

# CityScene



November 2009  
Volume 16 Number 11

www.independencemo.org  
City of Independence, MO

## 24 Highway Improvements Announced

A new City project was recently announced that will improve 24 Highway in western Independence. The Missouri Department of Transportation, which is the federal funding administrator, has approved construction plans to build 2,800 feet of new sidewalks along the south side of 24 Highway between Lake Drive and Sterling Avenue.

"This project will improve pedestrian safety and convenience along one of our major streets," City Manager Robert Heacock said. "We applaud MoDOT's cooperation with the City on this project to help improve the 24 Highway corridor."

The project will also build 2,300 feet of new curbs and new push-button, controlled-pedestrian traffic signals on 24 Highway at Northern Boulevard and at Sterling Avenue. In addition, 38 new trees will be planted.

Public Works Director John Powell said \$475,000 in federal highway transportation enhancement funds will pay 75 percent of the construction costs. The local match to these funds will be paid by Independence Power & Light, which will cover the electrical system and street lighting improvements. Work is scheduled to begin this winter and be completed in summer 2010.

Powell said that this project is the latest of several infrastructure improvements for western Independence. The projects include:

- Street improvements completed earlier this year on two projects:
  - The \$3,000,000 Santa Fe Road project between 23rd and 31st Streets included new curbs, drives, storm drainage system, and pavement along one mile of street. The project also included a shared bicycle and pedestrian path, two major drainage culverts were installed, and a new railroad crossing warning system.
  - A \$700,000 Walnut Street improvement project between Lexington and Forest included new curbs, drives, sidewalks, street surface, storm drains, street lighting, the burial of overhead utilities, and the planting of new trees.
- Last year, the City completed an \$800,000 Maywood business district street improvement project on Truman Road between Northern Boulevard and Home Street. The project included new curbs and sidewalks, new pendant style street lights, benches and trash receptacles, and newly planted trees and shrubs.
- In 2007, a \$600,000 project was completed to build sidewalks and medians along Winner Road from the Englewood business district to Truman Road. This included a new concrete sidewalk along the north and east side of Winner. New street lights were installed and a landscaped median was built for two blocks along the west side of Winner Road.
- Neighborhood projects to build sidewalks have been completed on Pacific Street, Delaware Street, and College Terrace. In 2007 the Pacific Street sidewalks were built between Noland and Main Streets; and the College Terrace sidewalks

**See 24 Highway Improvements, Page 2**

## City Warns: Beware Of Telephone Scam

Never give credit card numbers or other information to anyone calling you on the telephone, Utility Customer Service Manager Tom Heinkel warns.

"If you receive a call from someone saying they are from the utility company and that you 'forgot to sign your check' or that you are behind in your payments and that you must pay right now with your credit card, you are being scammed," Heinkel said.

"Some utility customers have received calls in which the caller states that they are eligible for a new program that pays a portion or all of their utility bills if they sign up immediately and pay a small fee with their credit card, Heinkel explained.

"These are scams designed to get your personal information to be used for illegal purposes," he said. "Don't fall for it."

The City's utilities do not make such

**See Scam, Page 3**



## 'Englewood Cop Shop' Dinner a Success

The community turned out in large numbers October 8 to eat spaghetti and help raise money for volunteer programs of the Independence Police Department. The Englewood Cop Shop Fundraiser Spaghetti Dinner event was also a community cooking contest and gathering at Maywood Baptist Church, 10505 E. Winner Rd.

IPD Crime Prevention Officer Rob Romey estimated 400 attended and said that more than \$2,200 was raised to benefit programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, and Police Explorers. This includes money for supplies, as well as crime prevention educational material and items deemed necessary to promote crime prevention education in the City of Independence.

**See Dinner, Page 3**

## Dr. Martin Luther King Day Celebration January 18

The Community of Concerned Citizens, in partnership with the City of Independence, will observe Dr. Martin Luther King Day with an evening of ceremonies at 7 p.m. Monday, January 18 at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple Ave.

The theme for the 2010 Celebration is "Content of our Character."

The celebration will feature music from the group FOCUS. The keynote speaker is Theresa Byrd, Director of Field Services for the Jackson County (Missouri) Family Court.

## Holiday Safety Tips from the IPD Crime Prevention Unit

Nationwide around the holiday season law enforcement agencies see a "bump" in crime. This is also true in Independence. Officer Rob Romey said the Independence Police Department is committed to making citizens as safe as possible. "We think that with extra education and preparedness, everyone can avoid becoming the victim of a criminal attack," Officer Romey said.

"Crime is like a table with three legs – it takes all three legs to stand," Officer Romey said. "If you take away one of the legs, the table isn't supported. Desire, ability and opportunity must all exist to support crime. We may not be able to stop someone's desire to commit a crime, but we can take away their ability and/or opportunity to commit the crime."

