



## WINTER 2024-2025 NEWSLETER

### MAYOR JOHNSON'S LETTER

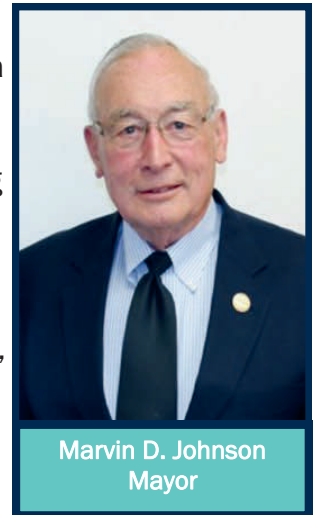
As I write this final city newsletter article as Mayor, it is hard to know where to start. We did not have a city newsletter when I began, January 1, 1980. We depended completely upon the *Delano Eagle* and *Wayzata Weekly* that most people were subscribing to, and they were covering us well.

Our City Hall did not have water or restrooms. We did have an oil furnace with a fan for heat, but the floor was cold in the winter. The manual typewriter, mimeograph copier, and pull handle adding machine were the office equipment of the day with a single telephone. All the chairs were hard wooden with most of them being folding chairs for the audience. Before we moved into our new building, we did end up with some old soft chairs for the staff and council members which I believe were throw aways from Cargill.

Fortunately for the City, Earl Taylor, our City Clerk Treasurer, was our office employee with some part time help. Being Clerk for several years already, he handled all city day to day operations well. Jim Franklin, our newly appointed Police Chief was getting our new West Hennepin Police Department off to a good start.

In the 1980's, the council was discussing the need for a new City Hall. The city had held some large public meetings and elections in the lower level of the church next door as well as regularly using the restrooms. It wasn't until the Maple Plain Lions had about \$200,000 that they were giving away that we got serious and said they could use the building anytime if they donated to us. Maple Plain had been approached first, but they had some additional demands. Years later the Lions membership declined, and the organization disbanded. We moved into our new City Hall in 2000 and we have since gone through two renovations.

Prior to discussion on building a new City Hall, the Soleys, who owned and lived on the five acres next to the railroad (city property now) wanted to sell their property to the City as they were aging and had no children. Discussion was being held with staff. Then one of our council members at



Marvin D. Johnson  
Mayor

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#### MEETINGS

##### City Council

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

\*Truth in Taxation at 6:00 p.m.

##### Planning Commission

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

##### Workshops are

posted as scheduled.

[www.ci.independence.mn.us](http://www.ci.independence.mn.us)



Independence Town Hall picture taken in 1981.

that time with his wife became self-appointed mediators. Their offer was

withdrawn. It wasn't until we had some new council members that the Soleys approached the City again. The property was purchased and the Soleys lived in the home until they deceased. Part of the Public Works building and the Public Safety garage stand on some of that property.



At the beginning of my first Mayor term, we had been notified that the City was eligible for a Federal Wastewater Grant that would cover 95% of the costs for making sewer available around Lake Sarah and Lake Independence and also help individual homeowners that had failing systems. The council spent hours listening to ideas from a selected engineer, whom we eventually fired and contracted with another engineering firm who worked with us to become a part of the Metropolitan Waste Management System. The hardest part of this project was that residents had to admit that they needed a new septic system, and many were leery of the City's motive so did not sign up. Consequently, we had to upgrade the system years later to add the remaining residents to the system around the lakes. No federal funding was available for phase two.

Another proposal at the same time was to work with the City of Delano for providing space for the first Delano Senior Center. We were very supportive of the project, provided some funding, but when completed we never received an invitation to the ribbon cutting/open house. Many of our Independence residents attended events there. Years later when Delano decided they were going to build a new City Center and provide more room for the Senior Center, our City Council worked with Hennepin County to use some Federal Community Development Block Grant Funding across the county line to provide some funding for the new center. The request was unprecedented but approved.

After the completion of the initial sewer system, many residents were anxious to upgrade from gravel roads and driveways and asked for a blacktop road. Over a period of a few years, we had several hearings, and many of our developed areas spruced up drastically because of the new road surfaces. At the same time, some new developments were built, and the Council developed policy that those roads to be blacktopped immediately.

I have worked with 28 different council members. A couple periods of time we had some very difficult meetings, unconstructive years and I was about ready to give up. The community understood the situation and were very supportive by urging people to attend council meetings. I felt like that was the times that I was needed the most. I stuck with it!

We have been fortunate to always have good Planning Commissioners and tenure people. Also, our long-term staff has made the City what it is today. Earl Taylor, Mary Leintz, Tony Hirsch, and Mark Kaltsas with their staff have been the face of the City and have served us well. Co-Directors Elloyd Simon and Clem Schumacher, Dan Cook, Larry Ende, and Shawn Bode have led Public Works. Jim Franklin, Larry Bailey, Ray McCoy, and Gary Kroells have provided Public Safety with their staff. In each department we have had long time tenure which is unheard of these days. They have made me as Mayor look good, and I am thankful for all their service.

Other major projects for the City included building a new Public Works Facility, new Public Safety Headquarters, new Public Safety garage, remodeling and expansion of City Hall, and purchase of the large City Park Property. All the properties have the latest technology and cameras for observation and safety. I can remember when the council had a lengthy discussion whether to tape record council meetings.

