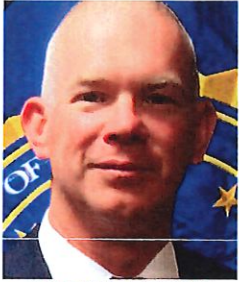


City Hall NEWS

SPRING 2024

FORMER KBI LEADER APPOINTED AS INTERIM INDY POLICE CHIEF



CHIEF HARRISON



CHIEF HUTCHINGS

David Hutchings, retired Associate Director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI), has been appointed interim Independence police chief, effective upon the April 5 departure of Chief Jerry Harrison. Harrison, who had served as the local chief since 2016, has accepted the chief of police position in Lebanon, Missouri.

A 33-year veteran of the KBI, Hutchings retired from the bureau in August 2023, where he had served as associate director since 2011. He is a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy, where he completed the Law Enforcement Leadership program and is a member of FBI National Academy Associates. Hutchings currently resides in Topeka.



Love
INDEPENDENCE
04/27/2024

BEAUTIFICATION *in full Spring swing*

Championing beautification efforts across our community remains a top priority for the City of Independence, our City Commission and our highly engaged citizen advisory committee. We continue to expand our resources to incentivize community beautification and advance code enforcement practices to combat blight.

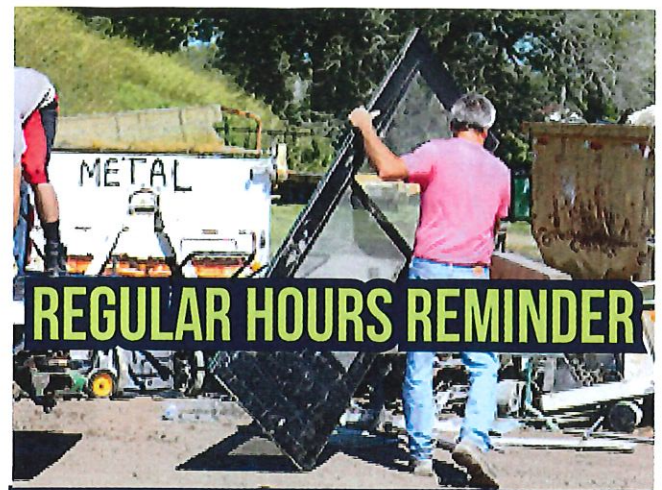
Read on to learn how you can be part of the solution.

City of Independence
120 N. 6th, Independence, KS 67301 | (620) 332-2500
www.independenceks.gov

Jump start your spring cleaning during **LOVE Independence Week**

April 22-27 the City will extend its staffing hours to receive drop-offs of bulky waste items at the City Sanitation Yard and limbs, brush and leaves at the City Brush Yard. Both facilities will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day.

- **City Sanitation Yard, 21st & Maple**
Accepting large items - appliances (nothing containing freon) furniture, mattresses, etc., **from Independence residents**; No hazardous waste, household trash, commercial construction waste or industrial tires.
- **City Brush Yard**
1/2 mile south of College Ave. on CR 4500
Accepting limbs, leaves and brush only. No lumber.



REGULAR HOURS REMINDER

RECYCLING

*Every Thurs 11 a.m.-1 p.m. &
1st Sat of the month*

BULKY ITEM DROP-OFF & BRUSH YARD

Thurs-Fri 8 a.m.-12 noon & 1st Sat of the month

NEIGHBORHOOD EXTERIOR GRANT PROGRAM REMINDER

Designed for residents living in the City's designated Revitalization Districts, this grant provides up to 50 percent reimbursement for neighbors who work together to improve their properties. Minimum co-applicant investment is \$1,000. Total projects ranging from a minimum of \$2,000 up to \$10,000 in qualifying exterior work may qualify for reimbursement.

