

# Independence Park Commission



Parks Improvement Sales Tax Program Report  
July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

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## Mission and Membership

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The Independence Park Commission was established by Ordinance in 1999. The Commission's primary mission is to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council relating to public education, use, and knowledge regarding Parks and Recreation activities. The Commission also serves as the official Parks and Recreation Sales Tax Oversight Committee.

The Park Commission is comprised of seven voting members appointed by the City Council. Current members include Chair Diane Kyser, Kay Douglas, Jana Evans, Paula Martin, Cody Steger, and Dennis Tharp with one vacancy.

## Sales Tax Review

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Independence voters renewed the current Parks Improvement Sales Tax (PRST) in perpetuity in August of 2010. It is dedicated to fund on-going park maintenance, certain facility operations, recreation programming and various parks and recreation related capital projects. Through December 31, 2023, the tax generated \$2,478,310, or 47%, of the PRST revenue for fiscal year 2023-24.

## Park Projects, Revitalization & Operations

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Parks, Facilities and Grounds maintenance staff worked on a variety of projects during fall and winter months.

- Preparations for July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration twice as the first date closed early due to weather
- Set up/take down for 1849 Main Street – facades, stage, fire extinguishers, fans, supplies
- Disassembled NFTM exhibits, loaded, transported, unloaded, and reassembled them in the new space, ensuring the artifacts were handled properly and not damaged during the transition
- Hill Park - Painted the skate park
- Waterfall Park – Repaired playground surface, sealed parking lot & winterized the waterfall feature
- Blackburn Park – Installed new wind screens on the pickleball court
- All parks – Winterized restrooms and irrigation systems
- Parks and trails – Cleared and removed brush
- Adventure Oasis – Power washed lazy river, cleaned up landscaping and trimmed trees, winterized pools and both spraygrounds
- George Owens Nature Park – Set up Enchanted Forest light display on Speck Road, prepared trailers and drove tractors during the event
- Training – Trained new employees to pass CDL exam for snow removal
- Equipment maintenance – Prepared trucks and equipment for snow removal operations
- Facility maintenance – Oversaw custodial and maintenance work for all city buildings
- MO Model Railroad Museum – Oversaw roof, HVAC, siding and flooring repairs
- Park maintenance facility – Installed new fencing to secure equipment and facility
- Homeless Cleanups – 21 camps cleaned up and removed
- Graffiti and vandalism – Daily removal and repair
- Woodlawn Cemetery – 60% complete repaving streets and repairing curbs w/Municipal Services  
456 wreaths placed in Wreaths Across America program  
Purchased new backhoe to replace a 27-year-old piece of equipment



## Recreation Programming & Operations

### Adventure Oasis Water Park

- Daily Admissions – 23,128 (Resident only)
- Classes & Programs – 2,016 participants (Open to residents & non-residents)
- Birthday Parties & Group Rentals – 1,072 participants
- July Dive-in Movie and Dog Swim cancelled due to weather
- Added new picnic tables and landscape rock
- Power washed bridges & building exterior
- Painted slides and bucket in zero-depth entry pool



### Palmer Senior Center

- Home Delivered Meal Program – staff delivered 7,330 meals and served 7,582 meals on-site
- Programs – 440 Programs offered with 12,315 participants
- Special Activities – Ladies of the Vaile, Scamboree, Heath and Information Fair, Veteran's Breakfast and Recognition, Thanksgiving Luncheon and Christmas Celebration
- Day Trips - 446 patrons enjoyed three trips to the New Theatre Restaurant Dinner & Show, Fantastic Travels, Under the Sea, a day trip to Hannibel, MO, an Autumn Adventure trip to Atchison, KS, and a Holiday Lights tour
- 1,958 hours worked by volunteers





## Independence Uptown Market

- Winter Market & Farmers Market with EBT snap tokens program – 35 to 45 vendors served 750 to 1,000 patrons weekly with meats, produce, bakery items and crafts
- Programs & Events – 17 events with 119 participants: Christmas in July, Spirit Of Independence Band Concert with 126 in attendance, Santa-Cali-Gon, Crafternoons, Coffee with a Cop (2), Creating over Coffee, Sugar Skulls, Fall Luminaries, Employee Benefits Fair, Trunk or Treat, Santa’s Village, CSL Christmas Store
- Independence on the Run – This volunteer-led 5k run starts and ends at the Market. An average of 10 participants meets each Saturday during the Farmers Market.
- Santa-Cali-Gon – Over 54,000 people came through the Market to see craft and jewelry vendors
- 10 Private Rentals – birthday parties, showers, retirements, wedding receptions, celebrations of life, fundraisers, and more

