

City Hall NEWS



**NOW OPEN
FOR THE SEASON**

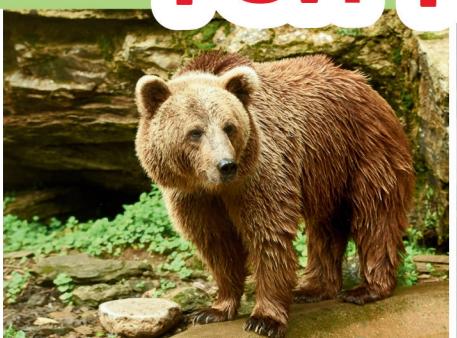




Photo ID's left to right: Left to right: Paul Merimee (MFG Construction, Water Products – General Manager), Kerry Snapp (MFG – SVP Operations, Quality), Captain Chris Furr (Ind Fire & EMS), Andy Juhola (MFG – CEO), Kelly Passauer (Ind. City Manager), David Cowan (Ind. Assist City Manager), Captain Keith Copithke (Ind Fire & EMS), Jon Rettmann (MFG Construction, Water Products – HR Manager), Joe Kusiak (MFG Construction, Water Products – Sales Manager), and Troy Wilson (MFG Construction, Water Products – Materials Manager).

MFG presents major gift for firefighting equipment

In a brief ceremony at the Indy Fire/EMS station on February 20, Leaders of Molded Fiber Glass Companies (MFG), in conjunction with the Morrison Foundation, gifted the department a \$25,000 donation to support the purchase of bunker gear for firefighters.

Executives from MFG's corporate office in Ohio were on hand for the presentation, including Andy Juhola, CEO and Kerry Snapp, Senior Vice President of Operations/Quality.

"MFG prides itself in supporting the various communities in which we manufacture, and we hope this \$25,000 donation to Independence Fire and EMS reflects that commitment," said Juhola.

Independence Fire/EMS Chief Aaron Cook said the funds will be used toward new bunker gear (fire pants and jackets), ensuring that secondary sets are available at all times for firefighters on duty. This allows the

department to maintain extra gear in ready condition in the event primary sets are damaged or soiled with carcinogens or hazardous chemicals without ample time to wash them between fire calls.



"When firefighters return to the station following a fire, their gear needs to be immediately rinsed and placed in the gear washer," Chief Cook explained. "The entire washing

and drying process takes about 12 hours total, because the gear has to air dry. If they have to jump back into their dirty gear for another call before their shift is over, they could be covered in carcinogens. This generous donation will help keep our firefighters safe, and we are extremely grateful to MFG."

2024 FIRE FACTS

Indy Fire/EMS answered **316** fire calls last year, including:

- 35 Structure Fires
- 40 Gas Leaks
- 1 Trash Fires
- 14 Grass Fires
- 49 Outside Fires
- 12 Car Fires
- 113 False Alarms
- 2 Carbon Monoxide
- 11 Power Lines Down
- 32 Aircraft Standbys
- 7 Mutual Aid

Additionally, staff installed more than **50** smoke detectors in the community.

PHASE 2 underway at Central Park Sports Complex



Phase 1 of the Central Park Sports Complex development project is complete, and the community has fully embraced the new facilities, including youth sports fields, a paved, lighted and accessible walking trail, outdoor fitness court and connection to the Eagle Loop Trail, generously built and maintained by the Eagle Shredders mountain bike group.

2024 brought the park's grand opening and the debut youth sports seasons, and now Phase 2 of the renovation project is underway to add even more amenities to the complex, including:

- Completion of the East Baseball Field (Crossland Field);
- 4 parking areas (near the east field, near the soccer pitch, along Sycamore Street and at the Dog Park/future home of FirstOak Bank Pickleball Courts and Batting Cages).

- Completion of shade structures for the five ball fields.

Estimated completion of Phase 2 is August 10, 2025, and no disruption of summer ball is anticipated.

