



## Central Park Sports Complex gets huge grant funding boost

A major community improvement project has moved closer to launch with the help of more than \$2 million in committed federal grant funding.

In November, Independence City Commissioners officially accepted a National Parks Service Land and Water Conservation Fund grant totaling \$2,000,110 to support Phase I development of the proposed multi-use Central Park Sports Complex on North Park Blvd.

Lacey Lies, City of Independence Finance Director,

explained the award is a 50-percent matching grant and will help fund site demolition and earth work; construction of a soccer complex and supporting facilities; a four-plex of baseball/softball fields; a fitness court, lighting and parking improvements. Additionally, Lies said, a grant amendment has been submitted for Phase I that is anticipated to add approximately \$300,000 to this stage of the project and will help fund completion of a 1.1-mile multi-use trail adjacent to the sports complex. ►

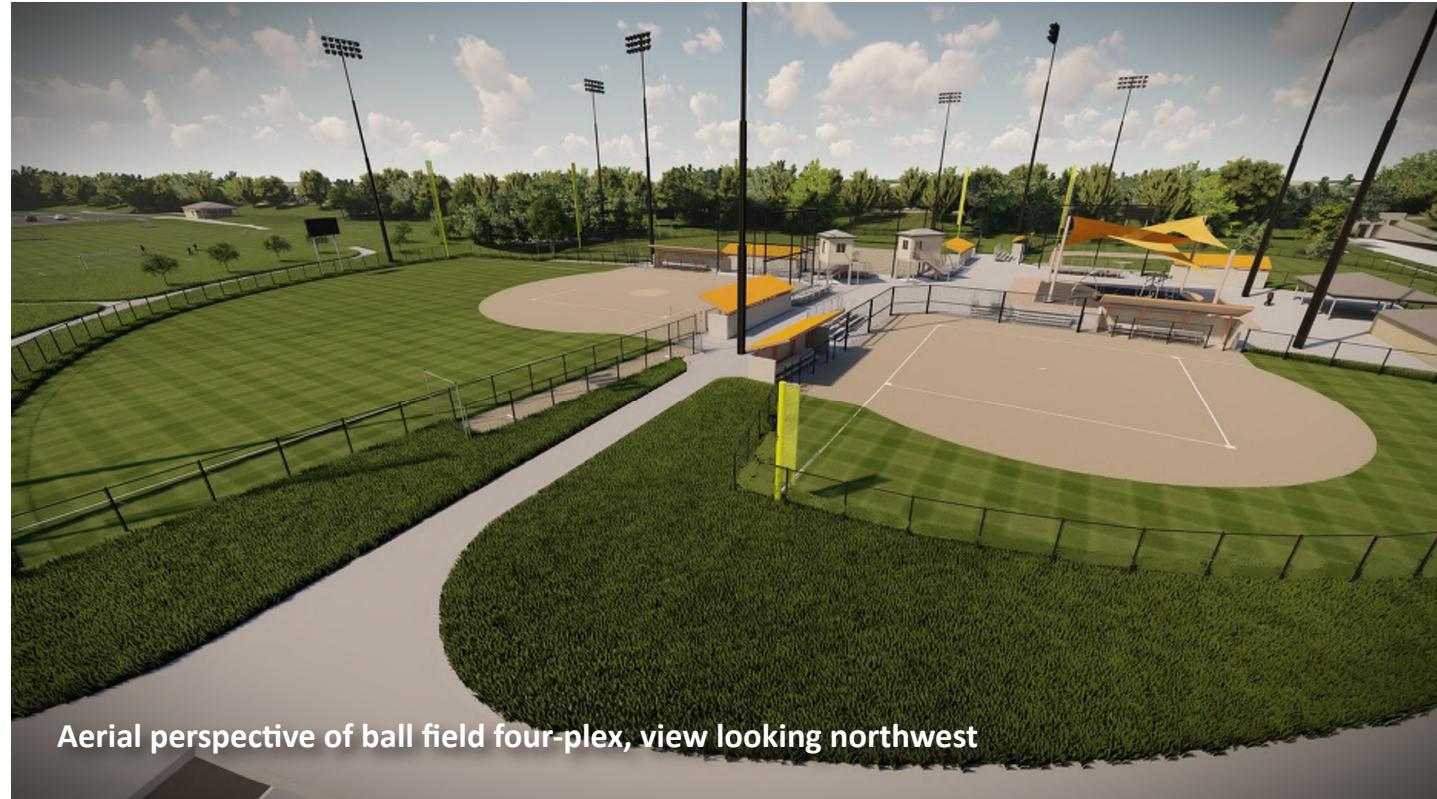
"This grant award and the overall sports complex project are huge wins for the community," Lies said. "The project will greatly improve the offerings of recreational sports programs and expand access to safe, high-quality health and fitness facilities for citizens from literally every walk of life in our community."

