

NEWSLETTER

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MAYOR JOHNSON'S LETTER

Dear Independence Residents:

It is hard to believe, but it has now been over a year since our initial lockdown because of Covid 19. In my wildest imagination would I have thought that a year later we would still be isolating from each other. I have to admit that there are some meetings that I'm happy to still be doing virtually, not traveling, but others where I miss the socialization, networking and the food. We are very anxious to get back in City Hall for our meetings. Our staff has been so patient during the remodeling too.

I feel fortunate that I have had my two Covid 19 vaccines already and received them locally.

Just recently we lost two of our Independence Centurians. Former Councilmember LeRoy Haglund served on the City Council for a term in the early 90's. His farm was on County Road 92 which he planted into mostly trees.

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**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



CLEAN UP

The City of Independence will be holding a clean-up event this year for residents. The dates are being finalized within the next two weeks and will be announced on the City website and also on Facebook!

We look forward to offering the event again this year and will be offering a hybrid model which will follow safety measures around COVID19 recommendations. Stay tuned for further announcements or call City Hall at 763-479-0527 with questions.

Alice (Kuntz) Noreen lived in the Lyndale area and just deceased at 102. Kuntz Drive is named after her family. Her parents had a grocery store across from their home which was located just west of “Mama’s Happy” antique creamery in Lyndale and her father repaired watches. Alice worked there prior to spending her life in education in area schools. Alice was an only child and was the oldest living alumni of Mound Westonka High School.

Property Valuation questions?

Contact the City Assessor, Dave Thomsen at 612-388-5426 before the Board of Appeal meeting.

April 6th at 6:00 p.m. is our scheduled date for our City’s Board of Appeal. This is the meeting where you have opportunity to appeal to the City Council the valuation the assessor has established for your property. We are anticipating a major increase in value for homes because the market has been so crazy. As you may recall in one of my last newsletter articles I said that in the City of Independence home values showed an average ratio of 87% of the real market value last year. That number should be close to 95% (I hope you will have received your valuation statement from the County before you receive this newsletter.) If your home value is an 8 or 9% increase, you are probably average with everyone else.

First thing to do if you have questions is to call the assessor David Thomsen at 612-388-5426. If you still have questions and want to address the Council, be sure and call City Hall and get on the agenda for the April 6th meeting. The council cannot do anything for a year after that date.

The time is soon coming for the reconstruction of U. S. Highway 12 and County Road 90 and U.S. 12 east of Maple Plain. Detours will be in effect all summer long, May to September. Then next summer construction will begin on U. S. Highway 12 and County Road 92 north and south with some different detours.

Enjoy spring! I hope it comes early, and stay healthy!

Marvin D. Johnson, Mayor



WeCAN

Western Communities Action Network, Inc.

Because together, WeCAN

What We Do!

WeCAN serves the western communities of Hennepin County including Mound, Minnetrista, Rockford, Spring Park, St. Bonifacius, Tonka Bay, Navarre, Minnetonka Beach, Maple Plain, Loretto, Independence and Greenfield.

1. **Emergency Assistance**– rent/mortgage and utility assistance as well as emergency vet care.
2. **Food Support**– Meals on Wheels, Mobile Market and Kids Food Program.
3. **Family Programs**– Ready-to-Learn School Supplies, Adopt a Family, Birthday Shelf, Personal Care and Household Cleaning

Products.

4. **Employment Programs**– One-on-One job search help, Computers/ Office Equipment Availability.

Whether you are in need of help, a donor, a business or a community member looking for volunteer opportunities, we are happy to connect with you.

(952) 472-0742

5213 Shoreline Drive Mound, MN 55364



**Chief Gary
Kroells**

Safety Improvement for Highway 12 Starting in May 2021

Over the years, far too many injuries have occurred and lives have been lost along Highway 12. To improve safety between Wayzata and the western edge of Wright County, the Highway 12 Safety Coalition was formed in 2014. The Coalition has worked closely with elected officials, MnDOT, Hennepin County and our state legislature to obtain funding for safety improvements along Highway 12. After seven years and over a hundred meetings to discuss funding, design plans, safety audits, cost benefit analysis and lobbying legislatures at the state capital, I am proud to say the much needed construction safety improvements for Highway 12 are scheduled to begin in May 2021.

What can you expect over the next two years in regard to safety improvement through Maple Plain, Independence and Orono?

