DECEMBER 2026

Discover a Healthy Life

KANNAPOLIS MATTERS

Kannapolis Fire Department Breaks Ground on New Training Tower

The Kannapolis Fire Department recently broke ground on a new four-story training tower at Fire Station 1, located at 300 Fire House Drive. The $1.5-million facility will replace the department's former training tower and is expected to be completed in 2027.

The new tower will provide firefighters with a modern, hands-on training environment to practice critical emergency response skills, including fire suppression, search and rescue, ladder operations, firefighter survival and more. Constructed using metal shipping containers, the facility will allow firefighters to train in realistic scenarios that better prepare them for emergencies.

"This facility is an investment in our firefighters, but ultimately, it is an investment in the safety of the people we serve," said Kannapolis Fire Chief Tracy Winecoff.

The department is also developing plans for a Legacy and Memorial Garden near the training tower to honor retired and former firefighters who have dedicated their lives to serving Kannapolis.

The new training tower represents another step in the City's ongoing commitment to public safety and ensuring firefighters have the resources and training needed to serve the community.



Calendar of Events

DECEMBER

1-30 **Celebration of Lights & Winterland Express** | 6 p.m. nightly *(closed 12/24-12/25)* | Village Park

8 **The Embers Christmas Show** 8 p.m. | The Swanee Theatre

11-13 **Holiday Train Display** | Daily Showings | The Swanee Theatre

12 **Kannapolis Christmas Parade** 6 p.m. | Downtown Kannapolis

18-20 **A Christmas Carol Live Performance** | Daily Showings | The Swanee Theatre

21-23 **Christmas Movies at the Gem** Daily Showings | The Gem Theatre

23-25 **Christmas Holiday** City Hall Closed

JANUARY

1 **New Years Day** City Hall Closed

No pets or smoking, please. More at kannapolisnc.gov.





Clarke Promoted to Deputy Police Chief

Kannapolis Police Chief Chris Hill announced the promotion of Jennifer Clarke to the position of Deputy Police Chief. As Deputy Police Chief, she will oversee the efficient operation of the three bureaus of the police department and assist in the implementation of department policies, plans and strategies.

Jennifer began her career with the Kannapolis Police Department as a Patrol Officer in 2007. Since then, she has served in both the Patrol and Criminal Investigation Divisions. She was awarded a Police Commendation in 2008 and a Unit Commendation in 2014. She was promoted to Sergeant in 2016 and Lieutenant in 2017.

In addition to her regular duties, Clarke is one of the department's certified polygraph examiners. She was promoted to Captain in 2021 and has served as the Captain over the Special Operations Bureau, Field Operations Bureau and Support Services Bureau.

A graduate of Smoky Mountain High School in Sylva, N.C., Clarke earned an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice Technology from Southwestern Community College and a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Western Carolina University. She also holds an Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate from the N.C. Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission.

Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Earns National Re-Accreditation



The Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Department has once again earned national re-accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), placing it among the top 1% of parks and recreation agencies in the country!

This prestigious recognition reflects the department's commitment to providing high-quality parks, programs and services to our community. To earn re-accreditation, the department demonstrated compliance with 154 national standards covering operations, management, safety and services.



Little Library Installed

Rowan- Cabarrus Community College recently installed a Little Free Library at Bakers Creek Park. The project, led by the College's TriBeta student organization in partnership with the City of Kannapolis, promotes literacy through community engagement. The new "take-a-book, leave-a-book" Little Library is located beside the playground, providing children and families with greater access to books.

The College's TriBeta Chapter worked with the City of Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Department to arrange for its installation at Baker's Creek Park. The College's English Department also contributed books to stock the library.

The Little Library encourages reading outside the classroom while emphasizing the importance of developing literacy skills at an early age. Park visitors are welcome to take a book to enjoy or leave one for someone else to read. Baker's Creek Park is located at 1275 W. A Street, Kannapolis.



City Receives State Gold Star Recognition

The City of Kannapolis Water Treatment Plant has been recognized by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for exceeding state and federal drinking water standards in 2025.

The City received the N.C. Area Wide Optimization Award and was one of only 21 water treatment facilities in the state to earn the prestigious Gold Star honor. The Gold Star recognition is awarded to facilities that have received the Area Wide Optimization Award for 10 or more consecutive years.

