



The Sister City Delegation from Higashimurayama was honored at a 25th Anniversary Banquet at the Hilton Garden Inn.



Mayors Kazuo Hosobuchi, left, and Ron Stewart

Sister Cities Celebrate 25 Years

Independence played host recently to a 36-member delegation from Higashimurayama, Japan, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Sister City friendship between the two cities.

The visit included a Mayor's reception at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 E. Maple St.; an anniversary banquet at the Hilton Inn, I-70 and Little Blue Parkway; introduction at a City Council meeting and a visit to Glendale Elementary School, 2611 Lee's Summit Road.

As is customary with each visit, the Japanese delegation presented the City of Independence with a gift. Higashimurayama Mayor Kazuo Hosobuchi gave Mayor Ron Stewart a set

of Japanese paper lanterns with the City seals of both communities. This and other gifts given to Independence are on display at the Truman Memorial Building.

Local artist Kathy Killip designed an angel symbolizing peace. Killip was inspired to make the angels after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Citizens and students from each city visit back and forth on a regular basis. The adults visit for five days every five years and the students spend three weeks each summer. An Independence delegation will visit Higashimurayama next September.

Jana Waits, committee chair, said citizens often develop life-long friendships as

a result of the exchange.

The Sister City relationship was established January 26, 1978, after a visiting Japanese businessman appealed to Lana White, an Independence resident who is a native of Japan, for help finding a local contact. When she couldn't help him, White gave the man a tour of the City and invited him to stay in her home. The businessman was so impressed with White and Independence that on his return to Japan he corresponded with White. The Sister City relationship grew from their friendship.

Higashimurayama is 19 miles west of downtown Tokyo and has a population of 137,200, similar in size to Independence.



Councilmember Jim Schultz helped serve breakfast to volunteers.

Volunteers Give City More Than 67,000 Hours

In times like these, when the City is experiencing another tough economic year, the value of volunteer workers increases. The City recognized the priceless donation made by its volunteers at the annual volunteer appreciation breakfast in early November at the Truman Memorial Building.

It was one of the best attended in recent years, with more than 300 volunteers enjoying breakfast served by Mayor Ron Stewart, councilmembers and the City's

department directors.

It is estimated that at least 670 volunteers working in the last year in almost every City department and on its boards
See Volunteers, Page 2

Holiday Closings
City Hall will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, December 24 and 25 in observance of the Christmas Holiday; and Thursday, January 1 in observance of New Year's Day.

Tourism Salutes 173 Volunteers

The Tourism Department recently honored 173 special Independence volunteers at the annual Historic Sites Volunteer Banquet, held at the Hilton Garden Inn. The event celebrated the efforts of those who give of their time, talent and energy to make visitors to Independence feel welcome and enjoy their stay here.

Tourism Director Stephanie Roush emphasized the extraordinary accomplishment of reaching 20 years of volunteer service. In celebration of the volunteer program's success and the many hours of service provided, each volunteer honored was presented with a star, etched with the Tourism logo, the date and event.

"During the past year, those who have volunteered have fulfilled 5,375 assignments, totaling 22,192 hours," Tourism Historic Sites Volunteer Coordinator Cathy Offutt said. "We truly couldn't do it without you."

The value in salaries of those donated hours is \$341,534. What is more impressive, Offutt said, is that the total value of the hours donated during the 20-year life

Volunteers From Page 1

and commissions donated more than 67,000 hours. Translating that into salaries, that's a gift from citizens of more than \$1.29 million.

"Our volunteer program illustrates the commitment and dedication of a caring community" Mayor Ron Stewart said in praising the volunteers. "These volunteers are a valuable resource that makes a difference in the City's ability to provide services to the residents."

"As we continue through these tough fiscal times this gift of time becomes even more valuable," City Manager Larry Blick said.

Some of the areas that benefit greatly from the volunteer program include the Powerhouse Theatre Program, Senior Adult Nutrition Program, George Owens Nature Park, the Animal Shelter, Code Compliance, Police and tourism sites such as the National Frontier Trails Museum (NFTM).

"I am pleased to be in a community

of the volunteer program exceeds \$325 million dollars.

Volunteers represented a variety of sites, including the National Frontier Trails Museum, Vaile Mansion, Bingham-Waggoner Estate, 1827 Log Courthouse, Pioneer Spring Cabin, Tourism Information Center and the 1859 Jail and Marshal's Home.

Although all volunteers present were gratefully thanked by Mayor Ron Stewart, Offutt and Roush, there was an extra round of applause for those loyal volunteers who are charter volunteers and who have continued with the program for the entire 20 years of its existence. Those ladies are: Vlora Andes, Mary Bryan, Cathy Decker, Sandee Dougherty, Janice Pearson, Jan Spencer, Charlotte Tindall and Dee Vance.

"The historic sites of Independence are always eager to accept new volunteers to add to their rotating staff of tour guides and helpers" Offutt said. For more information about volunteering call Offutt at 325-7112.

where we having caring individuals who are willing to give their time to the Police Department," Police Chief Fred Mills said.

