

CityScene



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www.independencemo.org
City of Independence, MO

Independence Athletic Complex 'Play Ball!'

The City of Independence celebrated the opening of its newest park facility with a Fall Sports Celebration October 18 at the Independence Athletic Complex, 17800 E. Salisbury Road. The celebration began with a ribbon cutting ceremony led by Mayor Don Reimal at 1 p.m. and featured sports challenges from 1:30 - 4 p.m.

"What a day for Independence," Mayor Reimal said. "This has been a long time coming, but thanks to the public who voted for the Parks Sales Tax in 2002, we're able to do this and a lot more for our parks.

"We are making history in Independence today by cutting the ribbon for the largest ball park and park facility to ever be built here," he said. "What more could you ask for? This is a facility that covers everyone's interests."

Sports challenge events held during the opening included a soccer agility course; soccer accuracy kick; long distance soccer kicks; football – punt, pass and kick; radar gun baseball pitch; running the bases; wiffle ball home run derby; and disc golf.

The Independence Athletic Complex lies on 165 acres of rolling land and features the following amenities: eight soccer fields (two lighted), three lighted softball fields, two lighted baseball fields, six practice football areas (one lighted), two restroom/concession buildings, one shelter for about 100 people, one playground, one amphitheater with space for 1,000 people, more than 1.5 miles of trails and ample parking.

For more information about the complex, call the Independence Parks and Recreation Department at (816) 325-7843.



Mayor Don Reimal cut the ribbon to officially open the Independence Athletic Complex before several sports challenge events got underway.



Go to City7.TV to view Mayor Don Reimal's comments and some events at the Independence Athletic Complex opening.

City Web Site Wins Pinnacle Award

The City of Independence Web site, www.independencemo.org, has received the 2008 Pinnacle Award for Excellence from the National Association of Government Webmasters (NAGW). The City's Web site was judged as the second best Web site in the population category of 100,000 and above.

NAGW is a national association of city and county government webmasters working to improve government Internet and intranet services.

City Manager Robert Heacock emphasized how the award reflects the City's commitment to serving the community.

"Our Web presence allows us to serve Independence residents and others interested in our community whenever they

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Health Department Wins MML Award

For the second time, the City of Independence has been awarded the Missouri Municipal League Innovation Award. This year Independence was recognized for its Neighborhood Code Compliance Program (NCCP), which is administered by the Health Department.

The Innovation Awards program showcases municipal projects that demonstrate new approaches for solving municipal problems. The Awards, by recognizing successful programs, put the spotlight on municipal programs that might benefit other cities.

Health Director Larry Jones said the NCCP is a new approach to code enforcement in Independence. This program was created in response to citizens' desire for a pro-active rather than a re-active code enforcement approach. Prior to this program, nearly all code enforcement action was in response to complaints.

"While the City certainly wants to See MML Innovation Award, Page 2

MML Innovation Award From Page 1

respond to citizen complaints, it also desires to sustain its community without relying solely on neighbors turning in neighbors,” Jones said. “Through the NCCP, the Code Compliance Division partners with neighborhood areas and through education, team building, and financial assistance is able to help make their neighborhood a healthier and safer place to live.”

The program consists of engaging citizens in a neighborhood meeting, identifying individual property violations in the neighborhood, providing the citizens in that neighborhood a free cleanup and following up with a re-inspection.

“The entire process is done in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation rather than the typical enforcement approach,” Jones said. “After each cleanup, residents evaluate the NCCP program. Results are used to improve and enhance the program.

Code Compliance Manager Andrew Warlen said since the inception of the NCCP, the City has worked with citizens to remove more than 1.5 million pounds of trash and brush from 6,938 addresses in 22 neighborhoods.

“By simply advising citizens of violations and providing a free clean-up, compliance has risen from 62 to 90 percent,” Warlen said. “The remaining 10 percent were addressed after each cleanup through



Mayor Don Reimal, far right, with Health Department employees, back row from left, Andrew Warlen, David Dickerson, Amanda Bendure, and Kim Gearhart; second row from left Sara Jane Faris, Dana Baker and Shari Jansens; and front, Teresa Pirog.

the standard Code Compliance process, with every effort being made to provide extensions or other assistance.

Warlen said the ultimate result was 99 percent voluntary compliance. Formal enforcement action (tickets/abatement) was necessary for the remaining 1 percent.

During 2007, two neighborhoods reached 100 percent voluntary compliance and no formal enforcement action was required. The two largest cleanups, 60 tons and 47 tons, were also held in 2007.

Independence won the award in 2006 for its Missouri Citizen Corps Volunteer Program. This program expanded existing volunteer programs and created training in community preparedness and citizen readiness for the volunteers.