The awards are presented annually by the NCDEQ Division of Water Resources to water treatment facilities that demonstrate outstanding performance in removing turbidity from drinking water. Turbidity refers to the cloudiness of water caused by small particles that can interfere with disinfection and potentially contribute to microbial growth.

While all public drinking water systems are required to meet strict state and federal standards, facilities receiving this award achieve water quality performance goals that are significantly more stringent than those requirements.

In 2025, 66 water treatment plants across North Carolina received



the Area Wide Optimization Award, with 21 earning Gold Star recognition. Together, these award-winning facilities serve more than 3 million North Carolina residents.

The recognition reflects the City of Kannapolis' continued commitment to providing safe, high-quality drinking water to residents and businesses. It also highlights the dedication of City water treatment staff who work to maintain high standards of water quality and treatment operations.

For more information about the N.C. Area Wide Optimization Program, visit www.deq.nc.gov.

Deputy City Manager Eddie Smith to Retire



Deputy City Manager Eddie Smith has announced his retirement from the City of Kannapolis effective December 31, concluding more than three decades of public service and 21 years with the City.

Since joining Kannapolis in 2005, Smith has played a key role in the City's growth and transformation, helping lead major projects, including the redevelopment of downtown, the construction of City Hall and Police Headquarters, Atrium Health Ballpark and improvements to several fire stations. He also helped establish the City's first Capital Improvement Plan, launched the Citizens Academy (now Kannapolis 101) and is known as the "Father of Jiggy with the Piggy."

Throughout his career, Smith has demonstrated a strong commitment to public service and local government leadership. He currently serves as President of the North Carolina City & County Management Association and has held numerous leadership roles throughout the state.

We thank Eddie for his many years of service and leadership.



Celebrate the Holidays in Kannapolis

The holidays are here! Join us for fun, family-friendly events all season long. From visiting Santa at the Celebration of Lights to catching a show at the Swanee Theatre, you're sure to find something for everyone in Kannapolis this holiday season.

HOLIDAY EVENTS INCLUDE:

Kannapolis Celebration of Lights
Through December 30
Village Park



Enjoy beautiful holiday lights and displays at Village Park, 700 West C Street.

Visit with Santa and take a free photo, make a holiday craft, enjoy s'mores around the fire pit and more. The event is open from 5:30–9 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and 5:30–10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays (closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day).

Pre-purchase your Winterland Express tickets now and reserve your seat for a magical ride through the Kannapolis Celebration of Lights! Tickets are $2.50 per person and can be purchased online.

The Embers Christmas Show
December 8
Swanee Theatre



Get into the Christmas spirit with The Embers at the Swanee Theatre. Enjoy a night of festive fun, holiday cheer and incredible music from one of the Southeast's most beloved bands.

Holiday Model Train Display
December 11–13
Swanee Theatre

The Atlantic Coast S Gaugers model trains are back! For one weekend only, this popular interactive model train display will fill the Swanee Theatre, 200 West Main Street.

This fun, family-friendly event is free to the public. The trains will be on display from 5–9 p.m. on December 11, 11 a.m.–9 p.m. on December 12 and 11 a.m.–5 p.m. on December 13.



The Kannapolis Christmas Parade
6 p.m., December 12
Downtown Kannapolis

This nighttime parade travels through the streets of downtown Kannapolis and typically lasts from 6–7:30 p.m.

A Christmas Carol
Theatre Performance
December 18–20
Swanee Theatre

Sigmon Theatrical brings the classic Christmas story to life at the Swanee Theatre with music, dance, puppetry and illusions. This all-ages performance is a wonderful way to celebrate the holiday season.



Tickets are $25, with VIP tickets available for $35. Each show includes a 10- to 15-minute intermission, followed by a meet-and-greet.

Show times are as follows: December 18, 7–9 p.m. | December 19, 7–9 p.m. | December 20, 3–5 p.m.

Christmas Movies at The Gem Theatre
December 21-23

Enjoy family-favorite Christmas movies at The Gem Theatre this holiday season. The Gem will have matinee show times for several Christmas movies. Each movie will only have one show time, so tickets are limited.

For complete and updated holiday information and tickets, visit **www.kannapolisnc.gov/christmas** or **www.discoverkannapolis.com**.

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