

CITY HALL NEWS

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She's 102, and after 67 YEARS on display at Riverside Park, the iconic 1050 Locomotive is in need of some serious love! Read on to learn about the effort to restore the cherished train for future generations to enjoy. (See Page 6)

Help yourself to these interactive online tools for monitoring budget, projects and progress

Calculating Your City Property Taxes

1 Your Home's Market Value x 11.5% = Your Home's Assessed Value (Determined by County Appraiser)

2 Assessed Value x City's Mill Levy Rate (.054629) = Your City Property Tax

EXAMPLE

$\$100,000 \times 11.5\% = \$11,500$
 $\$11,500 \times .054629 = \628.23

In furtherance of our goal to continually improve operational transparency and communications with citizens, we have introduced a new online resources where you can access comprehensive budget information and also check in on the progress of projects outlined in our dynamic, long-range community based strategic plan.

As we work through the annual process for setting the 2023 Municipal Budget, a new online "Budget Book" is available providing insight into the process itself, explanations of line-item allocations and how the budget is divided among City departments, as well as tax calculations for residents.

"We've been working hard to provide a user-friendly platform accessible to any interested citizen that provides clarity around the budget, how it is developed and how it impacts our taxpayers," said City Finance Director Lacey Lies. "We're trying to make a rather complicated concept easier to understand for the average citizen and in a useful way."

The Budget Book can be accessed on the City's website using this link: <https://city-independence-ks-budget-book.cleargov.com/6290/introduction/transmittal-letter>. 

Citizens may view the budget on the site and also select sections to download, if they so choose, Lies said.

Important highlights about the 2023 budget, Lies said, include the fact that the mill rate did not change from 2022 – remaining steady at 54.629 mills. A significant portion of the expense budget will be allocated for major projects in the works or on the horizon, she said. These include:

- City Hall renovation (in progress) at 120 N. 6th;
- Runway and fuel secondary containment improvements at the Independence Municipal Airport;
- AWOL animal shelter upgrades;
- Clarifier rehabilitation and fencing at the Water Treatment Plant;
- Water line replacement projects;
- KDOT and local street projects;
- Comprehensive Plan update;
- Communication tower and radio equipment project;
- Central Park Sports Complex.

This information and more can be found in the online Budget

Book, and Lies noted a section that may be of particular interest is the "Budget Overview" tab, which offers a "Property Tax and Mill Levy Overview" explaining how property taxes are established and providing the formula used to calculate City property taxes. Citizens can use this formula to approximately calculate their own tax liability.

The site also includes detailed information on funding sources for the budget, the City's long-range capital improvement plan and contact information for each member of the City's management team.



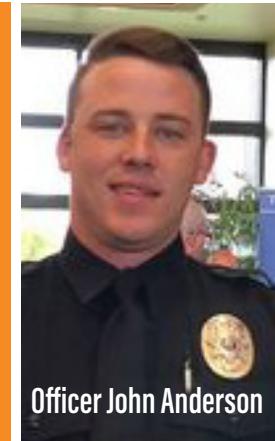
Another new interactive resource for citizens is the Strategic Plan Dashboard, which allows you to monitor the progress on the initiatives that you helped create as part of the Community Based Strategic Plan adopted in 2018. This new tool offers a color-coded graphic representation of project activity within the five key areas of the plan's focus, including:

- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - Business retention and recruitment; expanded medical services; business tax incentives; addressing vacant buildings.
- INFRASTRUCTURE - Utility maintenance and capital improvement plan; annual street review/Improvement plan; ADA compliance; water meter replacement; long-term plan for City Hall and emergency services facilities.
- BEAUTIFICATION - Addressing abandoned houses; expansion of recycling; code enforcement and blight remediation; once weekly trash pickup and expansion of other pickup services.
- PARKS & RECREATION - Enhanced branding and tourism initiatives; optimization of small parks; expanded summer education camps for kids; zoo enhancement/maintenance plan; expanded senior activities; more partnerships to promote Neewollah and other events beyond SEK.
- COMMUNITY SPIRIT & UNITY - Consider modification to size of City Commission; improve communication with Diversity Task Force; enhance communication with public through various media; conduct annual citizen satisfaction survey.

