



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

❖ See **OLD MERCY** page A5

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 through Saturday, October 25. The closure is intended to ensure public safety, improve traffic flow and accommodate



changes in parking during one of Independence’s most celebrated traditions. City officials and Neewollah leadership 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 Neewollah events and updates, please visit www.neewollah.com.

❖ See **INDY COMMISION** page A8

New Map Highlights NOAA’s Nationwide Benefits Amid Budget Cut Threats

■ Interactive Map 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 (NOAA) 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, climate research, coastal

restoration and support of 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

❖ See **NOAA** page A2

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-

❖ See **POP PARTY** page A2



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

❖ See page A7



James Comey indicted over testimony at 2020 Senate hearing

❖ See page A8

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