In the early 1980's our City was being considered for a major landfill. Many of our residents started an organization called "Preserve Green Acres" and we did many things to oppose such a siting. One year I had 80 meetings dealing with landfill issues, attending County Board Meetings, Metropolitan Council Meetings, Legislative Committee Hearings

etc. We pushed hard to build the Incinerator in Minneapolis which supplies heat and hot water to much of downtown Minneapolis. After that I was appointed to serve on a Hennepin County Recycling Committee which met for two years making recommendations to Hennepin County Staff and Commissioner's.

Over the year's roads and road safety has had a lot of attention. Besides various road committees and studies for the City, I have been involved with the Highway 55 Corridor Coalition and two different Highway 12 Coalitions. The first Highway 12 Coalition ended when the new bypass was being built between Wayzata and County Road 6. That coalition included members all the way to Willmar. The present Coalition, under Gary Kroells leadership, has seen many safety improvements accomplished.

One action our City Council took when County Road 6 was being rebuilt was to demand cement curbing where curbing was needed. The County had been using blacktop curbing and we demanded they use cement in Independence. We had to pay for part of the costs, but today it is standard procedure with the County to use cement.

Another opportunity I had was to serve on the Metropolitan Radio Board. Early on I heard Jim Franklin, our first Police Chief, talk about the difficulty of communicating with other police officers and other departments. When I was asked to serve on a Task Force to talk about radio communication, I remembered Jim's comment and volunteered to be on the committee. I was Vice Chair of the Board and for several years we listened, traveled, met, and went to the Legislature and ended up building an 800-Megahertz Radio System that is now the backbone of public safety radio communications in the State and much of the country.

During the years I have had the privilege of meeting, networking, and leading in several municipal organizations. I have been a part of Northwest Hennepin League of Municipalities, Metro Cities League, Regional Council of Mayors, Minnesota Mayors Association, League of MN Cities, and the National League of Cities. For

most of these organizations I was on some policy committees too, as well as being an officer at some point. In 2018, our City Staff and I hosted at our City Hall about 35 Mayors from across the United States who were members of the National League of Cities Small Cities Council. Our presenters were awesome, one which was Congressman Tom Emmer, a former Independence council member. They stayed at the new hotel in Delano. In the evenings we hosted them on a city bus tour, at Windsong Golf Course, Guthrie Theater, and had a Minnehaha Watershed presentation and dinner cruise on Lake Minnetonka. I will miss these organizations, each with their unique experiences.

I have been blessed with good health, have had the confidence of the citizens of Independence over the years and have been honored to serve as your Mayor. I never dreamed of serving so long. Many are probably aware that I ran for State Senate in 1988. I am so glad that I lost that election and could continue to be your Mayor.

As a teenager, a Bible passage became my favorite lifelong verses. It is Proverbs 3: 5 & 6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." I am amazed how all my life experiences have opened up before me without any of my imaginations or pursuit. Becoming your Mayor is a story in itself!

In all my years, in various positions, I have missed very few meetings. I have always told people that because I do not have children, I could spend more time away and not miss family obligations. I maybe could have been a better farmer though. One meeting I was not planning to attend was the evening of my mother's funeral when we had several family members still with us. However, I received a telephone call that evening from a resident I knew in Greenfield that owned land in Independence. He called to ask about an item on the agenda that evening and wondered if he should come to the meeting. What was happening, was one person was telling everyone that the City was putting trails around everyone's wetlands as seen on an environmental survey map. Lots of people were at the council meeting and we had to explain that the lines were simply topography elevation lines.



My most disappointing memory is the disapproval of a request for a Bed and Breakfast. The five-acre parcel with a big historical house with lots of memories and located amongst lots of trees was being purchased by a couple from Edina. Besides the Bed and Breakfast, they wanted to have outdoor wedding reception opportunities with music provided by a maximum of five string instruments. Several people wrote letters of support, but a few neighbors were very vocal opponents. One neighbor at the public meeting said, "We don't need those people from Edina moving out to our City." One neighbor told me that if I voted in favor, he would personally see that I would no longer be Mayor. The Council voted 3 to 2 against the permit. I was on the losing side. Those neighbors no longer live in the City, and we have never had a Bed and Breakfast proposal again.

I will miss many of the various government meetings and the people involved. I'll not miss writing the quarterly newsletter article, but I do appreciate hearing from people saying they read them. There are so many experiences, changes, and things that happened within the City since 1973 when I was appointed to the Planning Commission that I could write about, but this article is too long now.

Just a couple reminders: Our city's Truth In Taxation hearing is on Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and View Santa is Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

I want to wish Brad Spencer 'the best' as your next Mayor. He, the City Council, staff, and citizens have been so supportive.