## Wellness, Sports & Inclusion

- Homeschool Recreation Program – 307 students
- Miracle League – 27 athletes
- Reservations – 36 game fields & 36 tennis courts, baseball/softball practice fields
- Community Gardens – 15 participants, all beds reserved
- 5K Runs at Waterfall Park – 2 turkey-themed runs with estimated 600 participants

## George Owens Nature Park

- 31 Park Rentals with 1,175 attendees – group training, family reunions, etc.
- 2,501 Volunteer Hours
- Programs – Fishing, Nature Hikes, Tree Leaf ID, Dragonfly Days, Master Gardeners Workshop, Nature Craft for the Week, Intro to Fishing, ISD Teacher Fishing Intro, Family Fishing Day, Intro to Camping, Hummingbird Festival, Stories by the Campfire, MO Native Animals, Pickup Chess, Enchanted Forest, Pinecone Bird Feeders, Winter Solstice Torch-Lit Hike
- Projects – 3 acres of Honeysuckle Removal, trail information box repair, trail trimming, kitchen painting and wall repair in the Lodge



## Family Programming

- Programs – Independence Day Fireworks Celebration (2 events with 2,400 in attendance), Fun in the Park at Fairmount Community Center, Christmas in July partnership with Habitat for Humanity with 100 in attendance, 1849 Main Street at SantaCaliGon, Pickup Chess, Heritage Skateboard Competition, Fairmount Christmas Block Party



## Social Media

A new year brings a new look at the data! The Communications Team continues to utilize a mix of print, social media, and video to share stories about our community, programs, and venues for Parks, Recreation & Tourism. Metrics are from the following Facebook pages: George Owens Nature Park, Independence Uptown Market, Adventure Oasis, and Parks, Recreation & Tourism. Below are graphics for each page highlighting reach, page visits, new likes and follows, and the top post from July through December for each page. While some pages have seen a slower increase than previous timeframes, growth continues across all pages.

July through December 2023 Statistics



**Profile**

**George Owens Nature Park**  
@George Owens Nature Park  
georgeowensnaturepark.org

2.6K Followers | 1.7K Interactions

**Top Post**

George Owens Nature Park  
Published to George Owens Nature Park's profile · September 1, 2023 · 48

It is time -- the Hummingbird Festival begins today, noon through 5 PM! Join us tomorrow and Saturday to see hummingbirds drink from our many feeders as they migrate through the area. [#hummingbirds](#)

9,162 Impressions  
75 interactions, 13 shares

July through December 2023 Statistics



Profile



**Independence Uptown Market**

Home to the Independence Farmers' Market and a variety of events throughout the year.

7.8K Followers  
1.2K Interactions

Top Post

**COFFEE WITH A COP**  
October 4 | 8-10AM  
Independence Uptown Market

Independence Uptown Market

Are you ready for coffee, donuts, and conversation with the men and women in blue? We are! Join us tomorrow, October 4, at the Independence Uptown Market for Coffee with a Cop from 8-10 AM.

8,444 Impressions  
8 Interactions  
4 Shares

July through December 2023 Statistics



Profile



**Adventure Oasis Water Park**

@Adventure.Oasis.Water.Park  
indep.us/adventureoasis

9K Page Likes  
2.8K Interactions

Top Post

**ADVENTURE OASIS**  
**Delayed Opening**

Adventure Oasis

The kiddie area is delaying its opening. The rest of Adventure Oasis is open.

333,660 Reach

July through December 2023 Statistics



Profile



City of Independence Parks, Recreation and Tourism

Providing parks, programs, and services to the City of Independence, Missouri.

6.8K Followers, 3.2K Interactions

Top Post

**TODDLER TOWN**  
Tuesdays & Wednesdays  
October - March  
**10AM - 12PM**

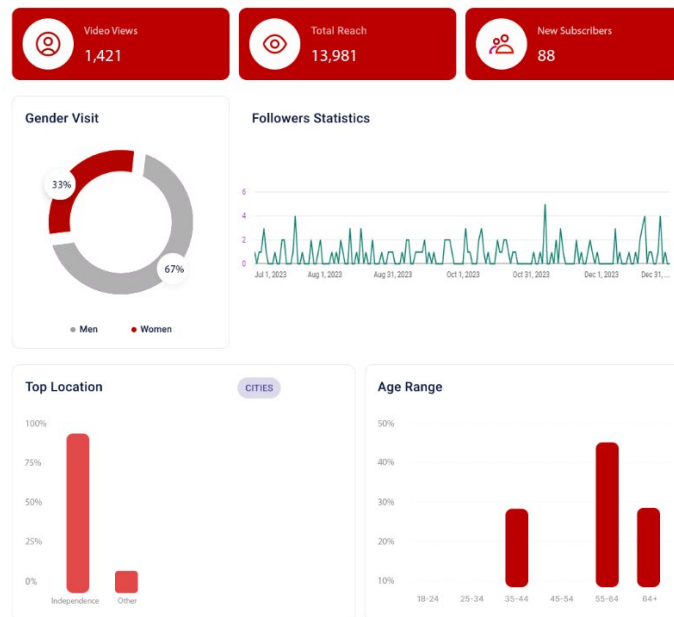
City of Independence Parks, Recreation and Tourism  
14,224 Impressions  
60 Interactions  
74 Shares