Tourism Director Stephanie Roush said volunteers provide the entire staff for the Vaile, Bingham-Waggoner, 1827 Log Courthouse and Pioneer Spring Cabin and assist at the NFTM, 1859 Jail Museum and Truman Home Ticket and Information Center.

New Committee to Study Public Safety Funding

The City Council recently created an 11-member commission to study ways to help finance facilities and equipment for the Fire and Police Departments.

The Citizens Committee on Public Safety is chaired by Lois McDonald.

The Council has asked the new committee, whose terms expire Jan. 31, 2004, for suggestions on ways to bring in revenue, such as, but not limited to, a sales tax proposal. Voters would have to approve any tax proposals.

"The Police and Fire Departments are operating with aging vehicles, equipment and facilities because the City cannot allocate enough revenue for upgrades," Mayor Ron Stewart said.

"We are asking this new committee to look for ways of financing these public safety needs," he added.

9 Police Officers Earn Valor Awards

Nine Independence police officers were honored in November at the 2003 KMBC-TV 9 Metropolitan Chiefs and Sheriffs Association Awards for Valor.

Officers throughout the metropolitan area are nominated by their peers or supervisors for recognition of actions performed.

The Independence recipients were Officers Phil Boude, James Combs, J. Dennis Onka, Jeff Perry, Ken Gibson, Mike Valentine, Mike Cano and Jason Clancy and Detective Mark Massop.

Utility Assistance Through I-SHARE



City of Independence Offers Utility Assistance Through the I-SHARE Program.

To apply for utility assistance contact:
Community Services League
300 W. Maple, Independence, MO
816-254-4100

petkoffs@communityserv.org
www.communityserv.org

To make a contribution to the I-Share Program, mail checks to:

I-Share Utility Assistance
C/O US Bank
3640 S. Noland Rd., Independence, MO 64055

Independence Power & Light contributes matching funds to the I-Share Program, up to a budgeted amount.

Council Okays 40-Year Contract for Electricity

The City Council recently approved a 40-year contract with the Omaha Public Power District, which is building a second coal-fired power plant near Nebraska City, Nebraska (NC2).

Independence Power & Light (IPL) Director George Morrow said the new plant could be operational as early as 2009. Nebraska City will be a not-for-profit power plant owned by a state-controlled power district.

The City's current 90 MW contract with Kansas City Power & Light (KCPL) expires in 2011. This arrangement provides IPL with 30 MW in each of three coal-fired generating units at the Montrose Station, located near Clinton, Missouri.

Morrow said renewing that contract is unlikely because KCPL wishes to recapture the capacity for use by its own

customers. The Nebraska City power will replace approximately one-half of the power presently purchased from KCPL.

The Nebraska City 2 Project will produce 600 megawatts — 300 MW will be retained by OPPD for its customers in the Omaha area. The other 300 megawatts has been contracted for by other public utilities like IPL, which has purchased 50 megawatts from NC2.

The City still needs to find another 50 megawatts of "baseload" power to protect the City's diverse of long-term power supply.

Morrow also said the City's \$70 million share of the \$850 million construction cost of the Nebraska City plant will be spread over the 40-year contract at low tax-exempt interest rates. Construction costs of the NC2 project are expected to

be low, because it will be the second unit on an existing site.

NC2 operational costs will also be low, because it has dual rail access for coal deliveries and it is near abundant low-sulfur coal supplies of the Powder River Basin area of Wyoming.

IPL, with about \$200 million in assets, owns 12 generating units that are used to produce power to meet the utility's intermediate and peak power needs. Similar to the KCPL contract, when the NC2 plant is available for operation it will provide "around-the-clock" baseload power.

Morrow said, "Due to the economies of scale, the NC2 partnership is a very economic way for Independence to produce electricity. If we were building our own plant, it would cost substantially more."

Fire Hydrant Maintenance an Ongoing Task

The City of Independence Water Department has more than 4,000 fire hydrants within its service area. Water Department staff test the hydrants on a rotating basis, whenever weather permits.

It takes about 10 minutes to test each hydrant. The department has two employees assigned to testing. Each works alone, testing all hydrants in a square mile area before moving to the next area.

The tester first makes sure all of the hydrant's caps are in good working order. A diffuser is placed on the nozzle to be flowed in order to disperse the water and prevent damage to the surrounding area. A flow meter is placed on the other nozzle, in order to measure the gallons-per-minute flow of the hydrant. The tester also checks the hydrant's water pressure and valve to make sure both operate properly.

If a problem is found, the hydrant is sacked and the Fire Department is immediately notified that it is out of service.

"All hydrants are repaired or replaced within two weeks unless special parts are needed and not immediately available," said Water Distribution Manager Denne Roe.

As a separate process, the Water Department also tries to repaint every hydrant every four years. This is done for aesthetic reasons and to make it easier for the Fire Department to locate hydrants.

Orange fire hydrants with black caps are public hydrants maintained by the Water Department. Red fire hydrants located in the Independence Water



Water Department Pipe Worker Stan Fanning makes sure the City's hydrants are in proper working order.

