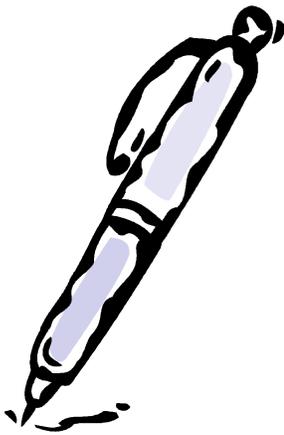




Fall 2008

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE NEWS

A letter from the Mayor



The political conventions are over for another year. Primary Election Day has passed and the number of candidates running for office has been narrowed down considerably. Our final vote will be made on Election Day, Nov. 4. Listen carefully to what the candidates have to say. Remember, no one candidate can promise the “moon” to you because politics is a team effort and part of that team is “us” voting. Study the candidates, know the issues and be sure to vote on Nov. 4. If you are going to be out of town or confined to your home, be sure to plan ahead for an absentee ballot. Call City Hall, 763-479-0527, for more information.

This summer, regardless of which direction you drive away from home, we have had to plan ahead. Construction on U.S. Highway 12 in Delano to the west, work to the east in Long Lake and Orono, to the north on County Road 19 or the south on Highway 7, all have meant detours or delays for traveling to destinations. Fortunately, most of the construction areas will be open this fall with finishing touches to be accomplished next year.

Final work is being done on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the City that needs to be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for approval. A Council-appointed task force reviewed it first. The Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on the plan on at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 13. After that, the City Council will vote to forward it to the Met Council and also order another public comment period at City Hall and receive responses from neighboring communities. Everything should be finalized by June 2009 for another 10 years. Comp Plans give a general direction for planning the community for the next 20 years, but they can be amended with good reasoning and approval from the Met Council.

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

It will seem strange not having Heritage Fest at the park this fall. Do visit the park for a hike or a picnic anyway, if you have the opportunity. We are sorry to hear that we have some Oak Wilt in the park. We have such beautiful oak trees in the park, so we are hoping that we won't lose all of them like we lost our huge elm trees in the community years ago.

The City Council is in the midst of working on our City budget for next year. The Council, at its Sept. 8 meeting, proposed a 2009 levy 2.2 percent lower than the 2008 budget. Final determination must be made by Dec. 15. We can lower the budget, but cannot increase it. The State Legislature has placed levy limits of 3.9 percent increase over the next three years on cities with populations over 2,500. Hennepin County is proposing a 7.5 percent increase in taxes.

Our Truth In Taxation hearing is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 1 at 6:30 p.m. The final 2009 budget and levy will be approved by the City Council on Tuesday, Dec. 9. At the Sept. 8 Council meeting, we had a very large crowd in attendance. At that meeting, I announced that any major cuts would be discussed at a council meeting and will be announced beforehand on the agenda.

By law, we would not have to hold a Truth In Taxation hearing because we are reducing taxes, but we are. Unfortunately, oftentimes people think this is a time for them to bring in their proposed valuation and taxes, but this is strictly for the City's proposed budget. Also, put on your calendar the dates for your school district and the County's Truth In Taxation hearings.

See you at the polls on Nov. 4!

Your Mayor,

Marvin D. Johnson

Meet Your City Employee: Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Official Bruce Satek



Residents often see Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Official Bruce Satek's white truck zipping through town. Whether he's heading to a building inspection or checking on a code violations, Satek's job is to help create a safe community.

Satek was hired by the City in 2005 as its first Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Official. His main duties are to review building plans, conduct building inspections, follow-up with potential City Code violations and act as a resource for residents and builders. In addition, Satek assists the Public Works Department with snowplowing.