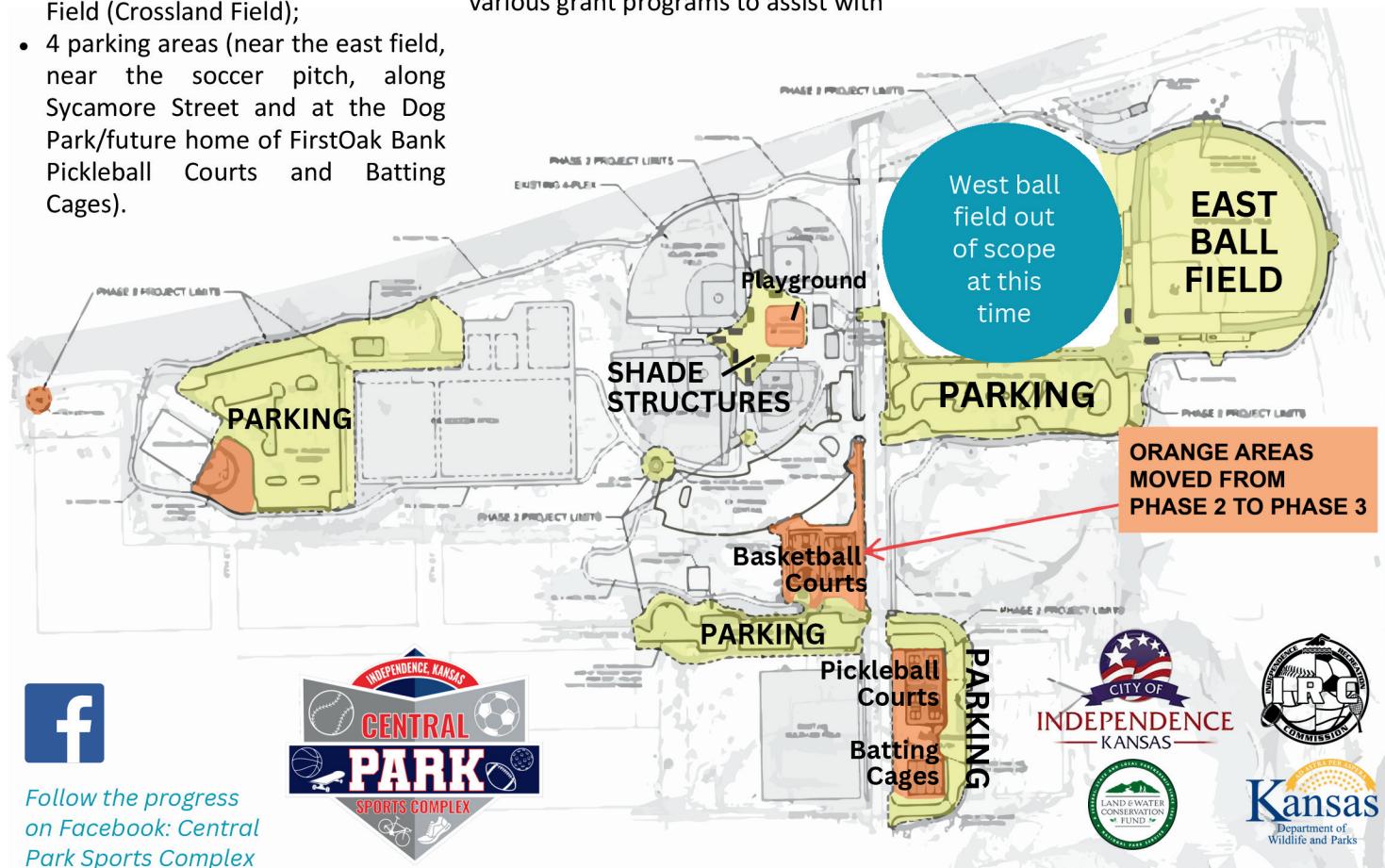
Additionally, the Phase 3 (2026) scope of work has been created and will include improvements to the basketball courts, construction of the pickleball courts and batting cages, and more signage. If funds allow, improvements to the skate park also will be added to the Phase 3 scope of work.

The City continues application through various grant programs to assist with

funding and broaden the scope of the project, such as adding another ballfield east of Park Blvd.

Private donations have been instrumental in the development of the complex to date and will be crucial to the successful completion of Phase 3 and any future enhancements.

