



Fall 2010

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE NEWS

A letter from the Mayor

A quick turnaround for another newsletter. By the time you read this article, college students will have left home, kindergarten through 12th grade children will be starting school and the State Fair will be over. Where has the summer gone?

I do know articles are being read. Last time I mentioned about the "Green Acres" issue and invited people to give me a call. I has several calls. I mentioned about the book, *Our Independence*, and found out City Hall had several calls but no books. When the spring newsletter came out and I had mentioned about my birthday and late snow storms, I ended up with birthday wishes by telephone and cards. It is great to know the newsletter is being read.



I just received a letter in the mail from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund regarding the annual Independence Campaign. This has nothing to do with our Public Safety Department nor do we receive money from the organization. Our Police Department does not solicit for funds in that manner. If ever you receive solicitations, before making a donation make sure it is for the cause you wish to support.



Alice Soley, another of our long-term residents just passed away. Alice and her husband, Ed, lived between our City Hall and the railroad. She was our resident "watchperson" and if something unusual was happening at our present facilities or across the railroad someone would get a telephone call. Ed did likewise and preceded her in death, but Alice had celebrated her 96th birthday in style in March. They had no children and had always wanted their property to belong to the City. About 15 years ago the City did purchase approximately five acres with the Soleys having lifetime right to live in the house. The Public Works building was built on the Soley property.

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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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The staff, various contract organizations and the Council have been working on the City budget for 2011. With staff salary freezes and another City bond being paid off, it appears we can lower our budget again this coming year and also reduce the tax rate even though overall valuation for the City has decreased approximately 8.5 percent. Preliminary approval of the budget was at the Sept. 14 Council meeting and final approval is made at the December meeting. At the December meeting we can lower our levy or approve what we did in September, but we cannot increase the budget.

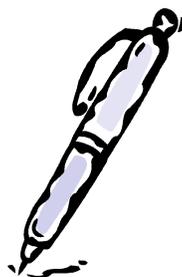
Primary elections are behind us! Now we get to listen to the final candidates' campaign talks, interviews and advertisements for a *long time* before the November elections because of the earlier Primary. Try to bear it and sort out what the candidates stand for. This is an important election year with all the state officers being elected. I'll name a few - the governor, secretary of state, attorney general, state senator, state representative, Three Rivers Park District Board Member, Soil and Water Conservation District Board and some school district board members. We have no City election. With the election of a new governor there will be numerous new appointments - especially Metropolitan Council Members and Commissioners.

Another month and Highway 12 will be open again. I'm amazed how well the detour has been working. I for one will be glad to have less traffic on our road. I'm hoping that we can have some kind of a celebration/ribbon-cutting event when the road is opened. If we do, we will use the news media to inform the public. It has taken year to get the project accomplished - something promised a long time ago.

Because it will probably be winter time before we have another newsletter, don't complain about lawn mowing now. It has been an unusual year. A very early spring and more than sufficient rains and heat to keep everything green and luscious all summer. I'm hoping for a long extended fall, too. But regardless of what the fall weather is, if it is storm free, we can be thankful and enjoy the fruits of the year. Happy Thanksgiving (just a little early)!

Your Mayor,

Marvin D. Johnson





ELECTION CONNECTION



Check Your Voter Registration Status Online

Minnesota voters now have the ability to check their voter registration status online before heading to the polls on Election Day.

Voters can visit www.sos.state.mn.us and select "Voter Registration Lookup Service." Voters simply enter their name, birthday and address and the service will quickly tell voters whether they are registered at that address. If they are not, the service will provide links to information on how and where to register. The service will also provide voters the date of their next election and the location of their polling place if they are registered to vote.

Voter registration for the Nov. 2 General Election ends Oct. 12. If voters are not registered by Oct. 12, they may register to vote at their polling place on Election Day.

Absentee Voting Begins Sept. 17

For voters who are unable to get to the polling place on Election Day, absentee voting is available beginning Sept. 17 until Nov. 1. Absentee voting is for people who will be unable to vote on Nov. 2 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 City Hall or visit <http://independence.govoffice.com>. Applications should be returned to Independence City Hall, 1920 County Road 90, Independence, MN 55359 or faxed to 763-479-0528. In addition to normal business hours, City Hall will be open for absentee voting from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 30 and will stay open until 5 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 1. All absentee ballots must be returned to City Hall by 3 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted.

