

Independence for All Update

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

Mayor Weir delivers State of the City: A Great American Story

Mayor Eileen Weir paid tribute to the rich traditions and history of Independence in her 2018 State of the City address while setting the course for continued success in fulfilling the community's strategic plan. Mayor Weir chose The City House for the public event, a facility that was recently established in Independence as the home of the Church of the Four Corners and a community gathering space.

Drawing from the city's recent branding research and community surveys, Mayor Weir spoke of the strong sense of community and pioneering spirit that gives Independence its unique identity.

"Our great American story abounds with tales of trailblazers and innovators who came to Independence in search of prosperity," Weir said. "It holds a place in our nation's history as a city that inspires exploration and bold new ideas and has always been populated with people who value hard work and creativity."

The city's economic growth strategies are rooted in these ideals of working hard and trying new things. Mayor Weir pointed to workforce development and transportation solutions as the cornerstones for increased community prosperity and outlined her efforts to close the employment divide and expand access to public transportation.

Mayor Weir reported that 40% of the strategic goals outlined in Independence For All have been achieved in the first two years, but year three of the five year plan will be the most challenging. "There are some tough decisions to be made in the coming year that will require candid community



conversations to face the challenges that are preventing us from becoming the city we want to be," she said.

The primary goals for 2019 are around the quality of the community through the built environment and perception of safety. Mayor Weir outlined the City Council's specific strategies to move the needle on how residents and visitors experience Independence. These strategies focus on executing the downtown redevelopment plans, improving housing quality, and reducing crime and disorder.

You can watch the full speech here, <https://youtu.be/Z4gQJV-AJcY>.



Leadership Exchange to Washington, MO

More than forty business and civic leaders traveled to Washington, Mo., on February 7 and 8 for the second Independence Leadership Exchange of the past year. Braving frigid conditions, the energetic group nonetheless gained valuable insights into Washington's success in the Missouri Main Street and National Main Street programs. Mayor Sandy Lucy welcomed the group and shared the city's history and riverfront redevelopment story.

The visit also included a tour of the fairgrounds that hosts the annual Washington Town & Country Fair and more than 700 acres of business and industrial park development.

"We were impressed by how aligned the leadership in Washington is," Mayor Weir said. "The Chamber, City Hall, Downtown Washington, Inc. and all the civic clubs understand what the goals are and work together to get things done."

The next Leadership Exchange is planned for October 2 through 4 to Fort Collins, CO. Contact Tom Lesnak at the Independence Chamber of Commerce for more information.



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.

City Council Reduces Electric Utility Rate by 2%

The Independence City Council gave unanimous support to reduce electric utility rates by 2% across all classes in a recent vote. It was the first electric rate reduction in IPL history.

“Our objective is to make Independence Power & Light the cleanest, most reliable, and most competitive electric utility in our region,” Mayor Weir said. “The City Council has an obligation to provide the best value and quality to our rate payers and attract new customers to our city. To achieve this, we must continue to look at ways to make our rate more competitive.”

Mayor Weir has established a council committee on utility rates to further explore opportunities to improve value and quality for customers. Councilmembers Tom Van Camp and Mike Huff were appointed to the committee by the Mayor.

“The purpose of the committee is to take a more comprehensive look at IPL and set rates that work for our strategic goals of customer-focused, financial sustainability, economic growth, and quality.”

City Council Approves New City Brand

The Independence City Council approved a new brand on February 19. This followed a year of research including more than 2,000 survey and interview responses from citizens and regional counterparts. Part of the new brand is an updated logo. While only part of the overall branding project, the logo is perhaps the most visual. As part of the research for this project, the Brand Steering Committee and ChandlerThinks, a third-party contractor, looked at the more than 40 logos used to represent the City. This makes it hard for citizens to identify City departments and programs. It also poses challenges for tourism and economic development as we market in the region and beyond. A strong brand and a logo to support it can be valuable tools to attract visitors and businesses alike. But this brand and its tag line are focused on the residents of Independence and the many great American stories that started and continue here today.

The pre-existing associations with the name “Independence” is already a big part of the brand story for our community. For this reason, the logo intentionally made the name



the hero. The Independence flame is a symbolic beacon that stands for Independence. It’s a place where anyone should be inspired to pursue their dreams in personal or professional endeavors. It is a respectful nod to the “Eternal Flame of Freedom” dedicated to the memory of President Harry S. Truman and on display at the Truman Library and Museum. The Independence flame consists of three strokes, representative of the historic Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails whose origins began in Independence, and yet another example of pursuing A Great American Dream.

City Council funds IPD Street Crimes Unit

The Independence Police Department formed the new Street Crimes Unit in December 2018 thanks to funding approved by the City Council for five new police officer positions in the 2018-2019 budget. This specialized police unit proactively targets high crime hot spots, repeat offenders, disorderly residences, ongoing vagrancy issues, and other crime-related community problems. Three additional detectives were transferred to the Street Crimes Unit in January to assist with investigating and prosecuting cases.



In the first sixty days of operation, the Street Crimes Unit has achieved impressive results:

Stolen firearms recovered	26
Illegal firearms enhancements recovered	8
Felony warrant arrests	55
City warrant arrests	250
Federal warrants issued	2
Stolen vehicles recovered	22
Traffic summons	63
GPS deployment violations (ankle monitor)	12
Property search warrants obtained	25

The Street Crimes Unit has also recovered many articles of stolen property that are currently being counted and identified. The IPD is utilizing an off-site city facility for storage of these items, and the facility is close to full capacity with stolen property.



“It is astonishing to see how effective the Street Crimes Unit has been in just two months,” Mayor Weir said. “We can all be proud of the work our officers do in our city to protect our homes, businesses and families.”