



Annual Report

City of Kannapolis
**Communications
Department**

2024





Goals & Responsibilities

The mission of the Communications Department is to provide **timely and accurate information** on the services and functions of the City to our residents and stakeholders, and to **create a strong sense of community** through public outreach programs, events, and partnerships.



Key Responsibilities

- City Brand & Strategic Marketing Plan
- Gem Theatre Strategic Marketing Plan
- Swanee Theatre Strategic Marketing Plan
- Website Updates and Maintenance
- Social Media Posts and Monitoring
- News Releases – 200+ annually
- Monthly Kannapolis Matters Mailer
- Marketing Materials for all City Departments
- Crisis Communications
- Environmental Education
- 3rd Grade Civic Education/Field Trips
- Kannapolis 101
- Internal & External Email Newsletters
- Liaison & Joint Marketing with Key Partners
- Wayfinding
- Kannapolis Youth Council
- Community Presentations
- Special Events Marketing and Planning
- Award Nominations for Departments
- Public Art Program
- Adopt-A-Street Program
- Maintain Photo Library



Meet the Team



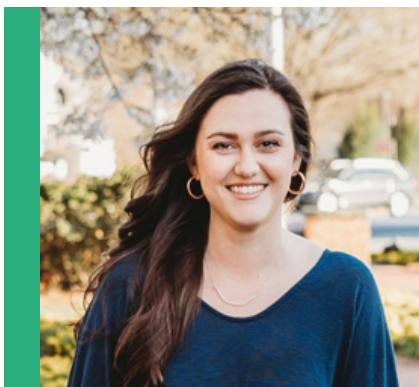
Director of Communications

Annette Privette Keller



Communications Specialist

Betsy Barnette



Communications Specialist

Samantha Monahan



2024 Highlights

- Assumed responsibility for Swanee Theatre marketing and rebrand
- Assumed responsibility for Gem Theatre rebrand and marketing, including new website
- Promoted Gem Theatre fundraiser and completed special projects for the VIP reopening event, including history installations and video
- Branded and promoted the new West Avenue Express Shuttles for Downtown
- Created special branding and marketing materials to promote 10th anniversary of Jiggy with the Piggy
- Created special branding and materials to promote the City's 40th anniversary of incorporation throughout the year, culminating in a pop-up birthday event for the community
- Managed Youth Council legacy project. Ten public art rocking chairs given to City Council
- in honor of the City's 40th birthday
- Launched updated version of City website
- Assisted HR department with numerous new initiatives including an employee newsletter, employee appreciation event, S.E.E.K program, and orientation videos
- Assisted Water Resources Department with Lead Pipe Inventory Project, including the creation of a website page and resident communications

Special Projects!



Social Media Insights



We post regularly across various platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Linked-in, and Nextdoor.

Facebook is our most successful platform for engagement, where we maintain **six dedicated pages**:

- City of Kannapolis- Community News 32K Followers
- Kannapolis Police and Fire 18K Followers
- The Gem Theatre 27K Followers
- The Swanee Theatre 7.5K Followers
- Run Kannapolis/Loop the Loop 1K Followers
- Jiggy with the Piggy 3.2k Followers

Key Facebook Metrics for City of Kannapolis



Facebook Page Visits

231,900

30% Increase from 2023



Post Engagements

91,300

27% Increase from 2023



New Followers

4,400

11% Increase from 2023

Our content was viewed a total of **2.4 million times**, and our total Facebook reach **increased by 13% in 2024!**

Top-Performing Campaigns



Kannapolis Christmas

Posts	Reach	Reactions	Shares
28	300K+	2,500+	770+



Gem Theatre Renovations

Posts	Reach	Reactions	Shares
10	200K+	4,500+	730+



City 40th Birthday

Posts	Reach	Reactions	Shares
12	56K+	500+	60+

Gem Theatre



In 2023 the City assumed responsibility for all marketing efforts related to The Gem Theatre. In 2024, we expanded that responsibility to include a full rebrand, complete with a **new logo**, and **website**, to further support the physical renovations the theatre underwent. We unveiled this new brand along with the reopening campaign on social media and in traditional media. Additionally, we preserved the rich history of the Gem utilizing installation of a **timeline wall** at the theatre and a **history video**.