Voters completing their absentee ballot materials should follow the instructions carefully even if they have voted absentee for years. Recent court rulings require that election officials reject an absentee ballot if the form on the outer envelope is not completed entirely. There are different requirements for military and overseas voters and voters who are not already registered at their current address. Domestic absentee voters who are already registered must provide the following information on their absentee ballot envelopes: voter signature and date, witness name, witness's residential address (do not use a P.O. Box), witness's title if the witness is an official or notary, notary stamp if the witness is a notary, and witness's signature.

In previous years, absentee ballot materials were typically reviewed for acceptance on the night of the election. As part of legislative reforms enacted this year, absentee ballot materials will be processed by absentee ballot boards within five days of receipt so that election officials can send replacement ballots to voters who made a mistake that resulted in their ballot being rejected. Should a problem be discovered less than five days before the general election, election officials will attempt to notify voters by phone or e-mail.

ENVIRONMENT

Receive a gift card for recycling a thermostat at a Hennepin County drop-off facility



Hennepin County and Covanta Energy Corporation are encouraging residents to save energy by replacing a traditional thermostat with a programmable thermostat. Homeowners can save about \$180 a year by using a programmable thermostat. Old thermostats contain mercury and must not be placed in the trash, but should be recycled.

As a thank you for recycling those old thermostats, Covanta Energy is offering a \$5 Menards gift card to residents to help reduce the cost of purchasing a programmable thermostat.

To participate in the program, County residents should bring a mercury-containing thermostat to a Hennepin County Drop-off Facility for recycling. Residents will complete a contact information form and Covanta Energy will mail them a gift card.

Hennepin County drop-off facilities are located at 1400 W. 96th St. in Bloomington and 8100 Jefferson Highway in Brooklyn Park. Call the facilities at 612-348-3777 for more information on the program or for location hours. There is a limit of one gift card per household. Conserving energy and recycling is making Hennepin a Cool County. Learn more at www.hennepin.us/coolcounty.

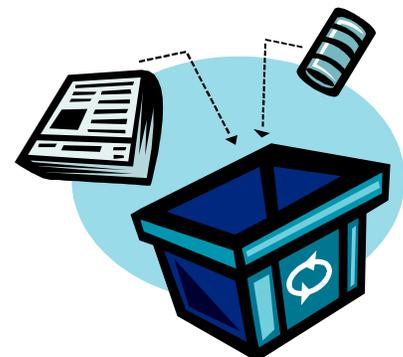
Recyclopedia Available at City Hall

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.

For an online source of recycling information, visit www.recyclemoreminnesota.org.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Maple Plain Fire Department Holds Open House and Steak Fry



Check out the Maple Plain Fire Department's trucks, meet some firefighters and tour the Fire Station at the upcoming Fire Department Open House. Community members are invited to stop by the Maple Plain Fire Station, 1645 Pioneer Ave, Maple Plain on Saturday, Oct. 2 from 1 to 5 p.m. for the Open House.

Following the Open House, the Fire Department will be hosting a steak fry from 4 to 8 p.m. to raise money for the Maple Plain Fire Department Relief Association.

A silent auction will be open from 1 to 7 p.m. Community members are encouraged to stop by and bid on items. All proceeds from the silent auction will also benefit the Maple Plain Fire Department Relief Association, a tax-exempt 501(c) organization. Community members who would like to donate a silent auction item or make a cash donation should call Craig Johnson at 612-581-1909 or email him at cjandkelly@hotmail.com.

The Maple Plain Fire Department is a group of 26 individuals who make a commitment to volunteering their time to train and respond to fire, medical and rescue emergencies in Maple Plain, a portion of Independence and surrounding communities.

In the past, the Relief Association has donated money in discretionary amounts to local families affected by an illness or death, bought equipment for the Fire Station and supported other non-budgeted items for the Maple Plain Fire Department.



Free Family Night in Maple Plain



Independence residents are invited to bring their family, friends, neighbors and lawn chairs or blankets to the Maple Plain Pioneer Park - next to the Fire Station - on Saturday, Oct. 2.

The Maple Plain Park Commission is hosting the first-ever Movie in the Park event. The event is being held in conjunction with the Fire Department Steak Fry and is open to all attendees. The movie will start at 8 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY

West Hennepin Public Safety Urges Back-to-School Bus Safety



High on the checklist of back-to-school preparation is a list of bus safety reminders for parents, children and motorists. Every Minnesota resident is responsible for knowing school bus laws and common ways to prevent school bus accidents.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety says that 72 percent of the nation's school bus fatalities take place outside of the bus. Drivers can help promote the safety of school bus riders by knowing the laws of traffic around buses.