Qualifying improvements include façade restoration; exterior painting or siding; masonry; window and door repair or replacement; awnings; gutters; exterior lighting or electrical work; building additions; front porch repair; roofs; driveway repair or installation; landscaping (with limitations); and tree removal (with limitations).



Scan here for more details, an application and a map of the City's Revitalization Districts



We may need to snap a pic or two

If you notice our Sanitation Department crews taking photos of trash in your neighborhood, please don't be alarmed. On occasion, if crews encounter an unusual situation on their routes - for instance if their access to a polycart is blocked by debris or if animals have invaded a cart overnight and left a mess - our crews have been instructed to take a photo of the "scene" to document any situation that has prevented them from doing a routine pickup. That way, if a customer has a question or concern later, we can verify, clarify and resolve the issue in a timely manner. Thank you for your understanding.



MAJOR PROJECTS TAKING SHAPE

CENTRAL PARK SPORTS COMPLEX

The Park Blvd. landscape is changing rapidly as Phase 1 of the Central Park Sports Complex progresses. Most earth work has been completed, including elevation changes and flood mitigation measures. Paved trails have been poured, lighting is up, and ballfields, dugouts and parking areas are taking shape. A fundraising campaign offering donors custom-engraved brick pavers has been completed, and the Donor Plaza is scheduled to be constructed in May.



Follow the progress
on Facebook: [Central Park Sports Complex](#)



BARTLETT PLANT WATER LINE

Construction continues on schedule for the nine-mile water line designed to connect the new Bartlett - Montgomery County LLC soybean crushing facility to the City's water plant via Rural Water District #6. Thanks to contracts with Bartlett and RWD #6, the project will result in no net costs to the City of Independence. The work is anticipated to be completed in the first quarter of 2025.

6th STREET MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT REBUILD

A rebuild of the 6th Street municipal parking lot directly north of City Hall began on schedule March 18, with an expected 60-day construction timeframe. The new and expanded lot will offer new lighting for enhanced safety, more ADA-accessible parking spaces and spaces sized appropriately to fit modern vehicles.



Land acquisition a strategic

The Independence City Commission has approved a significant land purchase as a first step toward a mitigation solution for neighborhood flash flooding that has plagued Independence since early development of the city. The purchase will include approximately 125 acres of current pasture, agricultural and residential land north of Oak Street, between 13th Street and 21st Street, along the banks of Whiskey Creek which is notorious for flash flooding during heavy rain and damaging downstream residences.

City Manager Kelly Passauer explained that, after the worst documented flooding incident in recent years – 2018 when 50 structures, including residences and businesses, incurred some level of flooding and varying degrees of damage - the City has completed extensive research on flood mitigation solutions, attempted some more affordable stop-gap remedies and applied on multiple occasions for grant funding to support improvement projects, all with little or no success.

A 2019 hydrology study, Passauer explained, recommended the construction of a wet detention area as the highest-impact solution to prevent downstream flooding. City staff has since referred to this recommendation as an “artificial lake” project for planning purposes.

“The City has been studying the problem and working toward a solution for many years,” Passauer said. “Now, all conditions have aligned, including property owners willing to sell the necessary acreage and opportunities to achieve several other community benefits with development in the area,” Passauer said.

She explained that with the acquisition of the property, the City will be able to pursue not only the development of the wet detention area, but other improvements that will meet the needs and wants of the community, including one

of the top-identified shortfalls – housing.

To help relieve congestion around neighboring schools and to provide access to the lake and future housing developments, the project plan also would include extension, construction and/or improvements to City streets in the vicinity.

“We want to get the greatest value for our investment and maximize the benefit to the community with this project,” Passauer said.

Total cost of the property purchase comes in at \$1,054,900, which includes two existing homes and several farm buildings. The purchase was made through the City’s Economic Development Fund, which is funded by franchise fees and sales tax dollars, not ad valorem taxes, Passauer explained.