The Strategic Plan Dashboard can be accessed using this link: <https://performance.envision.com/dashboard/city-of-independence-kansas140>. 

AT THE READY

IPD steps up training for active shooter response



Officer John Anderson



Officer Justin Ward

and offers courses nationwide.

Now certified instructors for the integrated response program, Anderson and Ward are equipped to teach their peers within the Indy department and other area law enforcement agencies.

Additionally, he said, he is hoping to participate in more training, including the Level 1 program which covers engaging the threat/shooter and the ERASE program - Exterior Response to Active Shooting Events - which offers training on response to outdoor emergency situations, such as sporting events, festivals, concerts, etc.

Chief Harrison said in addition to training up its officers, the department has launched an effort to acquire more equipment, including breaching tools (for breaking through locked/barricaded doors) and rifle-rated body armor. He said with expenditures totaling around \$10,000, the department could adequately stock its dozen or so vehicles with the enhanced equipment, and the items will be purchased as funds allow.

"Overall, it's a relatively small investment of money that ultimately could have an invaluable impact in terms of saving human lives," he said.

IPD also will be planning a series of local training drills in conjunction with the Fire/EMS department to practice response, breaching and rescue scenarios, Chief Harrison said.

While beefed up training and equipment regimens are on the horizon, Chief Harrison emphasized that all officers on the force are already prepared to respond to any community emergency and also offer ongoing training for employers and community organizations (schools, churches, etc.) in the ALICE run/hide/fight concept. An acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate, the ALICE program includes a classroom learning component and on-site training so that businesses and organizations can create their own response plans in the event of an active threat.

"God forbid any of this ever happens in Independence. But if we've learned anything from the tragic events happening all too often across our country, it's that we can never say never, and it is of paramount importance to be prepared. We want the community to know that we are training and preparing for such terrible events."

Organizations interested in learning more about ALICE training may contact Sgt. Dustin Stafford via the IPD's non-emergency number at (620) 332-1700.

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
Water Tower Maintenance	Bidding project to maintain and coat north water tower.	1st Qtr 2023
Zoo and Park Power Feed Relocation	Working on proposed concept to refeed current electrical services.	3rd Quarter 2022
Maple Street Rebuild (17th St. west to city limits)	Paving soon to get underway. Working with railroad on fixing crossing issue.	Expected completion 4th Quarter 2022
Evidence Building	Preparing to award bid for buildout of evidence storage room in existing building.	Expected completion 1st Quarter 2023
Communications Tower	Design under review for new communications tower for emergency services north of historic City Hall.	Yet to be determined
Wayfinding Signage	In progress, design and installation of signage and kiosks.	Expected completion October 2022
Airport Taxiway Improvements (Taxiways B & D and Terminal Apron)	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Water Plant Next Phase	Awaiting plan approval by Kansas Department of Health & Environment. Bid award targeted for October.	START: 4th Quarter 2022 COMPLETION: 4th Quarter 2026
Parking Lot North of 6th St. City Hall	Design complete and ready for review. Bid type and timeline to be established.	START: 1st Quarter 2023 COMPLETION: 3rd Quarter 2023
Water Line/Meter Project (Northwest of 10th St. railroad crossing, south of Oak Street)	Will include replacement of water meters and some water mains. Bid award targeted for October.	START: 4th Quarter 2022 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2023
Lakeview Lift Station	Preparing infrastructure at lift station to improve inflow and infiltration issues (preventing ground water and storm water from entering the sanitary sewer).	START: 3rd Quarter 2022 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2023
Southeast Lift Station	Bidding the project for pump replacement to improve reliability and ease of maintenance.	START: 4th Quarter 2022 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2023
Fire/EMS Addition on Myrtle St.	Framing and trim for overhead doors completed. HVAC and sprinkler system work nearing completion. Wall framing and soffits completed.	Expected completion 1st Quarter 2023



FIRE/EMS FACILITY EXPANSION
Myrtle Street. Anticipated completion 1st Qtr. 2023.

