City Council Meeting Recap; Tips to Keep Our Streets and Drains Clear

River City Briefs

October 23, 2026

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

Para La Versión En Español

Community Services & Parks Fee Information



With ballots arriving in mailboxes ahead of the November election, the City of Independence is providing information to help residents better understand the city's financial situation and recent service closures. The FY 2026–27 budget addresses a gap between General Fund revenues and the cost of providing services. Over the previous three fiscal years, the city has eliminated or left vacant 11 positions and reduced service levels.

The adopted budget included revenue from a Community Services & Parks Fee to support library, museum, and park services. In August, the city began temporary closures after a referendum petition on the fee qualified for the November election. While the referendum process is underway, the city cannot collect the fee, which had been budgeted to support library, museum, and park services.

The city continues to evaluate funding and operational options. The webpage below provides information about the city's financial situation, service closures, and what residents can expect moving forward. It is intended for informational purposes only and does not advocate for or against any ballot measure.

Learn More Here

Protect Our Storm Drains This Fall



Leaves and other debris can clog storm drains, preventing rainwater from flowing properly and increasing the risk of localized flooding. Keeping our streets and storm drains clear helps protect our roads, neighborhoods, and local waterways.

Here are a few ways you can help:

- Keep leaves out of the street. Rake leaves from your property into your yard debris bin rather than blowing or sweeping them into the roadway.
- Give storm drains some breathing room. If you notice leaves collecting around a nearby drain, safely clear them away when

possible. Never enter the street or attempt to remove a drain grate.
- Put those leaves to good use. Consider composting or mulching leaves to create nutrient-rich material for your garden.

Need more room for leaves? The city is partnering with Brandt's Sanitary Service to offer an additional yard debris bin free of charge to the first 150 callers! This opportunity is available to Independence residents with an existing Brandt's account through June 30, 2027.

Call Brandt's Sanitary Service at 503-838-0464 to request your extra bin! A little leaf cleanup goes a long way toward keeping our stormwater system flowing and our community prepared for rainy weather.

60-Second Council - October 13, 2026 Meeting



At the October 13 city council meeting, council received updates on several city projects and operations:

-Museum and Sports Park property sales: the council received updates on the status of both property sales.

-Corvallis Road water line project: The project is nearly complete. While construction presented challenges, staff have received positive feedback about the new roadway, and the project represents a significant improvement to the city's water infrastructure.

-Building services: the council received an update on the city's contract with the state for building services, including inspections. Staff are evaluating how the contract affects workload and whether an in-house building official may be needed.

-Ordinance updates: The Legal, City Recorder, and Police departments are working together to update outdated ordinances and help keep city

regulations relevant and enforceable.

-Civic Center water line: the council received an update on a water line failure at the Independence Civic Center, with repairs underway.

Grocery Outlet liquor license: Council unanimously approved the change-of-ownership liquor license application for Grocery Outlet.

Watch Video Here

Connecting with Kids During National School Lunch Week



Last week was all about good food, great conversations, and connecting with the next generation of our community! Mayor Kate Schwarzler and city staff visited **Independence Elementary School** to celebrate National School Lunch Week and meet and greet 4th and 5th graders. Students even got behind our camera and took photos of their own. You might recognize a few of their shots in this post!

We had a wonderful time connecting with these bright, curious kids. We may have future mayors, city councilors, and civic leaders in our midst!

Thanks to Independence Elementary School for welcoming us.

Showcasing Independence's Grant-Funded Progress



Last Friday, the city of Independence welcomed participants from the League of Oregon Cities' annual conference for a tour of our community, highlighting how we've leveraged funding opportunities and partnerships to get important projects done.

Over the past three years, the city has secured nearly $24 million in grants, direct awards, and low-interest loans. These investments help address critical infrastructure needs while making the most of local resources. Outside funding also helps share the cost of major projects, easing financial pressure on local ratepayers and residents.

After the tour, representatives from U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley's offices, Congresswoman Andrea Salinas' office, Representative Paul Evans' office, CFM Advocates, and Business Oregon joined a panel discussion on the importance of building relationships with state and federal partners to help communities access resources and move projects forward.

Thank you to everyone who joined us, shared their expertise, and helped make this a valuable opportunity to learn and connect!

Cyclocross State Championships Coming to Independence

The Oregon Bike Racing Association's State Championship Cyclocross event is coming to Independence October 24-25, 2026.

The event is expected to bring hundreds of riders, friends and family to our community for a weekend of racing, with both championship and non-championship races available. Riders under 18 race for free.

Spectators are welcome at no cost. The course will travel through portions of Riverview Park and surrounding areas, so visitors may occasionally need to wait briefly for riders to pass at designated crossings. Course marshals will be in place to help keep everyone safe.