In addition to the above-mentioned improvements, the project includes a second phase which will involve the buildup of additional baseball fields, basketball courts, pickleball courts, batting cages and ancillary parking near these features, and Lies said additional grant funding opportunities are available through the National Parks Service for Phase II.

In addition to expanding programming and improving facilities, the new complex will create safer access for pedestrians and individuals with disabilities and will be designed to alleviate vehicle traffic congestion as well as reduce the destructive impact of flooding.

Total project costs for Phase I are anticipated at approximately \$5 million and Phase II at \$2.5 million, she explained. Approximately half of the project will be accomplished with the help of grant funding, with an estimated 37 percent of costs funded by the City/Independence Recreation Commission and 13 percent through private donations.

The project was put out for contractor bids in mid-



November, and Lies said she expects the bid will be awarded in late January, with an anticipated groundbreaking in March.

Timed to correspond with the bid announcement and groundbreaking events, a community committee will formally launch a public fundraising campaign early in 2023. Private contributions will help accelerate the project, Lies explained, and also build an endowment to support future maintenance, improvement and/or expansion needs. Contributions will be accepted through the Community Foundation for Independence (CFFI) and will be tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Plans are currently underway to structure a system of naming and recognition opportunities for donors. For more information on how to support the sports complex project, Lies may be contacted at laceyl@independenceks.gov. ■



# CONGRATULATIONS

## EMPLOYEES CELEBRATE SERVICE MILESTONES

### 35 YEARS

#### DAVID COWAN

Assistant City Manager

David began his career with the City in December 1986. He has since served as EMS Captain and Director, Public Safety Director and was appointed to his current role in September 2020.



### 25 YEARS

#### JUDY SHANER

Municipal Court Clerk

Judy began employment with the City in 1996 as a dispatcher/records clerk for the Police Department. After several advancements, she assumed her current role in March 2018.