Follow
Weekly
Progress
Here >



TIME HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL

CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY TO RESTORE THE 1050

After decades of delighting children and families as both a symbol of history and a thrilling play structure at Riverside Park, the 1050 locomotive is showing its age and needing a robust shot of TLC to bring it up to modern standards for safety, aesthetics and longevity.

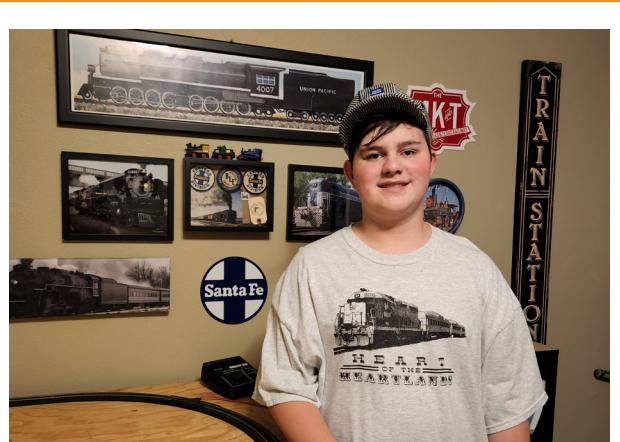
The first of 102 "2-6-2 prairie" locomotives built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1902, the 1050 was designed as a workhorse for rail lines. These locomotives tore through towns and into the open fields of the prairies. The locomotive was in passenger operation until 1920, when it transitioned to use as a freight locomotive.

This type of engine was retired from 1940-1955, and the ATSF rail company donated the 1050 steam engine to the city of Independence in the spring of 1955. At that time, a drive was

organized to raise money to move it from a side track near the Santa Fe Depot to the park. One way of raising funds was the selling of "shares" in The Independence Shortline Railway for a dollar each. The old engine was moved to Riverside Park on July 1, 1955.

Though built to last, 67 years of weather and curious climbers have taken their toll on the engine, and it's in need of some repair work to keep it beautiful and safe to climb on. The FORPAZ (Friends of Riverside Park and Zoo) organization has taken up the cause to raise funding to restore the structure, with a campaign goal of \$100,000. In a nod to the 1950s campaign, FORPAZ is offering symbolic "shares" in the Independence Short Line Railroad, as a donor perk. (More information on donor levels, as well as a donation form and online link are found on Page 7.)

TRAIN ON THE BRAIN: 12-year-old enthusiast championing the fundraising effort to fix the 1050



Kellen Ebert

Independence Middle School 7th grader Kellen Ebert's fascination with trains began about the time he could walk with a Thomas the Train toy. He has absorbed train facts from books and watching train videos on YouTube over the years. He plays train simulator video games, has model trains and enjoys watching live trains when he can catch them. Kellen and his family visit tourist trains on vacations, and Kellen's mom says he's somewhat of a living train encyclopedia when it comes to knowledge of the makes and models of engines and different railroad companies.

In September, Kellen shared his passion as a guest speaker at First Friday to tell the story of the 1050 locomotive and introduce the fundraising campaign to support the restoration project.

Kellen's other interests include playing saxophone in the middle school band, and he recently joined the school's chess club. He enjoys theatre and is cast as a Lost Boy for Neewollah's upcoming production of Peter Pan.



AVAILABLE DONOR OPPORTUNITIES CONDUCTOR

\$5,000 and Above

GOLDEN SPIKE

\$499-\$250

FIREMAN

\$249-\$100

BRAKEMAN

\$99-\$50

ALL ABOARD

\$49 and Under

\$4,999-\$2,500

BRONZE BELL

\$2,499-\$1,000

ENGINEER

\$999-\$500

Complete and mail this form back to:

FORPAZ, Attn: Restore 1050 Fund, P.O. Box 9, Independence, KS 67301

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

My check in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Please make all checks payable to FORPAZ.