COMMUNITY CORNER

City Works To Adopt New Shoreland Ordinance



In the State of Minnesota, shoreland management standards are intended to preserve and enhance the quality of surface waters, conserve the economic and natural environmental values of shoreland and provide for the wise use of water and related land resources of the State. As required by State Law, the shoreland overlay district applies to property within 1,000 feet of designated lakes and within 300 feet of designated rivers. This is the same overlay district that is identified in the current City shoreland ordinance. Properties within these overlay areas are subject to the provisions of the shoreland ordinance.

The City of Independence must adopt a shoreland ordinance in compliance with statewide standards for “Management of Shoreland Areas,” Minnesota Regulations Parts 6120.2500 - 6120.3900. Adoption of an ordinance which complies with minimum state standards is mandatory, and to ensure compliance, the ordinance must be reviewed and approved by the Department of Natural Resources. The City’s current “Management of Shoreland and Flood Plain Areas” ordinance was adopted in 1992 to address growing development concerns in lakeshore areas, but was not reviewed or approved by the

DNR, and falls short of minimum State standards in several areas. The current shoreland ordinance has been revised to meet these standards, and a first draft of the new proposed ordinance was posted to the City website on Aug. 22.

While many items in the revised ordinance remain the same as the current ordinance, there are areas that have changed to bring the ordinance into compliance with state standards. These changes are summarized in a document entitled “Shoreland Ordinance Update: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ),” available on the City website. Public review of the revisions has generated a number of questions relative to specific language, and how changes might affect individual property owners. Further clarification on these items is available in a document entitled “Clarification of Shoreland Ordinance Language – Common Questions,” also available on the website. The ordinance was a topic of discussion at the Sept. 8 Planning Commission meeting, and will be discussed again at the Oct. 13 Planning Commission meeting. In response to comments received to date, a second draft of the ordinance is being prepared and was posted to the City website the week of Sept. 22 for public review.

The documents referenced above may be viewed at <http://independence.govoffice.com> by clicking “Water Resources” then “Shoreland” in the left column. If you wish to be put on a contact list to receive updates on the ordinance, please contact the City at 763-479-0527. Specific questions may be addressed to Jessica Laabs, City Water Resources Consultant, at 651-643-0437 or Jessica.Laabs@kimley-horn.com.

PARKS

Host Your Next Event at the Independence Community Center

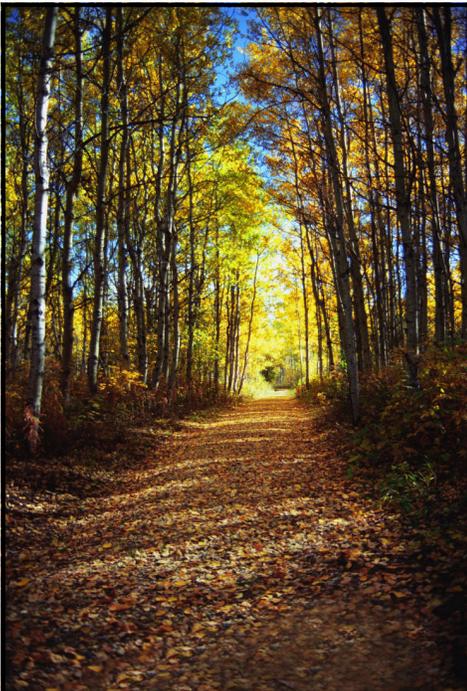
Planning a wedding, graduation party or other special event? Consider hosting it at the Independence Community Center, located at Independence City Hall. The Community Center is available to rent for a variety of meetings and events. The facility can accommodate up to 350 people and includes a large kitchen.

Rental fees vary from \$150 to \$400 for special events and \$500 for weddings. The facility can also be rented for funeral receptions for \$50 for residents and \$100 for non-residents.

For more information on renting the Independence Community Center, contact Christina Scipioni, 763-479-0549 or cscipioni@ci.independence.mn.us.



Help Plan Your City Parks. Join the Parks Commission.



Whether they're reviewing development plans, planning special events or working to make park improvements a reality, members of the Independence Parks Commission dedicate their time to improving the City for all of its residents.

