



Construction Improving Crysler

Have you had the opportunity to drive along Crysler between 31st and 39th Streets? If not, you'll be shocked at the difference the road improvements have made. While the interruption of traffic and disruption for residents who live along Crysler Avenue between 23rd and 39th Streets continue, one can now see what is in store by traveling along the almost completed segment that runs between 31st and 39th Streets.

"The old asphalt shoulders are gone and have been replaced with some of the more obvious improvements: curbs, gutters and sidewalks," Howard Penrod, Public Works director, said. "Three lanes of roadway now provide for left turns, allowing improved traffic movement.

"Also, the new traffic signals at 35th Street with the improved intersection add to the safety of the roadway," he emphasized. "As you drive down the newly constructed segment between 31st and



Public Works Director Howard Penrod, above left, recently took Mayor Ron Stewart on a tour of improvements underway on Crysler Avenue. The picture below shows the same area before construction.



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Little Blue Parkway Funded

The 30-year dream of the City of Independence to construct the section of the Lewis and Clark Roadway known as the Little Blue Parkway (from 40 Highway north to 24 Highway), has moved a step closer to reality through the efforts of Senator Kit Bond, and the announcement that Congress will provide an additional \$31.6 million to the project.

"Senator Bond was tireless in his efforts," Mayor Ron Stewart said. "Senator Bond visited the proposed corridor and realized first hand the potential the Little Blue Valley holds for the region. Support was also given by Senator Jim Talent and Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver."

Through previous efforts, the Little Blue Parkway was constructed from 40 Highway to 39th Street, including access ramps at I-70. Construction from 39th Street to 24 Highway is estimated to cost nearly \$50 million. In addition to the \$31.6 million, the City will utilize funds from previous federal appropriations, the tax increment financing projects at Eastland Center and the new HCA hospital, and the City's excise tax on new development.

The Little Blue Parkway will be built in stages. It is anticipated that the first section from 39th Street to R.D. Mize will be substantially complete by the end of 2008. A plan for the construction of the

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City Signs Contract For Power Supply

The City Council recently approved a 40-year contract with the Missouri Joint Municipal Electric Utility Commission (MJMEUC) for a 50 Megawatt-(MW)-a-year entitlement in a new power plant, "Iatan 2," to be built near Weston. The plant site is about 40 miles northeast of Independence.

Independence Power & Light (IPL) Director George Morrow said the new plant is scheduled to be operational as early as late 2010. It will be the second coal-fired generating unit at the Iatan Generating Station and will be built/operated by Kansas City Power & Light (KCP&L).

The City's current contract with KCP&L expires in 2011. This arrangement provides IPL with 30 MW in each of three coal-fired plants at the Montrose Station, located near Clinton. KCP&L has stated that they will not renew this contract when it expires.

"Given the long lead time necessary to plan and construct modern 'baseload' power plants, finding attractive projects to replace power from the existing KCPL contract has been a major focus," Morrow said. "The Iatan 2 project, in conjunction with IPL's 50 MW entitlement in the planned Nebraska City 2 project, will complete the objective of ensuring that the City of Independence has secure baseload electric sources well into the future."

The Iatan 2 project will produce about 850 MW – KCP&L plans to retain 465 MW for themselves while providing the remaining plant capacity to other utilities in Missouri and Kansas on an "actual cost" basis. MJMEUC, an organization

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Sister City Group Visits Independence



Independence recently welcomed nine students from Higashimurayama, Japanese, the City's Sister City. The student delegation spent about two weeks visiting with host families and touring the area. They took in City tourism sites, Adventure Oasis Water Park, the Police and Fire departments, and the Truman Home. Before departing they attended a luncheon with their host families and Mayor Ron Stewart. These groups have been visiting Independence since 1978.

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39th Street, you cannot help but notice how the aesthetics have been improved by the burying of utility lines and the new street lights. These add to the beauty and safety of the streetscape.”

This project also included improvements that might not be realized as you travel this roadway Penrod said. The street construction included a new storm water system that is designed to correct the tendency for water to pond on the street after a heavy rain.

“That tendency for the rain water to pond has for years created traffic prob-

lems by flooding the roadway,” he added.

A new 12-inch water line is included in the project. The old water line was too small and was prone to breaks. Those breaks in the old line caused an interruption to the water supply and severe street damage. Sod will be placed sometime in September on the segment between 31st and 39th Street.

The storm sewer structures are being placed on the segment between 23rd and 31st Street. The completion date for this segment is August, 2006.

The total construction cost of the Crysler project is \$4.5 million. Of that, the Federal Highway Funds contributed \$3.4 million and County Urban Road System Funds funded \$1.1 million.