**Signing off as your Mayor – December 31, 2024**

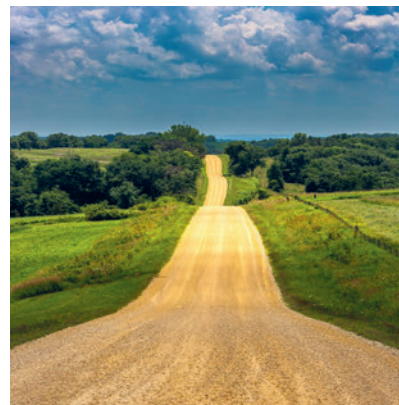
***Marvin D. Johnson***

**You are invited to  
the Retirement Open House  
honoring Mayor Marvin Johnson  
for his 45 years of service held  
on Thursday, January 30, 2025  
from 5-8 p.m. at the City of  
Independence City Hall  
Marvin Johnson Community  
Room at 1920 County Road 90,  
Independence, MN.**

## **Gravel Roads Improvement Project Open House**

**Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 from 5-8 pm  
at the City Hall**

The city recently adopted a 5-year gravel road capital improvement plan. The initial phase of the plan will commence in 2025 with the city improving approximately 17 miles of gravel roads. The improvements will include the following: Gravel road recapping, Drain tile improvements, Spot soil stabilization corrections, Stormwater management spot repairs, Stormwater culvert replacements, and Ditch grading improvements. Residents living on gravel roads will receive a reminder letter closer to the Gravel Roads Improvement Project Open House.



# 2025 Preliminary Budget Information

Truth in Taxation Meeting - Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 at 6 pm at the City Hall

If you have questions about your property's valuation, begin by contacting  
Hennepin County Assessor- Joby Rausch | #612-348-3046 | joby.rausch@hennepin.us

Every year cities in Minnesota are required to adopt a preliminary tax levy and budget by September 30<sup>th</sup> for the following year. Cities then have until December 31<sup>st</sup> to adopt a final tax levy and budget. The City of Independence City Council adopted the 2025 Preliminary General Fund Tax Levy and Budget at the September 17<sup>th</sup> Regular City Council Meeting. The City Council will consider adoption of the final budget at the December 3<sup>rd</sup> Regular City Council meeting. There are several key elements of the preliminary budget that should be noted:

- City Council has adopted a preliminary budget that again (eight consecutive year) reduces the applicable municipal tax rate from 31.5% to 31.2%. This reduction is the result of the City Council's continued direction and oversight to operate an efficient, effective and value driven local government. This reduction in the City's tax rate will equate to a corresponding reduction in City taxes on residential and commercial properties year over year (assuming a flat market valuation – market valuations are made by Hennepin County Assessor's Office). Note: the city's portion of property taxes only comprises approximately one-third of the total property tax for an individual property. the remaining amount is comprised of approximately one-third Hennepin County and one-third school district. Since 2017, Independence has not increased its applicable local tax rate while continuing to provide a high level of services to its residents. The City's reduction in tax rate is significant given the recent history of high inflation rates, continued increases to all insurance premiums, emergency services cost increases, and other cost increases to general operating expenses.
- The City of Independence has worked with West Hennepin Public Safety to increase police department funding to ensure officer retention, competitive compensation, and continued investment in capital needs.
- The city continues to increase its cash reserve balance to be at or slightly above auditor recommended levels.
- The city continues to maintain its debt service level while issuing debt to pay for key road, infrastructure, and facility improvements. For 2025, the city has updated its long-range capital road improvement plan which currently includes seal coating and gravel road tiling. The city has now completed a 5-year gravel road improvement plan which will cause for all gravel roads in the city to be improved by 2030. The city has allocated approximately \$175,000 per year to realize the update to the long-range capital road improvement plan.
- The city continues to maintain and update its long-range capital plans for all sectors of the city including equipment, roads, sewer, and municipal facilities. This planning allows the city to plan for, budget and manage all capital needs.
- The City continues to fund capital equipment purchases with cash rather than through issuing additional debt or financing. Long range capital planning allows the city to save cash for making capital purchases when necessary.
- The 2024 comprehensive financial audit resulted in the city receiving an unmodified and clean opinion. This is the highest opinion that can be obtained by a city.

# Goodbye, Maple Airport – “Maple Plain International Airport”

by Marvin Johnson

The Maple Airport located in Independence just southwest of Maple Plain will no longer be in existence after this year.

The airstrip was graded on the Johnson family farm, Hilltop Farm, in the early 1960's by Van Dusen & Co., Plymouth, MN, to be used by local pilots as a place for farmers to fly into to view Van Dusen's farm equipment. The airstrip has been in operation continuously since that time and licensed every three years by the Federal Aviation Administration and the State of Minnesota.

In previous years the Johnson family had purchased the small farms of people named Windquist, Johnson, Drysdale, Richards, Stinson, and O.K. Larson to make the biggest field in Independence. Fences and trees were removed (many tree stumps by dynamite) and three miles of underground tiling was put in to help drain and make the land more productive.

The Van Dusen Company did not fly many people in because they had a split and another company, Van Dale, Long Lake, was started and neither company used the airstrip much. However, a Delano Flying Club located at the airstrip as well as several individual aircraft owners. The pilots paid a small fee to use the airport. Marvin Getten, Plymouth, now 99, flew until he was 90 and was the first airstrip mower/manager, and Jon LaVasseur, Plymouth, took over from him. Marvin Johnson, eldest of the Johnson family, has been considered the Airport Manager since 1973 by the State. He sent a letter each year (which are in a file) to the pilots concerning rules for use of airport and communicating changes that might take place. For a few years, the rerouting of Highway 12 parallel to the airstrip was being studied.

The airport is closing because the property has been designated by the Independence Comprehensive

Land Use Plan and Metropolitan Council to be rezoned into a housing district abutting Maple Plain's residential area. That timetable is uncertain because of the need of sewer and water. In the meantime, the area will continue being farmed.

