Heights *Monday, 10/31/2022 6-8p*

On **Monday 10/31/2022 from 6-8p**, we will celebrate **Halloween in The Heights**. There will once again be a "spirit"ed competition for the Great Pumpkin Awards for decorations, judged by an expert panel composed of your neighbors.

Trick or Treat-ing begins at 6p and goes until 8pm, when we ask that lights go out and candy goes away. If you do not want to participate at all in the festivities, simply turn off your porch light, every light in your house, and go out for dinner between 6-8p. Just kidding.
☺ The "turned off" porch light should do the "trick."

<i>FenceTalk</i>	
Issue 2022.3 (Sept)	
Contents	
☼ University Heights Annual Picnic	1
☼ Halloween in The Heights	1
☼ Mystery of the Blue Streak	2
☼ UHS1 Trustees Report - Vandersall	3
☼ University Heights Today - Horn	5
☼ Welcome New Neighbors	5
☼ Annual Dues are ... Due	6
☼ University City News	7
☼ Dining Out (Fitz's 75 th Anniversary)	11
☼ Special Section: The Great Flood	13
Resources & Deadlines	14
Beware of Real Estate Developers	17
Article in Post-Dispatch - Fitz	18
A Neighbor's Experience - Harvey	19
How River Des Peres Became Sewer	20
Rainwater Management	26
☼ Info You Can't Live (Here) Without	
Calendar	29
Contact Us	30

And ... The Great Pumpkin 🎃 will be on the prowl again this year and will be giving awards to the **best-decorated homes!** It will be ... **SPOOK-TACULAR!!!!**



(continued on next page)

Here are a few guidelines to help make this Halloween a safe one for all:

- Stay home if you and yours are sick.
- Talk with your children about safety and social distancing guidelines and expectations.
- Guide children to stay on the proper side of the road and always ensure appropriate distance between participants.
- Carry a flashlight at night and ensure your children are wearing reflective clothing.
- Wear a face mask covering BOTH your mouth and nose.
- Wash your hands as soon as you return home.
- Inspect candy.
- Above all else, enjoy!

The Mystery of the Blue Streak

This past July a streak of blue mysteriously appeared on several of the streets in our neighborhood, most prominently on the entire length of Yale, but also on Cornell and even Amherst (where it turned an off-white). Some cars helped spread it, but even rain did not remove it adding to the consternation of some residents.

Certainly the color blue is known to be used by Missouri American Water to mark where water pipes lay, but the pattern of blue (see photo) is more like a splatter almost as if a conceptual artist was making a statement or beginning a piece. Fortunately or unfortunately, it appears to be unfinished at this point in time. No matter, it remains quite the conundrum.

Anyone having knowledge of how these mysterious blue streaks suddenly appeared in our neighborhood, please text your most curious *FenceTalk* editor Mark Pope at 314.910.0969. Thank you for your attention and diligence.



The Trustees Report by Myra Vandersall (Yale), Trustee

U. Heights No. 1 is recovering from epic flood

While the drama of the July 26, 2022 flooding in University City has passed, the trauma still continues. Dartmouth, Trinity, lower Yale, and Harvard residents are deciding whether to repair their homes and move back or to sell their properties. These are extremely difficult decisions, also being faced with yet another flood at some point. The River des Peres is unforgiving. About 45 homes were affected during the most severe flooding in the history of this subdivision.

FEMA and SEMA have opened a Disaster Recovery Center in Centennial Commons in University City. The center will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Sunday. If you need assistance recovering from the flood, please visit the center. Additionally, information and resources provided by FEMA and SEMA can be found on the City's website at: <http://www.ucitymo.org/920/Flood-Information>

The city is also exploring buyouts of homes affected by the River des Peres flooding, but this process is costly and several entities need to cooperate for success, including U. City, MSD, the Army Corps of Engineers, and FEMA. <https://www.kmov.com/2022/08/30/university-city-hoping-buy-out-homes-flood-plain/> In some cases MSD can offer up to a \$3,000 grant <https://msdprojectclear.org/customers/problems-tips/sewer-backups/financial-assistance-building-backups/> if sanitary sewage material backed up to your basement from the MSD lines.

The trustees placed dumpsters for community use along Dartmouth. Chris Paul, the owner of Dumpster Concepts reported that he removed 52 tons of trash, which equals 104,00 pounds. Still just a very small portion removed. The cost plus a sink hole in the middle of Dartmouth caused traffic issues with companies trying to move equipment in and out. The trustees towed an abandoned car that was impeding traffic around the sinkhole. The trustees also arranged to tow an unlicensed trailer on lower Yale. To complete the cleanup, University City sanitation employees removed the remainder with new trucks in a day-and-a-half. We are so grateful to those men and women who not only had a complex, physically demanding job, but were without equipment that was damaged in the flood. They are so proud of their new, shiny trucks.

The subdivision shed had five feet of water in it, but we paid extra for waterproof materials so it was not damaged. We lost our chain saw and a small mower. We also lost the fence behind the shed and extending north along the 5 ft. sidewalk easement we own at 6916 Vernon Ave. It will be replaced, including a new locked gate at a cost of \$12,000.

Should you see a security violation in the U. Heights flooded areas, please call the U. City police at the non-emergency line [\(314\) 725-2211](tel:3147252211) or, if you consider this an emergency, call 911. We have had only one report of illegal occupancy in one house.

(continued on next page)

City to take over maintenance responsibility for Trinity Avenue in front of city hall

After years of discussion The City of University City is about to take maintenance responsibility for a portion of Trinity Avenue in front of City Hall and the Trinity Building (Old Library.) This just means they will maintain the streets, sidewalks, trees and tree lawns, including Harriet Woods Plaza and the two stone monuments.

The subdivision will continue to maintain only the west half of Trinity down to the footpath entrance on the north end of 601 Trinity (the temporary police facility.) The police department will move into the Annex and the courts and council chamber into the Trinity Building.

This will ensure that the City is responsible for maintaining the access to all of their buildings and public parking. The City will still pay assessments on all of their front footage. This will save the subdivision thousands of dollars over the next few decades. The city intends to re-electrify the monuments as they do electrical on the Annex.

This ordinance will be finalized after it is officially introduced to city council and has three readings.

Assessment delinquencies reach a new low

We look at outstanding assessments with two lenses:

1. Outstanding assessments due by category
2. Aging of the outstanding assessments due so we can gauge the likelihood of them being paid.

Generally, the longer outstanding, the less likely to be paid or only paid at time of house sale.

Outstanding Dues by Category - 8.5.2022

Regular Assessment	\$9,658.31
Special Assessment	\$ 706.36
Interest + Late Fees + Legal Fees	\$3,979.77
TOTAL	\$14,344.44

Outstanding Aging Report- 8.5.2022

30 Days Late	\$50.97
60 Days Late	\$105.30
90 Days Late	\$14,188.17
TOTAL	\$14,344.44

Currently there are 11 property addresses that represent the total outstanding amount of delinquent assessments. The total outstanding balance of \$14,344.44 represents a 35.3% reduction (improvement) in outstanding balance since May 1, 2022. Thank you to those homeowners who recently paid their outstanding assessments. In addition, the total outstanding amount is the lowest total due at a comparable time period since 2012. Given assessment increases on a comparative dollar amount the total represents the lowest total outstanding on record.

The next assessment cycle begins in November with invoices mailed by 10.30.22 due by 12.31.22. If you have difficulty paying your annual assessment, please contact a trustee to develop a payment plan.

University Heights Association Today by Hope Horn (Cornell), UHA President

Hello neighbors!

I am so happy to be elected as your Neighborhood Association President for 2022. I thought it would be nice to introduce myself since there are so many of you that I don't personally know.

I moved to University Heights in the summer of 2016 after living just a few miles away in Clayton with my husband, Rich, and our three children since 1999. (Rich grew up here and, yes, went to Clayton High School.) We later developed ties to U City when my son, Matthew began his teaching career at the High School, and his wife joined the faculty at Barbara Jordan Elementary shortly thereafter. Fun fact: Matthew collaborated with Diane Davenport (Yale) several times on presentations for his history class.

My first experience with our beautiful neighborhood came when I drove a family friend to the Pfeiffer's house (Radcliffe) where he was staying for the weekend; I was entranced with the winding roads and antique light posts, and when it was time to move and find a new home, this was the only neighborhood that pulled at my heart strings. We moved into our home on Cornell and immediately felt welcomed and peaceful among these gracious streets and homes.

The entire Association Board and I hope that we can continue the long tradition of bringing the community closer through communication, beautification, and neighborhood - wide events. After the summer flooding disruption to so many of us, we are so happy to have a full in - person October picnic with cookouts, a live band, and (new!) an ice cream truck. Then we'll be on to the Great Pumpkin awards and culminate the year with Luminaria and festivities during the winter solstice. I'm hoping to see and meet many of you at the picnic in just a few weeks!

Welcome To Our Newest Neighbors

We've had a few changes in our neighborhood over the past few months, including the addition of several new neighbors. Big neighborhood welcome to our newbies!! (Please be sure to invite them to the Annual Picnic when you see them.)

