

Congresswoman Salinas Visits Independence; New Traffic Pattern on South Main

River City Briefs

January 30, 2026

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

Para La Versión En Español

60-Second Council - January 27, 2026 Meeting



City Council Work Session Recap

On Tuesday evening, the council held a work session to discuss several complex policy and budget topics:

- The council received an update on the city's infill development planning process, which is focused on encouraging thoughtful growth within existing neighborhoods

- The Community Services and Parks Sustainability Committee presented a recommendation for a potential fee to help address short-term financial challenges while allowing time for long-term economic development and debt reduction efforts
- The council reviewed proposed updates to cost-of-service fees, including fees for notary services and planning-related activities
- The council received an overview of the State of Oregon's MIRL program, which may support future housing development for families earning up to 120 percent of area median income

Many of these topics will return at future Budget or Council meetings, where the public will have opportunities to provide input before formal decisions are made.

For more details, visit the city of Independence website.

[Watch Video Here](#)

Congresswoman Andrea Salinas Visits Independence



Independence welcomed Congresswoman Andrea Salinas for a visit focused on collaboration and the future of our community. Congresswoman Salinas met with Mayor Kate Schwarzler and city staff to discuss what's

happening in Independence and engage in conversations spanning a wide range of topics.

Discussions included the city's infrastructure needs, ongoing projects, and exciting economic development opportunities on the horizon. The visit provided an opportunity to highlight local priorities, share progress, and explore how partnerships across all levels of government can continue to support Independence's thoughtful growth.

We appreciate Congresswoman Salinas taking the time to meet with our team and engage in thoughtful discussion about how federal, state, and local partnerships can help move Independence forward.

Water Meter Replacement Project Update



This week, contractors began Phase 3 of the city's water meter replacement project.

Water meters have an optimal life span of approximately 20 years, and many of the city's meters have reached the end of that cycle. This multi-year effort ensures continued accuracy, reliability, and efficiency within the city's water system.

Additional phases will move forward as part of the city's five-year water meter replacement program, with larger meters scheduled for replacement in future stages.

Seasonal Lagoon Turnover and Temporary Odors Explained



Some community members have noticed an unpleasant odor in parts of Independence over the past few weeks. This smell is coming from the city's wastewater treatment lagoons and is the result of a seasonal lagoon "turnover" event.

Here's what's happening:

Wastewater lagoons rely on natural biological processes to break down organic material (called biosolids). Under normal conditions, these materials settle and decompose gradually. However, a combination of temperature conditions and stagnant air can cause a lagoon to "turn over," allowing remaining biosolids to rise to the surface, particularly in Lagoon 1, as shown in the photo.

When these biosolids reach the surface, they can release gases such as hydrogen sulfide, which is responsible for the sulfur-like odor some residents are noticing.

Over the past few years, the city has removed a significant amount of accumulated biosolids from the lagoons, greatly reducing long-term odor issues. That said, some material remains and must continue to naturally break down as part of the treatment process.

As weather patterns shift and wind returns, the biological activity stabilizes, and the odor should dissipate naturally.

City staff are actively monitoring lagoon conditions and appreciate the community's patience. We understand that odors can be unpleasant, and we're committed to long-term improvements while continuing to operate a safe and effective wastewater treatment system.

Improving Safety and Flow at River Road & Main Street



Earlier this month, city crews completed the installation of a new 4-way stop at the intersection of Main Street and River Road, including updated signage and thermoplastic stop bars designed to improve safety and traffic flow. "New Traffic Pattern Ahead" signs will remain in place for the next 90 days to help drivers adjust to the change.

The new traffic pattern is intended to improve visibility, reduce delays at the intersection, and create a safer experience for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Please slow down, watch for the new stop signs, and proceed with caution as everyone gets used to the update.

Love Local Businesses All Month Long



THROUGH THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

Visit businesses displaying a Love Local poster, make a purchase of \$5 or more and receive a SCRATCH-IT worth up to \$20 off your next purchase at ANY participating location.



Sponsored by the Independence Downtown Association and The City of Independence



Free Income Tax Preparation Services



Free Income Tax Preparation Services!
Both programs operate on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from February 6 through April 11.
By appointment only.

AARP Tax-Aide Program

Offers free tax preparation services to low-to-moderate income taxpayers of all ages, but with a focus on those who are 60 years of age and older. You don't need to be an AARP member to take advantage of the Tax-Aide program.

Appointment requests will be accepted on or after January 15th. Visit our website or text/call 971-915-0316 to make your appointment.



MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT:
Complete an Appointment Request through the QR Code



WOU VITA Program

Offers free tax preparation services to:

- People who generally make \$67,000 or less
- Persons with disabilities; and
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

Many of our tax preparers are fluent in Spanish.

Appointment requests will be accepted on or after January 15th. Visit our website or text/call 503-751-4132 to make your appointment.

[Learn More Here](#)

Celebrate Independence's Community Services



Sign up to become
an FOTL member at
the event.

Join the Friends of the Library
as we celebrate Community
Services and Independence's
birthday!

SAT, 28 FEB



12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
at the Heritage Museum
281 S 2nd Street

Our city's ability to provide
community services - library and
museum - past June 2026 is
uncertain. Come find out what is
going on and how you can help!

DESSERTS & BEVERAGES PROVIDED

Support Central High School's Performing Arts



Central High School Performing Arts Presents:



Cabaret

Auction Fundraiser



Single Ticket: \$12
VIP Table \$115

March **6-7**

Central High Auditorium **7PM**



Scan to buy tickets or go to
chsperformingarts.net

Don't miss the Central High School Performing Arts Cabaret Show & Auction! Two nights of band, theater, and choir performances, plus tasty desserts! Proceeds benefit our Performing Arts programs.

[Buy Tickets Here](#)

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