Department's service area are private, and are the responsibility of the owner to maintain. No other hydrant colors are allowed in the Independence Water Department's jurisdiction.

CITY COUNCIL

*Mayor Ron Stewart	325-7026
*City Council Office	325-7021
*Councilmember Don Reimal	District 1
*Councilmember John Perkins	District 2
*Councilmember Renee Paluka	District 3
*Councilmember Charlie Rich	District 4
*Councilmember Jim Schultz	At Large
*Councilmember Jason White	At Large

*City Manager Larry N. Blick	325-7170

Landlord & Tenant Guide

The Landlord & Tenant Guide is published by the City of Independence to educate both groups of their rights and responsibilities. Copies of the Landlord & Tenant Guide are available from the Code Compliance Division, whose offices are on the 2nd floor of City Hall, 111 East Maple. Call 325-7193 to reserve a copy.

Hot Line Directory

Barking Dogs	325-7213
Crime Stoppers Tips	474-8477
Drop-Off Trash	325-7623
Drugs	325-6272
Potholes	325-7624
Street Lights	325-7535
West Nile Virus	325-7297

Coalition Working to Improve Health

A new coalition has begun in the City of Independence to help reduce chronic disease rates in the community. Bridget McCandless, M.D. and Al Van Iten are chairing this organization.

The coalition is divided into three working groups to identify activities that Independence citizens can do to improve health. Those areas are healthy eating, increased physical activity, and tobacco use reduction.

The Healthy Eating Work Group is being led by Peggy Hausheer and Melanie Moentmann; the Increased Physical Activity Work Group is being led by Dan Purdum, M.D., and Cynthia Leutzinger; and the Tobacco Use Reduction Work Group is being led by Ralph Ruckman, D.D.S., and Don Potts, M.D.

These work groups have already met two to three times and are looking at strategies for implementation in Independence.

Larry Jones, Health director, said residents may wonder why does Independence needs a Healthy Coalition?

Statistics show that last year 33 percent of Independence seventh grade students were overweight. That statistic compares with 15.5 percent of 12- to 19-year-olds who are overweight nationwide

(JAMA 2002). Approximately three years ago, a survey was done of Independence residents, asking them about their physical activity; and 66 percent admitted they did not exercise three times a week for a minimum of 20 minutes.

According to the Center for Disease Control, 70 percent of Americans are not eating the suggested five or more fruits and vegetables per day.

In addition, according to the EPA, cigarette smoke contains 4,000 substances, of which more than 40 are known to cause cancer.

“The focus of ‘Healthy Independence’ is to improve the quality of life in Independence,” Jones said. “As we continue to grow older together, it is estimated that by 2030, about 22 percent of the population will be over the age of 65. We need to be able to live healthy life styles in order to reduce our personal medical costs and the medical costs to society.”

The next meeting of the Healthy Independence Coalition will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 15, at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple St. Independence residents who are interested in becoming involved in the Coalition are encouraged to attend this meeting.

‘Man of La Mancha’ Slated in January

The inspiring musical “Man of La Mancha” will be presented by the City Theatre in January at the Sermon Center Powerhouse Theatre, 201 N. Dodgion. It is based on Miguel Cervantes’ epic story of Don Quixote.

Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursday, January 15; Friday, January 16 and 23; and Saturday, January 17 and 24. A mati-

nee is also scheduled at 2 p.m. Sunday, January 25. A dinner theatre is planned the first Saturday.

Ticket prices are: \$6 for Thursday and Sunday matinee; \$7 Friday and Saturday, and \$18.50 for the dinner theater production. There is a senior adult discount of \$1 off each ticket price.

For reservations call 325-7367.

IPL Offers Safety Tips

Independence Power & Light (IPL) offers these electric safety tips to help make this holiday season and the New Year a safe one.

- Don’t overload extension cords or electrical outlets.

- Make sure plugs fit securely into outlets. Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to a three-prong plug to fit a two-conductor outlet.

- Always unplug a light string or electrical decoration before replacing light bulbs or fuses.

- Turn off electrical light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

- Cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires and loose connections can cause a serious shock or start a fire. Replace damaged sockets or electrical cords.

- Don’t run electrical cords under carpets.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFi) says that to help protect against electricity-related injuries, consumers should check for problems in their home electrical systems.

For more home electrical safety information, call IPL at 325-7494 and ask for a free copy of “Electrical Safety at Home and Work”, or visit the ESFi web site at www.esfi.org.



CityScene is published monthly by the City Manager's Office, 111 East Maple Street, Independence, Missouri 64050. Editor: Irene Baltrusaitis, Communications Director, 325-7019. The City's webpage address is www.independencemo.org

Before You Dig Call! 

1-800-DIG-RITE
1-800-344-7483



City Council
6 p.m. Mondays
10 a.m. Tuesdays
7 p.m. Wednesdays
2 p.m. Sundays

Planning Commission
6:30 p.m. 2nd & 4th Tuesdays
10 a.m. Wednesdays
7 p.m. Thursdays

Inside Independence
7 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays
10 a.m. Mondays