Two common mistakes that drivers make are misdemeanors in Minnesota, punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and 90 days in jail. "The most common are: failing to stop when the bus stop arm is extended; and driving around the right side of bus when it's stopping," said Shari Danzeisen of the Minnesota School Bus Operators Association.

"The Highway 12 detour is still ongoing and expected to go until Oct. 16," WHPS Director Ray McCoy advised. "Please take extra precaution and be aware of children standing in their driveways waiting for their bus and the buses stopping to pick them up and dropping them off."

West Hennepin Public Safety is urging families to have discussions with their children and for motorists to pay attention to current bus safety laws. Children who know the procedure of where they can wait and how to walk around the bus have a better chance of avoiding an accident. Motorists who become more aware also can help with school bus safety.

As part of "back-to-school" homework, WHPS encourages residents to know their bus safety laws and what to tell their kids to do to be safe-to-school. Whether children walk to school, ride the bus or ride with parents, the most important thing each morning is that he or she makes it safely to the school entrance. Often families are so focused about what book needs to get into the backpack, or what's the school lunch that day, that distractions come easily in the midst of traffic and bus riders waiting at bus stops.

Anyone who is uncertain about a law relating to bus traffic may contact WHPS at 763-479-0500.

Additional resources:

"A Child's Life Could Be Saved by You" Provided by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, this website includes diagrams of state laws for drivers in the flow of bus traffic and who meet buses at intersections: http://www.dps.state.mn.us/patrol/comveh/schoolbus/pdf/a_childs_life.pdf.

"Back to School Planner for Pedestrians, Bicyclists and School Bus Riders" Provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/Int-WalkToSchoolPlanner2006/pages/SchoolBusMain.htm>

PUBLIC SAFETY

West Hennepin Public Safety Sponsors Free Citizen Education

Have you ever wondered:

- Why do the police block part of the lane when they pull someone over?
- Why didn't the police shoot him in the leg?
- If you are caught drinking and driving, do you really have to say the alphabet backwards?
- When I call 911, where exactly does that call go to?
- How do they know what police, fire or ambulance is for my house if I do call 911?
- The cars speed by my house all the time. Why don't the police do something about it?
- Do I really need to lock my doors -we live out in the country, don't we?
- You hear a lot about Meth Labs -we don't have a drug problem here, do we?

Here is your chance to get answers to these and many other questions in an interactive setting at West Hennepin Public Safety's Citizens Police Academy (CPA).

The CPA is not a training academy to make police officers out of citizens, but rather an opportunity for you to meet the officers of West Hennepin Public Safety and learn about the Police Department and how it functions. It will answer all of the above questions and also give you an opportunity to ask questions that maybe you have never had the opportunity to ask. You will also learn about the history of the Department and some of the programs and services it offers to the community.

Participants in the CPA will have both lecture sessions and interactive sessions where they will get to play the role of a police officer in a controlled setting. Participants will get to experience such things as making a traffic stop, operating a speed radar device, performing DWI sobriety tests, and learning about firearms used by the officers.

Most of the sessions will be held at West Hennepin Public Safety Department. Topics such as drugs, DWI enforcement, traffic stops, and criminal investigation will be at the Police Department. We will tour the 911 answering point for Hennepin County in Golden Valley, which serves Maple Plain and Independence. We will also hold a mock court trial to show you how a court proceeding can take place. The CPA will utilize the South West Metro Training Facility in Edina to teach participants about different levels of force that officers have available such as mace, taser, baton and firearms.

The CPA is held on Thursdays from 7 to 10 p.m. on Sept. 30 to Nov. 11 at West Hennepin Public Safety in Independence. There is no cost for the class and refreshments are served. It is a casual atmosphere on some serious topics. If you have questions about the CPA or are interested in participating, please contact West Hennepin Public Safety at 763-479-0500 or stop by our office at 1918 County Road 90 in Independence. Space is limited, so sign up early!

City of Independence
1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359

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Thank You to National Night Out Participants

The City of Independence and West Hennepin Public Safety thank all who participated in National Night Out.

Thanks to our residents, we had five block parties throughout the City. Neighbors were able to meet their police officers and firefighters and get to know one another.



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

October

- 7 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 11 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 12 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 26 City Council - 7:30 p.m.

November

- 2 General Election
- 4 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 8 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 9 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 11 Veteran's Day - City Hall Closed
- 23 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 25 & 26 Thanksgiving - City Hall Closed

December

- 2 Parks Commission - 7 p.m.
- 13 Planning Commission - 7:30 p.m.
- 14 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 24 City Hall Closed for Christmas
- 28 City Council - 7:30 p.m.
- 31 City Hall Closed for New Year's