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Attractions Coalition Planning 2006 Gala

Do you collect or make miniatures? Then this special event is for you! The Independence Attractions Coalition is planning the third annual three-day, city-wide Presidents Day Weekend gala February 18, 19 and 20. The theme for the 2006 event is “Miniature Marvels.” The 2005 theme was “Bear Affair.”

The highlight of the event will be exhibits of thousands of miniature objects at participating sites and attractions throughout the city. The miniatures will range from the intricately detailed White House in Miniature exhibit at the Truman Presidential Museum and Library, 500 U.S. 24 Hwy., to a scale model of the 1879 Chicago and Alton Railroad Depot, a restored landmark of historic Independence.

The Kansas City Toy and Miniature Museum will display large collections of miniatures that are not usually on exhibit, including an old-time county fair at the Bingham-Waggoner Estate, 313 W. Pacific, and a frontier/wild west era town at the National Frontier Trails Museum, 318 W. Pacific.

Private collectors or creators of miniatures are invited to display their collections during the weekend. Any miniatures, anything that is smaller than the original it portrays, are welcome. Examples are collections of animals, cars, planes, trains, seasonal villages or houses, dishes and furniture, doll houses or themed collections such as Disney memorabilia. Of particular interest are miniature models of actual Independence landmarks or distinctive houses and buildings.

For more information or to discuss the loan of your miniature collection for display, call Tourism at 325-7108.



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City Adding to Opticom Signal Safety System

To increase safety on streets the Police, Fire, and Independence Power and Light are cooperating in a project to add to the Opticom system that allows on-call emergency vehicles to change traffic signals from red to green.

"This is about public safety and enhancing the service we provide the community," Police Chief Fred Mills told the City Council recently.

The City, which began installing Opticom in 2001, already has 26 intersections equipped with the devices. Passage of the Public Safety Sales Tax has given the City \$113,000 in funding for Phase 3, the largest phase, for 29 additional intersections. The project should be completed by mid-December, and with installation will cost about \$200,000.

Key intersections in Phase 3 include Crysler Avenue, Noland Road and Lee's Summit Road on 40 Highway, even though not all are in the Independence city limits. "These were included because they are critical in our response to several Independence locations," Chief Mills noted.

There are also 12 intersections on 39th Street in Phase 3.

The Opticom system allows an on-call

emergency vehicle to change a traffic light as it approaches an intersection, so it can proceed through the intersection on a green light. This provides a safer response for police, fire, and ambulance services and reduces the response times. It can also reduce confusion that may exist for some motorists, and eliminates the total dependency on hearing a siren from an approaching emergency vehicle, alerting a motorist to stop.

Chief Mills reminds citizens that at all times, motorists should yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle using flashing lights and siren. He said the motorist must pull as far to the right as possible and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed or otherwise directed by a police or traffic officer.

Plans for Phase IV are currently being developed. There are currently 120 signalized intersections in the City of Independence. "The task is not a small one, but we are making progress," Chief Mills



The black arrow is pointing to the Opticom device at an intersection.

said. "We thank those who have worked with the Police and Fire departments to make Opticom and other public safety programs become a reality," Chief Mills emphasized. "We realize Opticom and many other positive initiatives would not have become a reality without the support of those we serve."

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comprised of 56 Missouri municipal electric utilities, is contracting for a total of 100 MW of Iatan 2.

Morrow said the City's \$74 million share of the projected \$1.2 billion construction cost of the Iatan 2 plant will be financed by MJMEUC at low tax-exempt interest rates with IPL's repayment to be spread over 30 years. Project costs are expected to be lower than usual since it is the second unit to be built at an existing plant site and it is relatively close to abundant low-sulfur coal supplies in Wyoming.

There is still work to be done before construction begins next year, including the finalization of contracts between KCPL and the participants and the receipt of necessary regulatory approvals/permits. KCP&L has already received approval for the project, however, from regu-

lators in Kansas and Missouri.

The City currently produces about two-thirds of its power and contracts for the rest. The peak power load for the City is more than 300 MW.

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

FLASH! City Drop-Off Depot
 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 Second Saturday Of Each Month
 March - November!

875 Vista Drive
325-7623
 Truman Road
 East of M-291,
 One Mile North
 On Vista Drive
 Next to Animal Shelter!

Drop-Off Depot

Trash: Cars, \$10;
 Vehicles Larger Than Car, \$15;
 Trailers 8 Feet or Longer, \$25

Brush: Limbs, Firewood, Bushes,
 Stumps. No Leaves or Grass: \$10
 per load

Major Appliances: \$15 Each
Batteries & Lawnmowers:
 Free

Tires: Car, \$1; Mounted Car, \$3;
 Truck, \$4; Mounted Truck, \$10;
 Farm/Tractor, \$15

Residential vehicles only, no commercial. No vehicles larger than a pick-up truck. Proof of residency required.

