

Strategic Finance Roundtable Recap;
Work Continues on New Southwest Subdivision

River City Briefs

October 24, 2025

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

Para La Versión En Español

60-Second Council - October 14, 2025 Meeting



At Tuesday night's meetings, the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) Board and City Council took several key actions:

- The URA Board discussed the future of properties owned by the agency and authorized staff to begin a development solicitation process for the remaining parcels.

- Following the URA meeting, the city council heard a report detailing nearly

\$24 million in grants, direct awards, and low-interest loans secured over the past three years. These dedicated funds are supporting major projects such as the water treatment plant, park, and sewer improvements, and community programs like the Youth Coding League.

-The city council authorized the transfer of Independence Days to a local nonprofit and approved a memorandum of understanding with the organization.

The Mayor, with the council's approval, reappointed Michael Hicks to the MINET Board and appointed Victor Ochoa to the Museum Board and Tristin Thomas to the Library Board. Congratulations to all

-The city council completed the city manager's annual performance review, noting a 100% positive rating from direct-report staff and positive feedback from six of seven council members. The council voted to accept the results and approved a 5% wage increase, equivalent to one step on the employee pay scale.

For more details, visit the city of Independence website.

[Watch Video Here](#)

Strategic Finance Roundtable Recap



The Strategic Finance Roundtable, a workgroup of the Budget Committee, met this week to continue identifying long-term solutions to the city's budget challenges.

Meeting Highlights:

- The Public Safety Fee is in effect and expected to generate approximately \$816,000 in the 2025–26 fiscal year.
- The Public Safety Fee study will be presented at a council work session next week and brought to the city council for approval in November.
- Staff provided updates on:
 - Urban Renewal Agency (URA) properties being incorporated into a development plan.
 - The transition of Independence Days to a newly forming nonprofit organization.
- An economic overview was shared to provide context for the upcoming budget season:
 - Nationally, recession concerns have eased as markets stabilize and consumer confidence improves.
 - Oregon continues to underperform compared to national averages in job growth and unemployment.
 - Population growth remains steady statewide at 0.7%, projected to slow to 0.4% through 2035, while Polk County is seeing 1–2% growth.
 - Federal tax changes (HR1) are projected to reduce Oregon’s General Fund revenue by \$888 million in the 2025–27 biennium.
- To date, \$1,417 in community donations have been received through the city’s website to support Community Services and Parks.
- The group discussed that a levy appears to be the preferred long-term option for sustaining Community Services and Parks funding.
- Members also emphasized the need to plan for the “gap” period between voter approval and when levy funds become available.
- The group requested:
 - A comparison of timelines and outcomes for a May vs. November levy.
 - A calculation of what a monthly utility fee equivalent would look like to support these same services.

Moving forward:

Staff will prepare follow-up materials on levy timing and utility fee options for the group’s next discussion.

You can watch the full video by clicking the button below.

[Watch Video Here](#)

City Partners with Pacific Power to Offer \$100 Tree Vouchers



The city of Independence is partnering with **Pacific Power** for the **Right Tree in the Right Place** program, helping residents choose and plant the right trees for a safer, greener community.

We're offering 19 vouchers worth \$100 each that can be used at participating businesses toward the purchase of trees, shrubs, or plants.

- One voucher per household
- Not redeemable for cash or store credit
- Available first come, first serve at the Independence Civic Center front desk (Open Monday–Thursday, 7:30 AM–5:30 PM)

Just like Mr. Bean, we're encouraging everyone to roll up their sleeves and make Independence a little greener, one well-placed tree at a time.

[Watch Video Here](#)

Work Continues on New Southwest Subdivision



Last week, contractors were clearing debris and removing trees, preparing the Corvallis Road site for Independence's future Water Treatment Plant. Engineers and contractors are performing needed preliminary engineering work on this critical project to secure safe, reliable drinking water for the next 20+ years.

Independence owns a critical water right next to the Willamette River, but without an updated treatment and distribution system, it could lose those rights in the near future. The city's new plant, which features a water intake, treatment system, pumping station, and a 2-million-gallon reservoir, addresses long-term needs as outlined in the 2023 Water Master Plan.