She said as plans develop for the wet detention area and additional improvements, the City will seek all applicable state and federal grant funding. As for street and infrastructure improvements that would benefit the neighboring schools, Passauer said funding may also become available thanks to an anticipated early payoff of the bonds issued after the school district’s 2009 bond issue election for school improvements.

A portion of those school bonds were funded by an approved 20-year City sales tax totaling 1%. According to plan, the City sales tax will expire in 2031 (1/2 cent) and 2032 (1/2 cent). However, because sales tax collections in recent years have outpaced early projections, the school bonds are expected to be paid off in 2028. Remaining sales tax collected until 2032 as part of the school bond project is eligible to be used for additional improvement projects that benefit the schools - such as extensions of access streets and accompanying infrastructure, Passauer explained.



investment for the future



Whiskey Creek Wet Detention ("Artificial Lake") Project FAQ's

Whiskey Creek flooding and its impact on downstream residences in neighborhoods across the community has been a problem for many years. This proposed project will be completed in phases and will not be an overnight fix, but will yield multiple benefits for our citizens and the community as a whole.

-City Manager Kelly Passauer

Q: What is the purpose of the artificial lake?

A: The lake will function as a wet detention reservoir for rain water and prevent Whiskey Creek from overflowing its banks and flooding downstream properties. Our 2019 hydrology study indicates a wet detention area would be the highest-impact solution to the Whiskey Creek flooding problem. It is our hope the "artificial lake" can be designed to also support fishing and other passive recreational opportunities.

Q: What is the cost and how will it be funded?

A: The property purchase alone was \$1,054,000 and includes approximately 125 acres of land with two existing homes and farm buildings. The property purchase was made through the City's Economic Development Fund, which is supported by franchise fees and sales tax dollars, NOT ad valorem (property) taxes.

Costs for the lake development or additional work to improve infrastructure and streets is not yet determined. We have engaged engineering/design firms to develop project concepts.

We do anticipate applying for any and all applicable state and



federal grant funding, and we also anticipate the future availability of sales tax funding generated through the school-bond issue sales tax currently in place. School bonds are expected to be paid off in 2028, while sales tax collection will continue until 2031 (1/2 cent) and 2032 (1/2 cent), and those funds are eligible to be used for street and infrastructure improvements that support the neighboring schools (such as the extension of existing streets in the vicinity).

Q: Are there other uses for the property?

A: While the artificial lake is expected to be several acres in size, it will not require all of the purchased property. Our plan is to pursue residential platting and development of additional housing on the acreage. Housing has been identified as a critical need in our community and a primary goal of the Independence City Commission. An aesthetically pleasing multi-use artificial lake, along with expanded streets and infrastructure, can help ensure the availability of desirable, viable housing options for Independence residents of all ages.



2023

By the Numbers

year in review

1916



SEE-CLICK-FIX SYSTEM
YIELDED

1,795

SERVICE REQUESTS

Scan here



to request service

This was the number of service requests and responses initiated through the online system on the City's website, which was implemented in Spring 2023. This includes **927** brush pickups; **467** bulky items (like couches); and **48** pothole repairs, plus several other miscellaneous requests.

The year historic Independence City Hall was constructed at 120 N. 6th. One hundred years later, in 2016, the building was vacated due to environmental hazards. After an extensive renovation and preservation project inspired by a citizen advisory committee, the building was brought up to modern safety and functionality standards, and City staff relocated back "home" in September 2023.



35 tons

Of recyclables were collected in an average of **250** drop-offs per month, including the first Saturday of the month and weekly recycling opportunities.

34,867

The number of feet of sewer main pipe serviced and cleaned by City crews.



2023

Year in review

By the Numbers



29,836

That's how many amusement tickets were sold at Riverside Park last year, amounting to **\$19,087.59**. Other major accomplishments for the park and zoo in 2023 were the arrival of new animals - a sloth and two brown-haired spider monkeys - as well as the addition of a sensory garden in the playground, thanks to FORPAZ (Friends of Riverside Park and Zoo). FORPAZ also championed the renovation of the 1050 steam locomotive; **907** guests attended the annual Zoolloween event; there were **478** park facility rentals recorded; and a generous donor contributed funding to restore the tortoise barn and exhibit, which is currently in progress.

