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# Press Release

## Building Trades Board discusses membership, 2015 code cycle

*Board seeks to fill vacancy before code meetings with Winfield, Wellington*

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (January 25, 2016) — The City of Arkansas City's Building Trades Board is trying to shore up its membership in preparation for a big year ahead.

The advisory board, in conjunction with the building trades boards in Wellington and Winfield, will be working this spring and summer to move all three cities onto the 2015 international code cycle.

Board members will participate in meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays, likely starting in March, that concern their particular disciplines. The meetings will be at 6 p.m. at the Winfield Public Library.

Neighborhood Services Superintendent Richard Brown, the City's code enforcement official who serves as an ex officio member of the board, said he'll sit in on the electrical meetings and a few others.

Winfield building official Rod Haney, who filled in as a code official on a part-time basis in Arkansas City until Brown was hired last October, will guide the builders.

Wellington building official Richard Jack, with whom Brown worked in Wichita, will work with heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) contractors and plumbers.

All three officials will meet Thursday in Winfield to nail down details of the meetings, order code books and make plans for a planned continuing-education training session next month.

Several board members expressed concern during their monthly meeting Thursday night in the commission room at City Hall, 118 W. Central Ave., about not having general contractors on the board.

One spot for a contractor is vacant at this time, while another contractor has had spotty attendance at meetings. The board decided first to discuss with that individual whether he wished to remain on the board, before looking at possibly enforcing a provision in municipal code that would allow for his removal.

**For immediate release**

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The code says that three unexcused absences in a 12-month period can be grounds for removal, although the removed member can ask the mayor to be reappointed to the board at any time.

## The 2015 international code cycle

Arkansas City currently observes the 2009 international code cycle, which is adopted by reference in its municipal code, along with amendments that were made to the international codes by the board.

The current codes enforced in Arkansas City are:

- 2009 International Building Code (IBC);
- 2009 International Existing Building Code (IEBC);
- 2009 International Fire Code (IFC);
- 2009 International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC);
- 2009 International Mechanical Code (IMC);
- 2009 International Plumbing Code (IPC);
- 2009 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC);
- 2009 International Residential Code (IRC) for One- and Two-Family Dwellings;
- 2008 National Electrical Code (NEC).

The City also has adopted the 2009 International Private Sewage Disposal Code by reference.

The code cycle change planned for all three cities this year will move them to the 2015 versions of the IBC, IEBC, IFC, IFGC, IMC, IPC, IPMC and IRC, as well as the 2014 version of the NEC.

Brown said it is good to adopt the newest codes every six years. Prior to the 2009 codes, the City had adopted the 2003 codes. But the change to 2009 has been unpopular with many contractors.

“The 2015 (code) is so much like the 2006, which is one of the best codes they had,” Brown said, predicting the new, simplified codes will be more popular with tradesmen. “You’ll get a kick out of it.”

Fire Chief Bobby Wolfe, who also is an ex officio member of the board, said the State of Kansas is planning to move to the 2012 International Fire Code on July 1, but said he’d prefer they go to the 2015.

Regardless of what the state does, though, the goal of all three cities’ building officials is to unify what they enforce in their city limits, even to the point of ensuring that all of their amendments match.

“We’re all trying to be on the same page,” Brown said, “so that if you go to Wellington, even with the amendments, you’ll know (what the code is). We’re trying to make it all local. There’s nothing requiring it — it’s just something we want to do for our contractors, and us.”

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He said Derby, Haysville, Sedgwick County, Valley Center and Wichita all have tried to do the same thing, to the point that they all have almost exactly the same ordinances and changes, and added that when he was in Rose Hill, he worked to match that group's codes, even though he was in Butler County.

## **Making modifications**

Building Trades Board chair Carl Bowman urged the other members to participate in the upcoming meetings and make their voices heard about which aspects of the international codes might be changed.

"That's why I'm begging you guys to be at each meeting, because you'll lose out on any input that you have in it and you'll have to go by (the other cities') code," Brown said.