The following information can help citizens avoid becoming a victim of crime.

### CAR LARCENY

One of the fastest growing trends in criminal activity is car larcenies (theft from an unoccupied car). Vehicles are a quick easy target for criminals, often resulting in large losses for owners. To lower your risk, here are a few suggestions:

**Remove Valuables** – Do not leave unopened presents, shopping bags or other items of value in plain sight. This only attracts criminals.

**Lock Your Vehicle** – This is the simplest way to prevent theft.

**Close Doors and Windows** – An open door or window allows a thief a quick and quiet way to steal property.

**Location** – Well lighted, well traveled areas deter criminal activity.

**Personal Communications and Computing** – Laptops, iPods, PDAs, cell phones, GPS systems, and other such items are extremely valuable and desirable. Do not leave these items in a vehicle.

**Bags and Luggage** – Criminals do not know what is inside closed bags. A zippered bag containing worthless items may result in a

broken window courtesy of a curious thief.

### HOME SAFETY

In addition to an increase in car larcenies, it is expected there will be an increase in residential burglaries. Although more brazen than thieves breaking into cars, burglars are often looking for the same high dollar items that are easily carried away. To lower the risk of being a victim, follow these suggestions:

**Christmas Tree Placement** – Presents around trees attract attention, especially if seen from a window. Keep presents away from open, highly visible areas that passer-bys can see.

**Solicitors** – Feeding on the holiday spirit, scammers often present themselves as being part of a charity. Do not let strangers into your house. Do not give anyone your personal information.

**Holiday Trash Disposal** – When disposing of holiday trash, do not throw out boxes of high dollar items in easily seen areas. This advertises to criminals what new items you might have.

**Keep Lights On, Indoors and Out** – Well lit houses are a deterrent for criminal activity. Criminals are cowards, and prefer to hide in the shadows.

### KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE

Officer Romey said that in addition to keeping ourselves safe, it is also imperative that we help others from becoming the victim of a crime. "Your police department needs YOU to act as our eyes and ears, and to report anything suspicious to us," Officer Romey said.

Some things to look out for:

**Car Prowlers** – Individuals who aimlessly walk through parking lots to look inside parked cars.

**Solicitors** – Individuals who go door to door, but have no identification, and possess no city permit.

**Home Prowlers** – Individuals walking through backyards, looking in windows, or trying door knobs.

**Alarms** – If you hear an audible alarm in

your neighborhood, do not assume that it is accidental. Call the alarm in, and then monitor your neighborhood for suspicious activity, reporting anything out of the ordinary.

If you observe any of the above, do not call a neighbor, do not call a friend, do call the police. It is always much better to call and have nothing wrong, than to not call and have something wrong.

### HOW CRIME PREVENTION BENEFITS YOU!

- Your vehicle windows are not broken.
- You don't have to repair your door locks when they are damaged.
- You do not have to spend hours on the phone with your insurance agent.
- You don't have to mend your family's sense of security.
- You do not have to rent a car.
- You do not lose irreplaceable items.
- Your family does not have to experience the trauma of being the victim of a crime.
- You do not have to wait for your car to be repaired.
- You do not have to pay an insurance deductible.
- Your insurance rates do not go up.
- You do not have to order another driver's license, credit card etc.
- You do not expose yourself to identity theft.
- The city becomes safer.

For more information about how to prevent crime contact: **Officer Rob Romey, 10920 E. Winner Rd., Independence, MO 64052. 816-325-7643**

## 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

## 24 Highway Improvements From Page 1

were built between Forest and College Avenue. The Delaware sidewalks were built in 2008 between 35th Street and Luff Elementary School. These three sidewalk improvement projects totaled \$370,000.

- A new \$1,500,000 bridge was built in 2006 on Vermont Street over Rock Creek to replace a narrow bridge that periodically flooded. The new bridge elevation was raised and about one-quarter mile of Vermont Street was reconstructed with new curbs, drives, and pavement.

- Ten storm water improvement and five sanitary sewer improvement projects have been completed in the last five years west of Noland Road. The most recent storm water projects totaled \$3.3 million and were on 10th Street between Crisp and Vermont, Pleasant Street and 40th

Street, and 35th Street at Pittman Road. The most recent \$1.05 million in sanitary sewer projects were on 40 Highway near 36th Street and on Northern Boulevard near 6th Street.

"These improvements are part of preserving and improving existing business districts and neighborhoods in Independence," Heacock said.



