

THE SUN SETS ON A VACANT MERCY- The sun set on a vacant Mercy Hospital building Thursday evening with hopes that it will soon be utilized for apartments and commercial space after the City of Independence announced an agreement with a DeSoto based contractor. **Brea Sanford | Staff Photo** 

# Old Mercy building getting new lease on life

BY BREA SANFORD

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At the end of Thursday evening's Independence City Commission meeting it was announced that a buyer had come forth to purchase the old Mercy Hospital building from the City of Independence. Shuttered since its closure in 2015, there had been numerous tries in the past to utilize the massive building in some way, including

housing the temporary City Hall while renovations were underway on the 1916 building downtown. Finding the aging hospital building as somewhat of an albatross around the proverbial neck of the City, whispers of a pending sale had been filter-

ing through the wavelengths for some time. After the meeting had finished, City Manager Kelly Passauer sent the following re-

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#### Road closure announced for Neewollah week

**STAFF REPORT** 

The Neewollah Board of Directors, in partnership with the Independence Police Department and the City of Independence, has announced a temporary road closure to support upcoming community events held during Neewollah week.

North Pennsylvania Avenue will be closed from Chestnut Street to Main Street beginning Wednesday, October 22



changes in parking during through Saturday, October 25. one of Independence's most The closure is intended to celebrated traditions. City offi- Neewollah events and upensure public safety, improve cials and Neewollah leadership traffic flow and accommodate are working together in order

to minimize disruptions and support downtown businesses throughout the event.

Business owners who have any questions are encouraged to contact the Independence Police Department or Neewollah directly for assistance.

Neewollah is a special time for Independence and the support of our community and downtown businesses helps to make the celebration truly memorable each year.

For more information about dates, please visit www.neewollah.com.

# **Neewollah Pop Party Co-chairs announced**

BY BREA SANFORD

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With Neewollah fast approaching, Queen Neelah pageant contestants are launching head first into a slew of meetings, interviews and more.

Queen's Directors Denise Hines and Melissa Small have announced Lisa Wilson and Dee Dee O'Malley are serving as this year's Pop Party Co-chairs. This event is being held this Sunday at the Independence Country Club and is designed to help participants learn social skills, manners and confidence in a formal or professional setting.

Wilson has served in numerous leadership roles



Wilson

within Neewollah, including Neelah Deb, Queen Candidate, Queen's Judges, Coronation Ball, Kick-Off Party, Summer Workshop and Fashion Show Co-chair and



O'Malley

was honored to serve as Queen's Coronation Emcee in 2019. Beyond Neewollah, Lisa is President of the Inde-



James Comey indicted over testimony at 2020 Senate hearing

#### **Indy Commission votes to approve** water supply loan, rates will likely rise

■ Loan amount not to exceed \$9 million

BY BREA SANFORD

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The Independence City Commission met for their regular meeting Thursday evening at City Hall. Mayor Scott Smith called the meeting to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Commissioners approved the adoption of the evening's Agenda, which began the meeting and the Consent Agenda, which approved the minutes of the August 25, August 28 and September 11 meeting minutes.

Moving on to Public Hearings, the Commissioners motioned to approve an adjournment on the public hearing regarding the condemnation of the home located at 817 West Cottonwood Street. City Staff stated that the owner continues to make repairs and is currently working with the building inspectors. The progress on the house is moving forward as finances allow the owner to proceed. The public hearing was adjourned on the property

until January 8, 2026.
Also adjourned was the public hearing on the home located at 314 North 5th Street. The owner of the property was present at Thursday evening's meeting and told the Commission that work has progressed beyond what pictures City Staff displayed before them. City Staff said that the owner had submitted a timeline of repairs and said repairs have commenced. This public hearing was adjourned until January 22, 2026.

Chris Hemmelrick with JoyCo Management Company spoke on the next public hearing, regarding the property located at 620 West Chestnut Street. Hemmelrick stated that extensive work had been done on the outside of the property and that the house was now connected to utilities. He shared that all that was left was interior renovations. City Staff was unaware that an inspection had occurred before Thursday evening's meeting. Commissioner Emert motioned to adjourn the public hearing until December 11. All voted in favor.

Director of Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo, Scott Patton, spoke regarding a public hearing for a scope change for the CDGB project at Riverside Park. Earlier this year, the City of Independence was awarded a CDBG grant to fund a large-scale renovation of the Riverside Park playground. A number of improvements

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### New Map Highlights NOAA's Nationwide **Benefits Amid Budget Cut Threats**

■ Interactive Map restoration and support of Reveals Local Impact of NOAA Programs Across All 50 States

Thursday the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) released a new interactive map showcasing the extensive national presence of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOĀA) in communities across the country. At a time when job eliminations and proposed budget cuts threaten weather and storm tracking, atmospheric research, seafood availability and the associated local jobs nationwide, this new tool was built to help identify how budget cuts would impact local communities. To our knowledge, this is the first time this information has ever been made visually available to the public.

Daily weather forecasts and emergency alerts, cliresearch, coastal mate

American fisheries are just some of NOAA's services that protect our economy and keep us safe from extreme weather. The new map shows NOAA labs, programs, partnerships and major offices by state and congressional district to help policymakers and the public alike understand the agency's local footprint and impact.

Data for the map was compiled from NOAA's publicly available "NOAA in Your State and Territory" documents and other official sources. The map reveals a striking footprint: nearly 200 National Ocean Service offices, another 200 National Weather Service offices, and additional facilities totaling 735 NOAA sites nationwide. All 735 NOAA sites are broken down by federal budget line item so you can see which specific budget cuts would impact

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**McCollam grabs first career** gold as Lady Bulldogs finish fourth at Coffeyville

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