[See donation options here:](#)



Follow the progress
on Facebook: Central
Park Sports Complex





Photo ID's (L to R): Paul Stoner, Riley Blomenkamp, Mike Younger, all with EBH Engineering; Independence City Commissioner Dean Hayse; former Commissioner Louis Ysus; Commissioner Tim Emert; Mayor Scott Smith; Robert Bever II and Ron O'Brien, representing Rural Water District #6; City Engineer John Garris; City Manager Kelly Passauer; County Commissioner Robert Bever Sr.; former Kansas Representative and past Interim Montgomery County Action Council Executive Director Jim Kelly.

'Big Straw' project earns engineering award

The City's recent water transmission line project for Bartlett Montgomery County, funded entirely by Bartlett and constructed in partnership with Rural Water District #6, has been selected for a 2025 Engineering Excellence Award presented by the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Kansas. This honor recognizes outstanding engineering projects that demonstrate innovation and creative problem-solving, and the award entry was submitted in conjunction with EBH Engineering, the lead project engineering firm and a member of the Kansas ACEC organization.

Nicknamed the "Big Straw," the project included a 9-mile, 14-inch water transmission line, connecting the Independence water supply to the new Bartlett Montgomery County soybean processing facility. One of the notable challenges of the project was the installation of the pipeline below the bedrock of the Verdigris River, in addition to crossing 11 other waterways. The project was fast-tracked to meet the critical water needs of the \$400 million soybean facility, which was already under construction when the project began.

Project specifications required the water line to supply 600,000 gallons per day to the facility initially, with a maximum future capacity of 2.4 million gallons per day. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of all partners, the project was completed five days ahead of schedule and saved hundreds of thousands of dollars under the initial budget.

In addition to the City of Independence and EBH Engineering, other key construction partners included Nowak Construction, Terracon, R.E. Pedrotti Company Inc., and PKMR Engineers.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATES

PENN & CHESTNUT CORNER REBUILD

Scope & Status:

Corner rebuild to accommodate drainage. Design anticipated to begin March/April.



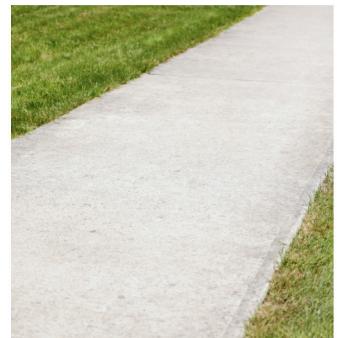
Est. Start:

2nd Quarter 2025

Est. Completion:

3rd Quarter 2025

WEST MAIN SIDEWALK PROJECT



Scope & Status:

8' sidewalk connecting West Main and Laurel St. sidewalks with Peter Pan Road and Labette Health Center. Taking measures to ensure proper drainage.

Est. Start:

2nd Quarter 2025

Est. Completion:

4th Quarter 2025

WATER LINE/METER REPLACEMENT

Scope & Status:

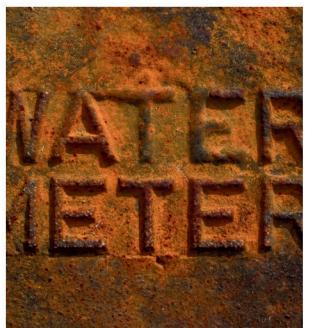
Water meter replacement with "smart" meters and water line replacement throughout town. Mostly complete.

Began:

1st Quarter 2024

Est. Completion:

2nd Quarter 2025



AIRPORT PAVING REHAB



Scope & Status:

Taxiway rehabilitation at Independence Municipal Airport. Awaiting construction.

Est. Start:

2nd Quarter 2025

Est. Completion:

3rd Quarter 2025

Downtown Parking: Facts and Figures

Many years ago, the City of Independence eliminated parking meters and enforcement of timed parking spaces in an effort to create a more inviting, customer-friendly downtown. More recently, however, we have fielded multiple complaints from business owners concerned that downtown employees and residents are utilizing “premium” on-street parking spaces, leaving few available spots for customers. Reserving close parking for our shoppers, diners and visitors can make a big impact on the success of our small businesses. It may surprise you to learn that there are **207** FREE public parking spaces within a one-block walk of downtown Independence. (See map below.)

If you live or work downtown, the onset of Spring weather is the perfect opportunity to put a few extra steps in your day (and quite possibly a few extra sales in our downtown registers) by choosing a public lot parking spot.