### 20 YEARS



*L to R,*

**KENNY FARMER**, Wastewater Treatment Plant Chief Operator

**APRIL NUTT**, Indep. Housing Authority Director

**LARRY MOORE**, Water Plant Operator II

### 15 YEARS



*L to R,*

**CHARLIE BENEDICT**, Animal Control Officer

**MICHAEL BREWER**, Sanitation Dept. Thrower

### 10 YEARS



**STEPHEN MELTON**, Sanitation Department Supervisor

### 5 YEARS



**SHANE COLLINS**  
IPD Sergeant

**CRYSTAL ELLIS**  
Park Staff/Zookeeper

**KIRBY FERRELL**  
Water Plant Treater

**JON JOHNSON**  
Fire/EMS Lieutenant

**BRIAN MCHUGH**  
Mem. Hall Supv.

**SHAWN WALLIS**  
Fire/EMS Chief

# 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
1916 City Hall Renovation	Construction in progress. Basement waterproofing complete; footings for dispatch center poured; plumbing and HVAC ductwork in progress; door frames and metal studs delivered.	Anticipated occupation April 2023
Fire/EMS Addition on Myrtle St.	Interior work underway. Power and lighting complete; plumbing to appliances complete; painting complete in housing area; ceiling tile installation complete; irrigation system work in progress.	Anticipated occupation 1st Quarter 2023
Maple Street Rebuild (17th St. west to city limits)	Paving nearly complete. Storm sewer change order under review.	Expected to open fully to the public in December 2022, with full project completion 1st Quarter 2023
Evidence Building	Construction in progress.	Expected occupation December 2022
Street Projects: Penn Ave. reconstruction Morningside to city limits; Chestnut Street repaving 9th to Penn	Final KDOT feedback received. Bid documents in preparation.	START: 1st Quarter 2023 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2023
Wayfinding Signage	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Extended sidewalk project West Main and West Laurel to Walmart & Labette Health	KDOT Transportation Alternatives grant received totaling \$980,224. Contracts currently in preparation for design.	START: 1st Quarter 2024 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2024
Water Plant Next Phase	Providing additional info to Kansas Department of Health & Environment.	START: 1st Quarter 2023 COMPLETION: 4th Quarter 2026
Parking Lot North of 1916 City Hall	Evaluating alternatives.	2nd 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. Awaiting KDHE approval.	START: 1st Quarter 2023 COMPLETION: 3rd 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
New Sewer Lines - 1st & Birch and Westminster area	Obtaining property easements, preparing contracts and awaiting KDHE loan documents.	START: 1st Quarter 2023 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2023
Main Street improvements 8th St. east to 2nd St.	KDOT funding accepted through City Connecting Link Improvement Program.	START: 3rd Quarter 2023 COMPLETION: 2nd Quarter 2024



Shop with a Cop



Stuff the Ambulance

## Indy's finest heed the call to brighten kids' holiday

Indy's first responders have a soft spot for kids, and every Christmas season you can find them spreading a little extra holiday cheer for area children.

For the past five years, Independence Fire/EMS has been teaming up with KVC foster care and the community to help provide a special Christmas experience for children in Montgomery County. The "Stuff the Ambulance" drive each December invites citizens to contribute new toys, blankets, books and cash donations to brighten Christmas for area children in foster care. The Fire/EMS team

also contributes to the "A Bright Christmas" initiative, spreading cheer in memory of community volunteer Jerry Bright.

In a similar gesture of Christmas spirit, Independence Police personnel annually join forces with officers from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office to offer the "Shop with a Cop" experience for local children in need. Working in conjunction with Walmart and the USD 446 KidsCREW organization, officers use donated funds to help kiddos select and wrap the perfect gifts for their loved ones. ■

HARDSHIP SUBSCRIBERS MUST APPLY BY JANUARY 18

## Help is available for utility bills

Did you know that the City offers hardship rates for utility services for low-income customers? Since a 2021 update to the local ordinance, the City's hardship rates program has been mirroring the income criteria set forth by the Housing & Urban Development (HUD) organization. Under this criteria, family income standards for "Extremely Low Income Limits" are based on the number of persons in a family rather than a particular annual income dollar amount.

The City's ordinance applies to water, sewer and trash service rates and states, "Any family shall be considered a hardship situation if the total annual income for such a family, from all sources, does not exceed the current 'Extremely Low Income Limits' as determined by HUD."

Additional criteria for eligibility include:

- Hardship rates only apply to families living inside the city limits;
- The family must have resided within the city limits for the previous 12-month period;
- The water/sewer account must be listed in the name of the

hardship subscriber; and

- The hardship subscriber must be recertified each year.

"The improved hardship rate program allows us to help those in our community who are most in need," said Independence Housing Authority Director April Nutt.

Application for the 2023 hardship rates program - for both current and new participants - must be submitted to the housing authority by January 18. Residents may call the Independence Housing Authority at (620) 332-2536 for more information or download the updated hardship rate application by scanning this code:



*Find more info on other available assistance programs:*

Neighborhood  
Exterior Grant



Downtown Building  
Grant



Sewer Cost Share  
Program



## Common MYTHS about flood insurance

There seems to be a bit of confusion afloat about flood insurance, how it works and who it benefits. Lets attempt to un-muddy the waters:

**MYTH:** Federal disaster assistance will pay for my flood damage.

**TRUTH:** Many people mistakenly believe that after a flood, they may apply for and receive individual disaster assistance or disaster assistance will compensate them in the same way that a flood insurance policy would. However, assistance is not guaranteed. Disaster assistance requires a major disaster declaration, and assistance averages about \$5,000 per household. Flood insurance payouts average approximately \$70,000.

