

# CityScene



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www.independencemo.org  
City of Independence, MO

## Independence - A City of Distinction



Pride in your hometown goes beyond being one of the few cities which has both the home of a former U.S. president and presidential library. Independence residents now can claim the title of a "City of Distinction" as named by Ingram's Magazine.

Ingram's asked officials throughout the metropolitan area what distinguishes their city, and how they meet

challenges that confront them. Independence was the sole city recognized in the over 50,000 population category.

Other cities receiving acclaim were Lenexa, KS and Belton, MO in the 20,000 to 50,000 population range, and Lansing, KS and Warrensburg, MO for the less than 20,000 population.

Ingram's praised the commitment to business growth by

Independence's leadership with approval of Tax Increment Financing plans, franchise assistance and commercial reinvestment and Enhanced Enterprise Zone opportunities. Pointing out the booming retail corridor along I-70, including the development anchored by Bass Pro Shops, the Hartman Heritage project and the Eastland Center where the Independence Events Center is located,

Ingram's said the foundation for business growth in Independence is solid.

To encourage companies to locate in Independence, the city offers incentives and assistance for businesses. In a study conducted by the Lewis White Real Estate Center, Independence tied for the top spot in fastest permit approval time and has among the lowest building permit fees throughout the metropolitan area.

When the magazine asked about the foundation for Independence's success, credit was given to Independence residents as well as to elected officials. The passing of dedicated sales taxes for Streets, Parks, Storm Water and Public Safety shows the importance residents place on the quality of life in

Independence. The continued renewal of these taxes by the voters reflects their confidence in the way the tax dollars have been used.

Ingram's noted that Independence finances are on firm ground. As of the end of the City's last fiscal year there was a total of \$470 million of special revenue obligations outstanding. Of this amount \$297 million, or over 63%, has been issued for the City's elec-

tric, water, and sanitary sewer utility systems and will be paid through the revenues of these utilities. The remaining debt is expected to be retired with revenues from dedicated sales tax levies and the revenues from economic development projects. Standards & Poor's has issued an 'A/Stable' rating on the City's most recent debt issue.

Independence has one of the lowest city real estate tax levies in the area. A comparison of the 2012 real estate tax levy amount reveals that at 0.7281, the city levy is less than half that of Kansas City or Lee's Summit. An additional benefit for Independence residents is that no personal property taxes are levied on vehicles, boats, motorcycles, etc. Because the City has no general obligation debt, it is not necessary to levy a property tax.

City Manager Robert Heacock said, "The uniqueness in Independence lies in its ability to offer diverse lifestyle or "quality of life" opportunities to its citizens.

"The historic neighborhoods and quaint shopping districts of western Independence combined with the very modern housing, as well as the shopping and entertainment options of eastern Independence, ensure there is something for everyone."

" Independence has all the amenities of a large metro area with entertainment, shopping, sports, parks and recreation and walking trails, but is small enough to maintain its friendly, hometown neighborhood feel. Our strong volunteer base steps up and helps their neighbor, even if they don't live next door."

– Mayor Don B. Reimal



## February Offers Many Reasons To Get Out and About

Opportunities abound to celebrate Black History Month in Independence during February.

Each Thursday afternoon in February, discover the important role played by African Americans in the opening of the American West. The National Frontier Trails Museum, 318 W. Pacific, offers a special 30-minute gallery walk at 2 p.m. on February 6, 13, 20 and 27, included with regular museum admission.

The Trails Museum is also the place to learn all about Amazing African American Art, with a special art workshop from 9 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 8. For only \$10 per person, you will have a wonderful time sculpting, painting and creating your own masterpieces. Advance reservations are required; call (816) 325-7575.

Rounding out the month's special activities, plan to attend A Taste of Color,

Class and Culture at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 22. The evening will be filled with delicious food, delightful music and amazing stories from actors portraying African American leaders from Independence's past.

Featured "guests" will include Sam Shepherd, Amanda Young, Professor Nathaniel Busch, Emily Fisher, Tamar Russell and Tom Bass. Mistress of Ceremonies will be Alversia Pettigrew. Tickets are \$20 per person; advance reservations required.

Call (816) 325-7575 for information for reservations.

Other February activities include the 10th Annual "Power Palooza" Saturday, February 1. Sponsored by Independence Parks & Recreation, the event is held at the Sermon Community Center, 201 N. Dodgion.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., enjoy the festive atmosphere with carnival games, face

painting, puppet shows, cotton candy and other treats. Purchase tickets at the door for games and activities.

Presidents' Day is in February and there is no better time to visit the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, 500 W. U.S. Highway 24. The Second Saturday presentation for February will be "Talkin' Truman: Love Letters: Harry and Bess." Truman Library archivists will present this program at 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 8. It's free with Museum admission.

Revisit the days of our 33rd president by watching the films and video archives, visiting the replica of the oval office and seeing the permanent Museum exhibits. Be sure to leave time to investigate the activities on the lower level and experience the "decision" theaters.

