

# River City Briefs

May 10, 2024

The city of Independence, Oregon | 555 S Main St, Independence, OR 97351 | 503 838-1212

[Para La Versión En Español](#)

## City Budget Approved by Budget Committee



At the latest city of Independence budget committee meeting, the majority of the committee voted to approve an amended city budget for fiscal year 2024-25. At the June 11, 2024, city council meeting, the city council will review and further discuss the amended budget.

The amended budget includes directions for staff to persist in exploring opportunities to decrease a proposed public safety fee. Additionally, the committee voted to increase some event fees to capture more tourism and event dollars.

The following is an excerpt from the FY 2024-25 proposed city budget “Operational and Budget Challenges” section brought forth for streamlined public accessibility:

While the influx of federal funds via the American Rescue Plan Act was

welcome, these one-time funds created significant fluctuations that made it harder to see the base budget for **FY 2023** and ensure that it was sustainable. As we advised in the FY2024 Budget Message the General Fund is not sustainable without an alternative revenue stream. This FY2025 balanced budget incorporates the following proposals:

- A one-time, reduction in General Fund contingency of \$400,000 relative to the FY2024 budget brings the City below the required contingency amount specified in policy, which will be replenished through a strategy involving additional revenue streams discussed below and eventually provide funds for reinvestment in services; and
- The implementation of a \$27 per month Public Safety Fee to be added to each utility bill beginning in January 2025. This will generate approximately \$510,000 during FY2025. The fee amount is proposed to be reduced for the 2025-26 fiscal year to \$10 per month, and then indexed each year in December based on inflation as calculated in CPU-West Region; and
- The City will place an Arts and Culture Operating Levy on the ballot(s) in 2024-25 to support the Independence Public Library, the Independence Heritage Museum, and City parks. This will generate \$1.065 million per year and translates to a rate of \$1.82/\$1,000 assessed value or about \$548 per year on a home valued at \$300,000. If this levy fails, the City will begin to close those departments that would have been funded by the levy.

As mentioned earlier, the city council will review and further discuss the city budget at their **June 11, 2024** meeting, with an additional opportunity for public testimony.

To learn more and read the proposed city budget, click the button below.

[Learn More Here](#)

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Discover the Experience of  
20th Century Mexican Laborers

# CURATOR'S CORNER

*Episode 8:  
20th  
Century  
Mexican  
Labor*



Migrant labor is nothing new to Independence—it's been woven into the fabric of the city's cultural tapestry. But the stories surrounding these experiences have often been lost, or the platform to share them hasn't always existed. University of Oregon Master's Student and second-generation Independence resident, Victor Ochoa, hopes to change that.

In his Master's thesis titled "*Somos de Allá y de Aquí: Tejano Sojourners, Mexican Immigrants, & the Creation of a Familiar Mexican Place in Independence, Oregon, 1950-2000*", Victor dives into the hidden stories of those who toiled in the fields while forging a new destiny for their families in their homes. Join Museum Curator Amy Christensen as she learns more about Victor's research and some of the cultural impacts these folks had, and continue to have, on our community.

Watch the video by clicking the button below.

[Watch Video Here](#)

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Experience Touch-A-Truck this Weekend





It's ALMOST here! Drop by Touch-a-Truck **this Saturday, May 11, 2024, from 10 AM - 2 PM** for an exciting and interactive time with some of the biggest and baddest rigs on the road...and in the air! As part of the festivities, a helicopter will land in Riverview Park around 11:30 AM and take off at 1 PM.

Remember, admission to the event is free, but we encourage you to bring donations for the **Ella Curran Food Bank**. They will have a tent near the park entrance so you can drop off your donations.

Come, enjoy the sunshine, and experience this unique and family-friendly event!

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## Independence Police Release Monthly Statistics



Have you been curious about what our officers have been up to all month?

The Independence Police Department is sharing a sample of the calls for service each month to inform and educate community members on the work we do.

## APRIL 2024

In April, officers engaged in 726 activities, including 32 Arrests (Adults and Juvenile), 18 check welfares, 17 domestic disturbances, 5 hit-and-run Crashes, 9 emotional health calls, and 49 Suspicious Activity / Person / Vehicle calls.

[Read More Here](#)

## Congresswoman Salinas Delivers \$1.3 Million for Vital Infrastructure Projects

Last month, we were visited by Congresswoman Andrea Salinas and her staff for a tour and the delivery of nearly 1.4 million dollars for two critical infrastructure projects in our city: the replacement of a water mainline on Corvallis Road and the Chestnut Street Bridge. The two projects were part of over \$14 million Congresswoman Salinas delivered to Oregon's Sixth District Community Project Funding initiative.



"We are incredibly grateful to Congresswoman Salinas for delivering us these dollars," said Independence Mayor John McArdle. "These essential infrastructure projects will enhance the livability of our current residents while, quite literally, paving the way for more affordable housing options in our community."

[Read More Here](#)

## Independence & Monmouth Engage with Local High School Students

Last week, Central High School hosted



a gathering of elected officials, including Independence Mayor McArdle, Monmouth Mayor Koontz, and Representative Paul Evans, who engaged with senior-level government class

students. Additionally, city staff from the Community Development and Economic Development departments of both cities delivered presentations on local planning, business initiatives, and city events. Following the staff presentations, both mayors answered questions students submitted, ranging from what a mayor's salary is to what motivates them to do their job.

