



NEWS RELEASE

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ST. CHARLES COUNTY COUNCIL TO VOTE ON NAMING OF NEW PARK NEAR WENTZVILLE *Benjamin Oglesby Purchased Property in 1871*

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Pending final approval from the St. Charles County Council Monday night, the County's newest park near Wentzville will become Oglesby Park, named after one of the property's early owners. The 199-acre plot of land is at 2949 West Meyer Road and is scheduled to open this summer.

"I am pleased to offer this name for Council consideration and approval," says County Executive Steve Ehlmann. "The history behind landowner Benjamin Oglesby and his family is both remarkable and inspirational."

Benjamin Oglesby was born a slave in 1825 in Bedford, Va., and was brought to Missouri in 1837 at the age of 12 by his owner, Marshall Bird. He worked on a farm near present-day I-70 and Highway W in the Foristell/Wentzville area.

In 1864, at the age of 39, Oglesby fled captivity of Bird and enlisted in the Union Army in St. Charles. His wife and children remained in captivity while he went through basic training in St. Louis to eventually fight for their freedom. Oglesby was assigned to the 56th United States Colored Infantry and was honorably discharged in 1865.

After the Civil War, according to the 1870 census, Oglesby, his wife, Martha and their six children – Medora, Samuel, Oskar, Bell, Albert, and Charlie – worked on a farm in Hickory Grove Township in Warren County. In 1871, he purchased 146 acres of land in Foristell. He financed the property through a \$2,000 Deed of Trust and paid off the property six years later.

Oglesby farmed the land at 2949 West Meyer Drive for 30 years. His wife died in 1900, and he died in 1901. He is buried in Smith Chapel Cemetery, a mile from his farm. The Oglesby children owned the property through the mid-1900s.

"As St. Charles County continues to expand westward, this park is in an ideal location," Ehlmann says. "The park will offer shelters, natural surface and paved trails, and a playground when it opens this summer. If the Council approves, it will be a fitting tribute to the Oglesby family name and the history of St. Charles County."

Ehlmann says the property allows the Parks Department to maintain green space for the future. This will be the 18th County park to open since the parks system was founded 25 years ago. There are three other park properties in reserve for the future.

For more information on St. Charles County Parks, visit stccparks.org.

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About St. Charles County:

St. Charles County, Missouri, founded in 1812, is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri. With a population of 405,262, is it the state's third largest county. It is home to 21 scenic county parks of which four are in reserve, encompassing 4,151 acres.

With one of the largest economies in the state, St. Charles County is home to multinational companies including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County Government has more than 1,170 employees in more than 30 departments and offices who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit sccmo.org.