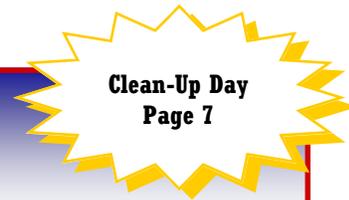


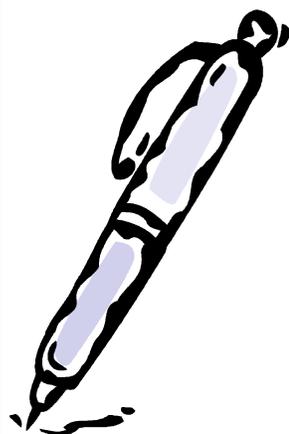


Spring 2009



CITY OF INDEPENDENCE NEWS

A letter from the Mayor



I find it hard to believe that it was almost three months ago that I wrote for the last newsletter in the middle of winter and now spring is here – I hope.

But even harder to believe is that we had just finished an election and we still don't have a Minnesota Senator. I worked at the polls on Election Day and I know how methodically and carefully our election judges handled our absentee ballots and how relieved we all were when every ballot was accounted for 30 minutes after the polls closed. All 2320 ballots. Minnesota is now getting the brunt of the Election Day jokes instead of Ohio and Florida. I do hope they get it settled soon.

We did not have a City election last fall, but we do have one this November, as well as some school districts. We will have two Council seats up for four-year terms. The school boards are on four-year terms, too, so now is the time to start thinking about serving or encouraging someone else to commit to the greater public good.

At our last Council meeting, Keith Triplett was appointed to the City's Planning Commission for a three-year term. He grew up in Independence on County Road 11 and now lives in the southwestern portion of the City and works for the Wright County Assessor. He replaces Brad Spencer who lives on Lake Sarah and has served the last four years. He has done a commendable job as chair during the public meetings on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Water Management Plan and the hearings regarding the Ryan property on County Line Road.

Continued on page 2

Planning Commission

Mario Crespo
Greg Gardella
Robert Gardner
Carl Phillips
Keith Triplett

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

The thing that is most frustrating for me now, at press time, is that the Legislature hasn't repealed the changes made to the Green Acres Law in the final days of the session last year. Everyone admits those changes are threatening the survival of farmers in that program, but all they are doing is playing political games. If anyone has land that qualifies for the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserve Program (in most cases you need 40 acres), you should be reviewing your options for that program immediately.

The circus is coming to town again! Last year was to have been their year, but because of high gas prices they did not travel. They will be here on July 30 for two shows at 5 and 7:30 p.m. at Pioneer Creek Park. Put it on your calendar now!

Hopefully you've read in the local papers about the closure of Highway 12 for awhile this fall and all next summer while the railroad bridge is replaced just east of County Road 90. The detour will be County Road 90 to County Road 6 all the way to Highway 12 in Orono. There will be signal lights on County Road 6 at County Roads 90, 83 and 19. West Main Street will be closed off at the cemetery. Hopefully the traffic will flow at a reasonable speed. Some people are doing it now, because of the slow down at signal lights in Maple Plain. There will be lots of signage for Maple Plain businesses put up on County Road 6.

There have been many news stories about the President's stimulus package. We are not sure at this time whether there will be any money for the City. I do know, however, that there is going to be lots of money available for home weatherization. If you need to replace windows, insulate or do anything with your house, you should be sure to call Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin, 952-933-9639, before you start your project. There is also lots of discussion about "green buildings" and "LEED Certified" projects – new buzz words. It has everything do to with indoor air quality, sustainability, water, energy and recycling. Projects may cost more to begin with, but should save money on other costs later.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the County will probably have sent out the tax statements. If your home was reduced in value last year, but your taxes are higher, you are probably being affected by the limited market value formula. The legislature is ending that program, so some of the tax from deferred value of back years is now being collected. The City tax rate went down, so if your home value remained the same or went down your City taxes should have gone down. That may not be the situation for the County or your school district. We are still waiting to see what valuation change will be plugged in for next year. The Board of Review for Independence before the City Council will be at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12. Don't hesitate in calling the assessor to meet with them first if you feel your property is valued wrongly.

Hope you have a wonderful and safe spring and summer!

Your Mayor,

Marvin D. Johnson

COMMUNITY CORNER

Meet Your City Employee: Larry Ende, Public Works



Larry Ende knows the streets in Independence well. After all, it's his job to help maintain them.

As an employee in the City's Public Works Department, Ende helps ensure that all the City roads are plowed in the winter and correctly graded in the summer. Ende uses his mechanical skills to keep the City's trucks and machinery in good condition. The City's parks also benefit from Ende's work; he helps maintain those as well.