Matthew Rohlfing, 6930 Cornell
Terrill & Dana Smith, 6958 Dartmouth
Elaine Spector, 6945 Cornell

If you see new neighbors moving in or simply moving trucks in the neighborhood, please let Don Fitz (Dartmouth), 314.727.8554 fitzdon@aol.com or Claudia Moran (Amherst), 314.974.6383, c.gracemorán@gmail.com know as they are the coordinators of our **Welcome Packets**, so that they can get one to our new neighbors to help them get settled into their new home and new neighborhood. Thank you!

Your Neighborhood Organization – The University Heights Association

Dear Neighbor:

The University Heights Association (UHA) is a voluntary organization dedicated to enhancing the sense of community among our residents of University Heights Subdivision #1. Our mission is to bring us together with regular communication, fun activities, neighborhood beautification, and to facilitate interaction between busy families. These activities are led by a group of elected neighbors that form its all-volunteer Board. Covid-19 made some of these activities harder to conduct in the past two years, but we are happy to announce that many of the regular activities will be back up and running in 2022!

- We publish Fence Talk quarterly, edited by Dr. Mark Pope, chock full on information and general interest to the neighborhood. Look for it in your email inbox.
- We distribute and maintain the neighborhood directory for all who wish to share their contact information - please see attached document in this email if you are new to the neighborhood and wish to be included in the email list (used only sparingly to publicize events) and the street directory.
- We are proud of our beautiful tree-lined streets and maintain the hanging floral baskets and entrance marker garden at the corner of Yale and Delmar.
- The October fall picnic and concert in Lewis Park is a fun family event, with live music, tables to linger at, grills to cook on, and free beer and ice cream for all.
- During the winter solstice, we distribute luminaria kits to all, and hope to reprise the progressive dinner this December - a perennial favorite event in the neighborhood, which was paused during Covid.
- Each spring (March) we host an annual meeting for the neighborhood at large – a great time to meet your new neighbors, get up to date on what’s going on around us, and hear a report from our trustees.
- Check out our website: www.universityheightsonline.com

All this activity comes with a nominal annual membership fee of **\$20.00 per household**. We hope that you will use this opportunity to join! Thanks for supporting our great community in the 2022-2023 fiscal year!

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email, if different from or in addition to the listing in the neighborhood directory: _____

Annual Membership for March 2022 to Feb. 2023	\$ 20.00
<i>Optional</i> Contribution to help support neighborhood activities	\$ _____
<i>Optional</i> Contribution for the University Heights Scholarship**	\$ _____

Total Submitted	\$ _____

Please print and complete this form, make your check payable to **University Heights Association, Inc.**, and include both of these pieces in an envelope. You can then mail or drop off that envelope to:

Peter Burgis, UHA Treasurer, 755 Radcliffe Avenue.

If you prefer to make your payment online, please be sure to include your name and address as part of the Venmo or PayPal process.

Venmo: @University-Heights

PayPal: uhgtsassoc@gmail.com

(continued on next page)

****At our annual meeting on March 9, 2021, we passed, and the Neighborhood Association approved a resolution entitled: *Apology for Racism in University Heights*, documenting our apology for historic racism in our neighborhood, especially regarding housing restrictions. We began to explore ways to repair the damage caused by previous generations. The University Heights Neighborhood Association Scholarship is a direct outcome of that document. It is a \$1,000.00 scholarship awarded to a University City High School graduating senior who is continuing their education past high school.**

Ways We Communicate in University Heights
 Face-to-Face (preferred) universityheightsonline.com (website)
 Telephone (in the directory) UniversityHeights1.Nextdoor.com (online community)
 Email (in the directory) universityheightsonline.com/FenceTalk (newsletter)

Common Abbreviations We Use In FenceTalk
 UHS1 = University Heights Subdivision No. 1
 UHA = University Heights Association, Inc.

University City News

U-City in Bloom's 7th Annual Plein Air Art Festival and Competition

SAVE THE DATE!

7th Annual

Plein Air Art Festival
and competition



Sunday Oct. 9, 2022

Paint University City's Historic Districts:
 The Loop, Civic Buildings, Parks, and
 Century-Old Homes.

 September is "Paint U. City Month".
 Paint any time during this month, including
 the day of the event. Plein Air work done
 in September will be judged October 9.

 On the day of the Art Festival, Sunday
 Oct. 9, check in after 8 AM on the lawn
 at City Hall, 6801 Delmar. Turn all work
 in by 2:30 PM, to the Community Center.
 Judging begins at 4 PM.

Reception and Art Sale, 5 – 7 PM

University City Community Center, 975 Pennsylvania
 For further information: Judy Prange – judyprange@outlook.com

(continued on next page)

U-City Buildings and Places Closed Due to Floods

Heman Park Swimming Pool

Heman Park Athletic Fields (until further notice)

Heman Park Community Center (until further notice)

University City Dog Park (until further notice)

Centennial Commons Recreation Facility (these parts are closed until further notice: fitness areas, gym, indoor soccer facility, and meeting/event rooms) (The U-City Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry has established, however, a reciprocal agreement with the Richmond Heights Department of Parks and Recreation to allow “current Centennial Commons Membership Holders access to their “The Heights” Community Center (8001 Dale Avenue, Richmond Heights, MO 63117) at no charge (includes Silver Sneakers RenewActive Card Holders). You must present your Centennial Commons Membership Card to gain access (no exceptions).

Re-opened for these limited services only:

Centennial Commons Recreation Facility (hours: 9a-6p M-F for: 1) Picnic Pavilion reservations, 2) purchase/renew Ruth Park Golf I.D. cards, and 3) purchase U-City trash stickers).

Please check the U-City website for further updates (www.ucitymo.org).

University City Costco Officially Opens October 25 at 8:00a

The St. Louis region’s fourth Costco store will open Oct. 25, 2022. Departments at the new Costco include Food Court, Gas Station, Hearing Aids, Optical Department, Pharmacy, and Tire Service. The newest Costco anchors the larger \$211 million Markets at Olive redevelopment east of I-170 on Olive Boulevard that will transform the area on the north and south sides of Olive into a commercial corridor with retail, restaurants, apartments, a hotel, and offices. The entire project adds nearly 50 acres of retail space, with 16 acres for Costco alone.

This Costco will be the first part of this new retail center to open. Construction on the second phase on the south side of Olive is underway. Over the next couple of months, the remaining buildings there will be demolished, and construction will start on four new buildings. Two of the buildings will be built this fall, and the other two soon after. Tenants will be announced in the next few months, the city said. Most buildings in the Markets at Olive are planned to be under construction by spring 2023.

Costco owns its property, but the business entity that owns the Markets at Olive project, U City LLC, was acquired last year by developers Larry Chapman (CEO of Seneca Commercial Real Estate) and Bob Clark (CEO of construction firm Clayco and developer CRG). Chapman and Clark are partnering on the project with David Hutkin of real estate firm Hutkin Properties and Caroline Saunders, former general counsel of CRG who is serving as partner and counsel. The original owner of the project, Novus Development, was approved for \$70.5 million in tax-increment financing for the development in 2019 and sold the development last November for an undisclosed amount. The multiple commercial projects will be done in phases that will end up covering both sides of Olive Boulevard east of I-170.

(continued on next page)

WE'RE OPENING IN
University City
Tuesday, October 25, at 8 a.m.

COSTCO
WHOLESALE

EVERYTHING YOU WANT. ALL IN ONE PLACE.

shop Special Offer

When you join and enroll in auto renewal of your annual membership:
A **\$20** Digital Costco Shop Card for new Executive Members. Or, a **\$10** Digital Costco Shop Card for new Gold Star or Business Members.*
Expires Nov. 6, 2022.

Join before we open!
Sign up at our temporary location:
**8421 Saint John Industrial Drive,
Suite 120
St. Louis, MO 63114**
Hours: weekdays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.;
weekends, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Shop opening day starting at 8 a.m.
8695 Olive Blvd., University City
For location details, visit Costco.com and
search: **University City Opening**

*To receive a Digital Costco Shop Card, you must provide a valid email address and set up auto-renewal of your Costco membership on a "Shop" card at the time of sign-up. If you elect not to provide a valid email address and sign up for auto-renewal, a Digital Costco Shop Card will not be emailed. Valid only for nonmembers for their first year of membership. Limit one per household. Restrictions apply and may not be combined with any other promotion. Some members will receive their Digital Costco Shop Card by email within 2 weeks of sign-up. Costco Shop Cards are not redeemable for cash, except as required by law. A Costco membership is \$60 a year. An Executive Membership is an additional \$60 upgrade fee a year. Each membership includes one free Household Card. May be subject to other fees. Costco accepts all Visa cards, as well as cash, checks, debit/ATM cards, EBT and Costco Shop Cards. Departments and product selection may vary.
Expires: Nov. 6, 2022 - Valid only at: University City - Awareness Code: 23785

The Issaquah, Washington-based retailer operates three existing locations in south St. Louis County, Manchester, and St. Peters. In addition to its 800+ locations worldwide, Costco is branching out even further into most regions of the U.S., and even some international destinations this summer. The 2022 expansion to launch 28 new Costco warehouses across the globe is well underway, and all the ones opening soon are listed on its website. Currently there are 11 countries outside of the U.S. that have a Costco warehouse, including Canada, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. This fall, Costco is adding New Zealand to the list as well as extending its reach in South Korea.

