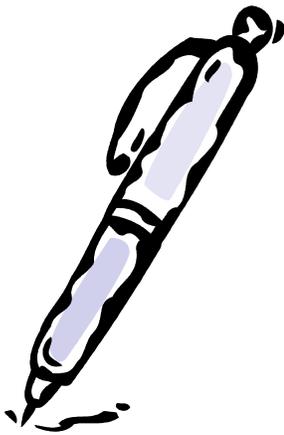




Winter 2009

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE NEWS

A letter from the Mayor



As winter has arrived with ice, snow and wild winds, we are reminded again about change and the changing seasons. As we are all perfectly aware of, we've seen lots of changes this year – from \$4 gas prices to \$1.50 per gallon, stock market plummeting, agriculture commodities one half of what they were and now holiday retail sales the lowest in forty years. And, of course, the change in our country's leadership

I was extremely proud and happy with how voting went in our City this year with a record 2320 people voting, which was 94 percent of our registered voters. We had plenty of room, voting booths or tables and no one had to wait in a long line. Our tally was basically completed by 8:30 p.m.

Back to change! Unfortunately, when we see change like we have it is the local unit of government, closest to the people, where the needs become the greatest. Our police have more domestic calls, our staff gets asked more requested about where to get help and basic services still need to be provided. Knowledgeable people can save us more money. It has been said that the best decisions are made in the hardest times and the worst decisions are made when times are good.

Now for a few brief happenings...

The State is unallocating money that was to be paid to the City for Local Government Aid and Market Value Homestead Credit.

Continued on page 2

Planning Commission

Chair Brad Spencer
Mario Crespo
Greg Gardella
Robert Gardner
Carl Phillips

City Council

Mayor Marvin Johnson
Lynn Betts
Lance Gyllenblad
Norm Wenck
Lindsay Wallace

Parks Commission

Chair Carole Peter
Leroy Kowalke
Lisa Phillips
James Rick

COMMUNITY CORNER

Continued from page 1

Northern Natural Gas is putting in a big pipeline in the western edge of the City and through Lake Rebecca Park Reserve to Rockford. The City requested that the pipeline to follow the right-of-way.

The discussion regarding rezoning of property from agriculture to commercial by Ryan Companies at the Delano border by the Methodist church is in deliberation now. The Met Council makes the final determination. If it approves of the land use change, then the Planning Commission and Council must decide on what goes in that area with lots of other details.

Our Comprehensive Land Use Plan has been passed on to the Council by the Planning Commission and when it gets a four-fifths vote of Council, it will go to the neighboring cities for review and then to the Met Council. It needs to be approved by June 1, 2009.

For those using Highway 12 to go east or west, it has been a real treat to have both directions open now. Delano will be replacing the railroad bridge in 2009, but Highway 12 east is done except for landscaping. For six weeks or so this fall, Highway 12 will be closed east of County Road 90 to put in a shoe fly for the railroad and then the whole summer of 2010 the road will be closed to replace the railroad bridge with a much wider four-lane bridge. Traffic will be routed south on County Road 90 to County Road 6.

The Council is trying to negotiate a plan to get Lindgren Lane, which is on the west side of Lake Independence, hooked up to sewer. It's a process involving Met Council and the Cities of Medina, Greenfield and Independence.

If you're able, organizations such as WeCan, Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners (IOCP), Love Inc, Heartland and the food banks really need our help. They have seen a tremendous increase in need and serve people in our area.

I have been representing the City on a Hennepin County Active Living Steering Committee, funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield tobacco settlement money. Its emphasis is to try to encourage people to walk and exercise more and to plan future developments so that we stay out of the car.

This past year we had six new house building permits. That was the same as the past two years. Other building permits for remodeling are at an all-time high.

Do you watch or listen to the City Council Meetings? If you have the Internet at home, you can tune in to the Council Meetings on the Lake Minnetonka Cable Commission's website, www.lmcc-tv.org.

Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas time with family and friends and that the New Year will be better for us all.

Your Mayor,

Marvin D. Johnson

COMMUNITY CORNER

Volunteers Needed For Annual City Clean-Up Day

The City of Independence will once again be hosting its annual City Clean Up Day this spring. The City is looking for volunteers to help make the day run smoothly. For more information or to volunteer, contact Recycling Coordinator Christina Scipioni, 763-479-0527 or ccscipioni@ci.independence.mn.us.



Be sure to mark your calendars for Saturday, May 2!

City Thanks Election Judges

The City of Independence thanks the people who served as election judges during the 2008 primary and general elections. Their help and expertise made Election Day go smoothly.