The City is encouraging residents who want to make a difference in their community to apply to become a Parks Commissioner.

"Being a member of the Parks Commission gives residents the opportunity to weigh-in on important park issues and to help shape Independence for future generations," said City Administrator Toni Hirsch.

The Parks Commission meets at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month. Along with attending monthly meetings, Commissioners typically dedicate one or two hours a month to preparing for meetings.

"Parks Commissioners have some exciting opportunities on the horizon," Hirsch said. "Some of the projects the Commission is working on are: a plan to implement developing Pioneer Creek Park, reviewing development applications and planning special events for next summer. The Commission is also heavily involved with the planning and execution of Heritage Fest, which we're hoping to bring back next year."

Residents interested in applying for the position should contact Christina Scipioni, 763-479-0527 or cscipioni@ci.independence.mn.us.

ENVIRONMENT

October is Choose To Reuse Month

Going green has never been so much fun! In an effort to encourage more reuse, Hennepin County has partnered with businesses and organizations that provide opportunities to rent, repair, resell, consign, trade, sell bulk and exchange used goods to offer discounts during October. When residents choose to reuse instead of buying new they can reduce their carbon footprint, save money and support the local economy.

The County has partnered with 83 local earth-friendly retail partners with 131 locations including: Cartridge World, Costume Rentals, Hymie's Vintage Records, Jerry's Hardware, Knight's Formalwear, Look Again Consignment, Once Upon a Child, Paperback Exchange, Rags to Riches, Savers, Steeple People and Whole Foods. Customers may pick up a "Choose To Reuse" coupon book at Independence City Hall, participating locations, Hennepin County Services Centers and all Three Rivers Park District locations, or download a copy at www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse.



Septic Inspections and Selling Your Home

A large portion of properties in Independence have private septic systems. To ensure the systems are working properly, property owners should take care of them and have their tanks pumped every 3 to 4 years. Septic systems with a filter need to be cleaned every six months.

When selling a home, Section 705.13 of the City Code requires that a compliance inspection be done on its septic system. The inspection must be done when a purchase agreement is made. Private companies conduct the inspections and should send a copy of the inspection report to the City Building Inspector. The inspection report allows the City to know if the system is in compliance or if it requires repair.

For more information on septic compliance, call Building Inspector Bruce Satek, 763-479-0531.

Illicit Discharge Reporting Form Now Available

In Independence, our storm sewer system is composed of wetlands, lakes and rivers. State and local regulations require the protection of these waters and the management of illicit discharge. "Illicit discharge" is defined by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as any discharge to a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer that is not composed entirely of storm water. Examples of illicit discharge include paint, herbicides/pesticides, deicing agents, automotive fluids, solvents, oils, soaps, spills, fuels and concrete washout water.

The City wants to keep these discharges out of its waters. If you see something suspicious or have information concerning illicit discharge to local bodies of water, use the Illicit Discharge Reporting Form available on the City website (independence.govoffice.com – click "Water Resources – Stormwater/MS4") or call City staff at 763-479-0527.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Prevent Gas Siphoning and Computer ID Theft

by Investigator Ben Anderson

West Hennepin Public Safety is issuing an alert to residents to be aware of gas siphoning, which has been on the increase in the cities of Maple Plain and Independence. West Hennepin has received three reports of gas siphoning occurring recently in residential areas in the City of Maple Plain and a commercial business in the City of Independence. This type of crime has hit numerous surrounding areas, but until lately it has not impacted the West Hennepin Public Safety area. This trend is likely to continue and/or increase with the high cost of fuel.

Residents are encouraged to park vehicles inside when possible or park in a well-lit area and use locking gas caps or tanks. Residents are also urged to call 911 with any suspicious activity. An officer will respond to check it out.

