



Gregory P. Kurtz

Mayor

[City of Independence, Ohio](#)

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MAYOR KURTZ'S WEEKLY UPDATE FOR MAY 7, 2021

National Day of Prayer

In the City of Independence and across the nation, people gathered on Thursday to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the National Day of Prayer. This year's theme was, "Lord Pour Out Your Love, Life, and Liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).



L-R: Linda Hendrix, Independence Recreation Dept.; Catherine Monnin, Rockside Church; Pastor David Wigger, Independence Presbyterian Church; Rev. Michele Thompson, Lead Pastor, Rockside Church; Fire Chief Steven Rega; Councilman Jim Trakas; Mayor Gregory Kurtz

I was proud to participate in the service on Public Square, where the pastors called on everyone to pray for first responders and their families, law enforcement, the U.S. military, educators, legislators, and workplaces.

Rev. Michele Thompson of Rockside Church urged people to pray for people's marriages, families, and mental well-being after this challenging year. Pastor David Wigger of Independence Presbyterian Church spoke about the need to pray to protect our military men and women, to give them the protection, bravery, and strength to thrive. The service concluded with Councilman Jim Trakas leading the group in singing "God Bless America."

Keeping You Informed

This week several residents called City Hall concerned about the surprise decision by the new owner of the Ramada Inn to rent rooms to a group that provides temporary housing for the homeless.

I want to assure residents, businesses, and visitors that the City, Police, and Fire officials are actively conducting all necessary health and safety inspections to ensure the owner complies with local, state, and federal laws. We stepped up security patrols in the Rockside Road area last year, and those protocols will remain in place indefinitely.

Also, the installation of multiple surveillance cameras in the Rockside Road area is progressing well. These high-tech devices will serve as a powerful tool for our police officers.

The fact that the Ramada situation is temporary does not diminish the immediate and significant burden it puts on our public safety forces and the City budget. The City is in constant communication with the owner and all other parties involved during this time.

If anyone has questions or concerns, please call the non-emergency Police phone line 216-524-1234 or my office. Do not go to the hotel looking for answers. You can count on me to continue to provide the answers and information you need.

Not Sure About Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine?



Cleveland Clinic doctors respond to the many rumors and misinformation floating around the COVID-19 vaccine and explain why it is safe and effective in this [video](#).

Excellence in Financial Reporting

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the City of Independence Finance Department a certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Finance Reporting for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2019.

The City's report was judged to meet high standards, demonstrating a "spirit of full disclosure" and clearly communicating the City's financial story and motivating potential users and user groups to read the report.



The award is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Congratulations, team!

L-R: Molly Snow, Renee Krysiak, Finance Director Vern Blaze, Maggie Osysko, Dennis Zdolshek

Download Finance Director Vern Blaze’s Weekly Report for May 7, 2021 [here](#).

55+ Picnic Lunch – RESERVATIONS REQUIRED



The City will be hosting a *free burger lunch* for residents who are 55+ on **Friday, May 21, from Noon to 1 PM**. The event is compliments of the City Council, Finance Director Blaze, and my office.

Members of the Fire Department will once again be preparing burgers on the grill. Residents should drive up like usual to the Civic Center to get their meals to take home OR enjoy at the Annex

Pavilion behind the tennis courts or other outdoor areas on campus (socially distanced, of course.)

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. The deadline is Friday, May 14. Please call 216-524-7373 or sign up online at www.independenceohio.org



Upcoming ODOT Project: NB I-77 Ramps at Rockside Road

The City of Independence is proposing a project to improve the on- and off-ramps from Interstate 77 northbound to Rockside Road. The project will enhance the operation of eastbound Rockside Road by providing a dual-lane entrance ramp onto I-77 northbound/I-480 from eastbound Rockside Road.

The plan would repurpose the eastbound curb lane-- east of the southbound I-77 ramps--to become an entrance-only lane to I-77 northbound. The middle lane of eastbound Rockside Road will be an option lane with traffic to either enter the loop ramp to enter I-77 northbound or to continue east on Rockside Road. Widening of the ramp bridge will be necessary to accommodate these lanes.