CityScene is published monthly by the City Manager's Office, 111 East Maple Street, Independence, Missouri 64050. Editor: Irene Baltrusaitis, Communications Director, 325-7019. The City's webpage address is [www.independencemo.org](http://www.independencemo.org)

## 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

## Keep Leaves, Yard Waste Out of Streets, Storm Drains

Keeping your leaves and other yard waste out of streets and storm drains is just as important as not pouring gasoline or used oil into a waterway. The health of local streams is vital for wildlife and recreational uses.

Water Pollution Control Director Dick Champion said "you may not think that the actions of one person can make a difference but they can."

"Leaves may seem harmless but if you rake your leaves into the street, those leaves can wash into storm drains and clog them up," he said. "Open drainage areas can become obstructed by dumped yard waste and brush. The reduced capacity of the total storm drainage system may then lead to flooding.

If you put too much fertilizer or pesticide on your lawn, some of the material may flow off during a rainstorm and end up in a stream. If you dump the old gas or oil from your lawn mower into a ditch or storm drain, it eventually will end up in a stream.

All of these things change the balance of nutrients in streams or may be toxic. Ultimately, the stream's oxygen is used up so fish and other wildlife begin to decrease. Life in the stream can actually cease to exist - except for some smelly, decaying plants.

Leaves, like grass, are best managed with frequent mowing to mulch them into the soil. Composting them is another great option. The nutrients from the leaves may not be good for streams but they are great for your soil.

If you're going to put down mulch anyway, consider putting down a layer of

leaves first and then mulch over the top. Or, check out the opportunities for disposal of yard waste at area recycling centers and plan your yard work to take advantage of these sites.

For more information about keeping our local streams healthy, contact Water Pollution Control at 325-7711.



## Scam From Page 1

telephone calls. You should never give personal information about your account to anyone who calls you unsolicited.

To pay a utility bill, you can do so safely by calling the City's Customer Service Group at 325-7930 or visit the Customer Service Center, 11610 E. Truman Rd., between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The drive through lanes open at 7:30 a.m. For secure 24-hour payment options call 816-325-SERV (7738) or go to the City's Web site [www.independencemo.org](http://www.independencemo.org).

## 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](http://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.

## Dinner From Page 1

"Although it was geared around fund-raising, the event focused on community building, especially in regards to networking among the 40 active blockwatch groups in Independence," Officer Romey said.

Organizers of the event were Frank Kithcart, Peggy Ault, J.B. Vicker, Doug Ault, Bob Spradling, Leah Burton, Pat Massey, Becky Meadows, Aileen Kithcart, Pat Renshaw, Dave Renshaw, Elisa Breitenbach, Virginia Mashburn, Denise Butler, Lisa Renshaw, David Renshaw Jr. Janet Castle, Cliff Cloyd, Monica Conner, Kaitlynn Conner, Alice Brinck, Nicholas Tarwaters, Nathan Ruiz, and PJ Ruiz.

Winners in the apple pie contest were Tammy Purtle, first; Debbie Anderson, second; and Barbara Farara, third. The spaghetti sauce contest winners were Frank Kithcart, first; Shary Sherry, second; and Karen Davis, third.

For more information, contact Officer Romey, 325-7643.

### Adventure Oasis Water Park

## 2010 Season Passes BEST Rates of the Season



Available  
Nov. 12 - Dec. 31  
At Truman  
Memorial  
Building

Regular Passes	Regular/Holiday
Youth/Senior Season	\$75/\$64
Adult Season	\$105/\$90
Family Season	\$250/\$212
5-Punch Pass Youth or Senior	\$24/\$20
5-Punch Pass Adult	\$32/\$27
5-Punch Pass Family	\$88/\$75

Non-Resident	Regular/Holiday
5-Punch Pass Youth or Sr	\$28/\$24
5-Punch Pass Adult	\$36/\$31
5-Punch Pass Family	\$100/\$85

**Holiday Promotion Ends  
2 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 31  
Adventure Oasis Opening Day  
Saturday, May 29, 2010**

Available at  
Truman Memorial Building  
416 W. Maple Ave.



## Utility Bill Payment Options

The City of Independence offers many convenient options for paying utility bills.

### To pay by phone call 325-SERV

You will need to have your Account Access Code and your utility account number in order to pay by phone.

### To pay online go to:

[www.independencemo.org](http://www.independencemo.org)

NOTE: There is a \$1 per month discount offered to residential customers age 62 or older on their sewer bill if they receive Social Security payments (or similar retirement benefits) and their sewer usage is 100 to 400 cubic feet per month. Call 325-7930 for more information.

## Historic Homes Dress Up for Holidays

The Spirit of Christmas Past Heritage Homes Tour features three landmark homes decorated for the holidays beginning the weekend after Thanksgiving and running through Wednesday, Dec. 30. The Bingham-Waggoner Estate, 313 W. Pacific; Marshal's Home, 217 N. Main; and Vaile Mansion, 1500 N. Liberty can all be toured for a discount price of \$12. If visited individually, each is \$5. The homes will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays - Saturdays and 1 to 4 p.m. Sundays. They will be closed Dec. 23-25.