The 2008 Independence Election Judges are: Lorraine Koch, Marion Beal, Mary Olson, Paula Savage, Judy Konicek, Judith Crosby, Marilyn Hamilton, Chandani Shroff, Darcy Ciatti, Jim Smith, Neil Grewe, Jerry Wise, Jeanne Gardner, Sharon Cook, Joan Kittok, , Kay Gabriel, Carol Strassburg, Marlys Timm, David Knaak, Ruby Frost and Marvin Johnson. Thanks again for all of your hard work!



West Hennepin Public Safety's 2009 Citizens Police Academy

West Hennepin will again be hosting its annual Citizens Academy in March and April 2009.

The Citizens Police Academy was designed to create a better understanding of law enforcement through education. The Citizens Police Academy participants are presented with realistic hands on information, which will help each participant better understand the police department functions.

Watch your local newspapers and check out West Hennepin Public Safety's website, www.westhennepin.com, for dates.



City Council Considers 2030 Comp Plan Update

At its Dec. 23, 2008 meeting, the City Council took its first look at the 2030 Comp Plan. It will be reviewing the document again at its Jan. 13 meeting.

The Met Council requires all cities to update their Comp Plans every 10 years. The Independence Comp Plan will be the City's guiding document. It has chapters that discuss topics including land use, sewer and water systems, transportation and parks and trails.

Copies of the draft Independence Comp Plan are available online, independence.govoffice.com, or at City Hall. For more information on the Comp Planning process, call 763-479-0527.

RECYCLING

2009 Curbside Recycling Schedule

Curbside recycling is available to all Independence residents. Recycling bins are available at City Hall. The first recycling bin is free and any additional bins are \$3 each.

Recycling is picked up every other Friday. Residents must have their recycling to the curb by 7 a.m. on recycling day. Missed pick-ups should be reported to Waste Management, 1-800-777-8408.

The 2009 Independence recycling schedule is:

January 3, 16, 30

February 13, 27

March 13, 27

April 10, 24

May 8, 22

June 5, 19

July 3, 17, 31

August 14, 28

September 11, 25

October 9, 23

November 6, 20

December 4, 18

Save Paper by Halting Phone Book Deliveries

Want to avoid 10 to 15 pounds of clutter every year? Opt-out.

To help cut down on wasted paper, Yellow Pages now allows customers to opt-out of automatically receiving new phone books. To stop the delivery of phone books to your home, visit www.YellowPagesGoesGreen.org and click on "Opt-Out." The site is also a wealth of information and resources about wasting less paper.



ENVIRONMENT

The Digital Television (DTV) Transition: What You Need to Know

On February 17, 2009, all full-power broadcast television stations are required to stop broadcasting in analog and continue broadcasting in digital only. This is known as the digital television (DTV) transition.

If you have a new television with a digital tuner or subscribe to a pay service such as cable or satellite, you can already receive digital broadcasts. However, if you watch television using “rabbit ears” or a rooftop antenna, you must take one of the following actions to receive digital broadcasts:

- Connect your television to a digital-to-analog converter box.
- Subscribe to a pay television service such as cable or satellite.
- Buy a digital television (a television with a built-in digital tuner).

If you purchase a new television, be sure to recycle your old one. Most TVs and computers contain a cathode ray tube (CRT), which contains two to eight pounds of lead. It is illegal to place electronic products containing a CRT in the garbage.

Recycling options for televisions and other household electronics available to residents in the Twin Cities metro-area include:

- Government recycling programs: Hennepin County takes electronics free of charge from households at drop-off facilities in Brooklyn Park and Bloomington. Quantity limits apply.
- Take-back programs: Some manufacturers and retailers will take back your old electronics for recycling.
- Garbage haulers: Some haulers pick up electronics for recycling.
- Recycling companies: You can drop off your old electronics at a recycler. Some recyclers pick up electronics for recycling.

For more information on Hennepin County’s drop-off facilities and how to recycle electronics, call 612-348-3777 or visit hennepin.us/electronics. To find additional electronics recycling options, visit RethinkRecycling.com, your go-to-guide for waste and recycling in the Twin Cities. For more information on the DTV transition, visit www.dtv.gov.



PUBLIC SAFETY

West Hennepin Public Safety Offers Free Gunlocks



West Hennepin Public Safety, in partnership with Project ChildSafe, a nationwide firearms safety education program, is inviting the public to take advantage of free gunlock safety kits. Each kit contains a safety curriculum and a cable-style gunlock that securely stores your firearms. The locks fit on most types of handguns, rifles and shotguns. The goal is to prevent a child or any other unauthorized person from accessing a firearm in your home. All residents interested are encouraged to stop at West Hennepin Public Safety to pick up their free gunlock.