Examine Truman's life with the feature film, "Harry S. Truman: 1884-1972," shown every hour from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. This 45-minute film examines Truman's life, from his birth in Lamar, MO, through his courtship of Bess Wallace, to his military service, election to the U.S. Senate and elevation to become the President of the United States.

Museum hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sundays, Noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors 65 and older and \$3 for children ages 6 to 15. Call (816) 268-8200 for more information.

For a light-hearted change of pace, bring the kids to see "Dragons, Bats & Buried Treasure" with Flying Heart Theater at the Puppetry Arts Institute, 11025 E. Winner Road. With performances at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 15 and Monday, February 17, the whole family will enjoy this show featuring magic, giant puppets, mythical creatures and audience participation. Tickets are \$5 each; call (816) 833-9777 for reservations.

Visit George Owens Nature Park, 1601 S. Speck Rd. at 10 or 11 a.m. on Thursday, February 20 for Nature Story time. Listen to nature stories and complete a craft, or take a short nature walk. Free for ages 2-5.

Be an "early bird" and get your Adventure Oasis Season Pass and 5-Punch Pass for a reduced price during January and February. Independence residents can save by planning ahead! Buy passes at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple. Call (816) 325-7843 for more information.



Visit the National Frontier Trails Museum for special February programs.

## Community Development Corner

Have you spotted those yellow Public Hearing signs posted around the City? Have you wondered what they meant?

Whenever a rezoning, special use permit or preliminary development plan application is submitted to the City, the public must be notified before any action is approved.

These notification signs are required by the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to be posted on the property to indicate the nature of the request and the day and time when the Planning Commission and City Council will hold a public hearing on that application.

A public hearing allows both the applicant and any other interested parties the opportunity to present relevant evidence to support their request. As an example, a public hearing would allow neighbors to voice their opinion if there had been a request to change the zoning of a house or building to allow a business to operate there.

Public input is an important part of the development review process. Testimony from a public hearing allows everyone



Posted Public Hearing notices allow neighbors a chance to share their opinion before changes are approved.

to have the opportunity to provide their point of view. The Planning Commission and City Council want their decisions to be based on all factors, including the possible impact on surrounding property owners. Participation in the public hearing is the best way to make sure your opinion is heard and considered by the decision makers.

If you have any questions regarding any posted public hearing, please contact the Community Development Department at (816) 325-7425.

## Registration Now Open For 5K Park Trot

The third annual 5K Park Trot is just four months away, and registration has already started for this free event! The *Building a Healthier Independence* team will host the annual walk/run beginning at 8 a.m. Saturday, May 3 at Waterfall Park, 4501 S. Bass Pro Drive, Independence.

Everyone is welcome, no matter the age or fitness level. Last year, more than 1,800 people registered for the Park Trot, and although the weather didn't cooperate, more than 1,100 people were present for packet pick-up. Registrants came from nine different states, including as far away as Maryland and Texas.



There is no limit to the number of participants, and the Park Trot will go on rain or shine. A free run for children 10 and younger will be held following the 5K.

The Independence Health Department has teamed up with Independence Parks and Recreation and KC Running Company for the Park Trot through the *Building a Healthier Independence* initiative to encourage exercise among residents.

Packet and T-shirt pick-up, as well as in-person registration will be held from 3 to 7 p.m. Friday, May 2 at Bass Pro Shops, 18001 Bass Pro Drive, and also from 7 to 7:45 a.m. near the start of the course on Saturday, May 3. A parent or legal guardian must sign a waiver for anyone under age 18 participating in the race.

Participants can register online at [www.independencetrot.com](http://www.independencetrot.com). Entrants can also purchase T-shirts for the 5K on the Park Trot website; just \$10 for any size.

For more information contact Alicia Nelson at (816) 325-7185.



## Think Safety First!

If you are considering adding a backup power generator, solar power generator, or wind turbine, Independence Power & Light (IPL) needs to review the plans before you start. Improperly installed systems can cause fires, electrocution or damage to buildings, and may pose additional risks to emergency response personnel.

IPL's goal is to provide reliable electric service to every business and resident of the city. Our front line personnel are at the greatest risk of injury when in the field working on electrical lines.

Small power generation units that have not been properly permitted and installed can cause additional risk of injury or death to our line personnel. These risks grow during a power outage, if an improperly installed generator energizes power lines which could be assumed dead.

To make sure your backup power generator is safe for you, as well as our line personnel and distribution system, IPL staff is available to answer questions you may have and can help guide you through the permitting process. Contact IPL by calling (816) 325-7453. Keep yourself, and IPL crews, safe.

## Drain Placards Warn 'No Dumping'

Have you noticed this sign in your neighborhood? Water Pollution Control storm water crews have been placing these placards on storm drains while taking inventory of the City's storm sewer structures.

More than 1,000 placards were placed between July 2012 and June 2013. The placards remind residents that dumping litter and hazardous materials into storm drains is harmful to the environment.

Fertilizers, pesticides, oil, antifreeze, paint, grass clippings, leaves, trash, pet droppings, or any other waste on streets and sidewalks washed down a storm drain is not "treated" before it reaches a stream or river.

