



City Volunteers Honored



Mayor Don Reimal, below, served coffee to volunteers.



Volunteers were entertained with card tricks by Nicholas Pierce.

More than 300 City of Independence volunteers were treated on a November morning to breakfast served by Mayor Don Reimal; Councilmembers Jim Schultz, Marcie Gragg, Will Swoffer, Myron Paris and Jim Page; City Manager Robert Heacock and several City department directors.

The breakfast is an annual event at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple.

As the volunteers worked their way through the breakfast buffet, Mayor Reimal and the City Council had the chance to thank each personally for their service.

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Dishing up breakfast were, from left, Mayor Don Reimal; Councilmembers Will Swoffer, Marcie Gragg, Jim Schultz and Jim Page; and City Manager Robert Heacock.

City Continues Major Effort To Underground Utility Lines

Since the 2002 ice storm, Independence Power & Light (IPL) has received over \$8.4 million in federal assistance from FEMA to bury electric lines as a storm mitigation measure, including \$1.8 million in new federal funding received in November 2008. Total project costs are matched 25% with funds from IPL.

The additional funding received in November will allow IPL to place an additional 1,870 residential overhead

electric service lines underground over the next three years at no charge to homeowners. So far, since 2002, more than 6,000 electric service lines running from power poles to Independence residences have been buried.

Many of the residences to be served are in western and northern Independence.

"This has been a very successful program," said IPL Director Leon Daggett.

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City Web Site Wins Award for 7th Year

The City of Independence Web site (www.independencemo.org) has been ranked second in its population category (75,000 - 124,999) in the eighth annual Digital Cities Survey conducted by e.Republics Center for Digital Government (www.center-digitalgov.com) and Digital Communities magazine.

This is the seventh year in a row Independence has been ranked by the Center for Digital Government as one of the most technology-advanced cities in America. The annual study examines how city governments are utilizing digital technologies to better serve their citizens and streamline operations.

City Manager Robert Heacock praised the Technology Services Department for these prestigious awards and the accomplishments of the department in serving

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Martin Luther King Celebration January 19

The Community of Concerned Citizens, in partnership with the City of Independence, will recognize Martin Luther King Day with an evening of special ceremonies at 7 p.m. Monday, January 19 at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple. The theme for this year's celebration is "A Dream that Changed the World."

The celebration will feature a Celebration Community Choir under the direction of Sandy Jones. The Rev. Wallace Hartsfield II is the keynote speaker.

The Rev. Hartsfield is pastor of the Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church in Kansas City. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from the Conservatory of Music, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Missouri - Kan-

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New Energy Efficiency Tax Incentives Available in 2009

Independence Power & Light (IPL) encourages customers to consider new federal and state tax incentives for energy efficiency home improvements. The incentives go into effect January 1, 2009.

IPL Director Leon Daggett said the Energy Star web site reports that federal tax credits are available for qualifying home improvements “placed in service” from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009. Qualifying improvements may include insulation, replacement windows, and high efficiency heating and cooling equipment, among others. In order to be eligible for a tax credit, improvements must meet specific criteria to qualify.

Federal tax credits are also available for qualifying renewable home energy projects including certain solar water heating, solar photovoltaic and small wind energy systems.

The Energy Star web site cites IRS

Form 5695 as the federal tax form to use when applying for 2009 home energy efficiency and renewable tax credits. For information on qualifying criteria for home improvements, go to www.energystar.gov or contact a tax advisor.

In 2008, new state legislation was enacted allowing an income tax deduction for home energy efficiency improvements. The new state legislation allows Missouri homeowners to deduct on their personal income tax the cost of a home energy audit by a state certified energy auditor and recommended energy efficiency improvements made after January 1, 2009. Certain rules and limits apply.

Information on the Missouri state income tax deduction is available on the web at www.dsireusa.org. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources will post a listing of certified energy auditors and

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Utility Lines

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“The benefits to utility customers in terms of improved power reliability during major storms are significant. IPL crews will be able to restore power to homes after major storms much more quickly than was the case in 2002.”

Due to limited funding, not all residences can be included in the program. The FEMA-funded program targets those homes with a high probability of electric service line damage from trees due to weather-related storms. IPL notifies households of their selection for the program.

For more information, call IPL at 325-7523 or e-mail jmedrano@indepmo.org.



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Web Site Wins

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the citizens of Independence.

“This recognition is truly an honor for Independence and a sign of the commitment by our Technology Services staff to continue to meet the various needs of the community and our organization,” Heacock said.

“This year’s winners reflect that even with budgetary challenges, cities are placing a high value on citizen engagement and improved services,” said Cathilea Robinett, executive director for the Center for Digital Government. “Cities are incorporating newer technologies such as Webcasting, podcasts and blogs while continuing to use IT to enhance delivery options for citizens and businesses.”

Jere Neer, acting Technology Services director, said in the last year the City 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 every year more and more citizens expect to be able to do business with the City online. From January through October 2008 the monthly average visitor sessions totaled 143,931 with a monthly average of 603,799 page views. An average of 4,718 people visit the Web site every day. The most used Web services are online job applications, business licensing,

utility bill payment and registrations for the food handler classes.

The survey is open to all U.S. cities with a population of 30,000 or more and respondent cities are classified into four size-based categories.

Winners were honored in November at a special awards ceremony in Orlando, Fla.

Earlier this year, the City Web site 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. It was the second time the City has won a Pinnacle Award. The Web site received the 2006 award for excellence in design/usability. NAGW is a national association of city and county government webmasters working to improve government Internet and intranet services.

The City Web site has also won several other 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.

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.

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

Tourism Volunteers Honored, Program Celebrates 25 Years

The Tourism Department honored more than 125 volunteers recently at the Historic Sites Volunteer Banquet at the Hilton Garden Inn.

