



Summer 2010

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE NEWS

A letter from the Mayor



When I last wrote the article for the newsletter we were just beginning to enjoy an early spring, but waiting for a late snow to happen. It never did! The rather dry spring changed in June so we are enjoying the beauty of luscious green growth of our lawns, plants and trees. For us who farm it has also translated into taller corn and soybean plants and a thicker hay crop because of the warm days. Fortunately to this point, we haven't had damaging hail and wind.

We have lost two residents who made their mark in our community. The first was Ruth Cummings who along with Verna Hamilton wrote the book "Our Independence." The book is all about the history of Independence and is still being sold at City Hall. Ruth also just published a couple of other books and had a book signing at a Wayzata book store. The second person who passed away was Gene Cook. He served as Chair of our Planning Commission and as a Council Member.

The Highway 12 detour is working amazingly well and we are halfway through the scheduled closing. The railroad bridge project is about a week behind schedule, but it is anticipated that the road will still open in mid-October. The new road bed is completed on the east side of the bridge and nearly completed on the west side. Paving will be done near the end of the project and will extend to just west of County Road 90. We are not sure how they are going to deal with traffic when the paving is done at County Road 90.

Thank you to all who participated in the Step To It Challenge. Our City did not win the contest, but we did rate very high, especially in steps per individual.

Because of the change in the Green Acres Law, we have had several new applicants wanting to enroll their acreage in the Agricultural Preserve Program. If you are one of those still confused about what has changed, be sure to talk to the assessor or I'll be glad to visit with you too.

The City is moving ahead with a sewer project on the west side of Lake Independence. This is a project some people have desperately needed and have been patiently waiting for and others are

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Planning Commission

Chair Mario Crespo
Robert Gardner
Tom Palmquist
Carl Phillips
Keith Triplett

City Council

Mayor Marvin Johnson
Lynn Betts
Brad Spencer
Lindsay Wallace
Norm Wenck

Parks Commission

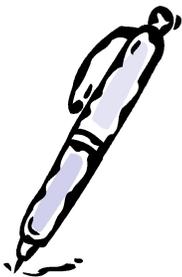
Chair James Rick
Leroy Kowalke
Carole Peter
Lisa Phillips

COMMUNITY CORNER

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strongly opposed. The bids for work came in under estimate and the work climate is such that we felt it was the best time to do this project. Most of the delays on this project were due to the Metropolitan Council rejecting all earlier proposals primarily on the housing density issue.

Most people saw the Star Tribune article about a month ago about Lake Independence. It is amazing how a newspaper writer can twist a story to make it sensational. What was an interview regarding the scope of the possible sewer project on Lake Independence was never even mentioned in the article. Instead of positive steps on dealing with the TMDL for Lake Independence, the article was completely negative. In fact, the one picture with the culvert going into Lake Independence was located on the Medina side of the lake. It is also interesting how the writer can "put words in your mouth" when it is not a quote.



Have a good remaining part of the summer! Fall will be here quickly!

Your Mayor,

Marvin D. Johnson

2030 Comp Plan Update Approved

Our Comprehensive Land Use Plan has been approved by the Metropolitan Council and formally adopted by the City Council. This process is required every 10 years, so in another seven or eight years we have to start all over again. Amendments can be applied for, but only in rare instances is it considered appropriate. Copies are available for viewing online or at City Hall.

Tour de Tonka Bike Ride - Saturday August 7



Mark your calendar for the 5th Annual Tour de Tonka bike ride, a community building event coordinated by Minnetonka Community Education. This ride, not a race, will be held Saturday, Aug. 7. Five different route options are available: 16, 23, 38, 65 or 100 miles - we have a ride distance for everyone. The event begins at Minnetonka High School at 7:30 a.m. Same day registration begins at 5:45 a.m. Registration fee includes a T-shirt, lots of entertainment and many wonderful rest stops full of great treats. In addition to the registration fee, a separate donation may be made to the ICA Food Shelf, giving riders an opportunity to positively impact our community with their exercise.

Also, on Tuesday Aug. 3, the second annual Tour de Tonka - Two Mile Smile will take place. This ride is open to all 3 through 7-year-olds and begins at 6:30 p.m. with same day registration beginning at 5:30 p.m. The ride starts and ends at the Minnetonka Community Education Center. Volunteers are also needed for this major event. Call Debbie at 952-401-6800 if you or your group would like to get involved. For more information on any Tour de Tonka event, visit www.tourdetonka.org or call Ellen at 952-401-6842.



COMMUNITY CORNER

New Absentee Voting Rules and Election Date Changes



At the beginning of 2010, the State Legislature made several changes to election laws that will affect you this election season.

The Primary Election will be held Aug. 10 to allow for a longer absentee voting period. Absentee voting for the Primary began June 25 and will continue until Aug. 9.