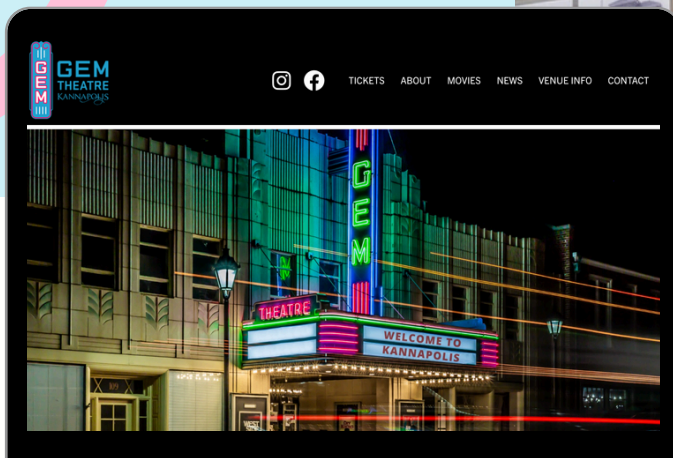
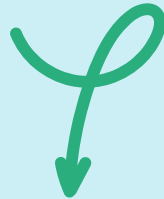
New followers in 2024

2.4K **200% Increase**
from 2023



New

**Brand &
Website**



Timeline wall at the Gem Theatre

Swanee Theatre

In August 2024, the City assumed responsibility for all marketing efforts related to The Swanee Theatre. We also began the strategic rebranding process for the venue. We have successfully grown our social media following for The Swanee significantly, with a **33% increase** in Facebook followers in just 5 months. In 2025, we launched a new website and plan to install the new brand internally at the theatre.