Work Progressing at New Fire Station

The floor has been poured and walls are going up at the new Fire Station No. 7, which is under construction on Hub Drive, just north of 23rd Street and west of M-291. The new 10,000-square-foot facility will cost \$2,381,750 and is the first of several major projects made possible by the passage in 2004 of the Fire Protection Sales Tax. It should be open in late 2006, replacing the current Station 7 on M-291.



Little Blue Expressway

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entire roadway will be presented later this month to the City Council.

Independence has been planning this road since 1972 and it was included in the Mid-America Regional Council's long-range plans in 1978.

Mayor Stewart, who has made the Little Blue Parkway a cornerstone of his priorities for the City, said "Now we can move the initiatives already started to greater heights than most ever dreamed."

City Manager Robert Heacock agreed, saying "The Little Blue Parkway will provide a vital element in ensuring the long-term economic viability of our community. It opens the Little Blue Valley for substantial residential and business growth development opportunities that do not currently exist in our area."

In addition to providing incentives for growth, the Little Blue Parkway will ease traffic demands on other streets like M-291, and the associated interchanges at 39th Street and 40 Highway. It will be a seven-mile, four-lane roadway with a divided median, and will connect to 39th Street, R. D. Mize, Necessary Road, Truman Road, M-78 Highway (23rd Street), Bundschu Road, and 24 Highway.

The Little Blue Parkway will also provide the needed emergency access for the new 257-bed Independence Regional Medical Center Hospital under construction by HCA adjacent to the corridor. The Parkway will also encourage revitalization and growth to the area around U. S. 24 Highway.

Fire Prevention Week October 9-15

"Use Candles with Care" is the theme for the National Fire Protection Association's Fire Prevention week October 9-15.

Joy Musquiz, Independence chief fire inspector, said in recent months several Independence homes were damaged and three left uninhabitable as a result of the misuse of candles. It's important to remember that you can use candles safely in your home. Follow this safety advice:

- Place candles on stable furniture, in sturdy holders that will catch dripping wax.
- Never leave a candle unattended.
- If the power goes out, use flashlights.
- Keep candles away from things that can catch fire.

·Place candles on higher furniture, where they won't be knocked over.

·Never place lit candles in windows, where they could ignite blinds or curtains.

·Don't allow children or teens to have candles in their bedrooms.

·Ask questions about the candles and candle-holders you buy. There are new standards that major suppliers follow to make sure the candles and candle-holders won't break, tip over, or malfunction in ordinary use.

·Extinguish candles carefully, using a long-handled candle snuffer or a soft, directed breath. Do not splatter wax.

Parks and Recreation Plans October Events

The Parks and Recreation Department has planned several October events.

Mystic Pumpkin Festival

Englewood Business District

·Halloween Window Painting Contest, Oct. 26 - 29.

·Free Concert - Lisa Monet Productions 7 - 9 p.m. Oct. 29.

·Pumpkin Decorating, 5 - 7 p.m. Oct. 29.

·Haunted Fire Truck Rides, 6 - 9 p.m. Oct. 29.

Co-sponsors are the Englewood Business Association and the Englewood Botanical Garden. Call 252-3372 or 325-7115 for more information.

Pumpkins in the Park

From 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at a different park each week. Dates and parks are: Oct. 11, Cler-Mont; Oct. 18, Sycamore Hills; and Oct. 25, Country Club.

All ages are welcome to this free event.

Decorate a pumpkin to take home for Halloween. Pumpkins and decorating supplies will be provided. The night will be finished with Halloween stories by the River and Prairie Storyweavers group. Wear your Halloween costume. Parents are encouraged to work with their children. Call 325-7843 for more details.

Nature Photography Contest

Take your best nature photo at an Independence Park. To enter the Nature Photography Contest, all photographers must register at the Truman Memorial Building, 416 W. Maple, between October 10 and November 15. Individuals will receive a disposable camera and information packet at registration. There is a \$5 entry fee per photographer.

This program is being provided with support from The Examiner, 410 S. Liberty.

Prize categories will be given in two age groups: 16 years and younger and those over 16 years. Photos will be judged and displayed at George Owens Nature Lodge, 1601 S. Speck Rd., December 1 - January 31. Call 325-7843 for more details.