\$8.9M

in grants received

The City received multiple grant awards in 2023, totaling upwards of \$8.9 million, including more than \$3.1M combined from the National Park Service and FEMA to support the Central Park Sports Complex; \$2.6M for water system improvements through the Kansas BASE (Building A Stronger Economy) program; \$1.6M for traffic safety improvements; \$650,000 for moderate income housing; and \$330,000 from the Department of Justice for Community Oriented Policing projects, among others.



\$34.5M

Building Permit Valuations

The highest valuation for annual building permits issued in the city since 2010.

Scan this code to see the full year-end report on the city's website, or visit IndependenceKs.gov > Government > Departments > Administration > Annual Reports





FLOOD ASSISTANCE

annual notice

Dear Independence Residents,

Because flooding is a potential hazard in any season, we want to make sure you are well informed regarding appropriate local resources for information and assistance. Assistant City Manager David Cowan acts in the roles of Community Rating System (CRS) Coordinator and Floodplain Manager for the City of Independence and is equipped to answer residents' questions about flood insurance. Mr. Cowan can be reached by phone or email (see contact information below). Citizens can also visit City Hall to check Mr. Cowan's availability and our webpage: <https://www.independenceks.gov/351/Floodplain-Management>

While Mr. Cowan can explain how flood insurance works and offer information and advice about coverage and how to find an insurance agent, from there, property owners are responsible for contacting an insurance agent for an actual quote. One of the best ways to find an insurance agent is to visit www.floodsmart.gov and enter your address on the website.

As a part of the CRS program, the City maintains open spaces in the community that function as natural floodplains and reduce the risk of flooding homes. These lots are free of structures and debris, allowing natural water flow and allowing for green space in the community.

Other information Mr. Cowan can provide includes how to retrofit a building for a better insurance rating.

Mr. Cowan is in contact with the Region VII NFIP Bureau and Statistical Agent for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources when more assistance is needed with insurance questions.

Additionally, the City offers information on historic flooding in the community, such as site-specific past flood locations and high-water marks throughout the city and just outside of the city limits. A representative from the City can make site visits to provide one-on-one advice to a property owner regarding flooding and drainage issues on private property. We offer advice and assistance with structural and non-structural flood protection, retrofitting, and mitigation measures, including flood insurance.

Mr. Cowan and other City of Independence personnel also have contacts for inquiries on financial assistance through Montgomery County Emergency Management, which also works with the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM) for grants related to mitigation. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is available after a disaster. Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) are additional sources of grants for projects to mitigate or reduce disaster damages. (Please note: These grants have specific application periods and are not always available at all times.)

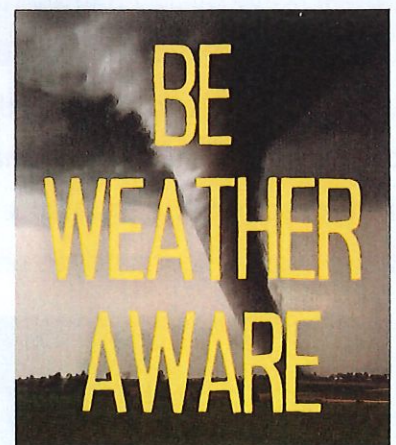
It is our pleasure to assist you.

