



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Mayor Jacobs: County to Upgrade Splash Pads, Build Dog Parks**

*KNOXVILLE, Tenn.*— Knox County will invest \$700,000 into its dog parks and splash pads, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs announced today.

“We are fortunate to have such unique outdoor assets in this community and the maintenance and expansion of them is a priority,” said Mayor Jacobs.

The move comes as the county had a surplus in revenues the previous fiscal year and county departments spent less than expected.

The county will set aside \$150,000 to help build new dog parks and another \$550,000 as part of a two-phase overhaul for its three splash pads, all which are in need of major upgrades.

The splash pads will close for the season after this Sunday, Sept. 19. Work on them will begin soon.

“Knox County’s parks and recreation footprint is quite large,” said Joe Mack, the department’s senior director. “We take pride in what we have and are always looking for ways to make it better.”

The county plans to build five new dog parks within the next couple of years thanks to a contest and grant program initiated and funded by the Boyd Family Foundation. The proposal – dubbed the Knox Neighborhood Dog Parks Plan – was designed to make Knox County No. 1 in dog parks per capita in the nation. The county is ranked No. 29 currently.

A contest was held last summer, and residents chose to build dog parks at Beverly Park, New Harvest Park, the SportsPark, Powell Station Park, and Clayton Park, though specific park locations may be updated if the need arises.

The Boyd Family Foundation then agreed to donate \$250,000 to build the parks. However, they are expected to cost much more, so the county is kicking in the additional funding. Work on the parks should begin in the next month or so.

In addition, the county recognizes that its three splash pads – located at New Harvest, Carl Cowan, and Powell State parks – have outlived their life expectancies. This current summer, parks maintenance crews have shut each of them down a number of times for repairs and maintenance.

The splash pads are open daily – weather permitting – from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. from May 1 through mid-September, although some years they stay open later if the weather is still warm.

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