**YouTube:** Video is an important part of the communications mix, and the Communications Team has increased promotional videos covering a variety of events, programs, and venues within the City. From July through December, videos were produced about these events:

- [2023 Hummingbird Festival](#)
- [The Enchanted Forest](#)
- [Best Little Arts and Craft Show](#)

- [Touch A Truck](#)
- [2023 Independence Square Lighting](#)

July through December 2023 Statistics (YouTube)



Profile



City of Independence, Missouri

The buck stops here, and you should, too!

9 Videos, 1.37K Followers, 15 Hours Watched

Top Video

**Hummingbird Festival 2023**

Video link: <https://youtu.be/6KIUN77HxY>

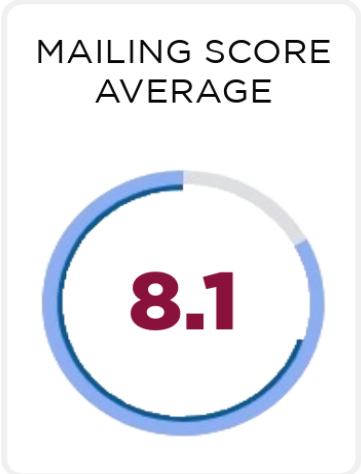
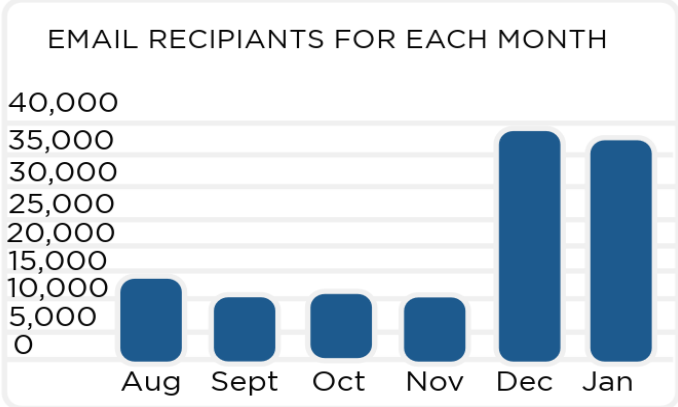
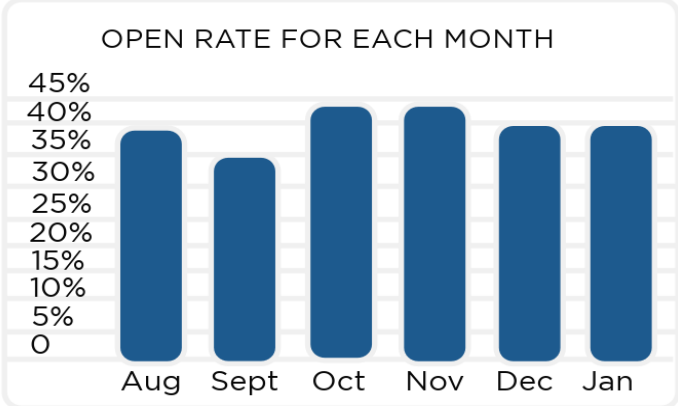
3,208 impressions



The Communications Team and PRT staff created a digital newsletter to inform the public of upcoming events and activities. This monthly newsletter goes straight to recipients' email. Content includes registration tips for WebTrac, an opening highlight featuring our Visit Independence blog, press releases or other interesting highlights about PRT-related news, and helpful tips about weather.

The mailings score shares performance based on a 10-point scale. This scale compares our publications to the national average of over 45,000 customers and millions of emails. Open rate shares the percentage of our mailings that are opened by the recipients. The recipients graph shares how many community members receive our monthly newsletter.