Ende has been part of the three-person Public Works Department for 15 years.

Circus is Coming to Town

Mark your calendars - The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus will once again be coming to Pioneer Creek Park.

The big top will be in Independence for two shows, 5 & 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 30. Watch future newsletters for ticket information!



Public Invited to Chamber Construction Meetings

The West Hennepin Chamber of Commerce's Highway 12 Task Force will be holding meetings to discuss impacts Highway 12 construction will have on area businesses. Meetings will be held at 1 p.m. every-other-Friday at Blackwater Café. Members of the public are welcome to attend. For more information, visit www.whcc-mn.org

Road Restrictions in Effect

During the spring, thawing and refreezing water make paved and gravel roads more susceptible to damage from heavy vehicles.

To preserve the life of City roads, Independence road restrictions were put into effect in mid-March and will be lifted in early May, depending on weather conditions. Residents are asked to plan their construction projects accordingly. Blacktop roads have a 5-ton limit and gravel roads have a 4-ton limit.

Flags have been installed on affected roads to help notify drivers of the posting. To find out when the restrictions will be lifted, contact City Hall, 763-479-0527 or visit independence.govoffice.com.



PARKS

Tips for Preventing and Treating Oak Wilt

Oak wilt is responsible for killing many oak trees in Minnesota each year. Unlike Dutch elm disease, oak wilt is easier to treat and prevent. The disease is caused by a fungal infection in oak trees. Infected red oaks usually wilt from the crown down in about two to six weeks. When white oaks are infected, they often die slowly and can live for many years.

Trees are infected with oak wilt in two ways. The most common means of infection is through the root systems of diseased trees. To prevent further infection, professional landscapers can create a barrier between healthy and infected trees' root systems.

Oaks can also be infected by insects carrying the oak wilt fungus. To prevent this type of infection, avoid pruning oaks in April, May or June. If pruning is necessary, then use a water-based seal to immediately cover any wounds to the bark. Pruning July through October is safer for oaks and pruning November through March is the safest time.

Treatment may be available for white oaks when they first become infected. Arborists can provide more information on the appropriate treatment for infected oaks.

If you suspect you have an infected tree, contact a professional landscaping company or arborist. Prevention and early treatment are key in limiting the spread of oak wilt.

This article has been compiled from information from the University of Minnesota Office of Extension.

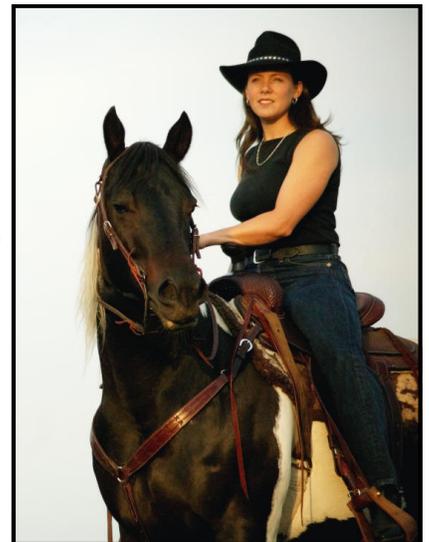
Luce Line closed to horses March 23 - May 15

The horse trail along the Luce Line State Trail, from Vicksburg Lane in Plymouth to Winsted, will be closed from March 23 to May 15 due to wet conditions and frost. The closure is intended to prevent damage to the treadway.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will post signs on the trail notifying users of the trail closure. DNR conservation officers, as well as local law enforcement officials, will monitor compliance. The main treadway will remain open for permitted uses.

Dog-walkers must obey trail riding rules specifying that dog waste be removed and that dogs be on a leash six feet in length or less.

Contact Martha Reger, DNR Area Trails and Waterways supervisor, 952-826-6769, with questions regarding the horse trail closure or any other trail-related issue.



ENVIRONMENT

Paper Recycling Beyond the Kitchen

Every hour Twin Cities metro area residents place over 21 tons of recyclable paper in the garbage. That's 42,000 pounds of valuable, recyclable paper!

So how is so much paper ending up in the garbage? One problem is that most people associate recycling with the kitchen. A common place for a recycling bin is in the kitchen, next to the garbage. While this is convenient, it often leads people to forget that recyclables, particularly paper, are generated throughout the home.

Here are some ideas on how you can recycle more paper beyond the kitchen:

In the Office

Place a small container for recycling next to your computer or desk for easy recycling of mail, office and school paper. If you shred paper, shred your documents into a brown paper bag for easy and proper recycling. Remember that you can also recycle envelopes with windows, paper with staples and paper clips, and magazines and catalogs.