“We appreciate all you do, your expertise, and the way in which you get people interested and excited about your sites,” Mayor Don Reimal said. “We could never afford the salaries of full-time staff to do the jobs our volunteers do for us. Without your help, we would be able limited in what we could accomplish. Thank you – not only for what you have done, but also for your future work for us. Keep up the hard work!”

Tourism Director Stephanie Roush thanked the volunteers for their efforts.

“There is no way we could put into words our appreciation for the time you give to the Tourism Department and the City of Independence, except to extend a heartfelt thank you as we celebrate our 25th anniversary together,” Roush said. “Someone once said, ‘We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.’ I assure you, you are not taken for granted, for you most assuredly deserve our gratitude.”

Sites benefiting from the volunteer program include the Bingham-Waggoner Estate, 313 W. Pacific Ave.; National Frontier Trails Museum and Chicago & Alton Depot, both located at 318 W. Pacific Ave.; 1827 Log Courthouse, 107 W. Kansas Ave.; Vaile Mansion, 1500 N. Liberty St.; and Harry S Truman National Historic Site Ticket and Visitor Center,

223 N. Main St.

Volunteer Coordinator Cathy Offutt reports that in the last year, 157 volunteers gave 16,552 hours of service. Those volunteer hours translate into a combined contribution to the City of \$281,384.

The Tourism Department traditionally presents the Mayor with a “check” representing the dollar value of donated hours during the tourism season. This year, the check was considerably larger, as it represented the total amount of volunteer service donated during the last 25 years. Hundreds of volunteers have donated 387,530 hours in the previous 25 years, representing a savings to the City totaling \$4,763,943.20.

The 1983 charter class of historic site volunteers includes Bingham-Waggoner volunteers Janice Pearson and Charlotte Tindall; and Vaile Mansion volunteers Mary Bryan, Sandee Dougherty and Jan Spencer.

Spencer volunteered at the Truman Library, Truman Visitors Center and Bingham-Waggoner before her current assignment at the Vaile. She admits that she had no idea she would continue 25 years and more.

“I’ll keep going as long as I can,” she said, “and when I can’t lead tours any longer, I’ll sit at the desk.”

Spencer finds her love of history, and



The 1983 Charter Class of Tourism volunteers includes, from left, Charlotte Tindall, Janice Pearson, Jan Spencer, Sandee Dougherty and Mary Bryan.

sharing that passion with visitors, are the reason she donates her time to the Vaile.

Barbara Warnex, a first-year volunteer at the Bingham-Waggoner, shares that love of history. “It’s very important to me that the Bingham was a family home,” she said. “I’ve also found that volunteering is much more exciting than I had expected. I’ve enjoyed meeting other volunteers, working with school children, and getting acquainted with visitors from foreign lands. I certainly plan to continue volunteering!”

Volunteer awards were presented to those completing one, five, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years. For information about volunteering at one of the City’s historic sites, contact Offutt at 325-7112.

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

Martin Luther King

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sas City, a Master of Divinity from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta and a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible from Emory University in Atlanta.

He has been president of the Youth Convention of the National Baptist Convention of America, a ministry partner with the Congress of National Black Churches and was a founder of an Atlanta Church Collaboration.

The Rev. Hartsfield has served as an

instructor and professor at Morehouse College and the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. He and his wife, Dr. Amy Harris Hartsfield, started a musical production company, Field of Hearts Productions, for which he served as CEO.

The Rev. Hartsfield future aspirations include writing for the African American Church and teaching at the university level.

IShare Fund Assists With Utility Bills

Contributing to IShare can make a big difference in a neighbor's life. Overseen by a group of local residents and managed by the Community Services League, the IShare program over the years has helped many Independence residents in need with payment of their utility bill.

IShare is a unique community based program in many ways. Local residents help in fund raising efforts and the City of Independence matches voluntary contributions dollar for dollar. This partnership helps assure that utility assistance funds are available to area families throughout the year.

With the onset of winter and increased energy use for home heating, the demand on utility assistance resources is particularly high.

"This year there are many new families that are experiencing job uncertainty and

job loss," Sue Crumpton, Community Services League executive director, said. "But, their bills keep coming.

"Combine that fact with the rising cost of energy, and the IShare funds become even more critical to our ability to help families stay warm and safe in their homes," Crumpton said.

"This year more than ever families need your help," Crumpton said. "You can help make a difference in a neighbor's life with your tax-deductible contribution to ISHARE."

Checks can be sent to: IShare, Truman Heartland Community Foundation, Commerce Bank Building, 300 N. Osage, Independence, MO 64050.

For more information on the IShare-Program, call the Community Services League at 254-4100.



Volunteers

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"Each and every volunteer is priceless," Mayor Reimal said. "We could not afford to run these facilities without you."

Some of the areas that benefit from the volunteer program include the Powerhouse Theatre Program, Senior Adult Nutrition Program at the Palmer Center, George Owens Nature Park, the Animal Shelter, Police and City Tourism sites.

Volunteer Coordinator Helen Matson said in 2007 volunteers gave the City 56,159 hours. Translated into salaries, that is a gift from the citizens of more

than \$1 million.

Citizens who would like to become a volunteer can call Matson at 325-7860.



Movie Night

POWERED BY:



PLATINUM RELIABILITY AWARD WINNER

Tax Incentives

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updated program rules on their web site as the information becomes available.

In addition to tax incentives, IPL offers rebates for qualifying residential high efficient air conditioners, heat pumps and electric water heaters. For information on rebates from IPL and a link to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources web site on the new state income tax deduction, visit IPL on the web at www.independencemo.org/pl or call 325-7485.



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 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.