Highway 12 barrier and County Road 90 roundabout

The Highway 12 center concrete barrier and County Road 90 roundabout projects will begin first. The projects are scheduled to begin in May 2021 and are expected to run through September 2021. During this project, Highway 12 will close to through traffic at Highway 12 and County Road 6 and between Highway 12 and County Road 92. Attached is a link to MnDOT's project website <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/hwy12-orono-independence/index.html>.

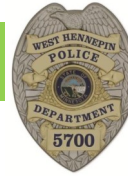
County Road 92 safety improvements at Highway 12

The County Road 92 safety improvements at Highway 12 project is scheduled to begin in fall 2021. Hennepin County is finalizing the design this spring as it heads towards construction. We will have updated information such as closures, detours and construction timelines in the summer. For more information about this project, you can go to the county's project website at www.hennepin.us/county-road-92-safety.

These construction projects come with delays and many months of detours. We must be patient and work together in order to improve Highway 12. Together we will save lives along Highway 12.

Chief of Police
Gary Kroells

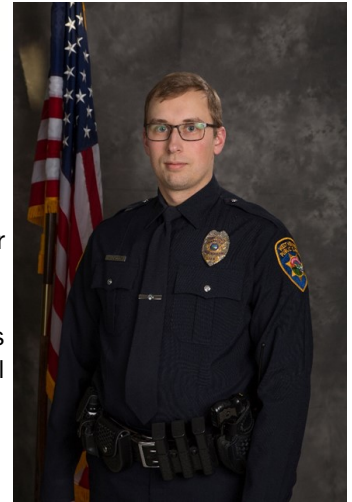
Insert map here



Farewell to Officer Geddes

After 5 years of dedicated service to the West Hennepin Public Safety Department, Officer Aaron Geddes left our organization to pursue his passion as an aviation instructor.

Officer Geddes was a valued asset to West Hennepin Public Safety Department. During his time, he always had a friendly smile and took pride in his work by providing exceptional service to the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence. He will be missed.



West Hennepin Public Safety Announces the 2021 Citizens Police Academy Delayed Until the Fall Due to COVID-19

West Hennepin Public Safety has proudly taught a Citizens Police Academy since 2009. Due to COVID-19 our spring academy was cancelled in 2020. West Hennepin Public Safety Department is optimistic we can host this course in the fall of 2021. Please keep an eye out for updated information in the city newsletters, on West Hennepin's Facebook page and in media outlets for a course coming in the fall of 2021.

WHAT IS CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY?

The Citizens Police Academy is a FREE 24-hour block of instruction designed to give citizens knowledge about how your police department operates, our policies, procedures, programs and challenges in modern day law enforcement.

The Citizens Police Academy was designed to create a better understanding of law enforcement through education. Participants are presented with realistic hands-on information, which will help each participant better understand the police department functions. The classroom and hands-on information covers: **DWI and Traffic Enforcement, home security, personal security, use of force, including deadly force, which includes a demonstration of the Taser Gun and FATS training (firearms simulation), Hennepin County Dispatch Center, Court procedures including testifying before a Judge** and many other areas related to law enforcement. An informational video explaining our Citizens Police Academy can be found on our website at <https://westhennepin.com/citizens-police-academy>.

This is a great opportunity to meet your police officers, fellow citizens and other members of government to learn why we do what we do. At graduation you will receive a certificate and become a member of the Citizens Academy Network Alumni.

URGENT: FLUSHING WIPES IS DAMAGING THE CITY SEWER SYSTEM!

The City has costly sewer damage repairs due to the use of “flushable” wipes. The latest breakdown resulted in \$4000.00 in damage to the pumps. We are urging residents to discontinue using these wipes and are trying to avoid having to pass on these incurred costs on to the user/s of the system.

Flushable “wet wipes” or “disposable wipes” do not break apart, and, as a result, are very damaging. The wipes cluster with congealed food fat to form large blockages known as fatbergs. After wipes are flushed they exit to the city sewer system but unlike toilet paper they fail to disintegrate. They clog the pumps, causing them to break down and redirect stagnant wastewater back into your homes. So-called flushable wipes are becoming a growing hazard to public health. Wipes are made from a very tough material called “air-laid paper”, and are often saturated with cleansing chemicals, disinfectants and cosmetic scents. Air-laid paper behaves very differently in sewers than toilet paper and does not readily disintegrate in water.