"This is our chance to look over the codes, see what we want to highlight, and also see what has changed from last cycle," Bowman said. "See what we want to change, add or ... well, we don't delete."

"Well, we do have the option to delete or add," Brown explained. "We have that right to do that — all of the cities have that right to recommend to our governing bodies anything that they will delete."

"There were some things where they brought the international codes in, there were just some common-sense things (to change), so we changed a little bit," explained board member Dave Billings.

He provided an example of an IPC requirement that washing machines have a 2-inch drain that was amended down to a 1.5-inch-drain requirement because wall limitations are present in many residences.

"The 2009 residential code says you have to have a residential sprinkler system, and almost every single town in Kansas wrote it out," Brown said, citing another example of a localized amendment.

"The state (of Kansas) said they weren't going to back it, either, and that's why we did (write it out)," Bowman replied. "(The state did so) only after the cities started writing it out," Brown explained.

Board member Brian Lawrence asked if changes would be recorded so they are easily accessible to any contractor. "How do we let people know that in Ark City, 'OK, here's your code book, but here's also all the changes we've made?'" he asked. "I just want it available to everyone for a level playing field."

Billings said prior changes have been adopted into the City's municipal code, and print copies also are available through the Public Works Department. Brown promised that would continue to be the case.

"Any amendments you guys present to the (City Commission) — you can present anything you want, but they're the final judgment and it has to go through them — anything that they approve is in the minutes of that meeting," Brown said.

“And it also goes into our amended code that we keep track of, and we will have it in a printed form or on the internet. From this point on, I can answer to that: Yes, it will be (recorded and made available).”

### **In other business, the board:**

- Approved the November meeting minutes as presented.
- Discussed the upcoming CEU (Continuing Education Units) training that will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 20 at Southwestern College in Winfield. Contractors must take 12 credit-hours of CEU every two years in order to renew their licenses, Brown said. Board member Mike Hammel urged the other members to pay early. The cost to attend is \$140 for those who sign up by Feb. 1 or \$160 after that date. Those interested may obtain a signup form from Terice Watts by calling (620) 441-4420 or visiting the Public Works Department on the second floor of City Hall.
- Discussed several general construction contractors who might be interested in filling the current vacancy. There was a discussion of whether residing in the city limits should be a factor. The only requirement in municipal code is that a contractor must do business in Arkansas City. The board expressed a desire to keep membership local, if possible. Watts said she would prepare two lists of candidates — one of just residents and one of all contractors who do business here, regardless of whether they live in town — for the board’s consideration for appointment.

### **About the Building Trades Board**

The Building Trades Board was established for the purpose of establishing criteria for licensing and regulating persons, firms or corporations desiring to engage in any of the defined building trades.

It also serves as a review board to which decisions of the code enforcement official may be appealed by citizens. If the board rules against them, they can appeal its decisions in district court.

The board has specific membership requirements to ensure representative cross-sections of trades:

- Two members must be electricians, one of whom must be a master electrician. The current electrical members are Mark Bartlett, of Bartlett Electric, and Jim Graham, of Graham Electric.
- Two members must be plumbers, one of whom must be a master plumber. The current plumbing representatives are Dave Billings, of Billings Plumbing, and Carl Bowman, of Bowman’s Plumbing, Heating & Air, who serves as chairman of the board.

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- Two members must be general contractors doing business in Arkansas City. No contractors were represented at Thursday's meeting and one spot is vacant at this time.
- Two members must represent heating, air-conditioning or refrigeration contractors. The current HVAC representatives are Mike Hammel, of Waldorf-Riley Heating & Cooling in Arkansas City, and Brian Lawrence, of Ark City Service.
- One member must be a citizen or layman familiar with the requirements of the Arkansas City building code. Brown currently is working to fill this position. All nine terms are for two years.

The fire-EMS chief and code enforcement official serve as ex officio members of the board, which meets at 5:15 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the commission room at City Hall.