

NOTES & NEWS

COMMUNIQUÉ TO THE INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL
FROM CITY MANAGER, ZACHARY WALKER



For the Week Ending October 21, 2016

Department News

Community Development

- ◆ **Explore *Rediscovering Independence*:** The South Main Neighborhood is the most recent addition to the *Rediscovering Independence* website. *Rediscovering Independence* is an online tool intended to introduce residents and visitors to areas of the city they might not be familiar with or which they have yet to visit. Within these traditional neighborhoods are a variety of architectural styles, unique histories, and distinctive area amenities which are highlighted on the site. Additional neighborhoods are added regularly, so website visitors are encouraged to check back often to discover new areas to explore. The website can be accessed at www.independencemo.org/RediscoverIndep.

Health Department

- ◆ **Public Health Investigator II Completes Training:** The newest Public Health Investigator II has completed her State Daycare training, which included six joint inspections with an Environmental Public Health Specialist from the Northwest District Office of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. She is now certified to complete State inspections for childcare facilities in our community.
- ◆ **Food Handler Class for Hearing Impaired:** On October 13, staff held a special food handler class for a hearing-impaired food service worker. The class featured instructional videos in sign language and written materials. The food handler class is also regularly offered in English, Spanish, and Mandarin to serve the needs of our community.
- ◆ **Painting Begins for Play Everywhere Grant:** Out of more than 1,000 applicants, Independence Health Department (IHD) and partners were one of fifty selected for the KaBOOM! Play Everywhere Challenge. The challenge encourages organizations to bring creative play opportunities to everyday spaces within their community, especially areas which are underserved and uninsured.

IHD is working with Hawthorne Place Apartments, 16995 E. Dover, to bring a new play space to Hawthorne's community center. There will be a Grand Opening ceremony with a Ribbon Cutting at 4 p.m. on Thursday, October 27. The new play space was created for the children and families of Hawthorne, which have been strategically placed to keep children entertained while their parents and/or guardians receive social services. Health Fair services will be available following the ribbon cutting.

One way which IHD is making the community center more playable is by partnering with local artists from Van Horn High School, Blue River Metropolitan Community College, and St. Mary's Catholic Church to bring a large, colorful painting to the main community room. Van Horn High School began the first steps of the painting on October 11.

- ◆ **Child Care Health Education Classes:** Health Department staff taught a class about the importance of fruits and vegetables to 30 preschoolers at Luff Elementary Early Education. The goal of the presentation was to teach preschoolers about different kinds of fruits and vegetables, how they grow, and the benefits of them for your body. The children also received a coloring page activity to reinforce the lesson, and the parents were sent home with informational handouts about the day's lesson.
- ◆ **School Wellness Grant Meeting:** Health Department staff met with the Fairmount wellness committee to begin completion of the School Health Index as a part of the School Wellness grant. The Fairmount wellness committee registered on the online program, and the team completed the first of the eight modules. Monthly meetings will occur to assist the team with completion of the School Health Index Assessment.
- ◆ **School-Based Influenza Clinic:** School-based influenza vaccine clinics are continuing in the Independence School District. Nurses have provided 960 vaccinations in 18 elementary schools and two middle schools. Clinics for the district will be completed next week.
- ◆ **Employee Flu Clinics:** Flu vaccinations have been offered onsite at multiple City departments over the last few weeks. In order to utilize extra employee vaccines, an evening clinic was offered to Cigna members, dependents, and retirees as well to employees with selected outside insurance. Flu vaccine is still available at the Health Department by appointment. A total of 432 vaccinations have been administered to date.

Human Resources

- ◆ **Flag of Freedom Awarded to City:** The Human Resources department is happy to announce that as a result of hiring veterans into positions, the City has received the Flag of Freedom award. This is awarded to organizations which hire veterans into their job openings. The award was presented at the October 17 City Council meeting.
- ◆ **Benefits Fair Scheduled:** The Benefits Fair has been scheduled this year during Open Enrollment (October 24-November 4) and will offer employees an opportunity to speak to several of the benefit representatives for the City.
- ◆ **Freshman Career Exploration Event Attended:** Staff from the Human Resources Department participated in the Independence School District's Freshman Career Exploration event. This was an opportunity to meet with freshman in all three of the school district's high schools' about careers and what choices they have in the academy path they'll choose.

Parks / Recreation / Tourism

- ◆ **Palmer Center Computer Lab/Library Upgrades:** The Palmer Center recently combined the library and computer lab, which had similar room functions, into one space. The new library now

has four brand-new computers (upgraded to Windows 10 from Windows XP) and includes a Merlin Monitor and high end magnifiers provided by Missouri Rehab Services for the Blind. Other additions include books to check out, resource files on topics ranging from Caregiving to Retirement Homes, and a new charging station. This change provides The Palmer Center with an additional room for other programs.