Beside family members flying in from Iowa, over the years until recently the airstrip has been a loading site for the Hennepin County mosquito control agency's helicopters. It has been used by many individual pilots locally and across the country.

There has been a couple of accidents with non-resident pilots landing in a snowstorm, but no one was hurt. They ended up in the unharvested corn field. One year a young man got a new ultralight aircraft and took off, without permission, and ended up atop trees to the south.

One summer a large airplane landed that had been used by a Florida drug cartel and was abandoned. That same summer a couple in a small aircraft from Kansas City had their engine blow up in flight near the airport. They pushed some emergency locator and spotted the airstrip and made a safe landing without power. It never made the news because that same day a small aircraft with some emergency landed safely without hitting a car on 35E north of St Paul.

One year on Sunday afternoons a large contingent of people who thought the airport was public land came and raced their snowmobiles on the grass. We were not aware of the situation until some neighbor informed the family what was happening.

For many years the pilots and their families and many friends would have a 'fly in day' and have a turkey dinner.

Marvin Johnson wrote a history of the development of the airport in 2005 at the request of the "Friends of the Maple Plain Library." The City has a copy as well.



# Winter Reminders

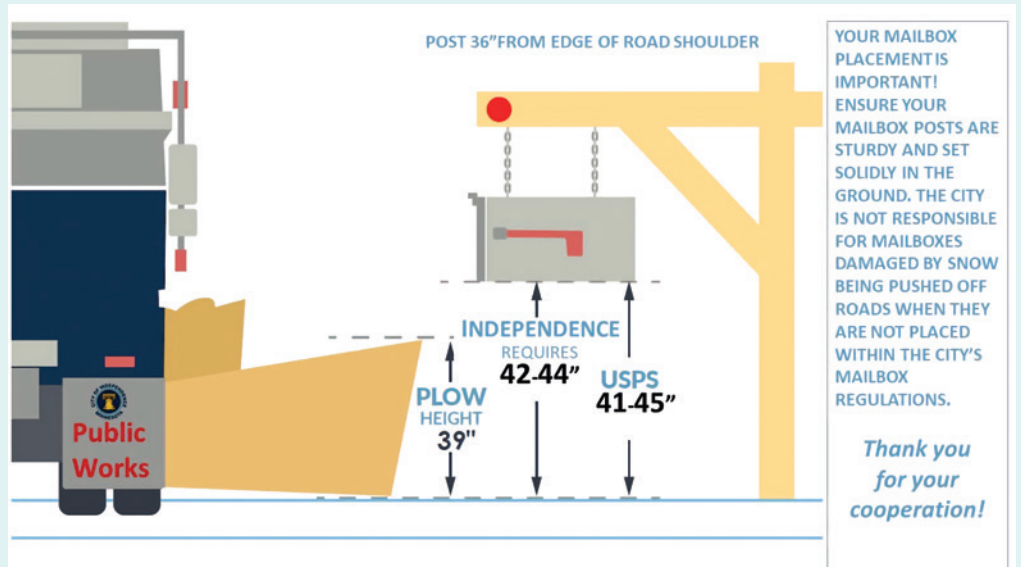
from City Staff, Public Works, Building Official, and Hennepin County

## New Residents

Welcome to the City of Independence. Would you complete our [New Resident Form](#) under APPS & FORMS tab (or contact City Hall if help is needed)?

## Right of Way

The City does not allow obstructions to be located within the City's right-of-way, including but not limited to boulders, rocks, and other materials/structures that may impede safety or drainage. Invisible dog fences and irrigation heads or lines are also not allowed in the right-of-way. The City is not responsible for these items if they are damaged during routine maintenance and repair operations such as snow plowing and road and ditch repairs. The City may have to remove obstructions located within the right-of-way.





### AFTER A 3-INCH SNOW FALL

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 park or 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.

[https://library.municode.com/mn/independence/ordinances/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=930901](https://library.municode.com/mn/independence/ordinances/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=930901)

### SEASONAL PARKING RESTRICTIONS

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 continue to park or permit to stand, any vehicle upon any city street.



SEARCH ALL CITY ORDINANCES

## Appreciation

Thank you for being kind to our winter crew during the snowy winters as they serve as their families' snow-removal guys, too!

## What Would Bruce Do? (WWBD)

Independence's long-time Building Official Bruce Satek reminds residents to be sure to clear away snow and ice from your gas meter and your vents this winter.

## Hennepin County Homestead Benefits & Application Deadline is December 31

Residential property that is occupied year-round by the owner or the owner's qualifying relative may qualify for homestead. Having your property classified as Homestead may lower your property taxes and you could qualify for additional property tax refund from the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

See homestead and related program tabs for Residential homestead, Veterans with a disability and their families, Blind or disabled people, & Agricultural property at <https://Hennepin.us/homestead/>.



## West Hennepin Public Safety's Promotion & New Hire



West Hennepin Public Safety is proud to announce Shawn Ebeling has been promoted as Sergeant for West Hennepin Public Safety Department. After an extensive internal promotional process Sergeant Ebeling was selected to lead our patrol officers. Sergeant Ebeling has 17 years of law enforcement experience. Seven years of service at West Hennepin Public Safety and ten years of service at Cottage Grove Police Department. During his law enforcement career, he has served in a dual role as a police officer and paramedic, investigator, use of force instructor, firearms instructor, drug recognition expert, and field training officer.