(continued on next page)

Just In Case You Were Wondering ... About the New Buildings Across I-170

Olive Crossing at 9100 Olive Blvd. is a redevelopment project just west of the new University City Costco on Olive at I-170 in Olivette. It is a mixed-use 140-acre development by Keat Properties and Keeley Properties that's currently under construction on 14.8 acres.

In the works is a dual brand Marriott Courtyard and Element hotel which will have up to 160-rooms. There is a Panera restaurant and 181 residential apartments along with 30,000+ sq.ft. of retail, dining, and services space, and 180,000+ sq.ft. of office space. The site originally was occupied by an Office Max and an Auto Repair Shop. In September 2022, construction was going strong with multiple buildings going up around the property. Scheduled for opening in Spring 2023.

<https://www.olivecrossing.com/>

University City Flooding and the Saga of River Des Peres

As water rushed from the River Des Peres into hundreds of University City homes after record-shattering rains late last month, city and federal officials already had a recommendation for how to reduce longstanding flood risks along the waterway.

For decades, experts have studied the flood-prone upper parts of the urban watershed, eyeing ways to protect residents and structures from rising waters. Year after year, heavy rains have fallen and streets and structures have flooded. In 2019, University City officials asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for options. Now, officials have a tentative but specific strategy spelled out in the Corps' draft plan released in April: Build an approximately 8-acre detention basin to store water upstream in Overland's Woodson Road Park.

But, given the scale of local flood problems and the modest scope of the recommended project — estimated to cost less than \$10 million — experts warn that the study's "tentatively selected" strategy, though helpful, will not go far enough to protect area residents.

Despite being labeled as a once-in-more-than-500-years rain event, some victims with damaged homes saw the late-July disaster as a tragedy waiting to happen. "This is the worst thing I've ever dealt with in my life," said University City Council member Tim Cusick, whose home was swamped by four feet of water. Piles of ruined belongings sit outside his neighbors' homes. "Their losses are just tremendous," he said.

Damage assessments from recent flash flooding are still in their initial stages. But even without an official overview, University City — which is essentially bisected by the upper River Des Peres — features among, if not atop, the hardest-hit parts of the region from the massive rains that hit July 26 and July 28.

Gregory Rose, the city manager for University City, said at least 300 homes in the municipality are estimated to have been "severely" affected by the flooding....

[The full article is available at https://www.stltoday.com/business/local/university-city-has-a-long-flood-history-the-feds-have-a-short-list-of-solutions/article_e0c7247b-9f03-5c8f-8fa9-b7a3c850b602.html]

Shortest Day Ever in Recorded History

You may have missed it, but on June 29, 2022 the Earth spun faster than it ever has, and completed that spin under the regular 24 hours. This was the shortest day ever recorded on Earth since scientists started using atomic clocks. On this day, our planet was able to complete one entire rotation in 1.59 milliseconds less than 24 hours. This is the latest in a series of speed records for Earth since 2020. And now you know.

[International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service](https://www.iers.org/) (IERS)

Dining Out (if you can) by Mark Pope

Editor's note: Dining Out is a favorite past time of University Heights neighbors and University City is the home of a mélange of cultural dining delights from all over the world, and at all price points. We'll try to review a different venue (or so) each issue and help move you into the adventures of eating whether it's food from China (even various kinds of this), Thailand, India, Vietnam, Japan, Korea to Mexico and fusions of all these; a variety of Middle Eastern cuisines, to homemade root beer (and its accompanying floats), to Italy and Greece, to Ethiopia and local soul food, BBQ, seafood, and pure American diner. It's all here. The Covid pandemic has made it very rough for local eateries, so please go out and dine in. They need you and we need them.

Fitz's 75th Birthday Bash (Saturday, September 17, 1-4p)

First, I have to confess that I love root beer. Not just "like" ... LOVE. I have driven hundreds of miles to sample regional root beers, like the luscious inhouse-made root beer at the Mark Twain Dinette (400 N. 3rd Street, Hannibal, MO 63401 (573) 221-5300 marktwaindINETTE.com or the self-styled "world's creamiest" root beer at the Dog n Suds Drive In (6748 US Hwy 67, Cherokee Pass, MO 63645-7101).

Luckily, if you too like root beers and don't wish to drive three hours to quench your need, all you have to do is walk over to The Loop for a cold refreshing one that has been ranked 9th out of all the regional, national, and international brands on the market <https://www.tastingtable.com/942906/the-best-root-beer-brands-ranked/> (7/27/2022), ahead of such legends as IBC (14), A&W (16, but my personal nationally available favorite), Mug (18), and Olde Rhode Island Molasses Root Beer (19). By the way, Sprecher's (Wisconsin) was ranked #1. They even make a maple root beer, but I'm holding out for a bacon root beer, because everything is better with ... you know.



(continued on next page)

In recent reviews:

“The pride of the Midwest root beer scene, Fitz's springs from its St. Louis microbrewery in the historic Delmar Loop. At its two locations, 19 soda flavors adorn a mouthwatering menu, including pumpkin and peach labels, but it's the locally devised 1947 root beer recipe that made this brand an anchor point upon the current Fitz's re-opening in 1993. Most of its root beer is served from the tap in the restaurant, and brewed onsite — but don't worry, you can order it sent to anywhere, right on their website.”

After tasting Fitz's classic root beer, various anonymous root beer reviewers (yes, there is such a thing, but I rather doubt you'll find it in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*) proclaimed:

Brewery Tourist says they can crank out a bottle in a second, and do it to the tune of 10,000 bottles per day, while also reporting that the journey from draft to quaffing on the onsite pour is about three feet to refreshment.

Gourmet Root Beer, one of the harder reviewers to please, calls it a success any way you measure your root beer, and questions how it could have even fallen by the wayside originally. Thankfully, Fitz's is back now, with its original recipe and label, so it's like it never left.

My Root Beer Reviews loves how its vanilla and wintergreen spices wait in the wings until the appropriate moment to step forward.

Steve's Root Beer Journal says that, without presenting a weak flavor, it's the one to grab when you want a drink that tastes the way the classic root beer should. It's root-forward, yet surprisingly light in taste despite all that. All in all, a fine drink.

On Saturday, 9/17/2022, Fitz's will be officially 75 years old (1947, for those who are numerically challenged) and they are planning a big bash from 1-4p at their original brewery in The Loop, 6605 Delmar Blvd., University City, MO 63130, 314.726.9555. They'll have live music, a face painter, and a caricature artist, along with \$1 draft root beer fills and \$5 root beer floats and a “free merch” wheel.

History and context:

The building that currently houses Fitz's was built in 1928 for the West End Bank. It became the Delmar Bank in 1933, and was remodeled in 1944 when the art deco façade was added. For a while, during the 1980s, it was a Chinese restaurant known as The Lantern House.

Fitz's Root Beer, the flagship soda, is made according to an original recipe developed in St. Louis in 1947. This unique formula features such ingredients as select natural roots, spices, barks, and is exclusively sweetened with all-natural pure cane sugar. Thanks to its robust and creamy flavor, Fitz's Root Beer has been recognized as one of the best root beers in the United States (see above).

Fitz's Root Beer is kegged in 15-gallon barrels in their bottling room right inside the restaurant and served ice cold right out of the tap. The Fitz's mugs are ‘bottomless’ (ok, they really do have a bottom, but there are free refills – get it!) so come thirsty and enjoy as much Fitz's Root Beer as you can drink as well as all the other kegged traditional sodas, including Fitz's Diet Root Beer (my personal favorite), Cream Soda, Orange Pop, and Black Cherry!

The Great Flood of 2022: A Special Section

Editor's note: Information for this contribution was compiled from a variety of sources including the New York Times, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, KSDK-TV, and observations of our neighbors. It's been a quite difficult time for some in our neighborhood. Please be supportive of their efforts to come back from this epic flood and the damage to their homes and lives.

The flooding that struck the St. Louis metropolitan area and our neighborhood in particular from July 25 to 28, 2022 was officially declared a major disaster on August 6 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), giving flooding victims access to federal funds to help with damage. That move made FEMA's individual assistance program available to eligible residents of St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County.

We all know that a lot of rain fell in a short period of time, but let's put it in perspective. The National Weather Service (NWS) Office in St. Louis offered this truly jaw-dropping information on its [website](#):

- Over 9" of rainfall within a 24-hour period
- 7.58" of rainfall in 6 hours
- 25% of annual total rainfall in 12 hours
- Surpassed July and August normal rainfall totals in 6 hours

For context, the previous record for 24-hour rainfall was around 7 inches, and that was from the remnants of a hurricane in 1915. The 6-hour rainfall totals had a *1 in 1000* chance of happening in a given year.

Two days after this flash flooding hit the St. Louis area, breaking a century-old rainfall record, the region was hit with another round of storms that caused more flooding, requiring dozens of residents to be rescued. Showers and storms moved through the St. Louis area on that Thursday afternoon and into the evening, prompting a series of flash flood warnings from the NWS urging residents to move immediately to higher ground with parts of the St. Louis area recording more than three inches of rain on Thursday, according to the National Weather Service. That was much less rain than fell on Tuesday, when more than 12 inches of rain were recorded in some parts of St. Louis County. A combination of high rates of rainfall and ground that was already saturated from Tuesday contributed to Thursday's flooding.

