

★ ANNUAL PROGRESS EDITION ★

*Project ROAR will help clean up Kansas City*By COUNCILMAN TROY NASH
Guest Columnist

We face many challenges as we strive to make Kansas City a more livable community. Although I am committed to bringing positive economic development to our city through my role as chairman of the Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development

Committee, I am enthused about strengthening our neighborhoods, and am dedicated to guaranteeing basic public services, none of these is my top goal for our city.

Instead, working with my in-district colleague Sandra McFadden-Weaver, I believe that our No. 1 goal should be far more basic: making Kansas City clean and free of trash. Although I am at large, I live in and

directly represent the 3rd District, which encompasses much of the inner city. The neighborhoods of the district have a severe problem with illegal dumping, a problem that the city has not had the means or the will to address.

Illegal dumping does not mean simply stray bits of paper, but often large piles of brush, refuse, and bulky items like water heaters and

commodes.

These piles are left in the middle of streets, on vacant lots, and even on private property. They constitute not only an eyesore, but often a public health hazard

as well. Moreover, this is an issue of public pride and respect. Neighborhoods and residential areas are not the place for trash.

Illegal dumping is not just an eyesore, it is a problem for neighborhoods that are striving to overcome decades of neglect to achieve urban renewal. Economic development is difficult to accomplish when the streets are not navigable because of trash. Chemicals and other hazardous materials are often involved, causing a serious environmental problem.

With the city's recycling program, RecycleFIRST, beginning in September, the importance of cleaning up Kansas City, especially the urban core, takes on added importance. Last spring I introduced a program called Rat On A Rat (ROAR) to address this issue. Modeled after a wildly successful program in Houston, ROAR takes a dual approach of increased city ac-



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What should be Kansas City's No. 1 goal and how can it achieve it?

tion and calling on citizens to do their part. The city's budget crisis prevented the program from being funded last year. This year will be different.

When the program is fully in place, Kansas City will have more environmental management officers to clean up existing dumping areas, much stiffer fines for those who dump illegally and organized citizen patrols to report and prevent illegal dumping.

Many of those who commit this crime are not from the neighborhoods they pollute and believe that they can escape punishment. In the past, that has too often been the case. When ROAR is fully operational, dumpers will be caught and heavily fined.

When we guarantee basic services and make our neighborhoods livable, we will be better able to move our city forward in other areas. Real progress will be made only when we improve the quality of life of all of Kansas City's citizens.

If you would like more information on ROAR, please contact my office at (816) 513-1605.