Donations can also be made online at www.squareup.com/market/forpaz-inc or by using the QR Code. FORPAZ is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.



*Plaque recognition for Golden & Silver Spike and Bronze Bell Donors.



“You never get a second chance to make a first impression.”

BEHIND
THE JOB
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**SGT.
CHRISTINA
JOHNSON**

Our featured City employee in this quarter's newsletter is someone who really doesn't relish the spotlight at all. "I am really not that interesting," said a humble Sgt. Christina Johnson. An Independence native and one of a handful of female officers on the force, she has been a part of the Independence Police Department for 18 years. The most rewarding aspect of her job, she says, is having the opportunity to make a positive impact in the community. "The thing I love about my job is helping the community in any way I can, such as making people feel safe in their community and letting them know they can call the police department at any time day or night, and we are there to help." When she's off duty, Sgt. Johnson enjoys spending time with

family, and her patriotism carries over into her favorite hobby - woodworking. Sgt. Johnson enjoys making shadow boxes, American flags and personalized wooden flags for others.

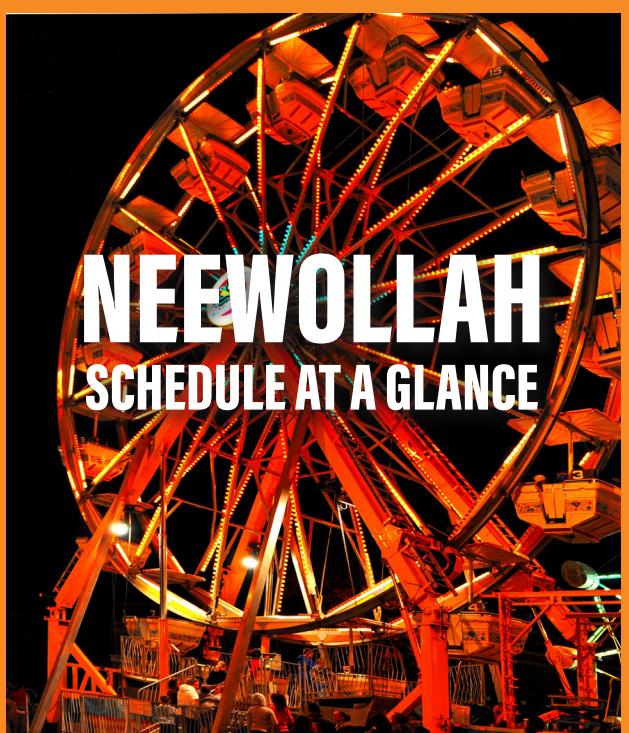
Police Chief Jerry Harrison said Sgt. Johnson is "a diligent hard worker, a kind soul and really cares about our community."

There is one particular motto that Sgt. Johnson lives by in her daily work in the field.

"When I was in high school, a teacher once told me a quote which has stuck with me, 'You never get a second chance to make a first impression.'

"I think of that quote often, and when I talk to youths, I tell them this quote to help guide them along the way and help them make good decisions. I hope I have impacted them in a positive way."

Congratulations, Sgt. Johnson. Keep up the great work!