Chief Kroells stated, "Our agency is honored to have Shawn Ebeling promoted to Sergeant. His strong leadership and futuristic thinking will lead our agency into the future and professionally serve our citizens."

Sergeant Ebeling stated, "I look forward to my new role as a Sergeant. I am excited to serve our agency, our dedicated police officers and the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence."



Sergeant Shawn Ebeling



West Hennepin Public Safety is proud to introduce the newest member of our team, Gabriela Williams, as a patrol officer. Officer Williams is currently serving in the Minnesota Army National Guard as a Military Police Officer and Corrections and Detention Specialist. She also spent four years assigned to the Counterdrug Task Force as an analyst with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas.

Officer Williams holds an Associate of Science in Criminal Justice from Southern New Hampshire University.

Chief Kroells stated, "Our agency is fortunate to have Officer Williams join our team. Throughout our hiring process we seek out officers with high moral character. Officer Williams fits this requirement. Our community will be well served by Officer Williams."



Officer Gabriela Williams

Officer Williams stated, "I'm thrilled to introduce myself as a new Police Officer to our communities. I am excited to start my career at West Hennepin Public Safety Department. It is an honor to join the team and serve the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence."

### BEWARE OF THIN ICE!

As Minnesota approaches the winter season, the Maple Plain Fire Department would like to remind everyone to be careful on the ice this season.

#### Safety tips:

- Test the ice thickness before walking with a pole or auger
- Wear a lifejacket!
- Dress in layers with materials like wool which keep you warm even when wet!
- If you fall in, remember to climb out in the direction you came from and kick with your legs (don't just use your arms!)
- Wear/carry ice picks to help pull yourself out of the water



### Maple Plain Fire Department

Proudly Serving: Independence, Maple Plain, Medina & Three Rivers Park

**ICE IS NEVER 100% SAFE! Recommended Minimum Ice Thickness**  
(Guidelines for New, Clear Ice Only)



m DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES





## PUBLIC SAFETY NEWS CHIEF'S DESK WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY



Chief Gary Kroells

### West Hennepin Public Safety announces the 2025 Citizens Police Academy

West Hennepin Public Safety's Citizens Police Academy will start February 13, 2025 and will end with graduation on April 3, 2025. The Academy runs for eight weeks, one day a week, Thursday nights, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

**WHAT IS IT?** 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 addition, you will be introduced to government officials and staff and learn about the responsibilities of their respective office. Participants in each session will commit to meeting 3 hours, one night a week for 8 weeks.



The Citizens Police Academy was designed to create a better understanding of law enforcement through education. The Citizens Police Academy 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 citizens police academy can be found 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.

**WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?** We believe an informed citizenry will enhance public safety, make better decisions about how to protect themselves and their business, understand law enforcement strategies to problem-solving, and provide leadership to other areas of government.



This class is a must for those people who live or work in or near the West Hennepin Public Safety Department's jurisdiction. The West Hennepin Public Safety Department is currently establishing a list of participants who would be interested in the next class. The recommended attendee age is 18 years and older. Please contact the West Hennepin Public Safety Department at (763) 479-0500 between the hours 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., if you are interested in attending the Citizens Police Academy or email us at [westhennepin@westhennepin.com](mailto:westhennepin@westhennepin.com).



## WINTER COMMUNITY EVENTS

### DECEMBER 2024

Ongoing [Maple Plain Library's Events](#)

SAT 7<sup>th</sup> [WHPS View Santa 3:30-4:15 - City Hall](#)

SUN 8<sup>th</sup> [SnoMads Snowmobile Safety Class 9-2pm at City Hall](#)

FRI, Nov. 29- SUN, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> Holiday Boutique at [Gillespie Center](#) 10-4pm

WED 11<sup>th</sup> Excursion: Guthrie Theater: A Christmas Carol"; Register at [Gillespie Center](#)

TH 12<sup>th</sup> [WeCAN](#) Adopt A Family gift distribution. To receive gifts or adopt a family, call 952-472-0742.

TH 12<sup>th</sup> Excursion: Christmas Lights Tour & Dinner; Register at [Gillespie Center](#)

TH 12<sup>th</sup> [Orono Community Ed Registration Opens](#)

FRI 13<sup>th</sup> [Mayor for a Day Essay Contest for 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Graders Deadline](#)

FRI 13<sup>th</sup> Toys for Tots Drop-off by noon

SAT 14<sup>th</sup> Christmas Brunch at [Gillespie Center](#) 11:30am

SAT 14<sup>th</sup> [CP Holiday Train 3-5pm in Loretto for the 4:15pm Train Stop](#)

MON 16<sup>th</sup> [Haven Homes' Adopt a Senior deadline to return wrapped gifts.](#)

SAT 21<sup>st</sup> Breakfast with Santa at [Gillespie Center](#) 9-noon

FRI 27<sup>th</sup> Excursion: Chanhassen Dinner Theater "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; Register at [Gillespie Center](#).

Note Gillespie Center's ongoing Weekly Exercise Programs, Bakery Discount, etc.

