



City of Independence
811 W. Laurel
Independence, KS 67301

*What I love most about working for
the City of Independence...*

"The City has always been supportive of continued education and advancement from within. I have loved getting to be on different committees (safety and social). Working for the City has allowed me to follow my chosen career path as a zoo keeper. My family has been blessed to move to this wonderful community."

*- Katie Southworth
Park & Zoo*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HOLIDAY TRASH PICK-UP SCHEDULE

Week of MLK Day:

All pick-ups shifted one day
(ex. Monday route on Tuesday, etc.)

January 17
CITY HALL CLOSED
for holiday observance

January 7 | February 4 | March 4
FIRST FRIDAY
7:30 a.m. Independence Civic Center
& Facebook Live
Co-sponsored by City & Chamber

January 8 | February 5 | March 5
Monthly Recycling @ City Sanitation Yard
21st & Maple 8 a.m.-12 noon
Also offered every Tuesday 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

January 13 & 27
February 10 & 24 | March 10 & 24
CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS
5:30 p.m. - Independence Civic Center & Facebook Live
THE CITY BRUSH DUMP IS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
on the **FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH***
8 A.M.-12 NOON
County Road 4100, one-half mile south of College Ave.
**January 8, due to holiday.*



Economy boost delivered! FedEx facility gets underway

A major commercial development project that will bring dozens of new jobs and a significant economic boost to Independence is now underway in the West Laurel Industrial Park.

In early December, the City issued an official building permit for the construction of a FedEx Ground package sorting and distribution center, a project that has been in the works since the Independence City Commission approved the sale of industrial park land last June.

The \$24 million project will include a 192,500-square-foot facility and will eventually employ a mix of full- and part-time workers, with operations running seven days a week. Property clearing and dirt work is in progress,

and the project is expected to take approximately 22 months.

In addition to the land sale in June, the commission also voted to extend utilities to the site and approved an application for a Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) grant to assist with the extension of Enterprise Drive. Passauer said KDOT has committed \$1,103,992 to support roadway improvements for the project.

"This project represents a great economic boost for Independence, thanks to the efforts of several individuals and organizations," Passauer said. "We are thrilled to support FedEx in this project and welcome the new facility to our community." ★

Finding our way toward an optimized tourism economy

If you're an Independence homeowner, you likely have no difficulty navigating the community to get to our beloved points of interest. It's a no-brainer to wind around the Riverside Park playground and miniature golf course to reach the zoo and concessions stand. If you want to take in a children's summer theater show, you zip straight out South 10th to the ICC campus and Inge Theatre. A First Friday presentation at the Civic Center? Everyone knows that's in the basement of Memorial Hall; and if it's a great night for cruise by Elk City Reservoir, you know you've got a few different route options depending on where you live in town.

But if you are a visitor or newcomer to our community, finding some of our gems may seem more like a literal treasure hunt. Or you may not know what to look for at all. For example, if you're just passing through and have an overnight stay at a motel on the west side of town, you'll find virtually no signage to invite you to the downtown area, park and zoo, museum, etc.

We hope some great new wayfinding signage will remedy this situation and, in turn, boost our local tourism economy. The signage will not only be directional, but informational as well.

"We don't want to keep our community assets a secret or inhibit our visitors' ability to maneuver around town," said Lacey Lies, the City's Finance Director and staff champion for the wayfinding signage project. "When guests travel here and can easily locate our attractions, shopping districts, recreation, dining and entertainment establishments, they will spend more time and contribute to our economy. And they will come back. That's a win for everyone."

The wayfinding signage project is picking up steam, thanks to Independence City Commission action last October to approve a signage fabrication contract with production company ColorAd, Inc. ColorAd and its partner design company, Avia,

have been working with the City for the past year to develop sign concepts based on identified points of interest in the community and current wayfinding voids in high-traffic areas where signage could be most beneficial.

The project includes the development of 45 directional and informational signs with a cohesive, attractive design to be installed on sturdy concrete footers throughout the community. This will include 30 vehicular signs (intended to be read by motorists); two informational kiosks; eight pedestrian guides; and five pedestrian totems.

Costs for the project are anticipated at approximately \$339,000, which includes a City commitment of \$100,000; an additional \$150,000 contribution by FORPAZ (Friends of Riverside Park and Zoo) and the Independence Tourism and Visitors Bureau; and \$67,000-plus pledged from other businesses and organizations. Funding solutions are still being developed for the remaining gap.

Having effective wayfinding signage in place is a key component in visitor satisfaction and, in turn, a robust tourism economy, according to nationally recognized downtown development expert Roger Brooks, who evaluated Independence in

2014. Brooks shared insights on opportunities to elevate the aesthetic of downtown Independence and to achieve a more inviting vibe in the community. Many downtown businesses have heeded Brooks' advice by adding benches, flowers and improved signage to contribute to the district's curb appeal.

