

NEWSLETTER

MAYOR JOHNSON'S LETTER

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When the yellow goldenrods cover the country side, soybean plant leaves begin to change color and the corn plant leaves begin to dry at the bottom of the corn stalk, we know that fall is close at hand. Soon the trees begin to show their beautiful colors and we wish we could enjoy that beauty for a long period of time. Unfortunately, a heavy frost, a rain and a few strong windy days change that colorful scenery very quickly.

One thing I think most of us would just as soon have over with quickly is the coming election. It seems like we have been embroiled in this season's campaigning forever. In some case political signs have been up for months already. I am so glad we do not have a city election at the same time as the general election because the smaller units of government get left out of the media and concern for the voters.

Besides the Presidential/ Vice Presidential; U.S. Senate; U.S. Congressional seats, we have the State Senate and State Representative seats to vote on. But are your prepared to vote for a County Commissioner, a Three Rivers Park District Representative or even in some cases a School Board Member or a school levy question? Voting has already begun (cont. p.2)



Mayor

Marvin Johnson

MEETINGS

City Council

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 6:30 pm

Planning Commission

3rd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Workshops are posted

as scheduled

ci.independence.mn.us

Internet Update

The City has been working to increase high speed data options for residents of Independence. High speed data is a private utility that is not regulated by local government. As a result, the City is not able to require private utility installation by providers. With that acknowledged, Independence has been focusing a significant effort on expanding high speed data options and coverage within the City.

The City has been working with Mediacom to apply for a grant to utilize an existing fiber line that served a cellular tower along a portion of County Road 6 between Ingerson Road and Nelson Road. The City and Mediacom were successful with our application and awarded an approximately \$150,000 grant to establish 7 miles of new infrastructure that will serve more than 100 Independence properties with high speed fiber services. This new fiber will also establish a basis for future expansion projects along the (cont. p. 2)

but if possible, check your ballot out before you vote in person so you don't get caught unknowledgeable about something on the ballot. November 3rd is the final Election Day and the polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. till 8:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Staff and the City Council has been working for months on a budget for next year and already required to set the maximum proposed Levy for next year's taxes. We are pleased to keep our tax rate flat as in the last few years. We will have a budget hearing at our Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 1st. The Levy can be approved as initially proposed or lowered.

Since our last newsletter we have had our City's Financial Audit Report for 2019. It was probably the best report we have ever received. Not a single glitch. We really appreciate our Staff and their work ethics.

We will soon be doing some remodeling in City Hall and the Public Safety Department which include some new technology. Staff and Council have had several meetings with an architectural consultant regarding the work to be done. It will be several months for the project to be completed but when it is finished it will make our building more beautiful, practical and welcoming. One thing that will be very noticeable will be the windows and natural light.

The bond for the road overlays and this project was at an extremely low rate and we had a high number of bidders for the project with the lowest bids below estimated costs.

The Council has been meeting "in person" for their Council meetings. We hope that soon the meetings will be open to the public. However, the public is always welcome to attend the meetings via Zoom. All you have to do is check the website and facebook for the invite or call the City for more information on how to attend.

Construction on U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 90 roundabout is still on schedule for next summer. County Roads 92 North and South and U.S. Highway 12 will be completed in 2022.

Until the next newsletter, enjoy fall, vote, stay healthy and hope that we soon have a vaccine for COVID-19 and get back to a somewhat of a normal past.

Marvin D. Johnson, Mayor
City of Independence

Internet cont....

County Road 6 corridor. In addition to working with Mediacom, the City has been working with a wireless high speed data provider named Xtratyme. The City leased a small area on the City Hall property to Xtratyme upon which they installed a new data tower that has the potential to serve a high percentage of the City's properties with high speed data services. Xtratyme is a private company that utilizes point to point wireless technology to provide speeds up to 1GB upload and download.

If you are interested in contacting Xtratyme call 1-888-987-2896 Ex. 2 or email at sales@xtratyme.com Another option is to fill out the webform on our Contact Us tab of the website www.xtratyme.com. The webform will ask for your contact address and contact info as well as the best time to reach you.





Chief Gary Kroells

PUBLIC SAFETY NEWS CHIEF'S DESK

I am commonly asked, 'Who is West Hennepin Public Safety Department?' and 'What police department do you work for?'



West Hennepin Public Safety Department is a local police department that provides law enforcement services for the City of Maple Plain and the City of Independence. West Hennepin was formed in 1979 when the two cities decided to enter into a joint powers agreement to form their own local police force. They named their local police force '**West Hennepin Public Safety Department**'. Over the years people driving through our great cities or who are new to the area have often asked, 'What is West Hennepin Public Safety Department?' It is the local police for Maple Plain and Independence. It is not part of Hennepin County Sheriff's Office.