LOVE Independence Week

**Love
INDEPENDENCE**

10TH ANNUAL

April 21-26

SPECIAL SERVICES

April 21-26 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 bulky items - appliances (nothing containing freon) furniture, mattresses, etc.; and bagged household trash, **from Independence residents**; No hazardous waste, commercial construction waste or industrial tires.

- **City Brush Yard**

1/2 mile south of College Ave. on CR 4100

Accepting limbs, leaves and brush only. No lumber.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



RIVERSIDE PARK PROJECTS

- Paint Middle Open 4H Building
- Plant flowers
- Trash pickup
- Paint miniature train depot/fencing
- Brush cleanup in Zoo ravine
- Power wash bandshell benches

Call the Park Office at (620) 332-2512 for more information or just show up on Saturday, April 26.

FIRE HYDRANT PAINTING

You provide the elbow grease, we'll provide the paint. Several opportunities around town. Call the Fire Department at (620) 332-2504 to coordinate.

OUR PARTNER PROJECT

The Independence Housing Authority is teaming up with Community Mission for Improved Housing, Inc. (CMIH), the Independence Land Bank and the City of Independence to paint and refresh 5 houses as Love Independence kindness projects this year.

In 10 years of the LOVE Independence movement, CMIH and its partner organizations and businesses will have completed a total of **41** home improvement projects for residents in need around the community.



A LOOK BACK AT 2024



BY THE NUMBERS



42 YEARS

The number of years between updated community development plans in Independence. After multiple opportunities for citizen review and input and months of work among City leaders and professional planning consultants, the Comprehensive Community Development Plan was approved by the Independence City Commission on May 23. The plan is a “roadmap” for the future of the city - taking into account everything from quality of life to housing and infrastructure - and the current plan can be accessed on the City’s website by scanning the code below.



\$189,000 IN PRIVATE DONATIONS

This was the total cost of the renovation of Riverside Park’s iconic 1050 locomotive, which was completed in 2024 and unveiled during last year’s park opening event.

The project included sandblasting and abatement of potentially hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead paint; repairs and reinforcements to improve safety and prevent climbing accidents; and complete repainting.

The project was championed by FORPAZ (Friends of Riverside Park

and Zoo) and funded entirely through private contributions from the community.

The 1050 style steam engine was built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1902 and retired from service between 1940 and 1955. Our locomotive was donated to the city of Independence by the ATSF rail company in the spring of 1955.

22 HOMES



445

The total number of animals adopted from the AWOL shelter last year (224 dogs/221 cats). Other notable AWOL stats:

- Total of **539** animals sheltered
- **86** animals reclaimed
- **2,473** volunteer hours (more than double 2023 hours)
- **136** dog spays/neuters
- **133** cat spays/neuters



The number of Moderate Income Housing units that will be constructed in the new Jefferson Subdivision in north Independence. Street work and infrastructure for the project was completed in 2024.



BY THE NUMBERS



9 MILES

The distance covered (47,200 linear feet) in the project to connect a 12" and 14" water line between the Independence water supply and Bartlett Montgomery County's soybean processing facility, in partnership with Rural Water District #6.

10 MONTHS

The amount of time to complete the project after the engineering was complete.



\$580,000

The project, funded entirely by Bartlett, was completed approximately **\$580,000 UNDER** budget and 5 days ahead of schedule to allow Bartlett to be operational for its scheduled opening.

The maximum daily flow capacity of the water line.

2.4 MILLION GALLONS

11,931,560



The number of pounds (**5,965.78 tons**) of trash collected by our sanitation crews last year.

Additionally, crews collected **51** appliances, and responded to **613** bulk pickup orders (for furniture, bedding, misc. trash).

We also picked up **1,583** brush piles through work orders.

1 GPS

ONE GIGABIT PER SECOND...that's the speed of the new fiber internet installed throughout the City by KWIKOM. The faster, more reliable service offers state-of-the-art functionality for individuals, businesses, schools and visitors.

After the installation, KWIKOM designated Independence an official "Gigabit City."

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



LOOK BACK AT 2014



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.





