



Spring 2010

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE NEWS

A letter from the Mayor



How nice to be rid of the snow and ice! It seemed like it was going to be a very long winter and it would have been if March would have been an average March. However, I never think of winter being over until I have had my birthday on May 2. I was told that there was a terrible blizzard the year I was born and I have seen snow on my birthday. How encouraging!!!

We've just lost another of our former Independence City Council Members. Mr. Douglas McCulley began serving on the Council by appointment in January of 1973, filling the vacancy left when my father, who was on the council, died suddenly after Christmas in 1972. Doug had been serving on the Planning Commission and then served several years on the City Council during which time the first City Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted. Doug farmed on County Road 92. He and his wife Merna were named Hennepin County Farm Family of the Year several years ago. They have four children. Doug was involved with many organizations over the years.

Our newest Comprehensive Land Use Plan is in its final review at the Metropolitan Council. It should be back before the City Council for final vote before summer.

Please join me and the Mayor of Maple Plain for the Step To It Challenge walk beginning at the Maple Plain Library at 10:30 a.m. on May 15. See page 3 for more information.

Most property valuations remained either the same or decreased in value. One thing I do know is that because of the 25 percent increase in Agriculture Land Values last year we saw a tremendous increase in the taxes payable this year. Property valuations this year affect taxes payable in 2011.

We have just reviewed our City's 2009 audit report. It was very good! Thanks to staff for following our budget, spending less where possible and ensuring tax dollars are accounted for properly.

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Planning Commission

Chair Mario Crespo
Greg Gardella
Robert Gardner
Carl Phillips
Keith Triplett

City Council

Mayor Marvin Johnson
Lynn Betts
Brad Spencer
Lindsay Wallace
Norm Wenck

Parks Commission

Chair James Rick
Leroy Kowalke
Carole Peter
Lisa Phillips

COMMUNITY CORNER

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

The Cities of Independence and Maple Plain will sponsor an annual Clean-Up Day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 1. 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 on April 29, 30 and May 1 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 1 from Maple Plain and Independence residents only:

- Scrap Iron/Metals – No charge for scrap metals/iron/aluminum. All lawn mower, grill and bikes 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, boards, sheetrock, tile, timbers, fences, etc.
- Mattresses, Box Springs and Upholstered Furniture – \$25 each.
- Carpet - \$20 a roll.
- Tires – Without rims: \$2 for lawn and garden tires, \$5 for car tires, \$10 for truck and semi tires and \$25 for tractor tires. There is an additional \$2 charge for tires with rims.

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.

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 City.

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

COMMUNITY CORNER

Continued from page 1

Those of you who are on the Green Acres Program make sure you get reported what you need done before May 1 and August 1. If you have questions, call City Hall, or I can try to answer your question if you give me a call. Unfortunately, the Legislature will not be out of session until mid-May, so there may still be some changes to the Green Acres Law. For those with larger acreages, you may want to take another look at the Metropolitan Agriculture Preserve Law instead.

The U.S. Highway 12 detour is now in place. This will be a long summer for traffic disruption, but hopefully the new railroad bridge and the realigned road will be well worth it. The traffic moved amazingly well on the detour last September, but it was certainly an inconvenience for all who live on the detour route or who have their road closed at County Road 90. County Road 6 has enough traffic alone so the impact of Highway 12 traffic makes ingress or egress a real challenge.

I encourage our residents to visit Pioneer Park on County Road 90. It is a great place for a picnic, a quiet meeting place or a walk in the country.



Your Mayor,

Marvin D. Johnson

Take the Step To It Challenge



Independence is encouraging residents to “Step To It” to include physical activity in their daily lives. Independence is participating with other cities, including Maple Plain, in a friendly four-week competition. From May 17 to June 13 participants in each city will track and report their weekly step and activity totals. Awards will be given to the people who log the most physical activity and a drawing will be held to give away Twins tickets in each city.

To start things off, Mayor Johnson and Mayor Sweeney will lead an inaugural walk at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 15 at the Maple Plain Library. Residents can register at the library and then join the mayors for the 1-mile walk. Sign up by yourself or recruit your family or friends and form a group. All participants have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win Twins tickets to a game in the new ballpark. The County is also supplying pedometers and other incentives, while supplies last, to those who sign up. To register, visit www.steptoit.org or call 612-596-1511.

Maps of walking and biking routes in Independence and Maple Plain will be available for residents. During the challenge, the City encourages residents to think about how they can incorporate walking and biking into their daily activities, such as grocery shopping, heading to the library and taking your kids to visit their friends. This is an Active Living Hennepin Communities event.

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1. FERTILIZE SMART

Make sure your fertilizer is phosphorus-free. Sweep up fertilizer that spills onto hard surfaces. Soils in our area already contain enough phosphorus to maintain most lawns. Excess phosphorus washes away into nearby lakes or streams where it feeds algae. Algae blooms stress fish and wildlife, and they make swimming and fishing unpleasant or impossible.



2. GRASS – DON'T BLOW IT OFF

Blow or rake grass clippings and leaves out of the street. Leave them on your lawn, use them for compost, or bag them up. Grass clippings and leaves in the street end up in the storm sewer, where they are carried to nearby lakes and streams. Clippings and leaves contain phosphorus and other nutrients that, like fertilizer, feed algae and other aquatic plants.

3. USE YOUR RUNOFF

Direct your downspouts onto your lawn or garden or into a rain barrel. Use rainwater to water your lawn and garden. It is free, naturally soft and perfect for keeping green things growing. Using rainwater reduces runoff, which carries pollutants to lakes and streams.