West Hennepin Public Safety Department is located at 1918 County Road 90 in Independence. It employs ten full time police officers: Police Chief Gary Kroells; Second in Command Sergeant Rick Denneson; one full time criminal investigator; one full time narcotics agent; six patrol officers and two administrative assistants. West Hennepin Public Safety Department is governed by a Police Commission made up of the Mayors of Maple Plain and Independence and one appointed council member from each city.

Historically, West Hennepin Public Safety handles approximately 7,000 calls a year, 583 a month, or 19 calls per day. Throughout the summer months of May through August 2020, West Hennepin Public Safety Department has handled 3,546 incidents.

West Hennepin Public Safety's Mission Statement is '*To protect and serve the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence in a professional and compassionate manner.*'

Our philosophy, vision and expectation for West Hennepin Public Safety are, '*To advocate professional law enforcement services. We shall strive to encourage all police personnel to achieve and maintain the highest standards of ethics, integrity, community interaction, professional conduct in providing police services to the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence.*

To be a progressive, active, and effective police department, we must serve with professionalism and exhibit diversity, tolerance, and sustained high standards in police work each and every day. We must continue to develop strategies, combine resources, utilize partnerships, and execute programs designed to improve police services to our citizens and the profession of law enforcement.

Chief Kroells stated, "West Hennepin Police Officers are here to protect our citizens from criminals who are looking to take advantage of others."

Bike Ride for Pancreatic Cancer!

Independence resident Randy Stinson set out to bike 700 miles by his 70th birthday which was August 17. His goal was to honor his wife Sharon, who has been battling pancreatic cancer for 19 months. He decided to raise money to fight the terrible disease. His mantra was '700 x 70'. By Monday August 17, he had ridden 834 miles and raised \$10,880 for the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN). Well done Randy!



PanCAN is a nonprofit organization that funds research, provides patient/caregiver support, conducts community outreach and advocates for increased federal research funding for those affected by pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic cancer, like any cancer, does not discriminate. As Randy stated, 'pancreatic cancer doesn't care whether you're an Independence resident, CEO of Apple, US representative or Supreme Court Judge-all are susceptible'.

It is still possible to donate to accelerate progress and improve patient outcomes. If interested, the link is <http://support.pancan.org/goto/RandyStinson700x70>.



West Hennepin

Public Safety Department NIGHT TO UNITE CANCELLED

October 6th, 2020

For the health and safety of our citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic, West Hennepin Public Safety has decided to cancel Night to Unite on October 6, 2020. It was a difficult decision but Night to Unite will come back stronger than ever next year.

We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's Night to Unite event on Tuesday, August 3, 2021.



Randy Stinson



Halloween Safety

Did you know?

Only 1/3 of parents talk to their kids each year about Halloween safety.

Twice as many kids are killed as pedestrians by cars on Halloween than on any other day of the year.

Suspicious fires and arson fires skyrocket around Halloween.

- **Avoid costumes with long or billowing fabric-it can be a fire hazard.**
- **Use battery operated candles or glow sticks inside jack-o-lanterns.**
- **Teach children to stay away from open flames and to stop, drop and roll if their clothes catch fire.**
- **Keep decorations like hay and corn stalks away from any ignition source.**



Do I need an assembly permit for my gathering?

“Assembly” means a gathering of more than 50 persons at a time. Did you know the City requires a permit for such occasions? There is a simple application on the web-site and in the City Hall office to be completed, and then approved by City Council, West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) and a City Official. The intent of this is for WHPS and the City to be aware since the large gathering of people can increase the potential need for fire, police and other public services. The City helps ensure noise, lighting, traffic/parking, adequate restroom facilities etc... are offered and neighboring homes will not extraordinarily be affected. Regulations can be established which protect the health, safety and welfare of all persons within the city. We’ve reduced our prices for these permits. They are as follows:

200+ Attendees (Large Assembly): \$100
100+ Attendees (Medium Assembly): \$25
50+ Attendees (Small Assembly): \$25

Applications are due 45 days prior to the event.

Please call the City with any questions at 763-479-0527.



City Snowplow Policy



West Hennepin Public Safety, Public Works, and the Hennepin County Highway division would like to caution residents that it is unlawful to dump, plow or push snow from private driveways onto highway or city streets whether you are plowing your driveway or you have hired someone to remove snow.

Snow dumped on highways or street right-of-way can create a hazard not only for motorists, but also for snowplows. Even heavy snowplows have been ditched and damaged when hitting compacted and frozen snow. The person responsible for depositing snow on roadways may also be liable in a civil lawsuit if damages or injuries that occur as a result of this action.

The violations are considered a misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum \$700 fine and/or 90 days in jail. Independence Public Works and WHPS will be enforcing these laws.