30 YEARS



DEREK BRYANT
Asst. Police Chief



LYDIA COLLINS
Administrative Aide

25 YEARS



DUSTIN STAFFORD
Police Chief

20 YEARS



MIKE DEVORE
Maintenance III / Mem. Hall



ERIK LEQUE
Chief Wastewater Plant Oper.



ED SYKES
Chief Water Plant Oper.

15 YEARS

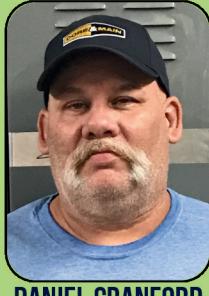


JOHN FELTON
Asst. Public Works/Utility Dir.



KATIE SOUTHWORTH
Zookeeper III

10 YEARS



DANIEL CRANFORD
Pub. Serv. Worker III



BRIDGET HAMMER
Dispatch / Records Superv.

5 YEARS



GARRETT DAVISON
Cemetery Sexton



JOHN FLETCHER
Maintenance II / Park



LACEY LIES
Finance Director



ERIN MUSGROVE
Code Enforcement

**REMEMBER:
THERE ARE
MULTIPLE
WAYS TO
PAY YOUR
UTILITY BILL**



Online at:
IndependenceKs.gov



In person at
City Hall, 120 N. 6th



In the payment drop boxes
in the Civic Center drive and
Municipal Parking Lot (6th St.)



By mail using the return
portion of your paper bill



By phone at
1-844-215-7377



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 & KP&F Retirement Programs
- Flexible Scheduling
- Supportive Environment
- Meaningful Work!

- 14 PAID HOLIDAYS IN 2025
- 2 weeks annual vacation, increasing to 3 weeks by 5th anniversary
- Sick leave available after 3 months of employment

WE ARE CURRENTLY RECRUITING FOR

FIRE/EMS*

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

***KP&F Retirement Program**

HOUSING AUTHORITY

- Secretary/Tenant Based Rental Assistance Administrator

PARK, ZOO & CEMETERY

- Park Ride Operators/Ticket Sellers/Concessions Workers
- Maintenance I - Park / Zoo / Cemetery (**APPLY THROUGH EXPRESS**)

POLICE DEPARTMENT*

- Patrol Officer I
- Part-time Accreditation Manager and Evidence Technician

***KP&F Retirement Program**

PUBLIC WORKS

- Public Service Worker II - Medium Machinery Operator - (Street or Water/Sewer - **APPLY THROUGH EXPRESS**)
- Public Service Worker II (Street/Sanitation/Water & Sewer-**APPLY THROUGH EXPRESS**)
- Wastewater Plant Operator I
- Wastewater Plant Operator Trainee
- Water Plant Operator I
- Water Plant Operator Trainee



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



- Maintenance I Park/Zoo/Cemetery
- Seasonal Park & Zoo Workers
- Public Service Worker I and II in the Street, Sanitation and Water / Sewer Departments

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

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

Applications also accepted at:

KansasWorks, 317 N. Penn

620.332.5904

www.southeastkansasworks.com



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



MISSED TRASH PICKUP?

Please Call:
(620) 332-2507 or (620) 714-1801
*For all other sanitation questions
please call the main
City Hall number, (620) 332-2500.*



POTHOLE, DOWNDOWN SIGN, COUCH ON THE CURB?

Remember to use our handy
See - Click - Fix
online system to request a service.

BEAUTIFICATION

MAY 3 | JUNE 7

MONTHLY RECYCLING

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

**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.

CALENDAR

INFORMATION

MAY 2 | JUNE 6

FIRST FRIDAY

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

APRIL 24 | MAY 8 & 22

JUNE 12 & 26

CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

5:30 p.m. @ City Hall

SPECIAL DATES

APRIL 18

GOOD FRIDAY

CITY HALL CLOSED

Sanitation services
shifted one day

APRIL 26

LOVE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Random Acts of Kindness

APRIL 26

95TH BASEBALL ANNIVERSARY

Celebration of first night
game in organized baseball
played under lights

Visit www.indkschamber.org
for more info

MAY 26

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE

@ Mount Hope Cemetery
CITY HALL CLOSED
Sanitation services
shifted one day

JUNE 19

JUNETEENTH OBSERVANCE CITY HALL CLOSED

Sanitation services
shifted one day