The Great Flood showed that St. Louis's storm systems were already "under exorbitant stress" from development, said Derek Hoeflerlin, an associate professor and chair of the landscape architecture and urban design programs at Washington University in St. Louis. Gov. Mike Parson of Missouri, who was on a trade mission in Germany, said he had been monitoring the rainfall from afar. He and the lieutenant governor also declared a state of emergency, allowing the state to coordinate directly with local officials and provide assistance.

The St. Louis area also flooded nearly three decades ago, when the Mississippi and Missouri rivers swamped villages and farmland during a two-month inundation that came to be known as [the great Midwest flood of 1993](#). That flood claimed 50 lives across the region, left almost 70,000 people homeless, and caused an estimated \$12 billion in property and agricultural damage. City officials said they were not sure how many people had been displaced, but Jim Sieveking, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in St. Louis, described the flash flooding as "catastrophic" and the rainfall as "historic."

(continued on next page)

The flooding shut down more than two dozen sections of major roads that crisscross the St. Louis area, including Interstate 170 and Interstate 70, the Missouri [Department of Transportation said](#). At least four state highways and several other major roads were also closed, the department said. Many drivers found themselves stranded, including a crew from a local NBC affiliate, KSDK, whose vehicle stalled at the bottom of a flooded exit ramp on Interstate 70 before they were rescued by firefighters.

The Great Flood of 2022: Resources and Deadlines ***October 7, 2022***

President Joe Biden approved a request from Missouri Governor Mike Parson to declare the flooding a major disaster. The move makes FEMA's individual assistance program available to eligible residents of St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. The programs can help flooding victims with temporary housing, housing repairs, replacement of lost or damaged belongings and vehicles as well as other qualifying expenses. To apply, go to www.DisasterAssistance.gov or call FEMA's toll-free application line at 1-800-621-3362 from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Central Time, seven days a week.

FEMA assistance

Near to us, FEMA opened a disaster recovery center on 8/26 for people impacted by the flash flooding during The Great Flood. This center is located in the University City Recreation Center at Centennial Commons. It's open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. The other three recovery centers in St. Louis City, St. Charles, and Hazelwood are still open (see below for location information). Please apply online at disasterassistance.gov before visiting the centers. No appointment is necessary to visit a Disaster Recovery Center and walk-ins are welcome.

To speed up the process of getting help, flooding victims are encouraged to document damage and save related receipts. The sooner victims apply for FEMA aid, the sooner they may receive assistance. **The deadline for most individual assistance programs is 60 days following the President's major disaster declaration. That would be Friday, October 7.** Disaster assistance to eligible individuals generally falls into the following categories:

- Housing Assistance may be available for up to 18 months for displaced persons whose residences were heavily damaged or destroyed. Funding also can be provided for housing repairs and replacement of damaged items to make homes habitable.
- Disaster Grants, which are available to help meet other serious disaster-related needs and necessary expenses not covered by insurance and other aid programs. These may include replacement of personal property, and transportation, medical, dental, and funeral expenses.
- Low-Interest Disaster Loans are available after a disaster for homeowners and renters from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to cover uninsured property losses. Loans may be available for repair or replacement of homes, automobiles, clothing, or other damaged personal property. SBA loans are also available to businesses for property loss and economic injury. Businesses can visit sba.gov or call 1-800-569-2955.
- Other Disaster Aid Programs include crisis counseling, disaster-related unemployment assistance, legal aid and assistance with income tax, Social Security, and veterans' benefits.

A press release from the governor's office said more than 750 homes and more than 130 businesses in the area had

(continued on next page)

sustained major damage due to recent flooding. A joint assessment by federal and state emergency management agencies also found that more than \$35 million in damage to uninsured infrastructure was damaged by flooding.

Three other Disaster Recovery Centers are now open seven days per week for one-on-one help.

1) Hazelwood Civic Center, 8969 Dunn Road, Hazelwood, MO 63042, Hours: 8 a.m.–7 p.m. seven days a week until further notice

2) Ranken Technical College, *Mary Ann Lee Technology Center*, 1313 N. Newstead Ave., St. Louis, MO 63113 (On the corner of Newstead and Page). Hours: 8 a.m.–7 p.m. seven days a week until further notice

3) Developmental Disabilities Resource Board – DDRB Building, 1025 Country Club Road, St. Charles, MO 63303 (I-70 near Zumbuhl Road Exit) Hours: 8 a.m.–7 p.m. seven days a week until further notice

No appointment is necessary to visit a Disaster Recovery Center. Walk-ins are welcome.

Before visiting a center, apply with FEMA online at DisasterAssistance.gov or call **800-621-FEMA (3362)**.

For needs not covered by insurance or other sources, FEMA may be able to provide Individual Assistance grant money that does not have to be repaid for:

- **Rental Assistance** if you need to relocate because of flood damage
- **Personal Property** that was damaged or destroyed by flooding
- **Lodging Reimbursement** if you've had to stay in a hotel temporarily
- **Basic Home Repairs for homeowners** whose primary residence was damaged by flooding
- **Other Serious Needs** caused by recent flooding

In addition to the assistance listed, please note the following:

- Only one application per household
- FEMA does not pay for lost or spoiled food
- By law, FEMA is not allowed to duplicate insurance payments or assistance provided by other sources
- **FEMA Application Deadline is October 7, 2022**
- Renters and homeowners in **St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County** who were affected by flash flooding July 25-28 may apply for FEMA disaster assistance.
- Apply online at DisasterAssistance.gov, by calling **800-621-3362** or by using the [FEMA mobile app](#).
- If you use a relay service, such as video relay (VRS), captioned telephone or other service, give FEMA the number for that service. Helpline operators are available from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Press 2 for Spanish. Press 3 for an interpreter who speaks your language.

American Red Cross

Another way to get help with flood-related costs is to attend a Multi-Agency Resource Center, or MARC, through the American Red Cross.

(continued on next page)

The American Red Cross announced three additional dates for the MARCs in the St. Louis area after overwhelming demand last week.

The Multi-Agency Resource Centers, or MARCs, will be held at Friendly Temple on Martin Luther King Drive on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The MARCs will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, and masks are required by the church where the event is being held.

The events will be one-stop shops for flooding victims to apply for assistance after flash flooding in the area over the last two weeks. The event is open to flooding victims from both Missouri and Illinois.

Small Business Administration

Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are available to businesses and residents in Missouri following the July storms. To be considered for all disaster assistance, applicants must first register with FEMA. Then they may apply online at SBA's secure website: <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/>.

SBA representatives will help business owners and residents apply at disaster recovery centers. For a list of locations, or to receive additional disaster assistance information, visit SBA's website at www.sba.gov/disaster.

Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at **800-659-2955** or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

The following SBA Business Recovery Center (BRC) opened Monday, August 15:

Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Inc., 1408 N. Kingshighway Blvd., Second Floor, Room # 219, St. Louis, MO 63113, Hours and Days of Operation: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday—Friday

Homeowners and Renters: If you have been referred to SBA for a disaster loan, please submit the application. Submitting the SBA application makes it possible for you to be considered for additional grants. If you qualify for a loan, you will have that resource available if you choose to accept it.

- If you were directly affected by the flooding – and have un-met needs – please stay in touch.
- Please tell FEMA about your specific needs.
- FEMA works with everyone – renters and homeowners – on a case-by-case basis.

United Way 211

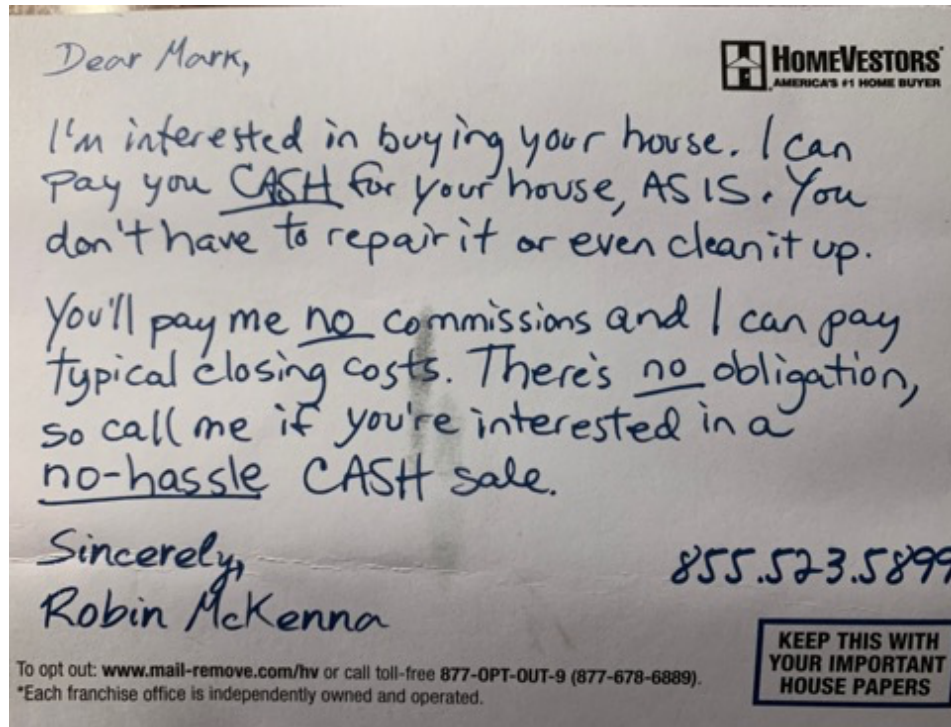
Dial 2-1-1 for help: **United Way 211** connects individuals with unmet needs to assistance programs through volunteer and faith-based organizations. Anyone impacted who needs additional help should call 2-1-1 for assistance or visit <http://211helps.org>.

