



TAP TO READ

# OLATHE IS WORKING AND OPEN FOR BUSINESS

One of the City of Olathe's priorities is to grow and sustain its economic base. Judging by the ongoing commercial and residential projects, and the number of people employed in the city, Olathe is achieving its goal.

According to the Olathe Community Development Second Quarter Development Report, Olathe's Building Codes Division issued 1,780 building permits in the first half of 2023, with total construction valued more than \$271 million. During that same period, the City issued permits for 165 new residential projects along with permits for 21 new commercial and 65 commercial remodel projects, with a commercial valuation of \$159 million.

In 2022, there were permits issued for 175 new commercial and industrial buildings and remodels, with a total valuation of \$472 million. There were also permits for 429 new residential projects (1,173 new residential units), with a \$264 million residential valuation.

In the first seven months of 2023, Olathe's unemployment rate hovered between 2.3 - 2.7 percent. Kansas' unemployment rate during that period ranged between 2.9 - 3.2 percent.

"It's a great time in Olathe," Casey Wilhm, Vice President of Economic Development at the Olathe Chamber of Commerce, said. "We have so much cool stuff cooking right now."

By providing incentives and funding – such as tax abatements, tax increment financing and opportunity zones – to eligible businesses and property owners, Olathe is able to encourage existing businesses to stay in town and new businesses to set up shop.

Another reason why Olathe is able to draw in large and small businesses is because of its diverse landscape, Tim McKee, CEO at the Olathe Chamber of Commerce, said.

"We are unique in that we still have an abundance of land onto which to develop for these significant users that are still coming into our Midwest landscape," McKee said. "I believe that translates into growth and bringing the biggest and best to Olathe."

Walmart announced plans last summer to open a case-ready beef facility in Olathe that could create more than 600 new jobs.

There is also potential for nearly 700 new jobs when Heartland Coca-Cola's new distribution facility in south Olathe moves forward.

Other projects of note in Olathe include Clorox's 6,000-square-foot distribution center near New Century AirCenter and Oppidan Holdings' 90,352-square foot data center in northwest Olathe, which the developer plans to begin construction this year and occupy the building in fall of 2024.

In terms of residential growth, Olathe has more than 1,500 multifamily units at various stages of construction, Wilhm said. Through the first half of 2023, "permits were issued for 165 new residential projects, including 159 one- and two-family projects and six multi-family projects, for a total of 300 new units."

There are multi-family projects currently under construction at K-7 and Harold Street along with one south of Santa Fe and K-7. A 303-unit multi-family project at Black Bob Road and Indian Creek Parkway is now leasing, and another residential project will be opening this fall at the southwest corner of College Boulevard and Ridgeview Road, Wilhm added.

Another project of note is the Arrello Apartments that opened last year on the former site of the Olathe Public Library's downtown branch. Buoyed by a 10-year, 100 percent real property tax abatement, Indianapolis-based developer Millhaus' \$37 million, 228-unit complex was downtown Olathe's first residential development in more than three decades – highlighting what Wilhm said is an aging housing stock in the core of the city.

"In order to revitalize housing stock we have significant incentives in place," he added. "A lot of folks are getting priced out, but what differentiates us from the other communities is we have significant incentives you can take advantage of."