West Hennepin Public Safety has assisted in distributing approximately 400 gunlocks in the last few years and is proud to continue to offer this great program to its communities. For more information, call West Hennepin Public Safety, 763-479-0500.

West Hennepin Public Safety warns citizens of heating fuel theft

WHPS received a report of a theft of a large amount of heating fuel from an Independence resident's underground fuel tank. The report was received during late November. Another similar report was filed with a neighboring jurisdiction also in November. The theft of such a large amount of fuel would require either a large truck or a large enclosed trailer.

"There have been cases in other jurisdictions where suspects have tanks and pumps inside their vehicles and trailers, and use them to withdraw fuel from construction vehicles and or semi tractors, but this is the first we have heard of this type of theft," stated Director Ray McCoy.

WHPS is encouraging residents to lock the caps on their tanks when possible and call 911 to report suspicious activity. If you have any information related to these thefts call Investigator Ben Anderson, 763-479-0500.

Fire Department Looking for Vehicle Donation

The Maple Plain Fire Department is looking to replace its existing rescue response vehicle, currently a suburban. The vehicle should have a one-ton chassis, four wheel drive, four doors and a towing package. A gasoline engine is preferred.

For additional information on this equipment need for the Department, or if you are interested in donating a vehicle, making a donation toward a new vehicle, or know of where the Fire Department can get a good deal on a newer model, please contact Maple Plain City Administrator Jason Ziemer, 763-479-0151, or Maple Plain Fire Chief Nate Jerde, chief1@mapleplain.com.



TRANSPORTATION

Independence Hosting a Highway 12 Detour Open House

Highway 12 Construction will soon come to Independence. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is planning to construct a new, four-lane railroad bridge over Highway 12 near the Maple Plain/Independence border. As part of the project, Highway 12 will be closed at County Road 90 for a month during the fall of 2009 and from about April 15 to Nov. 15, 2010. Traffic will be detoured north and south of Highway 12.

Mn/DOT will be holding an open house from 4-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10. at Independence City Hall. The Open House will give residents and business owners the opportunity to discuss the project and detour routes with Mn/DOT officials. Written comments will be collected.



RideNet Provides New Transportation Resource for Residents



Independence residents now have a new way to travel to shopping, medical appointments and more.

RideNet, a nonprofit, recently signed a contract to provide transportation service to 17 Hennepin County cities, including Independence.

“Residents can go play cards, go shopping or go wherever they want,” said Evelyn DeSmet, of RideNet.

To use RideNet, residents simply call 1-800-450-6100 or visit the organization’s website, www.CTRideNet.com, at least 24 hours before they need a ride. Live operators help callers find transportation options in their community. If no other transportation options exist, RideNet provides a ride in a car, van or handicapped-accessible vehicle. All of RideNet’s drivers must pass background checks and physical examinations.

It costs \$2.50 for a one-way ride within the 17-city service area. If residents need a ride to a location outside the service area, RideNet will charge an additional rate. The service area includes the cities of Independence, Maple Plain, Loretto, Medina, Minnetrista, St. Bonifacius, Mound, Spring Park, Orono, Long Lake, Minnetonka Beach, Wayzata, Deephaven, Tonka Bay, Greenwood, Shorewood and Excelsior. The service offers residents a safe and affordable way to travel around town.

“Our drivers will even help people to their door,” DeSmet said. “They are very customer friendly.”

City of Independence
1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359

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City Contact Information

Mayor

Marvin Johnson, 612-840-3433

City Council

Lynn Betts, 763-479-2789
Lance Gyllenblad, 763-972-2035
Lindsay Wallace, 763-479-6923
Norm Wenck, 763-479-4200

City Hall

Administration, 763-479-0527
Building Inspections, 763-479-0531
Public Works, 763-479-0530

<http://independence.govoffice.com>



CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359
Phone: 763-479-0527
Fax: 763-479-0528
Independence.GovOffice.com

City Hall Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m. - Noon; after Nov. 3, Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

City Calendar

January

- 1 New Year's Day - City Hall closed
- 2 City Hall closed
- 12 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 13 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 19 MLK Day - City Hall closed
- 27 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

February

- 5 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 9 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 10 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 16 Presidents' Day - City Hall closed
- 24 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

March

- 5 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 9 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 10 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 24 City Council - 7:30 p.m.