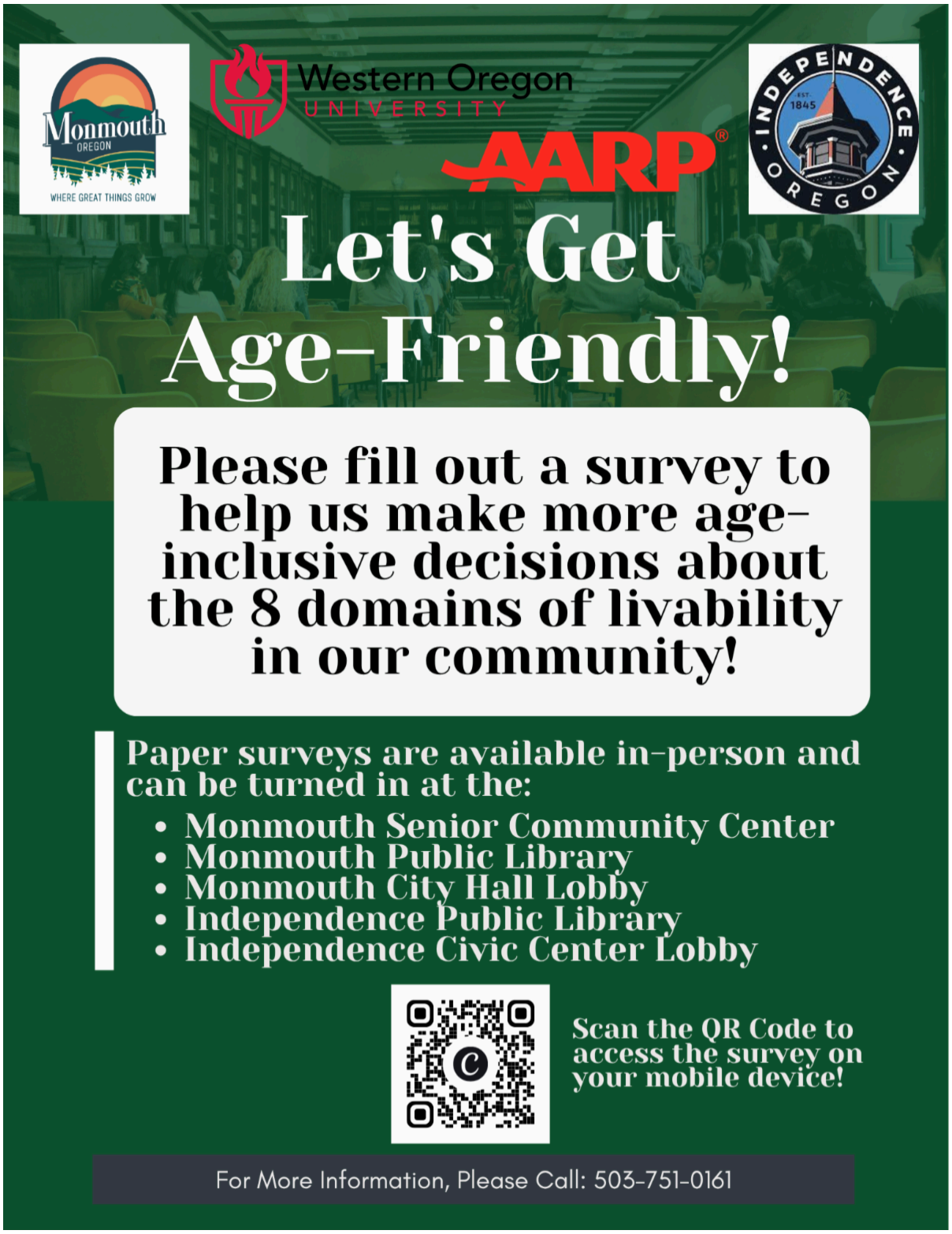
A note about Riverview Park: The park is currently open for permitted events, and this event was reserved through the city's normal park rental process. The organizers are paying the applicable park rental and camping fees at a level that supports use of the park areas included in the event. **The playground and river will remain accessible to the public, although visitors may occasionally need to wait briefly for riders to pass at designated crossings.** They will also be responsible for restoring any areas of the course that may need attention following the event.

Parking in the area may be limited, and some participants will be camping at Riverview Park Friday and Saturday nights.

We're excited to welcome riders and visitors from throughout Oregon and showcase Independence to new visitors while supporting local businesses.

Learn More Here

Help Make Our Communities Age-Friendly



Take Survey Here

Polk County Community Health Fair



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