FRIDAY, OCT. 21	PETER PAN	7 p.m.	MEMORIAL HALL
	5K/10K	8:30 a.m.	RIVERSIDE PARK
	FUN RUN	10 a.m.	RIVERSIDE PARK
SATURDAY, OCT. 22	CHILI COOK-OFF	11 a.m.	RIVERSIDE PARK
	MEDALLION HUNT	11 a.m.	RIVERSIDE PARK
	PETER PAN	7 p.m.	MEMORIAL HALL
SUNDAY, OCT. 23	PETER PAN	2 p.m.	MEMORIAL HALL
	NIGHT AT THE MOVIES	7 p.m.	INDEPENDENCE CINEMAS
MONDAY, OCT. 24	QUEEN NEELAH TALENT	7 p.m.	MEMORIAL HALL
TUESDAY, OCT. 25	QUEEN NEELAH CORONATION	7 p.m.	MEMORIAL HALL
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 26	FOOD STANDS OPEN	11 a.m.	
	CARNIVAL OPENS	5 p.m.	DOWNTOWN
	BANDSTAND OPENS	Evening	
THURSDAY, OCT. 27	CARNIVAL	5-10 p.m.	DOWNTOWN
	DOO DAH PARADE	6 p.m.	DOWNTOWN
	COMEDY NIGHT	8 p.m.	BOOTH HOTEL
FRIDAY, OCT. 28	CARNIVAL	3-10 p.m.	DOWNTOWN
	KIDDIE PARADE	4 p.m.	DOWNTOWN
SATURDAY, OCT. 29	ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR	8 a.m.-4 p.m.	DOWNTOWN
	CARNIVAL	10 a.m.-10 p.m.	DOWNTOWN
	GRAND PARADE	11 a.m.	DOWNTOWN
	BAND COMPETITION	1:30 p.m.	SHULTHIS STADIUM



In times of economic struggle, consider these City and area programs for assistance

In one of my previous columns, I shared with you my experience as a single mother many years ago. I realize several of you have had similar experiences and know what it is like to struggle financially. For those families who are living on fixed incomes or having trouble making ends meet, I wanted to bring to your attention some programs the City has that may provide some assistance.

HARDSHIP RATE This program provides a discounted rate for water, sewer and sanitation services for eligible citizens. This program was updated last year to reflect the current "extremely low income limits" as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These amounts are updated by HUD each year. You can find an application for this program on the City's website on the **Utilities Department** page, or you can visit this link: <http://www.independenceks.gov/202/Utilities-Department>

wishing to improve the exterior of your home and you live in a neighborhood revitalization district, you may be eligible for a 50% reimbursement grant. One of the grant requirements is that you need to partner with at least one neighbor who will also be making improvements to their residence. This grant program was featured in the last newsletter and while all funds for 2022 have been exhausted, you can begin planning now for your 2023 project and be prepared by downloading an application here: <https://www.independenceks.gov/352/Neighborhood-Exterior-Grant-Program>



DOWNTOWN INDEPENDENCE BUILDING GRANT This program is in place to aid in the preservation of the structural integrity of existing commercial buildings located within the Central Business District. This grant provides 25% reimbursement for eligible expenses with a maximum funding of \$25,000 per building. For more information visit this link: <http://www.independenceks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2570/Downtown-Independence-Building-Grant>

If you have any questions on any of the above City programs, the Finance Department can be contacted at 620-332-2500, Option 9, or you may email lacey@independenceks.gov.

Other programs not administered by the City but available in the community, county or state that may be helpful include:

- Community Access Center, 620-331-5115
- Food Bank, 620-331-5115
- Community Mission for Improved Housing, 620-779-5797
- Red Cross, 316-219-4000
- Veterans Services, 620-331-0540
- DCF, 620-331-0350
- Four County Mental Health, 620-331-1748
- WIC, 620-251-4210
- Independence Housing Authority, 620-332-2536
- Independence Community College (Scholarships and Grants available for those who qualify), 620-331-4100
- Property Tax Relief (Homestead), www.kansas.gov

*- Kelly Passauer,
City Manager*

If you're a homeowner in the floodplain, special guidelines apply to your property

Given the drought we've experienced in the Independence area this year, too much water may be the farthest thing from your mind. However, floods can happen quickly and in any season, so it's important to be prepared and informed at all times. If you live in the identified Independence floodplain, there are some particular guidelines you should know.

The City of Independence participates in the FEMA CRS program that requires us to manage the floodplain and help reduce and avoid flood damage to insurable property. By participating in the program, citizens in the floodplain can receive a reduction in their flood insurance.