The wayfinding signage is a major, comprehensive next step in facilitating community revitalization. Sign prototypes are under review at the City now, with final design decisions expected soon, and the first signs should go up in the summer, with anticipated project completion before the end of the year. ★



From City Manager Kelly Passauer

Thanks for making Indy the place to be in every season

The holiday season followed by the start of a fresh new year always brings to mind the many things we are thankful for. As City Manager, one of the things I am most thankful for is our team of employees. I've said it before, and you will hear me say it multiple more times, our employees are our greatest asset. During the fall months, it is especially easy to see how awesome they really are.

While months of coordinating with multiple volunteers goes on behind the scenes, the first visible sign occurs the



first week of October when the Neewollah banners go up, a few weeks after, that the crews start cleaning downtown, then manage the swirl of activities at Memorial Hall and Riverside Park with the play, queen pageant, chili cookoff and fun runs - all culminating with the downtown activities including a carnival, multiple food stands, entertainment and three parades. The parades involve detours, barricades, signage and security. Each morning after the previous evening's downtown activities, City crews are out early before the businesses

open to clean up from the night before. It is always amazing to see downtown on Sunday after Neewollah when it is cleaned up by noon. In 2021, Trunk or Treat was held on the evening of Neewollah clean-up Sunday, so City employees were back out on Monday to empty trash, pick up barricades and take down signage. The festival banners are taken down and the veterans banners hung up for the veterans parade just one week after Neewollah. Then, the veterans banners are taken down and Christmas decorations are hung up in time for the holiday parade, which is the fifth parade in four weeks. All of these activities involve coordination of multiple departments, from Public Works to Park and Zoo, Memorial Hall, Utilities, Police, Fire/EMS, Building, Code Enforcement, Animal Control and more. All of these

departments work together as one team for the community, as it should be. They always do an amazing job, but this year, their accomplishments are particularly noteworthy considering that multiple departments are very short staffed due to the current labor crisis.

I am also very thankful for the multiple volunteers who assist with our community events. The celebrations we all enjoy so much would not and could not happen without the organizers and hundreds of volunteers from Neewollah,

the Chamber of Commerce, Independence Main Street, the veterans organizations and many others. These citizens give their time and talent to make Independence THE place to be, especially in the fall. A special congratulations on a job well done to Generalissimo Lori Wesselowski who pulled off a successful festival during extraordinary circumstances. The 2021 Neewollah was reminiscent of the first annual Independence Halloween festival in 1919 (originally called "Mardi Gras" until it was officially named "Neewollah" in 1922). The

founders of this annual Halloween festival were also dealing with the remnants of the 1918 pandemic, "the Spanish Flu," which continued into 1919.

And last but not least, thank you to all of you who attended and participated safely in these events, either in person or virtually, and continue to support our community through every event, festival and season. There truly is no place like Independence. ★

— Kelly

PROJECT UPDATES: Public Works and Infrastructure

The City continues to make progress on several important initiatives related to streets, facilities and infrastructure.

Below is a quick-read chart of highlights for the most current and soon-to-start activities:

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECTED TIMELINE
Maple Street Rebuild (17th St. to west city limits)	Back on track after negotiations and minor adjustments to the project scope to lower the cost estimate. City Commission has awarded the project bid.	START: 1st Quarter 2022 COMPLETION: 3rd Quarter 2022
Central Park Sports Complex	Finalizing grading and storm sewer plans, submitting state permit, finalizing construction drawings and preparing for project bidding.	START: 2nd Quarter 2022 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2023
Rebuild of West Main from 10th Street east to 8th Street (complete street rehabilitation including sidewalks and buried infrastructure).	Getting prices for water line replacement.	START: Late 1st Quarter 2022 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2022
Whiskey Creek Clearing	Clearing vegetation along creek from Laurel to Walnut.	START & FINISH: December 2021
Kiddie Land Sidewalk & Restroom	Bids awarded. Preparing for construction.	START: 4th Quarter 2021 COMPLETION: 1st Quarter 2022
ADA improvements at Dog Park, Big Cheese Pizza parking lot, Zoo and other locales	Construction in progress.	START: July 2022 COMPLETION: 1st Quarter 2022

Important Reminders...

Remember to move your trash cart after your weekly pick-up.



The flu and COVID could be a frightening combination.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we launched our new sanitation schedule and trash cart service last fall. The process is going well. One note: After your weekly pick-up, please remember to relocate your trash cart back to your house.

Our Fire/EMS service has seen an uptick in COVID-related emergencies lately. Don't forget to get your flu shot and consider the COVID-19 vaccine and booster to better protect you, your family and your community.

WITH OUR FICKLE KANSAS WEATHER, FLOODING CAN HAPPEN IN ANY SEASON. HERE'S HOW TO HELP PROTECT YOUR HOME AND BE PREPARED...



PREPARE OR UPDATE A LIST OF BELONGINGS

Documenting all of your belongings will help you with the insurance claims process. Consider taking photos of high-value items or doing a video walk-through of your home to document its contents.

GET FLOOD INSURANCE

Most homeowners insurance policies don't cover flood damage. Protect your investment by purchasing flood insurance for your home and contents, even if you do not live in a high-risk flood zone.