- ◆ **Palmer Center Hosts Annual Information Fair:** The Palmer Center hosted the annual Senior's Information Fair with 29 vendors and 215 in attendance. Important health screenings and vaccines were provided by many of Palmer Center's program partners including: bone density, blood glucose, blood pressure, macular degeneration, glaucoma, hearing, fall risk, oxygen checks, low vision, and flu/pneumonia vaccines.
- ◆ **9th Annual Little Princess Ball Held:** The 9th Annual Little Princess Ball was held October 15 at the Truman Memorial Building. The 78 Princesses ages 4-10 enjoyed dinner, dancing and crafts with their loved one. Thanks to volunteers from IPL and City Theatre for helping to make this event memorable for our guests.
- ◆ **Fall Sports in Full Swing:** We have a lot of youth sports going on this fall season, including: Miracle League Baseball, Queen City Baseball, Hockey, IGSA Softball, SAI Soccer, and Fort Osage Youth League Volleyball.
- ◆ **Waggin at the Water Park:** Adventure Oasis enjoyed record-breaking attendance at the "Waggin' at The Waterpark" event held at the conclusion of the 2016 season. Roughly 170 dogs and their owners showed up to splash around Adventure Oasis Waterpark after the season had concluded. We couldn't have asked for better weather for this event and everyone had a "splashtastic" time – including the humans! There were vendors on site and door prizes were awarded to seven lucky winners.
- ◆ **Record Season at Adventure Oasis:** Summer 2016 was a record season at Adventure Oasis Water Park. AO hosted lots of swim lessons, fitness classes, birthday parties, and much more. This year, more than 55,000 people visited us, which is a 14% growth from last year. A big "thank you" to all of the organizations, businesses and city departments that helped to make this a very successful year! Be on the lookout for new happenings at Adventure Oasis in the 2017 summer season.
- ◆ **The Palmer Center Hosts Sister City Student Delegation:** The Palmer Senior Center had the pleasure of hosting a student delegation from our Japanese sister city, Higashimurayama. The 10 young people provided a martial arts exercise demonstration and then sat down with our seniors to eat and visit. It was great to hear their stories of their home life and what they are hoping to do with their lives. Everyone had a wonderful time!
- ◆ **Emerald Ash Borer Workshop a Success:** Approximately 30 people attended an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) workshop organized by the Parks Horticulturalist on September 8 at the Truman Memorial Building. Everyone in attendance was very interested in the information provided and appreciated the presentations by Chuck Conner, Urban Forester from Missouri Department of Conservation; Sarah Crowder, Heartland Tree Alliance; Mike Adams, IPL Arborist; and Tim O'Neil, Urban Lumber.

Power & Light

- ◆ **Electrical Grid Reliability:** Members of the NERC Compliance team attended a recent Southwest Power Pool (SPP) Fall workshop where SPP technical staff gave a presentation on a Synchrophasor pilot project. This is a new technology which could help improve reliability of the electric grid. Synchrophasors are sensors capable of detecting and recording changes on the electrical grid 30-60 times per second. The presentation focused on the technical challenges to collect, process and store the vast amount of raw data that is provided by these devices. The Power & Light department has devices capable of gathering the synchrophasor data and is still researching how the information might be utilized.
- ◆ **NERC Compliance:** Members of the IPL NERC Compliance team participated in the quarterly Critical Infrastructure Protection Working Group (CIPWG) meeting via webinar. The CIPWG is concerned with both physical and cyber security best practices, which may overlap with compliance with NERC Standards. Topics for the meeting included review of the working group charter, discussion of security protection for low-impact Bulk Electric System (BES) cyber assets, and plans for a scheduled GridEx IV cyber recovery exercise.
- ◆ **Appreciation from Jacksonville Electric Authority:** In a communication received from the Jacksonville (Florida) Electric Authority, they expressed their deep appreciation for our crews, not just for coming down, but for attending to business the way their own crews do. She said all their supervisors were thrilled with Independence Power and Light crews' work ethic, stating they want to call us first for all such emergencies. This was wonderful to hear from a weary voice on the other end of the line. They are down to 6,500 without power from 67,000 on October 13, and it's the hard ones that are left, the one service at a time issues that take so much time. We are very proud of our personnel who have been able to help during the crisis on the east coast.
- ◆ **IPL Receives Award:** IPL along with MGE was presented the 2016 Outstanding Corporate Partner Award from Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity. IPL and MGE partnered with Habitat on a pilot weatherization program to assist very low income homeowners to make their homes more energy efficient. Most homes received additional insulation, caulking and sealing around windows and doors, high efficiency HVAC systems and/or HVAC tune-up services, and new water heaters when required. Work was completed by professionals and volunteers, and homeowners were required to add 20 hours of sweat equity to their project. IPL will be monitoring the actual energy usage over the next year to quantify the program effectiveness. Twelve homeowners were assisted by the program this year.

Public Works

- ◆ **Winter Maintenance Supervisor Certificate Workshop:** Maintenance and Engineering staff recently attended a workshop sponsored by the KC Metro Chapter APWA and MoKan Superintendents Committee. The training covering all aspects of snow season - weather, policy, level of service, equipment, materials, etc. New techniques and snow equipment that can be used to help improve service to residents was covered. Our employees will apply the information learned in preparation for and during snow season.