In addition, the northbound exit ramp would be modified to increase the capacity of the exit ramp intersection with Rockside Road. It will require the reconstruction of the traffic signal at this intersection. Construction is scheduled to begin on June 1, 2022.

We welcome your questions and comments. Issues you may wish to comment on include, but are not limited to, the project's effect on residents, air quality, the local economy, floodplains, and historic or cultural resources. All comments must be received by June 3, 2021, to be considered in the project development.

Please be aware that it will not be possible to provide you with specific information regarding potential real estate acquisition at this stage in project development. Suppose right-of-way acquisition is necessary from your property. In that case, a representative working for the City of Independence will contact you directly at a later date to discuss the right-of-way needs, the acquisition process, and your rights under that process.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact City Engineer Donald J. Ramm, P.E., at RammDo@IndependenceOhio.org or 216.524.1374.

Community Shred Day



A steady stream of residents dropped off bags and boxes of paper outside City Hall for Community Shred Day on May 1.

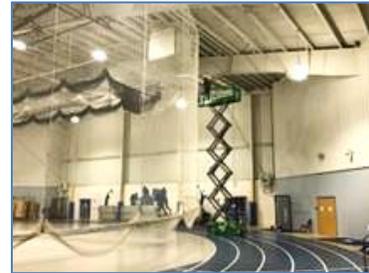
City staff was on-site to collect the paper from residents' vehicles and allow them to remain socially distanced. Everything was shredded on site for recycling.

Around Elmwood Park

Tables were moved from inside **Kiwanis Pavilion** to the grassy area outside and the clean grills have been installed.

Three (3) new dual-sided grills were installed at Annex Pavilion this week and bench pads will be installed next week, weather permitting.

At the **Fieldhouse**, netting, rigging, and divider “A” were repaired this week.



School Holiday Special



Twenty-five students learned about Cinco de Mayo at the April 30 School Holiday Program. The holiday marks the date in 1862 when the Mexican Army declared victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War, but over the years has become more of a cultural celebration.

The students also crafted “Worry Dolls,” which according to tradition help alleviate children’s worries and fears. Legend is that by telling the doll their worries and putting it under their pillow before they went to sleep, the child relinquishes their worries to the doll.



CORRECTION: Hometown Hero Celebrates 101st Birthday!

There was an error in the April 30 Weekly Update story celebrating Independence resident John Fabich on his 101st birthday.

Mr. Fabich has spelled his name the same way for his entire life. We know that since he's lived in the City for decades. Regrettably, due to a typing error, his name was misspelled last week. Below is the corrected story –you deserve it, Mr. Fabich.



It was my honor and privilege to wish John Fabich a Happy Birthday on Tuesday, April 27, when he turned 101!

A World War II veteran, Mr. Fabich enlisted in the Army Air Corps (now the Air Force) in 1942. Initially, he was stationed in South Carolina, where he built B-25 bombers. Five of the planes he worked on were part of the Tokyo Raid by the United States following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Later, as a Crew Chief, Fabich served in North Africa, Sicily, Corsica, Rome, Germany, France, Belgium and Austria before coming home to Cleveland in 1947.

Soon after returning, he met his late wife Margaret “Marge” at a dance at St. Stanislaus Church. They were married for 69 years and raised three sons – Ron, Don, and Jerry.

When I asked Mr. Fabich how old he felt on his 101st birthday, he said, “I feel good, like I’m 75!” God Bless you and your family, and best wishes for continued good health, Mr. Fabich.

		
	<p>Independence City Council Meeting Tuesday, May 11 Caucus begins at 5:30 PM</p> <p>Register to attend the virtual meeting at www.IndependenceOhio.org</p>	
		

It's Prom Night!

Congratulations to all the Independence High School seniors who will be celebrating prom tonight!

We spotted Matt Richards and Alyssa Pallini striking a pose outside City Hall. Don't they look happy! The couple is headed to Ohio State University in the fall.



If you know someone who would like to receive **Mayor Kurtz's Weekly Update email** every Friday night, tell them to email their name and email address to:

CityHall@IndependenceOhio.org.