STORE VALUABLES

Store valuables and important documents in waterproof or water-resistant containers above the base flood elevation (preferably on an upper floor). Make copies and store them online or offsite.

ELEVATE UTILITIES

Elevate or floodproof mechanical units, furnaces, water heaters, electrical systems, and other utilities on masonry, concrete, or pressure-treated lumber at least 12 inches above the base flood elevation.

REPLACE CARPETING WITH TILES

Tiles are more flood-resistant than carpet. Using tile or other flood-resistant materials in areas below the base flood elevation can help reduce water damage.

FLOODPROOF BASEMENTS

If you have a basement, minimize damage by floodproofing your basement and sealing walls with waterproofing compounds. Consider installing a sump pump.

INSTALL FLOOD VENTS

Install flood vents in foundation walls, garages and other enclosed areas to allow water to flow through, drain out, and lower the risk of structural damage.

USE FLOOD-RESISTANT INSULATION AND DRYWALL

Flood-resistant insulation and drywall will help minimize damage and can be easily cleaned and sanitized.

PREVENT SEWAGE BACK-UP

In some areas, flooding can cause sewage to back up through drain pipes in your home. Consult with a plumber and, if applicable, invest in a sewer backflow valve to prevent this potential health hazard.

Employees Celebrate Service Milestones

Jim Bennett
Cemetery Sexton

★★★
25 Years



Curtis Wilson
Public Service Worker II

★★★
20 Years



Jason Reddy
Police Sergeant

★★★
15 Years



Kevin Henry
Water Plant Operator II

★★★
10 Years



Melissa Adey
Dispatch/Records Supervisor

★★★
10 Years



Jerry Harrison
Police Chief

★★★
5 Years



Jessica Jaimes
Clerk 1

★★★
5 Years



Daniel Bowers
Police Sgt.

★★★
5 Years



Rick Barnes
Maintenance III

★★★
5 Years



Norman Williams Sr.
Public Service Worker I

★★★
5 Years



Come be part of our team!

NEW PAY RATES ★ GREAT BENEFITS
WE'RE HIRING!
MANY OPEN POSITIONS

Firefighter I/EMT

- Tests and maintains ambulances, pumping engines, aerial ladder trucks, hoses, other equipment.
- Participates in fire rescues, fire prevention, station maintenance and training.
- Performs clean-up and overhaul work after a fire.
- Responds to EMS calls, administers first aid and writes reports.
- Responds to major alarms while off duty.
- Assists with fire prevention education.

Full-time
\$689.92/56-hour week,
plus benefits

Zookeeper I

- Feeds, cleans, waters, bathes and grooms animals.
- Cleans cages.
- Performs a wide range of animal care.
- Identifies and treats minor injuries and illnesses.
- Maintains detailed, hand-written daily records.
- Provides mentally and physically-enriching activities for animals.
- Provides direction to visitors and answers questions from the public.
- Maintains zoo grounds.

Full-time
\$13.62/hour,
plus benefits

Mobile Intensive Care Technician/FF1 (Paramedic)

- Tests and maintains ambulances, pumping engines, aerial ladder trucks, hoses, other equipment.
- Participates in fire prevention, station maintenance and training.
- Performs clean-up and overhaul work after a fire.
- Responds to EMS calls, administers first aid and writes reports.
- Responds to major alarms while off duty.
- Assists with fire prevention education.

Full-time
\$858.48/56-hour week,
plus benefits

Dispatcher/Clerk I

- Receives regular and 911 telephone calls and dispatches personnel to handle emergencies.
- Cleans cages.
- Processes reports for prosecutors.
- Maintains case, report, accident, complaint, insurance and related files.
- Tests sirens, radios and phones.
- Checks validity of driver's licenses and vehicle tags.
- Submits crime information to law enforcement databases.

Full-time
\$14.75/hour,
plus benefits

Patrol Officer I

- Patrols city to enforce law and order.
- Investigates and prepares reports of complaints and accidents.
- Issues citations and makes arrests.
- Responds to crime, accident and emergency scenes.
- Serves subpoenas and warrants.
- Controls traffic and crowds.
- Appears in court.
- Books and transports prisoners.
- Takes fingerprints.

Full-time
\$17.18/hour,
plus benefits

Public Service Worker III / Heavy Machinery Operator Street Department

- Valid Kansas CDL required.
- Operates and maintains medium and heavy equipment.
- Reads, maintains, repairs, tests and replaces water meters.
- Mows and trim lawns and brush.
- Picks up and disposes of trash and brush.

Full-time
\$17.18/hour,
plus benefits

TWO WAYS TO APPLY:

Complete an application online at:
www.independencecks.gov



Applications also accepted at:
KansasWorks, 317 N. Penn / 620-332-5904
www.southeastkansasworks.com

**PLUS, we have several available openings in our
WATER/SEWER, STREET and SANITATION departments.**

**Apply at EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS,
2009 N. Penn, Independence / 620-331-6200.**