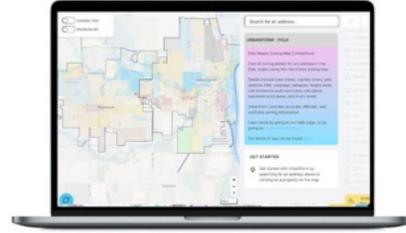
This project is being developed in partnership with the city of Monmouth and Polk County, creating a regional system that can provide water to multiple communities in the future and is consistent with Polk County's Regional Water Supply plan. Design and construction are expected to continue over the next several years, with the system projected to deliver water to homes and businesses sometime around 2030.

New Digital Zoning Tool to Modernize Housing Planning in Polk County

An innovative approach to advance housing production in Polk County launched this week for the cities of Monmouth,

Independence, and Falls City.

6,513 parcels across the three jurisdictions are now digitized by UrbanForm, an Oregon-based technology company that has developed a platform to communicate zoning—accurate, verifiable, and easy to use—so that municipalities, developers, and architects can collaborate with confidence and keep projects moving forward. The work, financed by a grant from Business Oregon through the Housing Infrastructure Support Fund



(HISF) created under Senate Bill 1537, will empower the County’s cities with an easy-to-use tool that streamlines access to jurisdictional zoning codes, improves permit application quality, reduces costly delays, and saves weeks of effort for applicants and reviewers.

The effort represents a collaborative partnership to address housing needs in Polk County between UrbanForm; the Missing Middle Housing Fund (MMHF), a workforce housing innovation non-profit; SEDCOR, the economic development agency for Polk, Yamhill, and Marion County; and the leadership of the cities of Monmouth, Independence, and Falls City. The project is anticipated to add capacity to municipal staff and reduce the time to develop critically needed housing in the region.

[Learn More Here](#)

Staff Participate in National Lunch Week



Last week, City Manager West and School Resource Officers Gonzalez and Preston, along with city of Monmouth and Polk County Fire District No. 1 staff, joined Central School District students to celebrate National School Lunch Week, trading in their meetings and patrols for cafeteria trays and conversations.

Sharing a meal is one of the simplest ways to connect, and this was a chance to listen, laugh, and engage with the next generation of Independence.

These moments help strengthen trust, spark curiosity about local leadership, and remind us that our community's future is sitting right at those lunch tables.

Leaf Pickup Program Returns this November



City of Independence **2025** **LEAF PICKUP PROGRAM**

PICKUP WEEKS:

- ✓ November 3
- ✓ November 17
- ✓ December 1
- ✓ December 15
- ✓ December 29

Every fall the Public Works Department picks up leaves for the residents of Independence, whose property has more leaves than the Brandt's yard debris container can hold. This service helps prevent the impact that leaves can have on the city's storm drains and rivers.

Important Things To Remember

- Leaves only, no other yard debris
- Remove leaves blocking storm drains
- Small leaf piles need to go in your yard debris can
- Cars need to be parked at least five feet from leaf piles
- Leave a minimum of one foot between curb and leaf pile and no piles in the corners of cul-de-sacs or in front of mailboxes
- Property owners are responsible for disposal of leaves after the week of December 29th

Thank You for using your debris can from Brandt's Recycling Services. Please continue to use it for limbs, grass clippings, leaves, and other yard debris. The Leaf Pickup Program is for all the extra leaves that don't fit into your debris can. Pile any extra leaves following the guidelines above. Contact Brandt's at 503-838-0464 for their services.

For more information or tips on how to help reduce storm water impact visit
www.ci.independence.or.us/leaf-collection

[Learn More Here](#)

Heritage Museum Kicks Off Winter Speaker Series



HERITAGE MUSEUM PRESENTS WINTER SPEAKER SERIES



NOVEMBER FEATURED SPEAKER
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH AT 6:00 PM
@ THE VALKYRIE WINE TAVERN



BOB OBLACK

GEOLOGY AND PACIFIC NORTHWEST BEAUTY

Buy a drink and join us for an evening of conversation and insight as Bob Oblack shares the story of Oregon's natural past. Discover a new perspective on our state's landscapes and gain a deeper understanding of how Oregon's breathtaking scenery was formed.

SUGGESTED DONATION AT THE DOOR

Drinks are not included in your donation
All proceeds support the Heritage Museum Society

THIS TALK KICKS OFF OUR WINTER SPEAKER SERIES!

JOIN US MONTHLY THROUGH FEBRUARY FOR MORE
ENGAGING SPEAKERS AT THE VALKYRIE WINE TAVERN
301 S MAIN ST, INDEPENDENCE

-No minors or outside drinks permitted-

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Oregon's Story Begins Here





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