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in helping to maintain the city sewer system by discontinuing the use of these wipes. It is expensive to fix these issues and the City is working to maintain our sewer system as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

Shawn Bode– Public Works Supervisor



Recent disasters have only compounded ongoing challenges to maintaining a sufficient supply of blood products for hospital patients in need due to COVID-19. Blood drives have been canceled in unprecedented numbers during this pandemic as organizations, businesses and schools have temporarily closed or restricted access to these community locations where drives are held for the public

To help restock hospital shelves, the Red Cross urges eligible individuals in parts of the country unaffected by these disasters to give blood, platelets or plasma for patients in need of transfusions. Please schedule an appointment to donate by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

The Red Cross is currently testing all blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor’s immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether they developed symptoms. Red Cross antibody tests will be helpful to identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies and may qualify to be convalescent plasma donors. Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors that have antibodies that may help patients who are actively fighting the virus. The Red Cross hopes that COVID-19 antibody testing will help provide our valued donors insight into whether they may have been exposed to this coronavirus. Donors can expect to receive the results of their antibody test within 7 to 10 days through our Red Cross Blood Donor App or on our donor portal at [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org).

All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) or use the Blood Donor App.



Insert Discovery Center info here

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event

Minnetonka, May 7 and 8
Minnetonka Public Works Department
11522 Minnetonka Blvd.
Minnetonka, MN 55305
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.



Hennepin is hosting a community collection event for county residents to safely and properly dispose of unwanted garden and household hazardous wastes. The collection event will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The following items will be accepted at the event:

(household, lawn and garden) Aerosols, batteries (tape both terminals), CFLs and fluorescent lamps, and HID lamps (limit 25), drain, oven and corrosive cleaners, gas cylinders (specialty gases-oxygen, helium, etc.) less than 59 lbs., liquid cosmetics, mercury thermometers and thermostats, paint, stain, varnish, solvents (limit three 5-gallon pails), pesticides, petroleum adhesives, pool chemicals, propane gas cylinders– less than 40 lbs.

(automotive) Antifreeze, auto paints, vehicle lead-acid batteries, gas, fluids (except oil), fuels (containers will not be returned).

The following items will **not** be accepted at the event:

Asbestos, business generated waste, construction debris, electronics, explosives, garbage, major appliances, medicines, oil and oil filters, radioactive products, recyclables (cardboard, glass, metal, paper, phone books, plastic, etc.), sharps, tires.

What to know:

- Residents should remain in their vehicles unless otherwise directed by staff.
- Items should be stored in the trunk of the vehicle, bed of truck, or in a trailer. Only bring in items that one person can load in a vehicle by themselves. Staff will remove most items from vehicles.
- Staff have adjusted operations to include 6-ft physical distancing and enhanced cleaning/disinfecting. Staff now wear masks, coveralls and gloves.
- Residents are encouraged to safely store their household hazardous waste until they are able to attend a collection event. Safe storage tips can be found by viewing the County's household hazardous web page.

Be prepared to show your driver's license or other proof of county residence. Face coverings that cover both the nose and mouth are required. The event will be shut down during inclement weather. Visit Hennepin County's waste collection event page to learn more and view all 2021 events. hennepin.us

**CITY OF
INDEPENDENCE**

1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359
Ph.: 763-479-0527
Fax: 763-479-0528

City Officials

Mayor

Marvin Johnson

City Council

Brad Spencer

Lynn Betts

Ray McCoy

Steve Grotting

City Officials

Planning Commission Chair

Robert Gardner

Planning Commissioners

Anita Volkenant

Leith Dumas

Tom Palmquist

Steve Thompson

City Staff

Administrator/City Planner

Mark Kaltsas

Public Works Supervisor

Shawn Bode

Building Inspector

Bruce Satek

Assistant City Administrator

Beth Horner

Administrative Assistant

Trish Gronstal



West Hennepin Public Safety issues burn permits for the City of Independence.

Call 763-479-0500

Applications are available at westhennepin.com. Applications are accepted Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Applications received outside these times will be reviewed the following business day. Permit requests not accepted Saturday or Sunday.

The BURN PERMIT is NOT valid until approved and returned to you.

Permits are issued in one month increments and you can request multiple months.

Permit Fees are \$10.00 per month

All Permits expire on Dec 31 of each year.