### JANUARY 2025

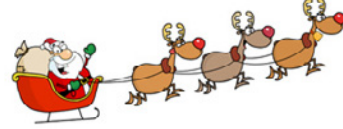
TH 30<sup>th</sup> 5-8 pm - Mayor Marvin Johnson's Retirement Open House! Check the [City's website](#) and local newspapers for details.

### FEBRUARY 2025

TH 6<sup>th</sup> 5-8 pm Gravel Roads Improvement Project Open House at City Hall.

TH 13<sup>th</sup> - April 3, 2025 from 6-9 pm - WHPS' 8-session [Citizens Police Academy](#) course.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS



THE WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY RESERVES ARE SPONSORING THE 44<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL "VIEW SANTA" PROGRAM. IT WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024. THE RESERVES WILL ALSO COLLECT NONPERISHABLE FOOD DONATIONS FOR LOCAL FOOD SHELVES.

CHECK THE TIMES CAREFULLY AS THEY HAVE CHANGED, ESPECIALLY AT THE END OF THE ROUTE.

VISIT WITH SANTA, TAKE PHOTOS, AND ENJOY REFRESHMENTS AT THE INDEPENDENCE CITY HALL ATRIUM (1920 COUNTY ROAD 90) FROM 3:30 TO 4:15 P.M. OR AT VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK (1664 BUDD AVENUE, MAPLE PLAIN) FROM 4:45 TO 5:30 P.M., OR SEE SANTA ON HIS ROUTE THROUGH TOWN.

#### SANTA'S ROUTE AND SCHEDULE ARE:

3:30-4:15 p.m. INDEPENDENCE CITY HALL	5:35 p.m. INDEPENDENCE ST. HOWARD AVE. DRAKE STREET PERKINS LANE INDEPENDENCE ST. BAKER PARK RD.	6:05 p.m. GATEWAY BLVD. HOWARD AVE. (via strip mall parking lot) HWY 12 FRONTAGE RD. BOUNDARY AVE.	6:20 p.m. MAIN ST. EAST BUDD AVE. BRYANTWOOD AVE. JOYCE ST. BRYANT ST.	6:50 p.m. MAIN ST. WEST HALGREN RD. HAMILTON HILLS DEV.
4:25 p.m. PAGENKOPF RD. 4:30 at BECKER RD. 4:35 at INDEPENDENCE RD. 4:40 at NORTH BUDD AVE.	5:50 p.m. GATEWAY BLVD. (HAVEN HOMES)	6:15 P.M. OAK ST. HOWARD AVE.	6:40 p.m. PRAIRIELAND AVE. JOYCE ST. WYMAN AVE. PIONEER AVE.	7:20 p.m. HALGREN RD. PARKVIEW RD. RAINBOW AVE. MAIN ST. WEST PARKVIEW RD. THREE OAKS AVE.
4:45-5:30 p.m. VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK				

THESE TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE.



VIEW SANTA

## 30TH ANNUAL GILLESPIE CENTER HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

NOV. 29 - DEC. 8, 2024

#### FEATURING OVER 80 VENDORS

\*Jewelry \*Household Gifts/Decor \*Books  
\*Clothing \*Framed Artwork \*Mittens/ Hats  
\*Edible Treats \*Lots More Beautiful Gifts!  
\*Food Available \*Silent Auction Baskets

BOUTIQUE HOURS 10 am - 4 pm



## SNOWMOBILE SAFETY - DECEMBER 8, 2024 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Pre course work must be completed before December 8<sup>th</sup> 2024. <https://www.snowmobilecourse.com/usa/minnesota/> The SnoMads are hosting a snowmobile safety course on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 8:00 AM - 2:00PM for ages 12 and up. Dues paying members free and non members \$25.00. You will learn the basics including trail and machine safety skills. TRADITIONAL COURSE Youth ages 11-15 Includes a riding performance course Lead by trained volunteer instructors Certificate becomes valid at age 12. Anyone born after 1976 must have a valid snowmobile safety certificate in order to ride our state trail system.

Independence City Hall 1920 CR 90 Maple Plain, MN 55359







## Spread Joy with Tommy's Trees!

Light up the Holidays for a Family in Need!

Light up your yard and heart  
this holiday season with a Tommy Tree!

A Tommy Tree is a beautiful 4-foot artificial tree adorned with colorful lights, delivered and installed in your yard for just \$50! (*Homeowners provide power*)

When you buy a Tommy Tree, and for every tree sold, \$50 will be donated to WeCAN to support families in urgent need this holiday season!

Scan the QR code below, order and let the joy begin!

Let's spread kindness and the holiday  
spirit together and #BeLikeTommy



Sponsored by West Hennepin Public Safety

Drop Site:  
West Hennepin Public Safety  
1918 County Rd 90, Independence, MN  
By NOON, Friday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>  
Mon-Thurs 8:00 - 4:30  
Friday 8:00 - 3:00

Unwrapped,  
New Toys for  
Children of  
All Ages are  
Accepted!

**TOYS FOR TOTS**

Supporting Local Food Shelves

**CP Holiday Train**  
26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
Loretto's Train Stop!

3-5pm Sat., Dec. 14, 2024  
Train Arrives at 4:15pm

[www.ci.loretto.mn.us](http://www.ci.loretto.mn.us)



There is hope.