The General Election will be the same day as past years, Nov. 2, but the absentee voting period before the election is now 45 days. Absentee voting for the General Election begins Sept. 17 and ends Nov. 1.

The law now requires that all absentee ballots be received by the City no later than 3 p.m. on Election Day. Any absentee ballots dropped off at the City after 3 p.m. will not be accepted. Voters are eligible to receive an absentee ballot if they are going to be absent from the precinct on Election Day, have an illness or disability, cannot go to the polling place because of a religious discipline or observance or are serving as an election judge in another precinct. Applications to receive an absentee ballot are available at City Hall or online, <http://independence.govoffice.com>. For questions about the upcoming elections, call City Hall, 763-479-0527.

Delano Senior Center Celebrates Older Americans Month 2010

May was Older Americans Month—a tradition dating back to 1963 to honor the legacies and ongoing contributions of older Americans and support them as they enter the next stage in life. The Delano Senior Center joined communities nationwide in celebrating this month with special activities and events.

This year's Older Americans Month theme – Age Strong! Live Long! – recognized the diversity and vitality of today's older Americans who span three generations. They have lived through wars and hard times, as well as periods of unprecedented prosperity. They pioneered new technologies in medicine, communications, and industry while spearheading a cultural revolution that won equal right for minorities, women, and disabled Americans.



These remarkable achievements demonstrate the strength and character of older Americans, and underscore the debt of gratitude we owe to the generations that have given our society so much. But the contributions of older Americans are not only in the past. Older Americans are volunteers. They volunteer at group meal sites and deliver food to homebound seniors; they help seniors with home repair, shopping and errands; and they provide vital counseling, information and referral services. Their energy and commitment reminds all Americans, not just senior citizens and their caregivers, to do their part to enhance the quality of life for older generations.

ENVIRONMENT

Wetlands Protect Us

Swaying cattails, the musical trill of a toad, the silent statue of a Great Blue Heron; is that what you imagine when you envision a wetland? A wetland's beauty and diversity are apparent at a glance; however, the function of a wetland is deeper than the surface and wider spread than the wet depression we walk by.



Wetlands are Mother Nature's sponge; preventing flooding and soil erosion by taking up rainwater from your roof, driveway and street. The water infiltrates through the soil and is slowly released into nearby lakes or streams and replenishes the groundwater.

As rainwater runs off into a wetland, plants and soil filter the water, preventing harmful chemicals, sediment and excess nutrients from entering our precious water bodies and keeping our water clean and safe.

You can help protect the function of wetlands by keeping a buffer (unmowed, natural vegetation) around your wetland; and avoid filling or altering wetlands. If you don't own a wetland, you probably live upstream of one. Use lawn care chemicals sparingly (or not at all) - and consider planting a rain garden or composting your yard waste to avoid sending pollution downstream.

~Courtesy of Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

Planting Native is Smart Gardening!

Native plants are the key to an easy, inexpensive and environmentally-friendly garden. Choosing to plant native means you've chosen plants that are hardy and well-adapted to the soils and climate in which they grow. This means you have more time and money to enjoy Minnesota's short-lived summers! Here's why:

- **Water your garden less** - native plants require little more water than normal rainfall and you preserve our precious water resources! Native plants also help stormwater runoff infiltrate into the soil with their extensive root system recharging ground water and preventing flooding.
- **Fertilize less** - in fact native plants improve your soil fertility! Native plants flourish in native soils and even pull excess nutrients out of stormwater runoff before it enters our local water bodies.
- **Weed your garden less** - native species resist invasion of alien plant species.

In addition, native plants attract wildlife by providing food and shelter. In fact you can choose your plants by the type of wildlife you hope to attract for the habitat in your area. Minnesota hosts a large variety of beautiful and functional native flowers and grasses. For example you can plant a colorful native prairie butterfly garden with Prairie Milkweed, Black-Eyed Susan, Pasque Flower, Rough Blazing Stars, and Little Bluestem. Also, a majority of native plants are perennials, which means you save yourself a trip back to the nursery next year!

~Courtesy of Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

ENVIRONMENT

Be a Good Neighbor-Don't Let Thistle Go To Seed

Paula Savage, University of Minnesota Master Gardener-Wright County

Each summer a drive around Independence discloses stands of thistle growing in the landscape. Most of these weeds are Canadian Thistle, but we also have Bull Thistle, Musk Thistle and Plumeless Thistle in Independence. These four weeds are on the MN Primary Noxious Weed list as defined by MN Law and are “deemed to be injurious to public health, public roads, environment, crops, livestock, and other property” (MN Dept. of Agriculture). It is important for our citizens to eradicate these weeds and not allow seeds to blow onto neighboring properties.

The Canadian Thistle is a perennial that grows to 4' tall and spreads rapidly and aggressively from the extensive root and rhizome system and by seed. Lavender flower heads are numerous and occur from June through September. Bull Thistle (flowers June-Aug.), Musk Thistle (flowers June-Aug.), and Plumeless Thistle (flowers May-July) are biennials and flowering occurs in their second year of growth. Eradication techniques are similar to those of Canadian Thistle.