Public Works strives to clear snow and ice from City roads as soon as possible. Delays may occur in the event of extreme weather or equipment breakdowns. The City has more than 56 miles of roads, and 60 cul-de-sacs that are maintained by the Public Works Department. Seasonal parking information is as follows:

- ⇒ From November 1 through April 15 of each year and between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. it shall be unlawful to park or permit to be parked, or to continue to park or permit to stand, any vehicle upon any city street.
- ⇒ Following a snow fall of 3 inches or more in depth, it shall be unlawful to park or permit to be parked, or to continue to permit to stand, any vehicle upon any street until the snow has been plowed from the street or the same has been otherwise disposed of.
- ⇒ High volume major collector roads and roads with steep hills and curves receive first priority.
- ⇒ Safety of the plow operators and the public are important. Snowplowing may be terminated after 12-14 hour to allow personnel to rest. High winds creating white out conditions may also suspend plowing until weather improves.
- ⇒ The City will assume no responsibility for damage to underground lawn sprinkling systems, exterior lighting systems, and similar landscaping installed in the public right-of-way.

Garbage Can Driveway Location! Please place garbage cans inside your driveway perimeter on pick-up days. Garbage containers should never be placed on roadways.

Mailbox Reminder! Ensure your mail box posts are sturdy and set solidly in the ground. The City is not responsible for mailboxes damaged by snow being pushed off roads!

****Nystrom publishing– this is where the Orono Discovery Page should go (to fill the entire page)

Elections 2020

General Election: November 3

Pre-Register and Absentee vote **NOW** at

www.mnvotes.org

Pre-Register to Vote and Absentee Vote NOW at mnvotes.org

If you are a new Independence resident, or did not vote in the last election, you can preregister to vote now! If you are not yet 18 but will be 18 years old on Election Day, you may also pre-register to vote now. Being pre-registered speeds up election day by having your name on the roster of registered voters when you go to vote. Pre-register on-line at <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterRegistration/VoterRegistrationMain.aspx>, or stop in at City Hall to pre-register. If you have questions, call the City at 763-479-0527.

Absentee vote in person – Sept. 22nd

Beginning September 22nd, you may cast an absentee ballot in person at City Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-4:00. Additional hours will start October 12th with voting on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00-3:00 as well as the continued Tuesday and Thursday hours.

October 31st (Saturday): 10:00-3:00 p.m.

Absentee Vote by mail

You may have an absentee ballot sent to you by completing an Absentee Ballot Application, available at mnvotes.org. Your ballot will be sent to you when it is ready-starting 46 days prior to the election if you applied for an absentee ballot in advance.

Tips for New Voters on Election Day

- You have a right to time off work to vote, without losing your pay, personal leave, or vacation time.

Sign in or register to vote.

- If you are registered to vote, your name will be on a list of voters. You just need to write your signature next to your name. If you are registered, you do not need to show ID when you sign in.
- You must bring proper ID to register on Election Day. The most common form of ID is a valid Minnesota driver's license, learner's permit or ID. Your ID must have your current Independence address. Go to www.mnvotes.org for ID options.

Vote

- You will vote in a private area, and your vote is secret.
- The ballot instructions will say how many candidates you can choose for each office. Usually it will say to choose one.
- Your ballot will count even if you do not vote on every race or ballot question.
- If you make a mistake, you have a right to ask for a replacement ballot.
- Take your ballot to the ballot box and insert the ballot in the counter machine.



CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

1920 County Road 90

Independence, MN 55359

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Fax: 763-479-0528

tgronstal@ci.independence.mn.us

City Officials

Mayor

Marvin Johnson

City Council

Brad Spencer

Lynn Betts

Steve Grotting

Ray McCoy

Planning Commissioners

Robert Gardner

Leith Dumas

Tom Palmquist

Steve Thompson

Anita Volkenant

City Staff

City Administrator

Mark Kaltsas

City Planner

Mark Kaltsas

Public Works Supervisor

Shawn Bode

Assistant City Administrator

Beth Horner

Building Inspector

Bruce Satek

Administrative Assistant

Trish Gronstal

Use of City Right-Of-Way

The City has identified new obstructions within the public right of way. The City's right of way is typically 66 feet wide and extends approximately 15 feet away from the outside edge of the public road. Residents can generally maintain (mow) the right of way between their property and the edge of the public street. In order to accommodate drainage, snow plowing and mowing, the City does not permit the following permanent or temporary obstructions in the right of way:

Landscape boulders, large rocks or similar structures

Fences

Parking or storage of trailers, recreational vehicles, boats or similar (permanent or temporary)

In order for the City to safely and effectively maintain the public streets and drainage systems, the City is asking all residents to help keep the City right of way free from obstructions. Please remove all obstructions from the public right of way to avoid any potential violations. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted to be in the right of way, please contact Public Works at 763.479.0530.

City of Independence Hours

Absentee (Early) Voting:

- 1) Currently open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- 2) Starting October 12, 2020: Open Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (as well as continuing the Tuesday and Thursday hours).
- 3) October 31, 2020 (Saturday) from 10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
- 4) November 2, 2020 (Monday) from 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.