David Cowan, Assistant City Manager
Floodplain & CRS Coordinator
(620) 332-2528/DavidC@IndependenceKs.gov



Spring storm season is here, and Independence residents are reminded the City does not own or operate any facilities officially designated as "storm shelters" according to requirements regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) IC-500 standards for shelters. In the midst of a weather emergency, citizens will not be turned away from staffed/open City facilities, but those entering do so at their own risk with the understanding that City facilities are not storm-hardened. Citizens are encouraged to be weather aware and ready. A few tips:

- Have a 3-day supply of necessities (food, water, medications) on hand.
- Have a battery powered AM/FM radio for news updates.
- During a severe storm, avoid rooms with windows, go to the lowest floor, find a small center room or interior hallway with no windows.
- In a trailer home, leave the trailer and go to a pre-planned safe location, such as a private storm shelter or neighbor's basement.
- If you have no time to escape to an indoor shelter, find the lowest lying area (such as a ditch), lay down and cover your head with your hands.



We need citizen voices as we finalize the community comprehensive plan

INDEPENDENCE TODAY



There are roughly **8,584** residents in Independence today.



Independence has a median age of **38.4** years



Approximately **40%** of residents have some form of college degree

COMMUTER PATTERNS



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates and LEHD OnTheMap 2020 Estimates

Scan here to read and offer feedback on the DRAFT Community Comprehensive Plan. Feedback accepted through April 30.

There is still time to share your input as the City finalizes the next version of its Community Comprehensive Plan, which was last updated *in 1982*.

The aims and components of the Community Comprehensive Plan include:

- Focus future development and public investment;
- Serve as a community information management tool;
- Document and analyze the community's existing conditions;
- Establish a set of goals for the future and how to achieve them;
- Provide guidance for community decision making;
- Actively encourage community involvement for all residents.

IMPORTANT DATES

- 4/16:** City Commission/Planning Commission joint meeting to review plan draft, 5:30 p.m. @ Memorial Hall Veterans Room
- 4/30:** Last day for public feedback
- 5/7:** Planning Commission adoption of plan, 5:30 p.m. @ Memorial Hall Veterans Room
- 5/23:** Scheduled City Commission adoption of plan at regular meeting @ Memorial Hall

REMEMBER: THERE ARE MULTIPLE WAYS TO PAY YOUR UTILITY BILL



Online at: IndependenceKs.gov



By mail using the return portion of your paper bill



In person at City Hall, 120 N. 6th



By phone at (620) 332-2500



In the payment drop box in the Civic Center drive



Through automated bank draft. (Form on website.)

We're Hiring!



It takes a great team to run a great city!

We offer:

- Competitive pay
- Excellent benefits
- KPERs retirement program
- Flexible scheduling
- Supportive environment
- Meaningful work!
- 14 PAID HOLIDAYS IN 2024
- Eligible for vacation after 6 months of employment
- 2 weeks annual vacation, increasing to 3 weeks by 5th anniversary
- Updated pay plans with 3% cost-of-living wage increase

WE ARE CURRENTLY RECRUITING FOR:

ENGINEERING

- Administrative Aide

FIRE/EMS

- Mobile Intensive Care Technician/Firefighter I (Paramedic)
- Firefighter I/EMT

PARK, ZOO & CEMETERY

- Maintenance I/Cemetery
- Park Ride Operators/Ticket Sellers/Concessions Workers
- Seasonal Park Maintenance

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Chief of Police
- Patrol Officer I
- Community Service Officer
- Dispatcher/Clerk I

PUBLIC WORKS

- Street Supervisor
- Public Service Worker II/Medium Machinery Operator
- Chief Wastewater Plant Operator
- Wastewater Plant Operator I
- Wastewater Plant Operator Trainee

Apply for the following positions through Express Employment Professionals, 2009 N. Penn Ave. Independence (620) 331-6200

- Public Service Workers I & II - Street Department
- Public Service Workers I & II - Sanitation Department
- Public Service Worker I & II - Water/Sewer Department

Scan the QR code at the top of the page or use this link to see full job descriptions and apply online:

<http://independences.gov/jobs.aspx>

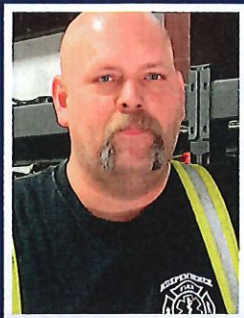
Applications also accepted at:
KansasWorks, 317 N. Penn
620.332.5904

www.southeastkansasworks.com

CONGRATS 2023 SERVICE AWARD HONOREES



25 YEARS
Donna Dean
City Clerk/Finance Office



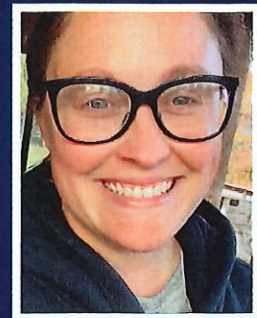
20 YEARS
Keith Copithke
Fire/EMS Captain



20 YEARS
Lisa Helkenberg
Asst. Police Chief



15 YEARS
Aaron Stringer
Public Works



10 YEARS
Jade Sherley
Park & Zoo



5 YEARS
John
Anderson
Police Department



5 YEARS
Hillary
Cook
Police Department



5 YEARS
David
Schwenker
City Clerk/Treasurer



5 YEARS
Kimberly
Stevenson
Housing Authority

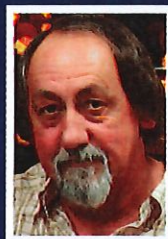


5 YEARS
Heath
Young
Park & Zoo

2023 RETIREES



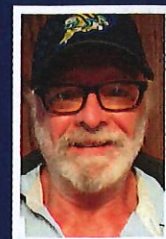
30 YEARS
Mark Vining
Police Department



27 YEARS
Jim Bennett
Cemetery



13 YEARS
Kenney Farmer
Wastewater Treatment Plant



7 YEARS
Rick Barnes
Maintenance



Presorted Postage
 US Postage Paid
 Kansas City MO
 Permit #1996

City of Independence
 120 N. 6th
 Independence, KS 67301



*****SCH 5-DIGIT 67301
 SUEANNE STONE
 314 S 4TH ST
 INDEPENDENCE KS 67301-3937

2735
 T16



JOIN US ON PARK OPENING DAY
SATURDAY, APRIL 13 @ 10 a.m.
 For a ribbon cutting at the newly restored 1050 locomotive!
 Thanks to FORPAZ for leading this amazing effort.

CALENDAR

BEAUTIFICATION

MAY 4 | JUNE 1

MONTHLY RECYCLING

8 a.m.-12 noon
 @ City Sanitation Yard,
 21st & Maple
 *Also available every
 Thursday 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Every Thursday,
 Friday & 1st Saturday
 of the Month**

BULKY ITEM DROPOFF

8 a.m.-12 noon
 @ City Sanitation Yard

**Every Thursday,
 Friday & Saturday**

BRUSH YARD OPEN

8 a.m.-12 noon
 1/2 mile south of
 College Ave. on CR 4100
 Brush & leaves only.
 No lumber.

INFORMATION

MAY 3 | JUNE 7

FIRST FRIDAY

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

APRIL 25 | MAY 9 & 23*

JUNE 13 & 27

CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

5:30 p.m. @ City Hall
 (*May 23 @ Memorial Hall)

APRIL 16

**CITY COMMISSION-
 PLANNING COMMISSION
 JOINT REVIEW OF
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
 5:30 p.m. @ Memorial Hall

MAY 7

**PLANNING COMMISSION
 ADOPTION OF COMP PLAN**
 5:30 p.m. @ Memorial Hall

SPECIAL DATES

APRIL 13

**OPENING DAY AT
 RIVERSIDE PARK &
 RALPH MITCHELL ZOO**
 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

APRIL 27

LOVE INDEPENDENCE DAY

MAY 27

**MEMORIAL DAY
 OBSERVANCE**
 @ Mount Hope Cemetery

CITY HALL CLOSED
 Sanitation services
 shifted one day

JUNE 8

**MISS ABLE CELEBRATION
 @ RALPH MITCHELL ZOO**