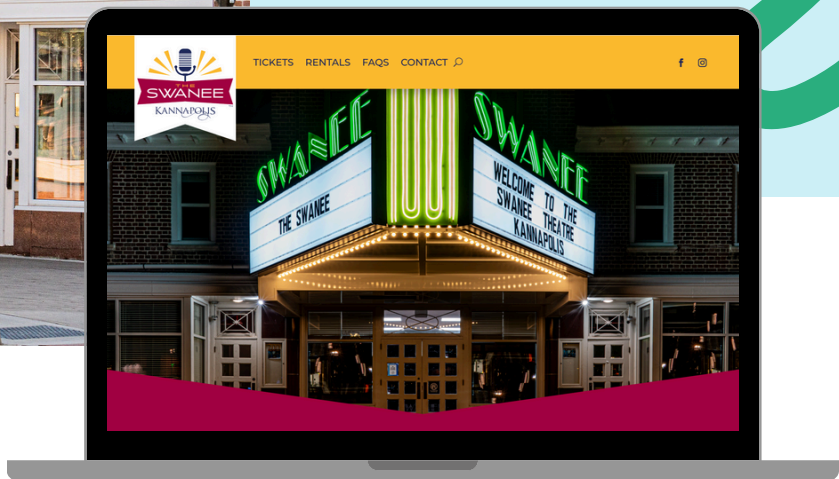
Followers

7.5K



New

Brand & Website

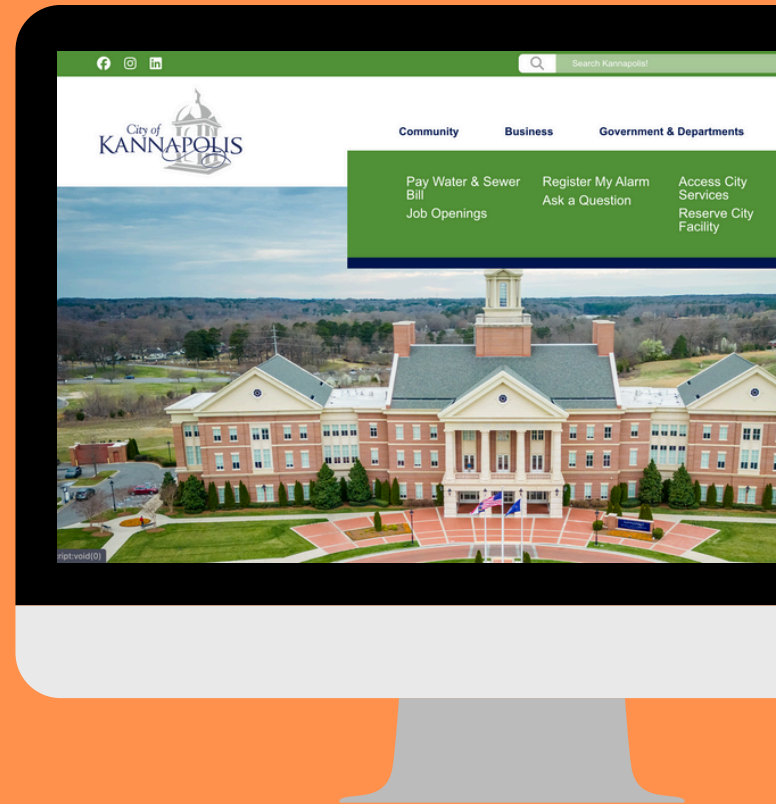


City Website Analytics

In 2024, we launched an updated version of our City website to modernize and improve functionality.

This project was a large undertaking involving the cooperation of all departments to ensure our website content remained up-to-date and easily accessible for residents.

Our website continues to be an important source of information for our citizens and staff. We update the website daily.



1 Million +

Total Page Views

423,928

6% Increase from 2023

Unique Website Visitors

2.51

Avg. page views
per session



The industry standard is to **click 3 times or less** to find the information you are looking for. As an informational resource for our citizens, we view this as a positive metric— users are able to quickly and easily find the needed information.

Newsletters



Resident Newsletter

- Sent monthly to 17K+ subscribers
- Features upcoming City events and important announcements
- 50% open rate

Kannapolis Matters

- Sent monthly in utility bills to every home in Kannapolis
- Features important City news and environmental tips



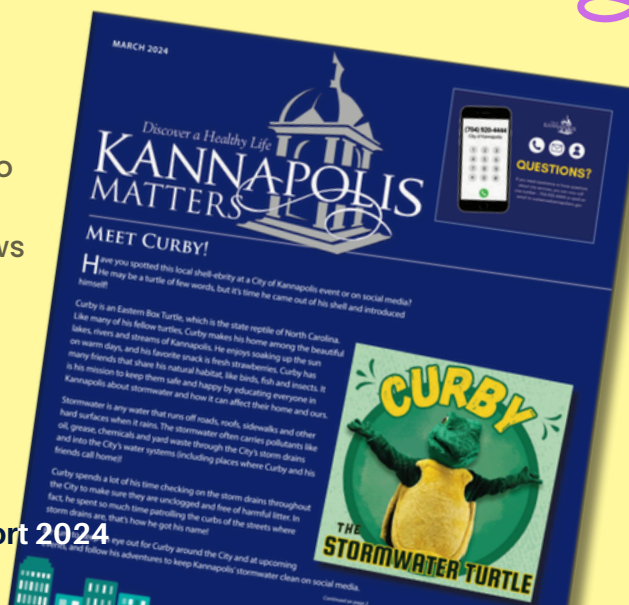
Employee Newsletter

- Sent bi-weekly to 600+ employees
- Features important HR information and employee updates
- 75% open rate



Discover Fun Newsletter

- Sent bi-weekly to 20K+ subscribers
- Features upcoming events at the Gem & Swannee Theatres
- 45% open rate



The industry standard for email open rates is **17-28%**

Special Programs



The Communications Department coordinates several special programs. We are responsible for all marketing, organization, and planning for these events as well as coordinating with other departments where necessary.



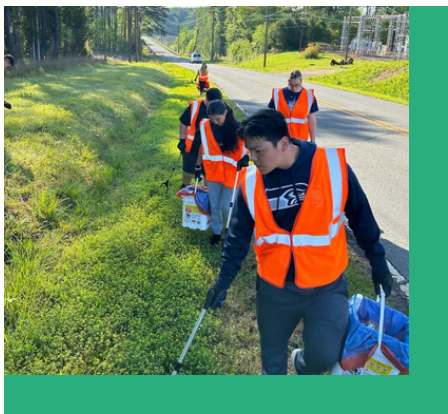
Civic Education

- Over **700 3rd grade students** at our 6 Kannapolis elementary schools receive an interactive activity book about City government, as well as presentations from various City departments throughout the school year.
- Students also participate in a **field trip** to our Water Treatment Plant, Village Park, and City Hall in the Spring.