"We're both volunteers," laughed Mayor Koontz. "We do this because we believe in helping our communities become the best they can be."

The forum was organized in collaboration with Central High School staff and the student body council.

At the end of the session, students were encouraged to participate in their local government by applying to be part of boards, commissions, and internships. Moreover, they were motivated to embrace their role in shaping the community that has nurtured them.

"Over 20 years ago, folks got together to create a vision for a better community," said Mayor McArdle. "You are now part of the group that will create the next vision."

The cities of Independence and Monmouth look forward to partnering with Central High School to deliver similar gatherings regularly and fostering ongoing engagement with the future leaders of our communities.

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## Independence Participates in Ceremonial Bill Signing

Earlier this week, Mayor McArdle and City Manager Kenna West were invited to be part of Governor Kotek's ceremonial signing for a package of bills that passed during the 2024 legislative session. The bills are focused on addressing housing and accompanying infrastructure development.

City staff and the mayor provided

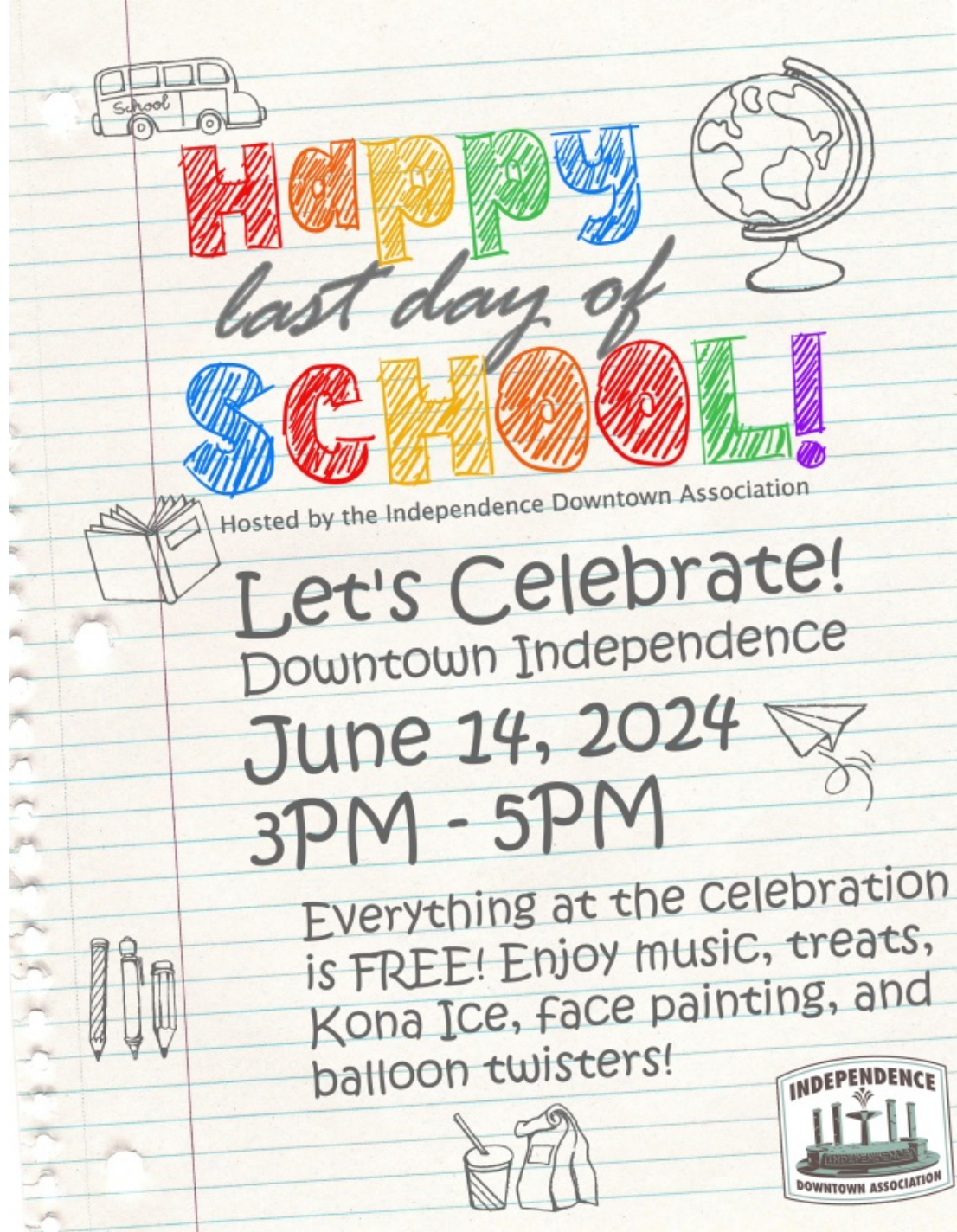


written and formal testimony during the creation of these bills, intending to keep Independence's housing needs at the forefront of legislative discussions.

The city of Independence was honored to be part of the signing ceremony and looks forward to the positive results of these bills on our community.



## Celebrate the Last Day of School in Downtown Independence



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