The Bingham-Waggoner Estate has chosen a "Dickens of a Christmas" theme inspired by the classic Charles Dickens story, "A Christmas Carol." Special Twilight tours are from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6.

Another stop on the Heritage Homes and Twilight Tours is the Marshal's Home, with a theme of "Looking Back at a Frontier Christmas." It helps visitors understand what a home of the 1850s might have looked like during the holidays. The two story red brick Federal style building also houses the adjoining 1859 Jail and an historic museum.

The Vaile Mansion will be decorated to the theme of "Victorian Christmas

Wedding." You'll see about 20 vintage wedding dresses, with the oldest dating from 1865. The Vaile's decorators will adorn more than 50 trees ranging in height from 12 inches to 12 feet with thousands of lights, ribbons and ornaments. For the Twilight Tour, the Vaile plans to feature a bell choir, refreshments and Mr. and Mrs. Vaile.

Stop in at the Chicago & Alton Depot, 318 W. Pacific, for the "A Visit From St. Nicholas" display in the station master's upstairs living quarters. The lower level will also feature period decorations. Tours are from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturdays, Nov. 28 and Dec. 5, 12, and 19; and 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sundays, Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, 13 and 20. Donations welcomed.

If you prefer contemporary homes, don't miss the Young Matrons' Holly and Mistletoe Tour from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. Five private homes and a church, are decorated in their holiday best. For tickets, call 373-8558.

The National Frontier Trails Museum, 318 W. Pacific, has several Saturday December events planned. On Dec. 5, the NFTM will offer covered wagon rides free with paid admission from 10 a.m.

to 4 p.m. and at 11 a.m., a Laura Ingalls Wilder re-enactment about Christmas on the prairie. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children ages 6 -17. On Dec. 12, "Celebrate the Holidays" from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with cider and cookies includes a chance to meet Father Christmas and hear live music; make a Crazy Quilt Christmas Boot at 10 a.m. for \$25 and learn about 19th century origins of holiday traditions during the program "In Search of Christmas Past" at 2 p.m. And on Dec. 19, learn how Lewis and Clark celebrated Christmas. There is no extra charge for the 2 p.m. programs. Reservations are requested. Call 325-7575.

The Harry S. Truman Library, 500 W. U. S. 24 Highway, will present its monthly "Talkin' Truman" program, "Christmas at the White House," at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 12. It is free with paid admission.

Attend one of the holiday-inspired concerts at the new Independence Events Center, 19100 E. Valley View Pkwy., which starts with "The Christmas Music of Mannheim Steamroller" at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17. The following evening at 7:30 p.m., you can join in "A Charlie Daniels Band Christmas." For tickets, call (866)443-8849.

Bring your family to the Events Center for holiday skating 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 23-24. Prices are \$6 for adults, \$4 for children and seniors. There is a \$2 skate rental fee.

For a complete list of holiday events and attractions, go to [www.visitindependence.com](http://www.visitindependence.com).

## Save Energy, Money This Winter

The Independence Power & Light (IPL) Department offers the following tips to save energy and money this winter season:

- Set thermostats as low as comfortable, consistent with safety and health needs
- Remember to clean or replace furnace filters on a regular basis as needed
- Keep drapes and shades open during the day, especially on south facing windows, and then close at night
- Make sure warm-air registers are clean and unblocked
- Weatherstrip and caulk around windows and doors as needed
- When the fireplace is not in use, keep the flue damper closed

More tips and information on insulation, ducting, windows, fireplaces and the value of programmable thermostats are available in the 33-page "Energy Savers" handbook available to Independence residents at no charge from Power & Light.

Residents with annual household incomes of \$41,100 or less for a family

of four may be eligible for home weatherization assistance. To learn more about this program, income guidelines for other family sizes, and assistance in completing an application form, call the Community Services League at 254-4100 or the Northwest Communities Development Corporation at 833-3072.

Residents looking at installing new heating equipment should consider heat pump systems. IPL offers rebates for qualifying newly-purchased central heat pump systems, as well as special winter electric rates for homes with heat pumps. Certain high efficient heat pump models may also qualify for federal tax credits. For more information on these incentives, including qualifying criteria for rebates and federal tax credits, visit the Power & Light web site at [www.independencemo.org/pl](http://www.independencemo.org/pl).

For more information on heat pumps, saving energy this winter, and to get a free copy of the "Energy Savers" handbook, call IPL at 325-7494.



### 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](http://www.City7.TV)

\*Denotes live meeting,  
all others are rebroadcasts.