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Recycling Centers

The City operates two recycling centers. Items accepted at the centers include paper, cardboard, paperboard, steel and aluminum cans, plastic, toner cartridges and dry cell batteries. The recycling centers and their operation days and times are:

35th Street Recycling Center
13600 E. 35th Street
 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fridays
 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturdays

Vista Avenue Recycling Center
875 Vista Avenue
 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sundays
 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mondays

Watch City Meetings On Streaming Video

City Council meetings and study sessions are available as live and archived streaming video on the City's Web site, www.independencemo.org

Each live City 7 TV broadcast is available online during the 6 p.m. Monday City Council meetings. An archive of the program is available on the site the next morning for viewing 24 hours a day. Archived videos are available for a few months following their posting. If you do not have a computer but would like to purchase a copy of a Council meeting call 325-7019.

Hot Line Directory



- Barking Dogs 325-7213
- Crime Stoppers Tips 474-8477
- Drop-Off Trash 325-7623
- Drugs 325-6272
- Graffiti 325-7824
- Neighborhood Watch 325-7643
- Potholes 325-7624
- Report Power Outage 325-7550
- Street Lights 325-7535
- Storm Water Pollution 325-7727



Laundry Day

POWERED BY:



PLATINUM RELIABILITY AWARD WINNER

Gearhart, Dickerson Share Block Award

For the first time in the award's nine-year history, two City employees have won the Susan Paxton Block Distinguished Public Service Award. Code Compliance Property Maintenance Officers David Dickerson and Kim Gearhart are the winners of the 2008 award.

Gearhart and Dickerson work as a team in the Health Department's Code Compliance Division and are responsible for helping administer the Neighborhood Code Compliance Program.

The award, presented at a September City Council meeting, recognizes a City employee, volunteer or elected official who has demonstrated outstanding public service, valor, and job performance with leadership.

Judy Forrester, Junior Service League (JSL) immediate past president, was in charge of the selection process. Mrs.

Block was a member and past president of the JSL. Forrester praised Gearhart and Dickerson saying they are "both truly dedicated individuals and are both extremely committed to their work."

Forrester said every nominee was deserving, but the fact that Gearhart and Dickerson are key players in the Health Department's nationally recognized program was a deciding factor in their selection.

The late Bill Paxton, father of the late Councilmember Block, established the award to honor her memory. Mrs. Block represented the third council district from 1992 until her death November 11, 1996. September 24 was Councilmember Block's birth date.

Barb DiBlasi, Mrs. Block's sister, and her family attended the presentation.

The award is \$1,000 plus a sterling silver medallion and a sterling silver lapel pin. Proceeds come from the memorial fund established by Paxton.



Block Award winners, Kim Gearhart, left, and David Dickerson, third from left, with Barb DiBlasi, second from left, and Judy Forrester.

silver medallion and a sterling silver lapel pin. Proceeds come from the memorial fund established by Paxton.

Preventing Sewer Backups, Overflows

Sewer backups are an unfortunate but common problem. The Water Pollution Control (WPC) Department makes every effort to prevent such problems, but untreated wastewater can back up into homes and businesses. Sewage can flow out of manholes and into nearby yards, streets and creeks. WPC offers the following information to help prevent backups and overflows.

Don't flush anything not meant for the toilet. Sanitary sewer systems are designed to handle three things: used water, human body waste and toilet paper. Wastes such as disposable wipes, feminine hygiene products, diapers, disposable toilet cleaner heads, etc., belong in the trash, not the toilet.

Unlike toilet paper, disposable wipes don't readily disintegrate in water. Products labeled "biodegradable" may break down eventually under the right conditions, but they can still clog sewer lines. Products marketed as "flushable" may pass through household plumbing fixtures but contribute to clogging in household drain lines if a tree root or other obstruction is present. Backups and overflows can also occur in the City sewer system when wipes and other debris collect at pipe

bends or rough spots in the line.

Avoid planting trees and shrubs over or near the house lateral or the City sewer lines in your yard. Roots can damage sewers causing backups.

Check sewer cleanout pipes. Make sure the cleanout is capped. By keeping the cleanout capped, you reduce the amount of rainwater in the sanitary sewer system, as well as prevent sewer odors and gases from escaping.

Disconnect your downspouts, sump pumps and area drains. Downspouts, sump pumps and area drains connected to the sanitary sewer system overload the system with storm water and groundwater, in violation of City ordinance. Disconnecting them will help prevent dangerous, costly and smelly overflows.

Following these suggestions will help the City protect water quality and maintain the sewer system. When sewer backups occur between the house and City sewer main, the property owner is responsible for correcting the problem. Avoiding blockages means you avoid plumbing bills.

For more information call WPC at 325-7711. To report a sewer backup or overflow, call WPC Maintenance at 325-7727.