State of Missouri

The recovery.mo.gov website also has additional resources and information about disaster recovery in Missouri.

The Great Flood of 2022: Beware of Real Estate Developers in Sheep's Clothing by Mark Pope (Yale)

Only days after our neighborhood was flooded in July, I began getting phone calls from real estate developers to buy Mario and my house on Yale even though we had no flooding or damage. And they were quite persistent. I finally had to block their calls. But still they persisted and supplemented their tactics by sending cards through the post office like the one below.



Such calls were to me more than annoying and seemed downright disrespectful. Our neighbors had just survived a major flood that disrupted and even destroyed their lives. These real estate people didn't know our situation. Maybe they thought they were being helpful or maybe they were trying to get their proverbial toe into our neighborhood door and take advantage of a terrible situation to make a quick buck. It may not be a scam, but I don't know that and so I am careful about anyone calling me whom I do not know. I do not share my phone number with just anyone and so wonder if they got it through an unethical use of our neighborhood directory. No matter, I just didn't like it and so wanted to share my situation and thoughts on all this in case you had anything similar happen to you.

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the 8/28/2022 issue of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and can be accessed at <https://e-edition.stltoday.com/article/281998971264210>.

Looking Forward and Heeding Lessons from the Flood: Federal disaster aid covers a small portion of damages. We need a better system.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 26 Aug 2022, p A17

BY DON FITZ is a University City resident. Email fitzdon@aol.com to receive the link to join the Bob Criss Zoom session.

The flood that hit St. Louis on July 26 and subsequent flooding on July 28 were devastating for many of us throughout the area. Few were personally hurt more than those of us in University City. I lost over 55 years of irreplaceable belongings in the basement of my home on Dartmouth.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is helping with the cost of replacing water heaters, furnaces and HVAC systems; county tax assessor offices are offering tax relief for some residential property owners. Both are steps in the right direction but are not nearly enough. People throughout the area still need enormous financial assistance.

It is time to consider a Negative Appraisal Adjustment. The value of homes are appraised biennially. The negative adjustment would be an amount deducted from the appraised value of flood-damaged homes. Each home would then have a lower adjusted appraisal.

For example, the adjustment might be \$300,000. This would result in a \$400,000 home having \$300,000 deducted from its appraised value and be taxed at a value of \$100,000. What about homes with a value under \$300,000? Suppose a flood-damaged home were appraised at a value of \$125,000. Then, \$125,000 minus \$300,000 would equal -\$175,000, meaning the home owner would get a refund rather than pay any property taxes. People living in less expensive homes would actually receive several thousand additional dollars for rebuilding.

Of course, no proposal is a panacea without complications. The first problem would be that property taxes do not go into a general fund but are earmarked for specific uses, such as public schools. They could be hurt by a decreased revenue stream.

This is why a partnership between the affected county (or St. Louis city), the state and the federal government would be needed for funding. The partnership would need to make certain that schools and essential services were protected. It would also need to decide if the adjustment is to be only for 2022 property values or should be extended.

One issue would immediately arise: How much flood damage would be necessary for the negative adjustment to take effect? Legislators would need to develop a formula for determining the amount of the adjustment based on the degree of financial loss.

Another financial issue is that homeowners who file a claim with their insurance companies can receive a claim point against them, either driving up the cost of insurance or preventing them from buying insurance. The state Legislature should prohibit this. If medical insurance had the same leeway, people could be punished for using their insurance or even become un-insurable for the crime of getting sick.

(continued on next page)

Elevation certificates can lower flood insurance by verifying that homes are elevated enough to be less prone to flooding. The city, county or state needs to assist homeowners in obtaining such certificates.

The No. 1 action necessary is to prohibit the construction of residential and commercial buildings in flood-prone areas. Protecting health and property must be put ahead of serving developers' profit interests.

According to Bob Criss, an emeritus professor at Washington University who specializes in the study of floods, the best way to prevent future tragedies would be a buyout of homes that are repeatedly flood-ravaged. This would leave significant areas of St. Louis County with homes removed. What should be done with that land? It could become parks, urban farms or even left as wild areas. Criss will discuss the subject via Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 14 (see below).

A final necessary action: Every municipality (or the state) should severely restrict the creation of impervious surfaces, perhaps limiting the proportion of residential lots that can be used for building. If people cement over every square foot in sight, the ground will be not able to absorb as much water, thereby increasing the likelihood of new flooding.

Issues not covered above include specific problems for renters and ethnic disparities that result in Black families having financial resources for repair or relocation that are typically one-twentieth of what white families have. Every community, government, and home and business owner needs to come together if we are serious about minimizing future flood damage.

Don Fitz

#####

Editor's note: I asked several of our neighbors who experienced damage from The Great Flood to write a more personal perspective on what happened to them. Most kindly declined as their experiences were too raw and too close to the event to respond within my timeline. I understand their feelings on this, but appreciate Mark Harvey sharing what he and Mary went through with us all. Thank you, Mark.

The Great Flood of 2022: Through Our Neighbor's Eyes by Mark Harvey (Harvard)

On July 26 we experienced the most severe flood in the history of University Heights Subdivision No.1. To my knowledge 45 homes were affected. A few of these are outside of the 500-year flood plain, including my own. We had 2.5 feet of water in our basement. Because we installed a backflow valve, we had no sanitary sewer backflow. Storm water came overland through our windows, through the basement walls in fountains, and down the basement steps tearing the door off its' frame. We sustained \$43,000 in damage including the loss of my wife's car. Losing all of the basement junk (including 35 years of sermon files in eight file cabinets) was a blessing. We now have new shelves with nothing below 2 1/2 feet from the floor. USAA gave us \$10,000 even though we did NOT have flood insurance. FEMA granted \$6,000. Mary was substantially given money for more than a third of the auto loss. She was already able to find a replacement vehicle. We replaced our water heater, freezer, and dehumidifier. The boiler replacement is yet to come.

Editor's note: I thought you might find this background historical article interesting. This article was retrieved 8/29/2022 from <http://preservationresearch.com/infrastructure/the-harnessed-channel-how-the-river-des-peres-became-a-sewer/> Most photos were deleted for space issues, but are available in the original document at the link. Originally published 11/27/2010.

The Harnessed Channel: How the River Des Peres Became a Sewer

by Michael R. Allen

Versions of this article were published in Common Ground, Spring 2003 and the already-missed Creative St. Louis, March 2010.

Along the southwest edge of the city of St. Louis, Missouri runs a six-mile curve of what appears to be a river with paved banks. This river is usually dry and rarely filled to even half its capacity. Covered in rip-rap and white stones along this six miles, the banks form a visual boundary of the city limits — although the actual city line is several hundred yards west. Still, the moat-like river creates an effective border between the middle-class parts of the county and city that occupy either side of it. Yet this river actually unites them, because it carries away all of their wasted water and, deep below its channel, their sewage. The river is the River Des Peres, a harnessed channel that was transformed from a natural waterway into a massive civil engineering project in the early twentieth century.

Of course, the River Des Peres is not simply a deep gorge that carries away waste water from the city and its inner suburbs. In fact, it now lies almost completely underground and is not visible at all. In a 1988 booklet published by the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), the quasi-governmental agency that has controlled the river since 1956, an anonymous author writes that “the rocky banks of the River Des Peres form a landmark which nearly every St. Louisan recognizes, but few understand.” Few Saint Louisans realize that its 18 miles extend along over half of the city’s western edge, covering a drainage area of 115 square miles and serving a population of over 535,000 people. It enters the city at Skinker Boulevard and Vernon Avenue at the University City limits and then winds its way through Forest Park and into the familiar open section that drains into the Mississippi River. Along the way, it carries both storm water and sewage in separate pipes with connections to most major city and inner-suburban trunk sewers. It is the backbone of the St. Louis sewer system.

Very few residents recognize that the River Des Peres became the backbone of the St. Louis sewer system by having its natural state completely rebuilt so that none of its original features remain. No living person likely remembers the days when all of it was an open and wild, albeit polluted, waterway that St. Louisans happened to dump sewage into. And few accounts describe its earlier incarnation as a pure waterway far from the French settlements on the Mississippi River. In those days, the idea of the River Des Peres becoming one of the largest regional civil engineering projects in the Midwest would have seemed strange. Yet St. Louisans slowly converted the small river into their largest sewer over the course of more than a hundred years, so most of the changes were hardly noticed until the river was already irreversibly controlled by engineers looking to drain unwanted materials from the young city of St. Louis.

Today, the River Des Peres is a complicated and vital part of the second nature that keeps the Saint Louis urban area healthy for its human population. The river itself has, for the most part, been successfully controlled. If the Metropolitan Sewer District replaced the River Des Peres sewer with another one and decided to let the river return, most likely the channel would still only occasionally fill with rainwater. The channel has no source, because the natural ponds and wetlands in St. Louis County that fed it have also been turned into parts of the area's sewer system. Plans to restore its above-ground flow through Forest Park are complete, but they rely on mechanical pumps to regulate flow and maintain a high water level. Notably, this "restored" section is not connected to the channels under the park.