**WINTER & SPRING 2025**

Registration  
Opens  
December 12

Register  
[oronocommunityed.com](http://oronocommunityed.com)  
952-449-8350

Many  
classes &  
programs

Early Learning, Youth & Adult

**Community Education**  
Orono Public Schools

Haven Homes Skilled Nursing & Senior Housing invites you to

**Adopt a Senior**

for Christmas at Haven Homes!

To adopt one of our seniors, please email Aidan McGraw,  
Director of Therapeutic Recreation [aidan.mcgraw@cassialife.org](mailto:aidan.mcgraw@cassialife.org)  
-or- message us on our Haven Homes Facebook page.

Wrapped gifts are due back to the Haven Homes facility  
by Monday, December 16th!

If I were the mayor...

I have some great ideas to share!

When kids talk, cities listen.

**MAYOR FOR A DAY** ESSAY CONTEST

LMC LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA CITIES

Would your student like to be "Mayor for a Day" for a chance to win \$100?

Enter the League of Minnesota Cities Essay Contest: If I Were Mayor for a Day



**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**  
Saturday, December 21st, 2024  
9am - 12pm

**ENJOY PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND MEET SANTA!**

Delicious Hot Breakfast, Get a Gift from Santa  
Tickets: \$5 for Children 12 & Under  
Children 13+ and Adults \$10 in advance  
\$12 at the door

**GILLESPIE CENTER**

2590 Commerce Blvd,  
Mound, MN  
952-472-6501  
[www.gillespiecenter.com](http://www.gillespiecenter.com)



# HAPPENING AT THE GILLESPIE CENTER...

JOIN  
US!



30TH ANNUAL  
**GILLESPIE**  
HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

November 29 - December 8, 2024  
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Daily

Featuring over 80 vendors  
Jewelry, Household gifts & Decor, Books, Clothing,  
Mittens/Hats, Artwork, Edible Treats & Baked  
Goods, Food Available, Silent Auction Baskets

Gillespie Center  
2590 Commerce Blvd  
Mound, MN 55364  
Phone: 952-472-6501 [www.gillespiecenter.org](http://www.gillespiecenter.org)



Let's celebrate together!

**CHRISTMAS  
BRUNCH**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14  
11:30 AM

Tickets \$20

Gillespie Center  
2590 Commerce Blvd, Mound  
952-472-6501

Reading by Cindy Hilger  
"A Cup of Christmas Tea"  
Raffle Items



**PANCAKES**  
*With Santa*

Bring your little ones for a delightful morning filled with joy and wonder. Join us for A Pancake Breakfast with Santa Claus, where children can share their holiday wishes, enjoy a delicious breakfast, and revel in the magic of the season

**\$10 IN ADVANCE. \$12 AT THE DOOR. \$5 KIDS UNDER 12**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21  
9 AM - 12 PM

GILLESPIE CENTER  
2590 Commerce Blvd, Mound  
(952) 472-6501



**JOIN  
FOR AN  
EXCURSION**

Thursday, December 12	\$13
Christmas Lights Tour & Dinner	
Wednesday, December 11	\$50
GUTHRIE THEATER: "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens	
Friday, December 27	\$105
CHANHASSEN DINNER THEATER: "Irving Berlin's White Christmas"	
Wednesday, February 19	\$50
GUTHRIE THEATER: "A Midsummer Night's Dream"	
Thursday, March 20	\$70
SIDEKICK THEATER: "Concert: On the Road Again"	
Thursday, May 8	\$70
SIDEKICK THEATER: "Perfect Wedding"	

**Gillespie Center**

2590 Commerce Blvd, Mound  
(952) 472-6501

# HAPPENING AT THE GILLESPIE CENTER...



## GILLESPIE CENTER 2025 SWEEPSTAKES



52 Weekly Prizes of \$50  
&  
4 Quarterly Prizes of \$100

Tickets are \$20.00 each

Winners Announced Weekly and Quarterly

Week #1 January 1st - January 31st, 2025

Drawing at Gillespie Center, 2590 Commerce Blvd,  
Mound, MN 55364

The Gillespie Center is a 501c3 non-profit that was built  
and is maintained by donations and efforts of our  
community members.

Our Vision: *Envisioning a Thriving Community*  
Must be 18 years old to participate.

For tickets, contact Gillianne Cantu (952) 472-6501

Permit #0-04834

## WEEKLY PROGRAMS

### MONDAYS

8:30 - OVER 50 & FIT  
EXERCISE CLASS  
9:00 - CANASTA  
1:00 - CRIBBAGE  
7:00 - SQUARE DANCING

### TUESDAYS

9:30 - ART GROUP  
10:00 - PHOTO GROUP  
(1ST TUESDAY OF THE  
MONTH)  
10:00 - TAI CHI  
10:00 - CHAIR YOGA

### WEDNESDAYS

8:30 - OVER 50 & FIT  
EXERCISE CLASS  
9:00 - COFFEE CLUB  
11:30 STRENGTH &  
CARDIO FITNESS CLASS  
1:00 - BRIDGE  
1:30 - RUMMIKUB

### THURSDAYS

9:00 - QUILTERS & CRAFTERS  
10:00 - UKELELE GROUP  
10:00 - MEN'S SHED

### FRIDAYS

8:30 - OVER 50 & FIT EXERCISE  
9:00 - COFFEE CLUB  
10:00 - WALKING CLUB  
1:00 - 500 CARD GROUP



Create your own group!



