

Independence for All Update

August 2019 indep.us/indep4all #indep4all Independence, MO

City of Independence assumes operation of Regional Animal Shelter

Starting July 15, the City of Independence began operating the Regional Animal Shelter located at 21001 E. MO-78 Highway in Independence. The Regional Animal Shelter is a no-kill shelter serving Independence and unincorporated Jackson County.

Great Plains SPCA operated the Regional Animal Shelter since 2013 through a contract with Jackson County. The City of Independence provided annual funding to Jackson County for shelter and adoption services for lost, abandoned and owner-surrendered pets. Over the past five years the Regional Animal Shelter has achieved a live-release rate of more than 90%, qualifying it as a no-kill shelter based on SPCA national standards.

In January, Great Plains SPCA notified the city and county that it would cease operation of the Regional Animal Shelter by August 1.

“We mobilized quickly,” Mayor Eileen Weir said. “The city and county had the same goals: to ensure that the publicly funded shelter facilities could continue to be used, and that the shelter would remain no-kill”

On August 6, Independence voters approved a local use tax to help support on-going operations of the Regional Animal Shelter. A fund has also been established at the Truman Heartland Community Foundation to accept tax-deductible charitable donations.

“Pets are important to our citizens, and we are excited to step in to operate the animal shelter,” Weir said. “Top tier animal services add to the health, safety, and quality of our region and help us achieve our Independence for All strategic goals.”

Please call (816) 325-7207 to learn more about the Regional Animal Shelter or volunteer opportunities.



Independence moving ahead on industrial development

The Independence City Council recently granted approval for two industrial development projects in an effort to meet market demand for manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution facilities.

The Council approved issuance of Chapter 100 Bonds for two Class A industrial buildings to be located on 34 acres north of RD Mize Road, between Jackson Drive and Little Blue Parkway. Van Trust Real Estate will develop approximately 550,000 square feet of new industrial space to support multiple tenants and uses.

“Demand for Class A industrial is high, and Independence has missed opportunities because of lack of product. Developing industrial utility customers and attracting large employers is a top strategic goal for the City and our EDC,” Mayor Eileen Weir said. “We have been patient but persistent in finding the right partner to bring the kind of quality development we want in Independence.”

Chapter 100 Bonds have also been approved for the Ronson Manufacturing project to be located at the northeast corner of the intersection of M-291 and U.S. 24 Highway, the site of a former K-Mart in northeast Independence. Ronson, one of the Midwest’s largest full-service custom precision sheet metal fabricators, will repurpose the former retail space for their manufacturing facility and office headquarters.

“We are delighted to retain Ronson as an employer and corporate citizen in Independence and repurpose an abandoned building in an area of town that has struggled to attract investment,” said Weir. “Ronson could have relocated anywhere in the Midwest, so finding a solution that works for everyone is a huge accomplishment for our city and the Ronson employees.”

Learn more about the City’s Economic Development Council and its work to bring businesses to Independence at inedc.biz. Updates on these and other projects will be provided on the City’s website and social media pages as appropriate.

Working toward the future

Since its implementation in 2017, more than 40 percent of *Independence for All*’s 74 strategies have been completed as the City works to improve customer focus; ensure City finances are stable and sustainable; increase economic prosperity of the community; and achieve livability, choice, access health and safety through a quality built environment. You can read the plan in its entirety at indep.us/indep4all and follow progress at indep.us/dashboard.

This newsletter will provide a quarterly update on these strategies and programs created to meet the identified needs within the plan.

For more information, please contact Independence Mayor Eileen Weir’s office at (816)325-7027 or email eweir@indepmo.org.

Englewood Art District poised for next steps

The Englewood Arts District was established in 2009 to support arts-related business development and attract the creative class to western Independence. The Englewood Arts District is home to several galleries, exhibit spaces, restaurants, and local businesses that collaborate on promoting and supporting the arts through the monthly Third Friday Art Walk and special events throughout the year.

The City Council recently approved the establishment of the Englewood Community Improvement District. The CID imposes a 1% sales tax within the district to fund public improvements including streetscape amenities, signage, banners, landscaping, public artwork, and maintenance. In 2018, the City Council approved an ordinance requiring all CID's to address trash and litter, public safety, and walkability.

Street Crimes Unit Update

As mentioned in the March 2019 issue of this newsletter, the City is celebrating the early success and impact of the Street Crimes Unit within the Independence Police Department. Below is a brief update on their impact between Dec. 2018 and early August 2019.

Stolen Firearms Recovered	86
Felony Warrant Arrests	109
City Warrant Arrests	673
Federal Warrants Issued	8
Stolen Vehicles Recovered	29
Traffic Tickets Issued	195
Search Warrants Served	46

Truman Connected

If you could design a pedestrian and bicycle path that connects residents and visitors to neighborhoods, Independence Square, Truman Library, Englewood Arts District, Truman Sports Complex, and the Rock Island Trail, what would it look like? The City of



Independence, in coordination with the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) and a Steering Committee of community

members, is kicking off Truman Connected to develop a concept.

“This project will help us connect the Truman Library to the Truman Sports complex for all citizens and visitors,” Mayor Weir said. “We are excited to kickoff this conversation with more than 300 citizens providing feedback at pop-up events in August and more public feedback to come this year.”

There will be three rounds of public engagement including online and in-person options to give feedback on this project. The plan is set to wrap-up in February 2020, with recommendations being worked straight into design and construction beginning in 2022.

Truman Library and Museum prepares for the future

Not since the Harry S Truman Presidential Museum and Library opened its doors in 1957 has the Independence landmark closed for an extended period. But a \$25 million renovation of the Truman Library means a year-long hiatus for museum visitors. This is the third time the library has been renovated. In 1968, \$310,000 was spent on updates and in 1980 \$2.8 million went into expanding the building.

The 2019-2020 remodel includes constructing a new museum entrance, state-of-the-art exhibits, and overall improved visitors' experience.



“Visitors tend to miss some of the Truman story,” said Mayor Eileen Weir. “President Truman is among the most influential public figures in history and many of his major decisions and achievements have been under-represented at the museum. This renovation will allow the museum to tell more of the Truman story and engage visitors in new ways.”

Funding for the Truman Library renovation has been provided by private support from businesses, foundations and individuals as well as a \$3 million commitment from the State of Missouri.

“Sen. John Rizzo was our champion for this project in Jefferson City,” Weir said. “He understands and respects the enormous role Truman plays in our city, state, and nation. Sen. Rizzo’s leadership allowed the Library to move forward at this time with confidence that the entire project can be realized.”

The Truman Library accounts for

a large part of the city and state tourism activity, but visitors will still have plenty to see when visiting Independence. Other historic sites including the Truman Home, Independence Square, Truman Courtroom, National Frontier Trails Museum, and the City’s many historic tours will be available during the renovation. Visit visitindependence.com for more information.

All images care of Truman Library Institute.