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor	
Don Reimal	325-7027
City Council Office	325-7022
Councilmembers	
Marcie Gragg	District 1
Will Swoffer	District 2
Myron Paris	District 3
Jim Page	District 4
Jim Schultz	At Large
Lucy Young	At Large
City Manager	
Robert Heacock	325-7170



Watch City 7 TV

City of Independence
Government Access Television

City Council

6 p.m. Mondays*
10 a.m. Tuesdays
7 p.m. Wednesdays
2 p.m. Sundays

Planning Commission

6:30 p.m. 2nd & 4th Tuesdays*
10 a.m. Wednesdays
7 p.m. Thursdays

For more information:

www.City7.TV

*Denotes live meeting, all others are rebroadcasts.

December Tourism Events

On Saturday, December 6, the National Frontier Trails Museum, 318 W. Pacific, will celebrate "Holiday Cheer." Wagon rides, cider and cookies will be included with regular admission from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A program, "Remembering Christmases Past with Laura Ingalls Wilder," will be at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children ages 6-17 and include museum admission as well as wagon rides. Reservations to 325-7575 are strongly recommended.

The traditional Twilight Tour is from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday, December 7. Tour the 1859 Marshal's Home, 217 N. Main; the Bingham-Waggoner Estate, 313 W. Pacific; and the Vaile Mansion, 1500 N. Liberty; for a total cost of \$12. The Bingham-Waggoner will provide live entertainment, complimentary refreshments and visits with the Sugar Plum Fairy. A bell choir will play Christmas music at the Vaile Mansion.

You can also purchase a \$12 ticket to visit all three homes any day from November 28 through December 30. The homes are closed December 23-25. The decorated Chicago & Alton Depot, 318 W. Pacific, offers tours from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturdays, December 6, 13, and 20 or 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sundays, December 7, 14, and 21.

The Square shops offer fresh baked cookies and recipes to shoppers from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, December 13 during the "Winterfest Cookie Exchange."

The "Littlest Angel" Puppet Show returns to the Puppetry Arts Institute, 11025 E. Winner Rd. at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturdays, December 13, 20, 27 and at 7 p.m. Monday, December 29. The cost is \$5. Call 833-9777 for reservations.

For a holiday brochure with a complete listing of all events, call 325-7111 or go to www.visitindependence.com.

Mayor's Holiday Carnival

Each year hundreds of Independence families attend the annual Mayor's Holiday Carnival hosted by the Independence Parks and Recreation Department.

Mayor Don Reimal is joined by seasonal guests such as Santa and his elves. Those attending participate in a variety of games and activities at this free event that focuses on family unity. Carnival activities for children include balloon creations, popular carnival games, moonwalks and a private visit with Old Saint Nick.



The Mayor's Holiday Carnival has been an Independence tradition for more than 50 years. It was initially called the Mayor's Christmas Party and was a stage show highlighting local high school choirs, dance studio groups, and performers.

Parks and Recreation employee Donna Streed remembers performing in the 1950s at the Mayor's Christmas Party at the Truman Memorial Building as a member of a local dance studio.

"It was the highlight of the year for our group to perform for the mayor and the citizens of Independence," Streed remembers.

In 1995 the event moved to the Roger T. Sermon Community Center and in 2002 it was renamed the Mayor's Holiday Carnival and became a celebration with games and activities for the entire family.

The holiday tradition continues this year with Mayor Reimal from 10 a.m. - noon, Saturday, December 6 at the Sermon Center, 201 N. Dodgion St.

Web Site Wins

From Page 1

need us," Heacock said. "We are constantly striving to embrace innovation and enhance services to better meet the needs of our citizens and customers."

NAGW's Pinnacle Awards are given to local governments for Web site excellence. This year's awards drew more than 60 entrants, competing in three categories based on population. Judges reviewed Web sites based on team size, content, organization, design, function, accessibility, standards and interactivity.

"Our staff is honored that our Web site has received this award," Jere Neer, acting Technology Services director, said. "The City is very fortunate to have talented Web developers who take pride in the product they produce. Being recognized in this way, by an organization of their peers, confirms our opinion of the high quality of their work."

Neer said the City, in the last year, has made several major additions to the Web site including putting the City Council agenda online, adding an interactive map of the City's parks and adding an e-check feature for utility bill paying.

He said the Council agenda software benefits the public because it allows people to search the current agenda and past agendas for specific words or phrases. "This new agenda is much more detailed

and allows Web site visitors to view attachments such as maps and contracts."

"The interactive parks map has detailed information about all City parks, allowing Web site visitors to find parks with specific amenities," he said.

Neer said the ability to view and pay utility bills online was one of the City's first online service offerings. The utility billing e-check feature enhances this service by allowing payments to be made with an e-check, which withdraws directly from a person's checking account.

This is the second Pinnacle Award earned by the City's Technology Department. The Web site received the 2006 award for excellence in design/usability.

The City Web site has also won several Digital Cities Survey awards. Independence ranked third in the 75,000 to 124,999 population category in 2007, tied for second in 2006, fourth in 2005, ninth in 2004, seventh in 2003 and third in 2002. It is the seventh year the City has been named one of the top 10 Digital Cities in the country.

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