Find the
Independence
Floodplain Map
Here

If your property is in the 100-year floodplain, the following activity requires a building permit and State of Kansas-FEMA approval:

- Installation of Fence
- Dirt work that could change the flow of water
- Adding on to your home
- Building a garage or shed
- Remodeling, new siding, new roof

Fence application:



Building Permit:



For more information on weather safety, flood zones and flood safety in the City of Independence, please feel free to contact City of Independence Emergency Manager/Assistant City Manager David Cowan at 620-332-2528; davidc@independenceks.gov

The signs are all around us ...and they're a bit of a nuisance!



Lately, we've noticed a growing number of temporary signs for multiple purposes being placed around town.

Did you know it's actually illegal to place paper or temporary signs on utility poles, street sign posts, trees or anywhere in the public right of way? Yard sale, campaign and real estate signs are the most common culprits, popping up all over town and often remaining long after a sale or event is over.

Please help keep our neighborhoods free of this clutter. And remember, the City offers free posting of rummage sales on its website.



Come be part of our team!

CHIEF WASTEWATER PLANT OPERATOR

- Monitors treatment process and performs laboratory tests as required.
- Keeps records for federal and state health agencies.
- Writes specifications and purchases materials.
- Monitors for/maintains safety compliance.
- Manages grounds, staff and plant operations.
- Makes budget recommendations.
- Certification as a Kansas Class IV Wastewater Operator required within 1 year of employment.

Full-time, \$21.44/hour starting, plus benefits

PUBLIC SERVICE WORKER II / MEDIUM MACHINERY OPERATOR WATER/SEWER OR STREET DEPT

- Installs, repairs and locates water and sewer mains and lines.
- Repairs streets, manholes and street signs.
- Picks up and disposes of brush and trash.
- Monitors for/maintains safety compliance.
- Reads, maintains, repairs, tests and replaces water meters.
- Maintains and repairs water pumps and service stations.
- Trains in operation of equipment.
- Turns water service on and off.
- May supervise small crew of laborers.

Full-time, \$15.33/hour starting, plus benefits

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

MOBILE INTENSIVE CARE TECHNICIAN/FF1 (PARAMEDIC)

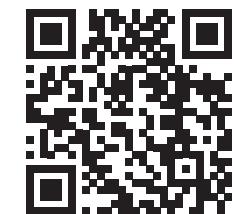
- Tests and maintains ambulances, pumping engines, aerial ladder trucks, hoses, other equipment.
- Participates in fire prevention, station maintenance and training.
- Performs cleanup and overhaul work after a fire.
- Performs rescues.
- Responds to EMS calls, administers first aid and writes reports.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

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

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



Scan here for complete job listings

TWO WAYS TO APPLY:

Complete an application online at:
www.independenceks.gov

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

*Our dedicated employees are our most valuable asset
at the City of Independence. As a team, we work hard day in and day out to help maintain the wonderful quality of life we and our neighbors enjoy in our community. We want you to love it here.
We want you to stay here. We want you to retire with us.*



INDEPENDENCE

KANSAS

City of Independence
811 W. Laurel
Independence, KS 67301

City of Independence Trivia

*How many seats are in the
Memorial Hall auditorium?*

Answer: 1,950

CALENDAR OF CITY EVENTS

September 8 & 22

October 13 & 26 | November 10 & 17

CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS
5:30 p.m. - Independence Civic Center

October 8

ZOOLLOWEEN

@ RALPH MITCHELL ZOO
5 p.m.-7 p.m. | \$2 admission | 2 & Under free
Come in costume & enjoy!

October 7 | November 4 | December 2
FIRST FRIDAY

7:30 a.m. Independence Civic Center
& Facebook Live

November 11 | November 24-25

CITY HALL CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS

*Sanitation services shifted by one day
(11th to 12th...24th to 25th...25th to 26th)*

October 1 | November 5 | December 3
MONTHLY RECYCLING

@ City Sanitation Yard

21st & Maple 8 a.m.-12 noon

Also offered every Tuesday 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

CITY BRUSH DUMP OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
on the FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

County Road 4100 8 a.m.-12 noon
(One-half mile south of College Ave.)