In the Bathroom

Remember to recycle boxes from toothpaste, medications and other toiletries. Place a recycling container in your bathroom for collecting these recyclables.

Other Areas

Consider placing recycling containers in other areas of the home where you generate recyclable paper, such as children's play areas or bedrooms. You will be more likely to recycle your paper if containers are readily available.

Rethink Recycling. You can recycle more kinds of paper than you think. To learn more, contact your community recycling program or visit www.RethinkRecycling.com, the metro area's resource for recycling and waste disposal.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Reserves Wanted

***By: West Hennepin Public Safety
Officer Stephanie Heupel, Police Reserve Coordinator***

The West Hennepin Public Safety Reserve Program is looking for more volunteers to become reserves. Police reserves are an essential part of the Department. As a police reserve, you will assist officers on calls, transport suspects to Hennepin County Jail, patrol the Maple Plain and Independence communities and help the officers when needed. And most of all, as a reserve, you will be able to help keep your own community safe. Reserve officers are also in charge of community events, such as View Santa, and help police officers with different training events.

Police reserves not only consist of those who are interested in going into law enforcement, but are a group of people who want to make a difference. Reserves come from all walks of life and are credited for giving back to their communities.

West Hennepin Public Safety Reserve Officers must:

- Be at least 19 years of age
- Have a valid Minnesota Driver's License
- Be in good physical condition
- Have good vision that is correctable to 20/20 with corrective lenses
- Have a stable work record

Potential applicants must fill out an application and submit to a background check and interview. Upon completion, reserves will receive proper training in Reserve School and will attend monthly meetings. Reserves also wear a uniform and duty belt supplied by West Hennepin Public Safety.

If you're interested in becoming a West Hennepin Public Safety Reserve Officer, please call West Hennepin Public Safety, 763-479-0500.



CLEAN-UP DAY

Hennepin County, Independence and Maple Plain to Sponsor Annual City Clean-Up Day

The Cities of Independence and Maple Plain will sponsor an annual Clean-Up Day for their residents from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 2. The drop off event will be at the Independence City Hall, 1920 County Road 90, Independence. Hennepin County will also be collecting household hazardous waste from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 30, May 1 and May 2 at Independence City Hall.

Please note that you will need to show proof of Hennepin County residency for the hazardous waste drop off and proof of Independence or Maple Plain residency for the cities' drop off. Please have identification and money ready when you arrive.

The following items will be collected on Saturday, May 2 from Maple Plain and Independence residents only:

- Scrap Iron/Metals – No charge for scrap metals/iron/aluminum. All lawn mower grill and bike tires must be removed. All plastic must be removed from lawn mowers, aluminum and steel removed from grills. Tanks and barrels will be accepted only if they are cut in half.
- Appliances - \$15 each unit, including dehumidifiers, heat pumps, water heaters, microwaves, washers, dryers, refrigerators, etc. \$25 for air conditioners. Gas air conditioners and refrigerators will not be accepted. Anyone bringing in a gas air conditioner or refrigerator will have to pay \$200 to leave it, or they must take it back home.
- Construction Material/Misc. Junk - \$20 a cubic yard (a pickup holds 3 cubic yards or \$60). Items accepted include concrete, lumber, doors, moldings and boards, sheetrock, tile, landscape timbers, fences, etc.
- Mattresses, Box Springs and Upholstered Furniture – \$25 each.
- Carpet - \$20 a roll.
- Tires – With or without rims. \$5 for car tires, \$10 for semi tires and \$15 for tractor tires.

The County will accept many household hazardous wastes, including mercury items (fluorescent bulbs and HID lamps, thermostats and thermometers); pesticides; electronics (computers, televisions, VCRs, stereos, etc.); automotive wastes (fuels, fuel additives, starter fluid, waxes); aerosol cans, paint, lead-based paint chips, solvents and thinners; pool, photographic and hobby chemicals; rechargeable tools, household batteries and lead-acid batteries and gas cylinders (propane less than 40 lbs., specialty gases less than 59 lbs. will be evaluated). Items are accepted from households only, business waste cannot be accepted. These items will be collected on April 30, May 1 and May 2.

Do not bring recyclables that are collected curbside, yard waste (leaves, grass and brush), boats or canoes. No commercial hazardous waste will be accepted by the County or the Cities.

For further information or to volunteer at the event, call the Independence City Hall, 763-479-0527.

City of Independence
1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359

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MAPLE PLAIN, 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-Thursday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m. - Noon

City Calendar

April

- 2 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 14 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 28 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

May

- 11 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 12 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 25 Memorial Day - City Hall closed
- 26 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

June

- 4 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 8 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 9 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 23 City Council - 7:30 p.m.