Yet the River Des Peres occasionally reminds St. Louisans that while it is usually under their control, it can still occasionally overpower that control. In 1973 and 1993 it overflowed its banks and destroyed homes in south city. It has also begun to gradually shed the appearance of an engineering project. Since the river's open banks were first paved, a variety of grasses, flowers, and trees have taken root in the cracked pavement. Now, throughout the summer months, those concrete banks are partly green. From about March to November, visitors to the open channel can find ducks, geese, turtles, frogs, toads, and snakes living in its channel and on its banks, while the enclosed channel attracts rats and snakes. Both above and below ground, then, the River Des Peres remains very much an ecological being.

Two episodes are particularly useful in examining St. Louis's attitude toward the River Des Peres: the massive civil engineering efforts of the 1920s and 1930s that finalized human control and the failed 1972 initiative to turn parts of it into a recreational area. Both show that the city sees a symbolic value in controlling this once-wild river at its western edge and that even efforts to re-naturalize it occur within the realm of civil — and not ecological — engineering. St. Louis continues to overlook the fact that the River Des Peres is not simply a public work but also a part of nature.

The City Encroaches

The river was named for two French Jesuit priests, Father Gabriel Marest and Francois Pinet, who, in about the year 1700, founded a mission near its mouth at the Mississippi River and downriver from the village of Cahokia, Illinois. This was 64 years before St. Louis was founded, and it appeared to be a tranquil setting for religious work. The priests sought to minister to the Kaskaskia and Tamaroa Indians and the villagers from Cahokia, although they eventually abandoned the mission because the "low-lying, swampy lands" nearby supported malaria-carrying mosquitoes. In those days, the river carried a constant flow of water.

Within two hundred years, though, the burgeoning city of St. Louis was looking to its west for expansion. As the city limits moved further west, residents set their sights on the river as a possible way to drain sewage and storm water from their expansion projects. According to the Metropolitan Sewer District booklet, the River Des Peres was "recognized as a valuable resource as far back as 1876." Not surprisingly, that was the year that the current city limits were fixed and the River Des Peres fell almost entirely (save for a small northern section) under city control.

As developers sent sewage into the River Des Peres, city planners realized that a more permanent way of using the river as a sewer was needed. The central city was already overusing the old Mill Creek as its primary sewer, but planners hesitated to turn all of the River Des Peres into a giant open sewer. They developed a plan to drain the expanded city, and "the objectives of this plan were to collect sewage

flows in the upper River Des Peres watershed and carry them eastward to the Mississippi River via the Mill Creek sanitary sewer line, thereby preventing the discharge of sewage into the River Des Peres.” Since St. Louis had a sewer system that combined storm water runoff and sewage in the same channels, use of the River Des Peres as a sewer would mean its complete and permanent pollution — something that was unpalatable in the late nineteenth century when most of the city was already facing problems of odor and hygiene.

Yet developers in the western part of the city did not wait for the city to implement its costly plans and instead continued to use the River Des Peres to drain their new, affluent subdivisions. As historian Katherine Corbett writes, “in 1887, [Sewer Commissioner] Robert McMath realized that until he extended the main public sewers into the fashionable West End, developers would continue to pipe sewage into the natural water courses, particularly the River Des Peres.” The plan to divert this water into the Mill Creek sewer was urgently needed, but it never came to fruition. The Mill Creek itself was a natural waterway that city engineers harnessed earlier in the century, and its aging entry pipes and channel walls needed improvements before it could receive new sewage. Thus “by 1894, the River Des Peres was ‘nothing less than a monster open sewer, poisoning the air with the most dangerous corruption and menace to health known, the corruption of sewage.’” The city did very little to stop the flow of sewage into the River Des Peres, most likely because it did not want to halt the rapid development on the west side of the city. If the River Des Peres had been preserved as a natural river, subdivision of the western city would have been stalled until at least the 1920s, and the city would have lost that population as well as its national status as a growing metropolis. Besides, most of the people moving westward were wealthy city residents escaping the unpleasant central city. Among them were many of the people who would ultimately determine the River Des Peres’ fate.

Before the turn of the century, the city attempted to construct a new sewer to carry sewage away from the River Des Peres, building a line that carried water from the West End to downtown. Called the Pine Street Sewer, this structure was woefully inadequate. As Corbett writes:

During the twelve years it had taken to build the Pine Street Sewer, more and more raw sewage drained into the polluted River Des Peres. Once completed, the new sewer frequently overloaded the Mill Creek Sewer, again sending sewage into the River Des Peres.

With the 1904 World’s Fair being planned and continued western development anticipated, the city had to implement some plan to keep the River Des Peres from becoming an embarrassing health hazard. The ecological consequences of overloading the river with sewage had already been accepted de facto. Lacking a permanent solution by 1904, the city began enclosing the river’s curving Forest Park section in “a large wooden box.” This kept the sights and smells of the river away from visitors and the river permanently underground through the park. Although this enclosure might seem a hasty and temporary solution, it represents the first major step toward the current human control over the river.

By 1910, St. Louis was ready to go further: Mayor Frederick Kreismann announced that the city would build a permanent enclosure of the channel from the city limits down to Manchester Avenue. This \$4 million plan was too costly, and a period of inaction followed. A \$1 million plan to separate sewage from storm water in the section of the river from Lansdowne Avenue to the Mississippi River was completed by 1913, though. This section of the open channel was the first one built that remains in place today.

In August 1915, the river dramatically asserted itself after a chance tropical gulf storm hit the city, overflowing the river's banks throughout St. Louis. The impact was felt widely, as 400 local and 15 long distance telephone lines went dead, three Forest Park bridges were swept away, houses in suburban Maplewood were flooded to the second floor, and sewers backed up everywhere. Eleven people died, about 1,025 homes were destroyed, and the city experienced an additional \$1 million worth of property damage. Kreismann's plan would have prevented much of this damage, as his successor realized: "Mayor Henry Kiel stated that the only way to prevent similar disasters was to expend about \$10 million to implement the plans which had been drafted in 1910." Of course, no plan other than completely filling in the river's channel would offer complete security against large-scale floods. Even after engineers completed their work on the river, it twice overflowed its banks.

From River to Sewer, Completely

After the flood, W.W. Horner, chief engineer for the Board of Public Service, prepared a proposal to extensively engineer the section of the River Des Peres that lay within city limits. Using rainfall and runoff data, Horner prepared a new route for the river that he submitted to the city on December 16, 1916. Horner's plan was approved and gave the river the shape that it has today. Realigning and covering eighteen miles of former river would cost the city \$11 million, which had to be financed through a bond issue. The city placed 21 of its proposed public works projects, including Horner's plans, to a vote on February 9, 1923. The River Des Peres project passed with a 78 percent majority even though it was the second-most expensive project on the ballot.

Horner's plan apportioned the river into sections, which were lettered "A" through "J." This lettering more than any other aspect of the plan shows how it aimed to make the River Des Peres subservient to human needs once and for all. Rather than seeing it as an ecosystem that could be respected to some extent even as it was managed with an eye towards the city's needs, Horner saw the river as a series of projects that needed to be completed. Work began on the three-mile open channel of section "A" in 1924 and ended with the completion of the six-mile section "J" in 1933. During this time, the River Des Peres was drained and its course changed. Sewage pipes were separated from the storm water channel along the entire length. The storm water channel ran for about nine miles underground in double-arched tunnels measuring 58 feet wide before flowing into a nine-mile open channel that started around Macklind Avenue.

As the project was nearing completion, Horner spoke to *City Beautiful* magazine about his work — explicitly articulating many of St. Louis's assumptions about the symbolism of the project. The resulting article, from November 1929, and a subsequent update in December 1930, both have revealing titles: "St. Louis Puts the River Des Peres Into its Place" and "Transforming the River Des Peres into the World's Most Gigantic Sewer." These titles express the underlying symbolism that motivated much of the city's interest in capturing the river. There is little effort in the titles or the content of the two articles to conceal the notion that the River Des Peres project was a great conquest of wild nature. A feature that followed the 1929 article on another expensive sewer line — this one underground — leading to the new southwestern neighborhood of St. Louis Hills also underscores this fact. Obviously, St. Louis could have built needed storm water and sewer lines without disturbing the River Des Peres, although that would certainly have been more expensive and less impressive.

Indeed, Horner boasts of the visible civilizing of the River Des Peres. In the 1929 article, he is quoted as having said: “Compared to the Panama Canal, the project is a little one, but as an undertaking, even for progressive St. Louis, it has required major operation. As a sewer, it is probably the biggest and the best in the world . . .” Clearly, the River Des Peres project serves as a metaphor for the city’s completion of its westward growth. The comparison ties the river to an American tradition of expansion of settlement and human commerce that the Panama Canal epitomized in the early twentieth century. Similarly, the comparison to the commercial-military Panama Canal project demonstrates that Horner found the social utility of the new River Des Peres more important than any ecological changes to the St. Louis watershed that the project might engender. Horner praises the way in which the River Des Peres now serves new development and doesn’t even trifle with any supposed beauty; use is all that matters in his evaluation. The author of the 1930 article echoes Horner’s concerns, stating that “I do not think any of us appreciated when we were figuring out the required size of the channels and drawing pictures of them in the plans just how truly tremendous the floodways would appear.” Here, the visible open channel attracts attention — probably because it resembles the original river enough to suggest its being conquered, unlike the unseen and artificial underground section.