## Annual Membership

Annual memberships at the  
Gillespie Center help  
support the day to day  
operations. Call the Center  
to become a member or  
renew your membership.  
(952) 472-6501

Business sponsorships are  
also available.

## We Envision a Thriving Community!

Our Mission: We are dedicated to providing a prosperous and supportive environment,  
culture, and space to enrich the lives of our community members of all ages.





## Would your student like to be “Mayor for a Day” for a chance to win \$100?



Enter the League of Minnesota Cities Essay Contest: If I Were Mayor for a Day

4th, 5th, and 6th graders are invited to submit their essays sharing what they would do if they were Mayor. If you want to learn about being a Mayor and join others who want a chance to win \$100 and be recognized in the *Minnesota Cities* magazine, visit [www.lmc.org/mayorforaday](http://www.lmc.org/mayorforaday) and submit your essay by December 13th, 2024. Winners will be notified in early January 2025. Good luck to all participants!

Election Judges, Candidates, and Residents,

Elections don't happen without all our involvement, and during this General Election, we experienced the highest participation. So,

### **THANK YOU**

for helping to make this year's three elections happen and being kind to City staff and each other through it all!

You can find all election results at the Minnesota Secretary of State's website - [MNVotes.gov](http://MNVotes.gov).

## When the holidays are over, let's recycle the tree!

### **For Republic Services Trash Customers Only**

Before trees are recycled, all lights, tinsel, wire, ornaments and stands must be removed, as well as any bags you may have used to bring the tree in and out of the house.

Place the tree curbside by 6 a.m. on your trash collection day, either Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup> or January 17<sup>th</sup> 2025. If it's longer than 8 feet, cut the tree into sections. The Republic Services Christmas tree collection truck will pick up the tree, and you will see the charge for the service on your next invoice.

If you choose to recycle your tree(s), \$32.00 per tree will be added to your bill.



Sustainability in Action



2025

## Independence

## RECYCLING COLLECTION CALENDAR



Sustainability in Action

- Holiday - Service is delayed one day
 ■ North of Highway 12 but west of County Road 90
 ■ South of Highway 12/North of Highway 12 and east of County Road 90

## JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

## MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

## MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

## JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

## OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## We Recycle! (Do Not Bag Your Recyclables)



## Plastics Bottles &amp; Jugs

Water, soda and juice bottles, dish soap bottles, shampoo bottles, soap and lotion bottles, and detergent jugs (empty and clean/rinse, and dry; caps on)



## Plastics Cups &amp; Containers

Yogurt cups, pudding and fruit cups, clear disposable cups (no straws), margarine/whipped cream tubs, cottage cheese and similar containers, clear produce, deli and take-out containers (empty and rinse; lids on)



## Boxes (Flattened)

Cardboard, cereal, cracker, pasta and tissue boxes, shoe, gift and electronics boxes, toothpaste and other toiletry boxes



## Cartons

Milk cartons, juice cartons, juice boxes, soup and broth cartons (empty and clean/rinse, and dry; caps on)



## Paper

Mail, office and school papers, magazines and catalogs, newspapers and inserts, phone books (clean; staples OK)



## Metal

Food and beverage cans (empty and rinse; labels OK)



## Glass

Brown, green and clear bottles and jars (empty and rinse; no lids)

Twin Cities Customer Service: 763.972.3335 | [RepublicServices.com](https://www.RepublicServices.com)

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## CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

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

[asimon@ci.independence.mn.us](mailto:asimon@ci.independence.mn.us)  
[csolien@ci.independence.mn.us](mailto:csolien@ci.independence.mn.us)  
[ljohnson@ci.independence.mn.us](mailto:ljohnson@ci.independence.mn.us)

HOURS:  
Monday-Thursday: 8-4:30, Friday: 8-noon

### CITY OFFICIALS

#### Mayor

Marvin Johnson  
Brad Spencer—1/2025

#### City Council

Brad Spencer  
Lynn Betts  
Ray McCoy  
Steve Grotting

### Planning Commissioners

Robert Gardner, Chair  
Anita Volkenant  
Leith Dumas  
Hal Tearse  
Steve Thompson  
Jon-Paul Story, Alternate  
Timothy Usset, Alternate

### CITY STAFF:

Administrator/City Planner  
Mark Kaltsas  
Public Works Supervisor  
Shawn Bode  
Building Official  
Bruce Satek

Admin. Services Dir.  
Amber Simon  
Administrative Asst.  
Linda Johnson  
Carrie Solien

### *Tired of shoveling your driveway entrance a 2<sup>nd</sup> time after Public Works plows your street?*

If so, clear the area to the left of your driveway! **Note: It is against the law to dump, plow, or push snow from private driveways onto highway or city streets whether you are plowing your driveway or have hired someone to do so.** Snow dumped on highways or street right-of-way can create a hazard not only for motorists but also for snowplows. Even our heavy snowplows have been ditched and damaged when hitting compacted and frozen snow, costing your tax dollars to repair! **The person responsible for depositing snow on roadways may be liable in a civil lawsuit if damages or injuries occur as a result of this action.** Scan QR code to see all right-of-way use violations of MN Statutes, Chapter 160.2715 which are misdemeanors.