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**MYTH:** Flood insurance is only available to those who live in the floodplain.

**TRUTH:** Anyone in a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program can purchase an NFIP flood insurance policy. Those who live in a floodplain with a federally backed mortgage must purchase an insurance policy.

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**MYTH:** Flood insurance ratings are not based on actual risk and are used to make citizens pay for flooding.

**TRUTH:** Flood insurance is rated based on actual risk.

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**MYTH:** Homeowner's insurance will cover flood damage.

**TRUTH:** Flooding is not typically covered in these policies.

**MYTH:** A real estate agent or seller must disclose information about flood risks or history to potential buyers.

**TRUTH:** In Kansas, there are no statutory requirements to disclose property flood risk or past floods. In Independence, we have an ordinance that requires sellers to disclose the floodplain.

**MYTH:** You must own or be buying your structure to purchase flood insurance.

**TRUTH:** Renters in NFIP-participating communities can purchase contents coverage.

**MYTH:** Flood insurance is not needed outside the floodplain.

**TRUTH:** Floods do not read maps or respect floodplain boundaries. About 50% of insurance claims are on policies for structures outside the floodplain.

If you have questions about flood insurance, please contact a local insurance agent or the City Floodplain Manager at [davidc@independenceks.gov](mailto:davidc@independenceks.gov).

# JOB Come be part of our team!

## OPPORTUNITIES

### PUBLIC SERVICE WORKER II / MEDIUM MACHINERY OPERATOR

- 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, \$15.94/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, \$17.87/hour, 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.

Average weekly pay based on 24-hour shift scheduling \$860.82.  
Plus benefits.

### DISPATCHER/CLERK I

- Receives both non-emergency and 911 phone calls and dispatches personnel to handle emergencies.
- Processes reports for prosecutor.
- Maintains case, report, accident, complaint, insurance and related files.
- Tests sirens, radios and phones.
- Checks validity of driver's licenses and vehicle tags.
- Submits information to law enforcement databases.

Full-time, \$15.34/hour, plus benefits

### WATER PLANT OPERATOR TRAINEE

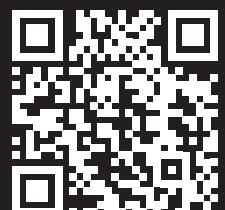
- Maintains operation of water treatment plant.
- Installs, repairs and locates water and sewer mains and lines.
- Turns water service on and off.
- Reads, maintains, repairs, tests, replaces meters.
- Maintains/repairs water pumps and service stations.
- Helps maintain plant buildings and grounds.

Full-time, \$15.94/hour, plus benefits

### TWO WAYS TO APPLY:

Complete an application online at:  
[www.independenceks.gov](http://www.independenceks.gov)

Applications also accepted at:  
KansasWorks, 317 N. Penn  
620-332-5904  
[www.southeastkansasworks.com](http://www.southeastkansasworks.com)



Scan here for complete job listings



# INDEPENDENCE

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## KANSAS

City of Independence  
811 W. Laurel  
Independence, KS 67301

### City of Independence Trivia

*What year was land donated  
to the City along the  
Verdigris River to establish  
Riverside Park?*

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money for the purchase of additional land.  
Verdigris. Individual citizens also gave  
(interurban) donated 30 acres along the  
Answer: 1914, Union Traction Company

## CALENDAR OF CITY EVENTS

January 12 & 26

February 9 & 23 | March 9 & 23

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

January 6 | February 3 | March 3  
**FIRST FRIDAY**

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

January 7 | February 4 | March 4  
**MONTHLY RECYCLING**  
@ City Sanitation Yard

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

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

January 2

**CITY HALL CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY**

*Sanitation services shifted by one day  
(January 3)*

**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.)