Next: Sewer to River?

Later efforts to prevent mudslides involved the paving of most of the open channel’s banks. Between late 1933 and late 1940, the city and then the federal Works Progress Administration hired unemployed workers to pave the muddy banks, at one time renting eight different quarries. As a result, the lower channel took on a drastically different appearance. During the seven years of paving, the channel acquired its now-familiar look, part natural and part engineered. One struggles today to see any hint of the original river, a fact that no doubt serves to increase its impressiveness to admirers. Yet many St. Louisans do not see the river as did Horner and the boosters of the mid-century; they see it as a noxious, mosquito-filled sewer. The Metropolitan Sewer District booklet to which I have referred was first published to renew public appreciation of the River Des Peres, which was dedicated as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark on October 27, 1988.

While the civil engineering involved in constructing the sewer that replaced the river is impressive, it is also ecologically questionable. Among the most significant consequences of the River Des Peres project has been continued flooding of the southwestern part of the river, which has overflowed carrying stormwater from more wealthy western neighborhoods. Heavy flooding in 1973 overwhelmed governmental resources, so private citizens in the affected middle-class areas built their own levees along the open channel to prevent further flooding. These levees held for a flood in 1982-1983 and still stand today, although they did very little to help during the huge flood of 1993.

In 1972, Mayor Alphonso Cervantes endorsed a plan to regulate the flow of storm water in the River Des Peres between Lansdowne Avenue and Morganford Road, flooding that section of the channel for use as a recreational area. This \$14 million plan would have included a marina and improvements in the narrow city parks that line this section of the channel, but it was defeated by residents who thought that boating was too loud for their neighborhoods. Proponents of the plan argued that the River Des Peres was far from being an impressive public work. To them, the river was a storm drain that made an ugly ring around the southwestern city. Such sentiments continue to be voiced today, although a vigorous program of landscaping and greenway expansion have improved the appearance of this part of the

channel — as has spontaneous growth of flora in the cracks on the paved banks. The channel clearly has the potential to serve as a green belt, provided that the Sewer District allows it to happen.

The River Des Peres is not suitable for a return to its original condition — something that has been partially achieved in Forest Park — but rather for a renewed ecological life. Of course, the channel has to remain clear for the flow of storm water, and the underground sewage pipes are equally necessary. However, MSD is working on implementing a plan to lessen the flow of combined sewer outflows into the river. Currently, 134 combined sewer outfall stations regulate the flow, and prevent sewer water from entering the channel in dry weather. While MSD does not foresee removing all outflow, decreases make it more likely that the channel could be engineered for recreational purposes.

In the future, the River Des Peres may return to a more natural state, although it shall never be free of its engineered channelization. The [River Des Peres Watershed Coalition](#) is dedicated to long-term improvement of the river, and one of its goals is to reintroduce a flow to the channel. Maintenance of a constant water flow, even if only on a small part of the river, might increase the already surprisingly diverse animal life that the river attracts. Despite its century-long abuse, the River Des Peres remains part of the natural world. The new greenway trails on the southern leg have brought more people to its banks for walking, biking and jogging, building a constituency for further revisions to the channel. The Watershed Coalition and others have initiated a vigorous re-imagining of the River Des Peres as something ecological, and future projects will soften the damage wrought by intense civil engineering. Perhaps there shall be some consolation to the tired earth: while the River Des Peres may never be free, it could again be wild.

Works Cited

Canfield, Marsha. "Citizens' opposition sinks Des Peres plan." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. 19 October 1972.

Cleary, Patricia. "Contested Terrain: Environmental Agendas and Settlement Choices in Colonial St. Louis." *Hurley*. 58-72.

Corbett, Katherine T. "Draining the Metropolis: The Politics of Sewers in Nineteenth-Century St. Louis." *Hurley*. 107-125.

Hurley, Andrew, ed. *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1997.

Metropolitan Sewer District. *The River Des Peres... A St. Louis Landmark*. St. Louis: Metropolitan Sewer District, 1988.

"St. Louis puts the River Des Peres into its place." *City Beautiful*. November 1929.

"Transforming the River Des Peres into the world's most gigantic sewer." *City Beautiful*. December 1930.

Editor: It seems especially relevant given our own neighborhood tree forest as well as the flooding that we recently experienced (and that is highlighted in this issue of *FenceTalk*) that we reprint this post on “Managing Rainwater” that was recently published in the *U City in Bloom* blog (<https://www.ucityinbloom.org/managing-rainwater/>) Every little bit helps.

Managing Rainwater - Posted by [Barbara Brain](#) | Sep 1, 2022 | [Gardening tips](#)

There’s no doubt that water is a precious natural resource but it can also be a tremendously destructive force as late July’s record-setting rainfall and flash floods demonstrated.

As a NatureScaper helping to rid Ruth Park Woods of invasive plants, the recent floods also have me reflecting on the water absorption powers of trees. According to the USDA, trees are veritable sponges! One large tree can capture and retain hundreds of gallons of water. I wonder how many gallons are captured by all the large, mature trees in Ruth Park Woods as well as those in our parks and lining our streets?

How do trees manage to suck up so much water? They do this by holding onto some of the rainwater on their leaves, stems and branches, preventing it from reaching the ground. If you’ve ever taken refuge under the canopy of a large tree during a rain shower, you will have experienced this for yourself. Some of that rainwater will evaporate once the sun comes out while the rest will drip to the ground and be absorbed by the tree’s roots which help water seep into the soil and also prevent the soil from washing away in big storms. A thick mat of fallen leaves under trees also plays its part by allowing water to seep into the soil slowly rather than rushing off to wreak havoc. [Learn more on the EPA website.](#)

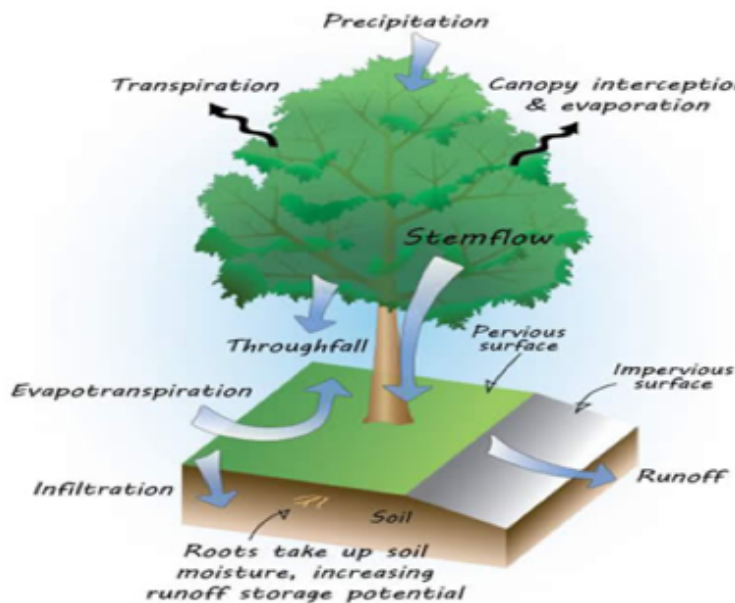


Diagram of how trees help manage rainwater



Trees absorbing water & helping to maintain the edges of a stream bank in Ruth Park Woods.

While we're talking about stormwater management, let's not forget the role of the rain garden in our beautiful Bird Garden. The rain garden is like a pond that doesn't contain water most of the time. It was designed to temporarily corral stormwater so that it can drain into the soil within 24 hours and not create a breeding site for mosquitoes. Kathy looked at it two days after the rain and ... no standing water. The rain garden is full of deep rooted native plants that can tolerate brief periods of standing water and drought. These are talented plants indeed! The stems, leaves and flowers hold rain drops above the soil for hours. Many native plants in all areas of the Bird Garden have roots that reach far down into the ground, allowing rainwater to percolate deeply into the soil where it's available to the plants themselves.