The largest source of storm water pollution results from everyday activities. Basically, anything dumped or dropped on the ground or in the gutter contributes to storm water pollution.



The City's "illicit discharge" ordinance prohibits dumping or discharging substances other than storm water into storm drains.

Remember: At the end of every storm sewer is a stream – a home for fish, crawdads, frogs and plants. By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pet waste, grass clippings, and automotive fluids off the ground and out of storm water.

For more information call WPC at (816) 325-7711 or visit [www.independencemo.org/wpc](http://www.independencemo.org/wpc). You will find a link to the Inside Independence video - "Dirty Job" Edition showcasing WPC Storm Water Division's maintenance cleaning crews at work. Learn more about these crews and why their work is so important to protect the storm drainage system.

To report storm water pollution call the hotline at (816) 325-7727.

## Silver Sneakers® Coming January 6

Independence Parks & Recreation is excited to begin offering SilverSneakers®, the nation's largest older adult fitness program, through select Medicare health plans.

Eligible participants will be able to join The Palmer Center Fitness Room and take SilverSneakers® fitness classes at the Truman Memorial Building at no charge.

To find participating health plans, go to [www.silversneakers.com](http://www.silversneakers.com); call Silver Sneakers® at 1-888-423-4632; or stop by the front desk at The Palmer Center, 218A N. Pleasant or the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple to verify eligibility.

To get the SilverSneakers® class schedule for the next class beginning in mid-January, please call The Palmer Center at (816) 325-6200.



# Directory

CityScene is published monthly by the City Manager's Office, 111 East Maple Street, Independence, Missouri 64050. For information call 325-7019. Web-site address is [www.independencemo.org](http://www.independencemo.org). Follow us at [Twitter.com/CityofIndepMO](https://twitter.com/CityofIndepMO).



## Where To Call

The City of Independence has an automated voice-response telephone system. Call 325-7000 and say the name of the person or the department you wish to contact.



- Adopt-a-Street** 325-7602
- Barking Dogs** 325-7213
- Building Permits** 325-7401
- Business Licenses** 325-7079
- Crime Stoppers Tips** 474-8477
- Drop-Off Trash** 325-7623
- Drugs** 325-6272
- Graffiti** 257-7824
- Municipal Court** 325-7230
- Neighborhood Watch** 325-7643
- Park Vandalism** 325-7208
- Police Non-Emergency** 836-3600
- Fire Non-Emergency** 325-7123
- Potholes** 325-7624
- Report Power Outage** 325-7550
- Street Lights** 325-7535
- Storm Water Pollution** 325-7727
- Utilities**
- Customer Service** 325-7930
- Pay by Phone** 325-SERV
- Payment Assistance** 254-4100
- Weeds, Trash** 325-7193

## Annual Volunteer Breakfast To Be Held February 8

The Annual City-Wide Volunteer Breakfast will be held from 8-10 a.m., Saturday, February 8, 2014 at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple.

City officials will serve breakfast to show appreciation to all the volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to the City on an on-going basis. Invitations will be mailed to volunteers in mid-January.

## City Drop-Off Depot

**CLOSED FOR WINTER**  
**Reopens March 8, 2014**  
 875 Vista Avenue

## Watch City Meetings On Streaming Video

City Council meetings and study sessions are available as live and archived streaming video on the City's website, [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 would like to purchase a copy of a Council meeting call 325-7762.

## CITY COUNCIL

- Mayor**  
 Don Reimal 325-7027
- City Council Office** 325-7022  
[www.independencemo.org/citycouncil](http://www.independencemo.org/citycouncil)
- Councilmembers**
- Marcie Gragg District 1
  - Curt Dougherty District 2
  - Roxann Thorley District 3
  - Eileen Weir District 4
  - Jim Schultz At-Large
  - Chris Whiting At-Large
- City Manager**  
 Robert Heacock 325-7170

THINK EVERYONE IS SMOKING?  
**Most Missouri teens don't.**

Fewer than 1 in 5 teens in Missouri smoke.  
(According to the 2011 Missouri Youth Tobacco Survey)



Your Life, Your Call.  
 Live Smokefree.

## Regional Animal Shelter

21001 E. Hwy. 78, Independence

Help them find a forever home.  
 Adopt a homeless pet.

**Noon - 8 p.m. Tuesday-Friday**  
**11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday**

Call (816) 621-7722

**Always Spay or Neuter!**



## Recycling Centers

**13600 E. 35th Street**  
 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fridays  
 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturdays

**875 Vista Avenue**  
 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sundays  
 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mondays

MRC now operates the two City recycling centers. Items accepted include paper, cardboard, steel, aluminum, plastic, glass, electronics, appliances, computers, flat screen TVs, lawn and garden equipment and rechargeable batteries. A fee will be charged for non flat-screen TVs. \$15 for TVs 27" and smaller and \$35 for larger TVs. All other items are free of charge, including computer monitors.



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 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.