Kannapolis 101

- **Kannapolis residents** participate in an 8-week long program to learn more about City government.
- They are provided dinner and the opportunity to tour various departments and receive presentations from City staff.



Adopt-a-Street

- We have a total of **15 active groups** who have adopted streets around Kannapolis and committed to keep them clean. **Two new groups** joined in 2024!
- We provide them with supplies and help coordinate trash bag pickup for each of their clean-up events.

Environmental Outreach

Social Media

We posted environmental education content on social media channels over **50 times in 2024**, for an average of 4 posts per month. Monthly posts include **water conservation tips, FOG guidelines, and garbage/recycling information.**



Shred Events

Approximately **10,000 gallons of paper** were shredded at our two annual events!

Education

- 3rd Grade Civic Education
- Kannapolis 101
- Curby the Stormwater Turtle present at major City events to promote the importance and educate people about clean stormwater
- The Recycle Right Campaign on social media and in print continues to educate people about the proper way to recycle

Kannapolis Matters Environmental Tips

- January- Recycling Schedule/Info
- February- Unused Medicine Disposal
- March- Meet Curby/Shred Event
- April- Say No to Littering
- May- Flushable Items
- June- Recycling Schedule/Info
- July-New Garbage/Recycling Contractor
- August- Imagine Kannapolis
- September- Recycle Right/Shred Event
- October- Loose Leaf Collection Begins/FOGs
- November- FOGs Education/Loose Leaf
- December- Christmas Tree Recycling

Cartology

In 2024, the Cartology app was downloaded over **5,000** times, and over **7,000** people used the Waste Wizard to determine if items were recyclable (a 9% increase from 2023).

There were **1,722** new reminders for weekly collection and environmental campaigns set. **Over 20%** of all households in Kannapolis have a reminder scheduled.



Youth Council

In 2020, City Council established a Youth Council to develop a diverse group of leaders. The core values of the Youth Council are leadership, accountability, and a heart for service. The Communications Department serves as advisors to the Youth Council.

50 Members

In the 2024/2025 school year

Monthly Meetings

- The Youth Council held 12 monthly meetings in 2024
- Visits to city departments

Social Events

- Christmas Lock In
- Trampoline Park
- Cannon Ballers Game
- End of Year Banquet

Service Projects

- Run Kannapolis
- Discover Fun Summer Events
- Shred Event
- Cooperative Christian Ministry Christmas Gift Donations
- Valentines Cards to Assisted Living Residents
- Tree planting at new public parking lot
- Celebration of Lights
- Rocking chair painting for City 40th Birthday
- National Night Out



Awards & Media Coverage

State & National Awards

- Distinguished Budget Award
- Five NC City & County Communicators Awards
- Heavy Hitter Award Finalist, Gem Theatre
- Two National City-County Communications & Marketing Association Savvy Awards

National Media Coverage

- MLB.com
- MSN
- Yahoo News
- USA Today
- ABC, CBC, NBC and Fox National Affiliates
- Sky News
- ESPN

Regional Media Coverage

- Business North Carolina
- Cabarrus Business Magazine
- Cabarrus Weekly Newsletter
- Charlotte Agenda
- Charlotte Business Journal
- Charlotte Ledger
- Charlotte Observer
- Charlotte on the Cheap Blog
- Charlotte Regional Business Alliance
- Centralina Regional Council
- CLT Today
- Cornelius Today
- Crew Charlotte
- Explore Cabarrus
- FOX
- Hoodline
- Independent Tribune
- Mooresville Tribune
- NC Tripping
- NC By Train
- NCDOT
- Neighborhood TV
- Newswire
- Northeast Business Today
- North State Journal
- Office of Governor Cooper
- Our Sports Central
- Our State Magazine
- Queen City News
- Queen City Nerve
- Raleigh News & Observer
- Salisbury Post
- Spectrum News
- The Business Journal
- The Assembly
- Visit Cabarrus County
- Visit Rowan County
- Winston Salem Journal
- WBTV
- WCNC
- WFAE
- WFMJ
- WSOC TV
- WCCB
- WRAL

30 

The media mentions Kannapolis or uses our news releases an average of 30 times per month.

We receive weekly coverage in the Charlotte Regional television/print market. One regional 60-second commercial, at minimum, costs \$1,000, so we received over \$360,000 in "free" coverage for the City in 2024.



Thank You!