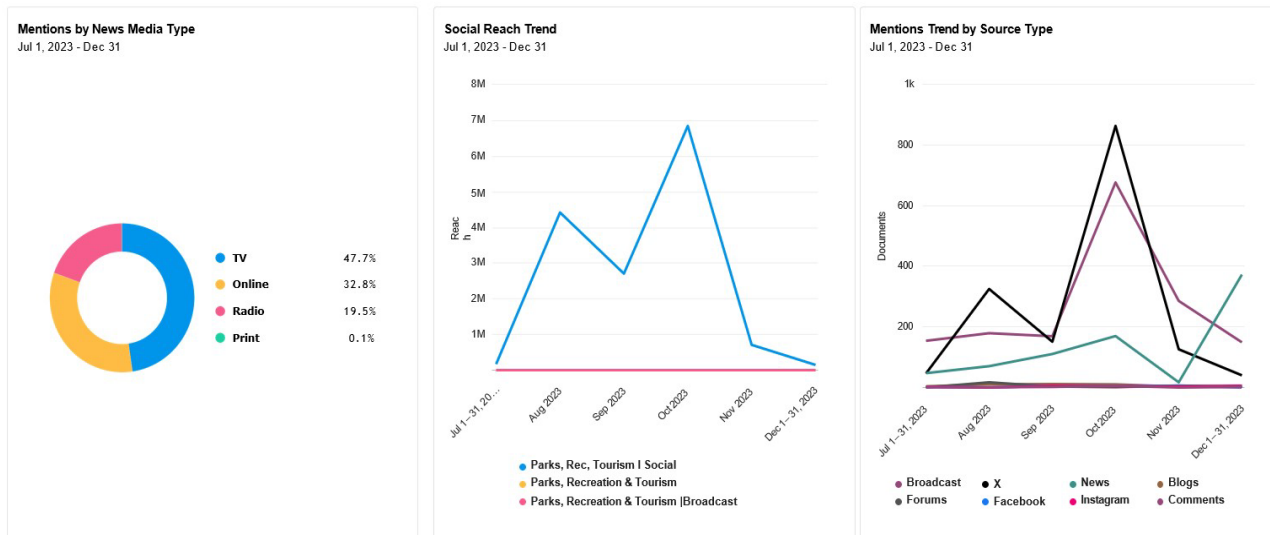
July through December 2023 Statistics (PRT Newsletter)



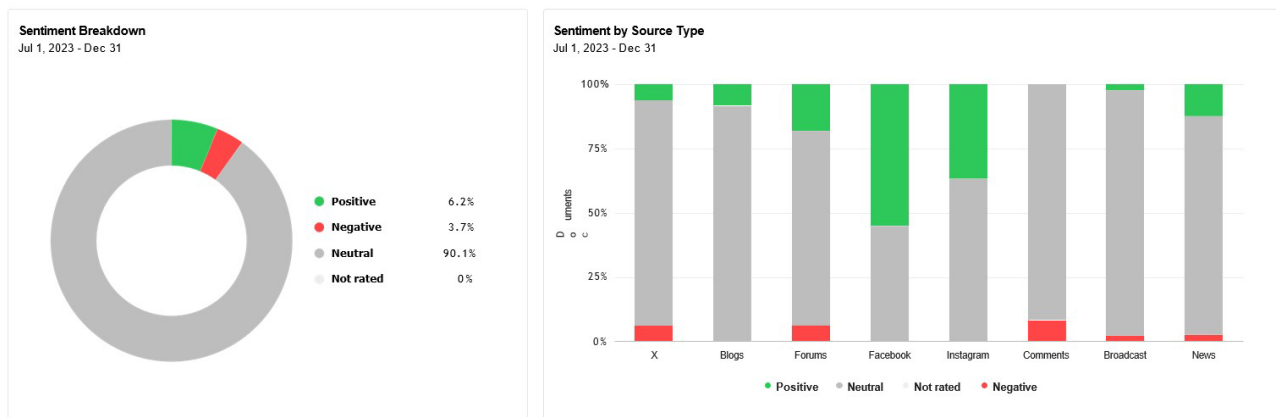
The breakdown of source varies across broadcast, social, and Parks | Recreation | Tourism. These sources breakdown further into blogs, forums, social media, news, and broadcast platforms.

Included in the summary of data are how the content is viewed by the public, whether it is positive, negative, or neutral in sentiment for the content.

How does the earned media break down?



How favorable is the content?



The Communications Team continues to work through a calendar of promotions, publications, and videos, sharing events and activities with the public through social media, newsletters, and our website.

We are continually updating information and incorporating events, activities, press releases, and blog posts on the Visit Independence and PRT website pages. Events and activities added to the website are throughout Independence, not just those created by PRT.

The Recreation Catalog is currently in production. Our team is working towards a biannual publication for Fall/Winter 2024 to be printed in late summer and Spring/Summer 2025 to come out in late winter.

## In Closing

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It is the opinion of the Independence Park Commission that the activities, initiatives, and projects supported by the Parks Improvement Sales Tax are in keeping with the program's intent, and that the work of the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department continues to enhance the quality of life in Independence.

The members of the Independence Park Commission, on behalf of the residents of Independence, express our gratitude and appreciation to the Mayor and City Council for their continued support of providing the best possible parks, recreation facilities, and programs for the residents of Independence.