Nonchemical ways to deal with these weeds are by mowing or pulling. Repeated mowing/cutting before flowering occurs is required over several years to see results. If you are late and it is eight or more days after flowering you will need to pick up the debris to avoid seed maturation and dispersal. If pulling, wear gloves and pull the whole root to avoid breakage of roots and resprouting.

If you choose chemical control, there are nonselective and selective chemicals that can be used to eradicate thistle. “Nonselective” chemicals, containing Glyphosate (e.g. Roundup), will kill all plants so use care when using around grass, trees or other valuable plants. “Selective” chemicals containing 2, 4-D (e.g. Weed Be Gone) will kill certain types of broad leafed plants, including thistles, but will not hurt grass. Therefore selective chemicals are more suited for killing thistle in the lawn.

The best time to use chemical control on perennial weeds is in the fall before they go dormant for the winter. The second best time is in the spring when plants are actively growing and up to about 6-10” tall before flowering. If weeds are near water use a product safe for this situation (e.g. Rodeo). In all cases, if using chemicals carefully follow all label directions.

For more information, the University of Minnesota Extension offers excellent identification photos of these weeds on the following website, <http://www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo/weedid/broadleaf/upright/index.html>.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

By Director Ray McCoy



Biking is a healthy, active way for your kids to have fun and get around. It can also be risky - bicycles are involved with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except the automobile. Children ages 5-15 are at greatest risk of death and injury on a bike. Many bike injuries are brain injuries that can forever damage a child's ability to think, walk and talk. The simple step of always wearing a bike helmet can reduce the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent. The good news is that many bike injuries are also predictable and preventable.

After your child has learned to balance and control a bicycle, begin teaching basic traffic skills. They can reduce the most common errors children make while riding. Fifty percent of all bicycle collisions involve children under 9 who are killed or seriously injured riding out of a driveway and not seeing or yielding to oncoming traffic. Teach your child to always walk his/her bicycle from the garage or house to the edge of the road and to begin riding only after searching for traffic. That means looking left, right and left again. Consider painting a line across the end of your driveway to act as a reminder for your child to stop and search for traffic before entering the roadway.

Your involvement can make a difference: set guidelines, keep an eye on your kids and wear a helmet yourself!



Volunteers Needed for Night to Unite

Join neighbors across Independence, West Hennepin Public Safety and local fire departments on Tuesday, Aug. 3 for the 2nd Annual Night to Unite. Sponsored by the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association, AAA of Minnesota/Iowa, and local law enforcement agencies, Night to Unite will celebrate and strengthen neighborhood and community partnerships.

Night to Unite is designed to get to know one another in your neighborhood, build neighborhood involvement by bringing police and communities together, and bring awareness to crime prevention and local law enforcement efforts!

WHPS would like to encourage neighborhoods to get together between 6 and 9 p.m. on Aug. 3 to fight crime and take back our neighborhoods. If you or your neighbors host a neighborhood Night to Unite event, WHPS and the local fire department will make a visit to your event and provide crime fighting and fire safety tips for your group. For more information pertaining to Night to Unite or how to get involved, call WHPS at 763-479-0500 and speak with Night to Unite Coordinator Sgt. Kroells or visit <http://westhennepin.com>.

RECYCLING

Recycling Pick-Up Days Change for Parts of the City

In effort to continue providing the most efficient and reliable service, Waste Management has found it necessary to make a change in the City's scheduled weeks for recycling pick-up. Please be advised the recycle week for all homeowners that live north of Highway 12 and east of County Road 90 changed on July 9. The pickup days will remain the same for all other households.

If you have any questions regarding this change in service, please don't hesitate to contact Waste Management at 1-800-777-8408, or via email at WMEservice@wm.com.

New pick-up dates for households north of Highway 12 and east of Council Road 90:

July 9, 23

August 6, 20

September 3, 17

October 1, 15, 29

November 12, 26

December 10, 24



Waste Management will be changing the dates of recycling pickup for houses in Independence that are east of County Road 90 and north of Highway 12. Households that will be receiving a new recycling pickup date are shown on this map in the purple shaded area. If you have questions about your pickup date, call Waste Management, 1-800-777-8408.

City of Independence
1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359

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Congratulations to Step To It Winners



Thanks to all who participated in the Step To It Challenge. Independence had a great year with 21 participants throughout the 4-week program. Bobbi McCoy had the most steps in Independence during the challenge. Other Twins ticket winners were Lisa Phillips, Marlys Timm, Lisa Spencer, Maureen Tomb and Kathi Jensen.



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

July

5 City Hall closed to observe July 4
12 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
13 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
27 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

August

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

September

2 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
6 Labor Day - City Hall Closed
13 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
14 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
28 City Council - 7:30 p.m.