Another trend that law enforcement has seen and one Maple Plain resident has possibly become a victim of is a computer scam, in which suspects use a 'Trojan horse' to enter a victim's computer. The computer program then downloads personal information, including account numbers and/or PIN numbers if they're recorded on the computer. The suspect then makes fraudulent financial documents and/or credit cards/debit cards.

This type of theft is reportedly on the increase and banking officials have urged people to make sure their spyware programs are up-to-date. This latest type of scam is yet another technique that criminals will use to continue to commit identity theft.

If you think you've become the victim of identity theft or need to report identity theft, call West Hennepin Public Safety, 763-479-0500, or visit the Federal Trade Commission website at www.FTC.gov. The website has excellent information and suggestions on how to prevent identity theft and how to respond to it if you become a victim.

Fire Safety Tips

Make sure your home is well-guarded against fire with these fire prevention tips:

- Keep lawns trimmed, leaves raked and the roof and rain gutters free from debris such as dead limbs and leaves.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from your home.
- Store flammable materials, liquids and solvents in metal containers outside the home at least 30 feet away from structures and wooden fences.
- Landscape your property with fire-resistant plants and vegetation to prevent fire from spreading quickly.
- Post home address signs that are clearly visible from the road.
- Create defensible space by thinning trees and brush within 30 feet around your home.

For more information on keeping your house safe from fires, visit www.FireSafety.gov.

ELECTION CONNECTION

Campaign Materials at the Polling Place

When you head out to your polling place to vote, please remember that no one may display campaign material, post signs or in any manner try to persuade a voter within 100 feet of the polling place.



These restrictions will be in place for Independence City Hall during absentee voting Oct. 3 through Nov. 3 and on Election Day, Nov. 4.

Places to Look for Candidate Information

Independence voters can find information on local candidates on local party websites, local newspapers or on the Minnesota Secretary of State's website, www.sos.state.mn.us.



The Minnesota League of Women Voters website, www.lwvmn.org, features a voter guide, special reports and voting information. The League also hosts non-partisan forums and debates. For more information, call the League, 651-224-5445.

How to Register to Vote

Eligible voters may register to vote up to 20 days before the Nov. 4 election. Remember, people who have changed their name or address need to register using their new information. Registration cards are at Independence City Hall, or on the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.state.mn.us.

Voters may also register to vote on Election Day if they have acceptable identification:

- A Minnesota Driver's License, Learner's Permit, Identification Card or Tribal ID with your current address.
- A "Notice of Late Registration" received from your City Clerk.
- One of the following picture IDs: MN Driver's License, Learner's Permit, Identification Card or Tribal ID AND a utility bill that contains your name and current address that is due within 30 days of the election.

Questions? Call City Hall, 763-479-0527.

Absentee Voting Available at City Hall

For those who can't make it to the polls on Election Day, absentee voting will be available beginning Oct. 3. Absentee voting is available to people who will be unable to vote on Nov. 4 because of illness, absence from their precinct, a religious holiday or serving as an election judge in another precinct.

To receive an absentee ballot, pick up an absentee ballot application at Independence City Hall, 1920 County Road 90, or visit www.sos.state.mn.us to download one. Applications should be returned to City Hall.

To make absentee voting more convenient, City Hall will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 1 and will stay open until 5 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 3.



City of Independence
1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359

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PERMIT NO. 30

Motorized Vehicles Prohibited in City Parks

The City of Independence bans the use of motorized vehicles in City parks. ATVs, golf carts, four-wheelers and other motorized vehicles ruin the terrain in the parks and create the need for costly grading repairs.



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

October

- 2 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 4 Maple Plain Fire Dept. Steak Fry
- 13 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 14 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 28 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

November

- 4 Statewide General Election
- 6 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 10 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 11 Veteran's Day - City Hall closed
- 18 City Council - 7:30 p.m. (tentative)
- 25 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 27 & 28 Thanksgiving - City Hall closed

December

- 1 Truth In Taxation - 6:30 p.m.
- 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.
- 25 Christmas - City Hall closed