4. SCOOP THE POOP

Grab a bag when you grab the leash, and pick up after your pets. When pet waste is left behind, rainwater washes it into lakes and streams. Pet waste contains bacteria that can cause illness. It also contains nutrients that can cause excessive algae blooms in lakes and streams.

5. USE CHEMICALS WISELY

Use chemical products according to label directions. Consider alternative or natural remedies to control weeds and pests. Read the label before using herbicides and pesticides, and apply according to directions. Use the minimum amount needed to control the problem. If you can, consider using alternative or natural remedies, or remove the problem by hand.

6. KEEP A HEALTHY LAWN

Aerate your lawn, seed bare patches and mow at a higher setting. Healthy lawns are good for the environment. A healthy, vigorous lawn needs less watering, fewer chemicals and less maintenance. Aerate your lawn periodically to loosen the soil. Seed bare patches to prevent erosion and soil loss. Mow at a higher setting. Grass mowed to a height of 2 ½ to 3 inches develops deeper, healthier roots and has a competitive advantage over weeds.



ENVIRONMENT

7. PLANT A RAIN GARDEN

Capture, clean and infiltrate rainwater that would otherwise run off your property. Rain gardens are planted depressions designed to store rainwater and allow it to soak into the soil. Find out more about rain gardens at www.bluethumb.org.

8. REPLACE TURF WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Swap some of your high-maintenance lawn for low-maintenance native ground cover, plants or grasses. Many native plants develop deeper root structures than turf grass, which reduces runoff by allowing for better water infiltration. More information on designing a native garden is available at www.bluethumb.org.

9. REDUCE YOUR FOOTPRINT

Replace some pavement – such as a walk, patio or driveway – with pavers or pervious pavement. The porous surface will allow water to seep through, reducing the amount of water that runs off into the storm sewer.

10. ADOPT A STORM DRAIN

Keep neighborhood storm drains free of leaves, seeds and grass clippings. Storm drains are directly connected to the nearest body of water. Water running into storm drains can carry with it anything dumped nearby including leaves, grass clippings, soil, oil, paint and chemicals. Keeping storm drains clear will protect the water quality of nearby lakes, streams and rivers.

This information is courtesy of the Pioneer-Sarah Creek Water Management Commission in cooperation with other water management organizations.

Stabilize Your Shoreline to Stop Erosion and Geese

Do you want to stop geese from traipsing across your lakeshore property? Is erosion degrading your lakeshore? Does green water make your lake unappealing in the summer?

Consider creating a buffer on your shoreline with natural grasses and flowers. Natural plantings deter geese, stabilize shorelines and absorb polluted run-off. For more information on stabilizing your shoreline, visit www.bluethumb.org

Recyclopedia Available at City Hall

Looking for a place to dispose of driveway sealer? Wondering what to do with leftover cooking oil? Find those answers and more in the City's new Recyclopedia.

The Recyclopedia is a detailed booklet that explains where you can dispose of many household and yard items.

Pick up your Recyclopedia at City Hall, or request a copy by calling 763-479-0527 or emailing cscipioni@ci.independence.mn.us.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Tornado Watches and Warnings By Director Ray McCoy

In Minnesota tornadoes occur mainly from April through July, with May and June being the peak months. But like thunderstorms, tornadoes can form any time of the year. The National Weather Service (NWA) issues **Watches** when tornadoes are possible or favorable in your area, for flash floods or severe thunderstorms. The NWA considers a thunderstorm to be severe if it is associated with wind speeds of 58 miles per hour or more, hail 3/4-inch in diameter or larger and heavy rain.

Remain alert for approaching storms. This is the time to remind and plan with family members where the safest places within your home are. Designate an area in the home as a shelter, and practice having everyone in the family go there. Have a plan for getting together if family members are separated from one another due to work, school or other activities. The best protection during a tornado is an interior room on the lowest levels of a building, preferably a basement or storm cellar. Listen to the radio or television for further developments.

A **Warning** is issued when severe weather has been reported or is imminent. Seek shelter immediately if you are in or near the path of the storm. A **Tornado Warning** is issued when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. If a tornado warning is issued for your area and the sky becomes threatening, move to your pre-designated place of safety. Turn on a battery-operated radio and wait for further instructions.

When the sirens sound to notify you of bad weather conditions please tune into a local broadcast channel. Please do not call 911 for weather conditions or updates. Keep the phone lines open for the emergency calls or the spotting of tornadoes. Warnings are issued by county names. Independence residents live in Hennepin County and are near Wright and Caver counties. For more information on staying safe during tornado season, visit www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/index.shtm.

Volunteers Needed for National Night Out



Join your neighbors and celebrate National Night out this year! West Hennepin Public Safety is looking for residents to host a block party for their neighbors during the evening of Aug. 3. Parties that register with WHPS will receive a visit from police officers and firefighters.

You can have your neighbors bring their own chairs, drinks, brats or hamburgers to grill, or have an ice cream social, a musical concert or a kiddie's parade - whatever brings neighbors outdoors to network and relax together.

To register a party call WHPS, 763-479-0500. Please register by 4 p.m. on July 30.

City of Independence
1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MAPLE PLAIN, MN 55359
PERMIT NO. 30

Census has Arrived



Remember to fill out your census!

If you need assistance filling out your census, you can call

763-852-1541. An assistance center is also available at the Delano Library, 190 Railroad Ave E. For the center's hours, call 763-972-3467.



CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

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

City Hall Office Hours
Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m. - Noon

City Calendar

April

12 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
13 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
27 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

May

1 City Clean Up Day
6 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
10 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
11 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
25 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
31 Memorial Day - City Hall Closed

June

3 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
8 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
14 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
22 City Council - 7:30 p.m.