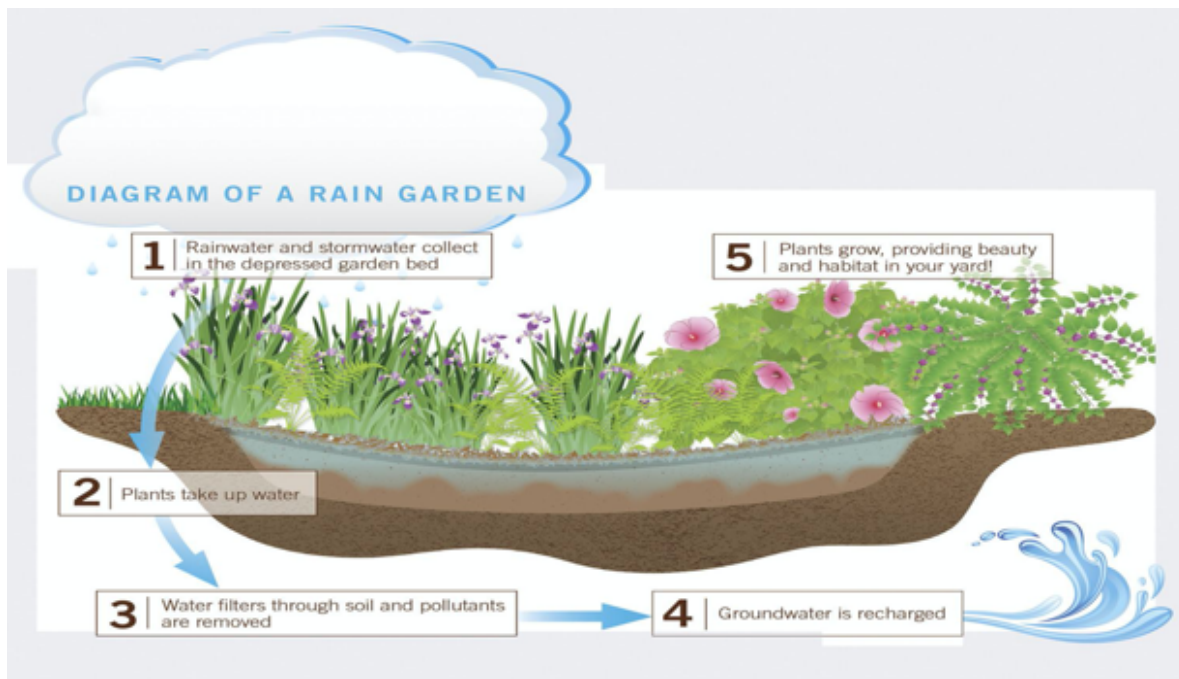


Diagram of a rain garden



This shows the entrance to the rain garden at the Bird Garden. The large river rocks direct & slow down runoff from the parking lot. It's very lush!

Contrast these scenarios with a well trimmed lawn. Turf grasses are shallow rooted and not at all adept at soaking up rainwater. Several years ago, I watched a demonstration of how rainwater behaves when it falls on various surfaces. Whereas all of the water was absorbed into a prairie landscape, it ran off the lawn grass almost to the same extent as from a completely impervious surface.

Development creates plenty of impervious surfaces — driveways, parking lots, roads and the frequency and severity of storms are on the rise. We will need LOTS of solutions to our stormwater management problems. If rain gardens and native plant gardens of all kinds were as plentiful as lawns, don't you think they would provide one of the solutions and a beautiful one at that?

For more details about trees and rainwater, see <https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/compass/2018/01/11/urban-forests-stormwater-management/>

For information about rain gardens, check out the [Missouri Botanical Garden website](#). Check [MSD's website](#) if you're interested in applying for grant funds to help cover the cost of installing a rain garden.

[The National Tree Benefit Calculator](#) and/or [iTree](#) will give you an idea of the annual economic & environmental benefits of trees.

Barb & Kathy

Info You Can't Live (Here) Without: Calendar

* denotes a UHA-sponsored event.

** denotes a UHS1 event.

Recurring

Saturdays (April 10-Dec 11, closed Nov 27) - UCity Farmers Market 8:30a-12:30p, The Loop, behind 6655 Delmar Blvd.

2nd & 4th Monday (monthly) – UCity City Council meeting (virtual until it isn't) (always on the 2nd Mondays, but 4th Mondays meetings are cancelled for July, August, & December, best to check in advance at 314.505.8605) (times: generally Study Sessions begin at 5:30p followed by Regular Meeting at 6:30p)

First Saturday – Artist Market Pop-Up, Live artists creating their work. Come watch. Componere Gallery of Art, 6509 Delmar Blvd. 11a-8p. www.componere.com

8/28/2021-1/22/2023 – The St. Louis Sound Exhibit, Missouri History Museum. A 6,000-square-foot special exhibit that explores the history of popular music in St. Louis from the dawn of recorded sound in the late 1800s to the turn of the 21st century. Nearly 200 artifacts are on display from important venues, local legends, and national stars like Ike & Tina Turner, Miles Davis, Chuck Berry, Nelly, the “Velvet Bulldozer” Albert King, the “Black Venus” Josephine Baker, and the *original* “king” of pop music, Scott Joplin.. <https://mohistory.org/exhibits/st-louis-sound>

11/1/2021-10/31/2022 – Gateway to Pride Virtual Exhibit, Missouri History Museum. LGBTQIA+ communities have been contributing to St. Louis's history for centuries. Now the *Gateway to Pride* virtual exhibit will begin to uncover the rarely-shared or often untold stories of St. Louis's LGBTQIA+ communities.

<https://mohistory.org/exhibits/gateway-to-pride>

September

9/1-30 – Paint U. City Month, artists are invited to paint University City's historic districts (The Loop, civic buildings, parks, and century-old homes in historic neighborhoods like University Heights Subdivision No. 1) and then to submit them for the

9/12 – UCity Bulk Items Pickup (East Zone, for the week of)

*9/13 - UHA Board of Directors meeting

*9/15 - *FenceTalk* Newsletter (2022, Issue 3, Annual Picnic & Halloween issue)

9/16 – U City Day at the Ball Game, Busch Stadium, Cardinals vs. Cincinnati Reds, 7:15p (Tickets: McNair Administration Bldg, 7700 Olive Blvd, M-F 9a-3:30p)

9/17 – Fitz's 75th anniversary root beer bash, 1-4p, in The Loop, 6605 Delmar Blvd, 63130, 314.726,9555.

9/17 – 50th Annual Great Forest Park Balloon Race (*The Glow* on 9/16) 🎈

October

*10/2 – The University Heights Annual Picnic (come join us for this traditional neighborhood potluck gathering on a Sunday afternoon 4-7p) (rain date 10/9) (bring food to share (the potluck part) and food to grill (for your

family), bring a folding chair to sit on, and enjoy complimentary Anheuser-Busch products and ice cream for all) – Lewis Park.

10/9 – UCity in Bloom Garden Tour and “Paint U. City” Plein Air Art Festival and Competition, 8a-4p.

10/9 – UCity in Bloom Plein Air Art Reception and Art Sale, Heman Park Community Center (975 Pennsylvania Ave), 5-7p

*10/12 - UHA Board of Directors meeting

*10/31 - Halloween (6-8p) (Great Pumpkin Awards for decorations) (it's on a Monday night this year) 🎃👻

November

*11/8 - UHA Board of Directors meeting

11/25 -Thanksgiving

December

*12/1 – *FenceTalk* Newsletter (2022, Issue 4, Luminaria issue)

**12/1 – UHS1 Assessments due (late fee assessed after 12/31)

** 12/11-12 Luminaria supplies available 🕯️

*12/12 – Luminaria

*12/14 - UHA Board of Directors meeting

12/21 – Winter Solstice (9:59a)

Info You Can't Live (Here) Without: Contact Us

University Heights Subdivision #1 (UHS1) Trustees (have the legal responsibility for UHS1)

Frank Castiglione (Cornell)

612.578.6852 f.castiglione@liftxl.com

Myra Vandersall (Yale)

314.518.1451 myravandersall@gmail.com

Mark Harvey (Harvard)

314.398.7485 markcharvey@sbcglobal.net

Anil Pillai (Dartmouth), trustee intern

314.308.1288 bloggerpillai@gmail.com

University Heights Association (UHA) Board of Directors (the neighborhood association representing our community)

Hope Horn (Cornell), president

314.368.8157 hope_horn@hotmail.com

Mario Carlos (Yale), Lamp Post signs & Marker Garden

314.910.0972 solracm91@gmail.com

Claudia Moran (Amherst), vice-president

314.974.6383 c.gracemoran@gmail.com

Thomas Hardy (Harvard), Luminaria organizer

314.482.9328 tmoobear@aol.com

Peter Burgis (Radcliffe), treasurer

310.871.8471 peterburgis@outlook.com

Tayebeh Hardy (Harvard), Luminaria organizer

314.477.5693 tayebeh_mz23@yahoo.com

Susan DuBois (Radcliffe), secretary

636.579.3442. sdubois@bhhsselectstl.com

Don Fitz (Dartmouth), Welcome packets

314.727.8554 fitzdon@aol.com

Vito Wagner (Yale), membership

307.920.0356 vito.wagner@gmail.com

Anil Pillai (Dartmouth), trustee intern

314.308.1288. bloggerpillai@gmail.com

Mark Pope (Yale), *FenceTalk* editor

314.910.0969 drmarkpope@gmail.com

Heather Zimmerman (Yale)

240.682.2094 runyon.heatherm@gmail.com

Important Numbers (Government (City/County), Board of Elections, Utilities)

Emergency 911

UCity City Hall 314.862.6767

UCity Police (non-emergency) 314.725.2211

UCity Fire Department (non-emergency) 314.505.8768

UCity Public Library 314.727.3150

St. Louis County Government 314.615.5000

St. Louis County Board of Elections 314.615.1800

Missouri Public Utilities Commission **800.DIG.RITE** (Call before you dig on your property and someone will come and mark where there are utility lines on your property – free service – “dig safely, it’s the law”) 800.344.7483 (800.DIG.RITE) (or 811 on your cellphone)

Utilities

Ameren Missouri (electricity) (report an outage)

800.552.7583/314.342.1111

Metropolitan Sewer District 866.281.5737

Missouri American Water 866.430.0820

Spire (natural gas) 800.887.4173

UCity Trash, Recycling, Yard Waste, & Leaf Collection 314.505.8560