

DEADLINES

NEWS DEADLINES
For inclusion in the Wednesday edition of the *Itemizer-Observer*.
Social news (weddings, engagements, anniversaries, births, milestones) — 5 p.m. on Thursday.
Community events — Noon on Friday for both the Community Notebook and Community Calendar.
Letters to the editor — 10 a.m. on Monday.
Obituaries — 4 p.m. on Monday.
ADVERTISING DEADLINES
Retail display ads — 3 p.m. Friday.
Classified display ads — 11 a.m. on Monday.
Classified line ads — Noon on Monday. Classified ads are updated daily on www.polkio.com.
Public notices — Noon on Friday.

CORRECTIONS

The *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* is committed to publishing accurate news, feature and sports reports. If you see anything that requires a correction or clarification, call the newsroom at 503-623-2373 or send an e-mail to kholland@polkio.com.

WEBSITE

The *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* website, www.polkio.com, is updated each week by Wednesday afternoon. There, you will find nearly every story that appears in the print version of the newspaper, as well as some items, including additional photos, that do not appear in print due to space limitations.

WEATHER

RECORDED	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
Jan. 20.....	49	33	.00
Jan. 21.....	48	29	.00
Jan. 22.....	51	39	trc.
Jan. 23.....	54	43	.04
Jan. 24.....	64	43	.00
Jan. 25.....	52	44	.00
Jan. 26.....	53	41	.00

Rainfall during Jan. — 3.21 in.
Rain through Jan. 26 — 3.21 in.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Family Building Blocks' recently added play room at the Academy Building in Dallas is just one of many services Sara Matthews, FBB outreach coordinator, hopes to promote.

Family Building Blocks opens office in Dallas

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Family Building Blocks, a Salem-based child abuse prevention nonprofit, recently opened a Dallas office, offering play groups and parent education to families in Dallas, Monmouth, Independence and Falls City.
Family Building Blocks (FBB) has an office in West Salem, but saw a need to open a more centrally located facility in Polk County, said Gabriela Maldonado Bell, the program supervisor in Dallas. The organization serves families struggling to care for their young children due to poverty, domestic violence, drug abuse, or mental health or other issues.
FBB offers families with children 5 years old or younger home visits, play groups and seminars for parents. Maldonado Bell said the focus is on parent education, child development and early childhood health.
"I think our goals are to es-

Check It Out

What: Family Building Blocks open house.
Where: The Academy Building, 182 SW Academy St., Suite 210, Dallas.
When: Friday. Open house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with a ribbon cutting ceremony from noon to 1 p.m.
Of note: FBB hosts monthly play groups in Dallas and Independence. The Dallas group meets the third Tuesday of each month at the Academy Building; the Independence group meets the third Friday of the month at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Independence. Both groups meet from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and are open to families with children 5 years or younger.
For more information: 503-623-9664; www.familybuildingblocks.org.

tablish this facility and this office as part of our greater Family Building Blocks relief

nursery and continue to expand services to as many children and families in Polk County as possible," Maldonado Bell said.
The Dallas office is holding its "grand opening" Friday, inviting anyone wanting to find out more about FBB.
The organization moved into the Academy Building in September, joining several other agencies and service organizations — including Mid-Valley Parenting, Community Action Agency Resource Center and The Salvation Army — in the county's "co-location" model.
Under the model, several organizations and county agencies all providing assistance to at-risk families in one form or another are situated under one roof.
Sara Matthews, FBB's Polk County family outreach coordinator, credits those partnerships for helping find more families in need.
"Working together has really helped increase our referrals that come in," she said.

Indy will decrease reconnection fees

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The city of Independence will no longer charge \$400 to reconnect a customer's sewer service, but high connection fees remain for water.
Also, the \$42.93 base rate for sewer will remain, regardless of whether or not the sewer connection is being used by a resident.
"We would eliminate the option to disconnect sewer," City Manager David Clyne said, "because you can't really disconnect the sewer line. People would continue to pay the base rates."
The change came about by the Independence City Council questioning the high base rates of both water and sewer when compared to other cities at Tuesday morning's council meeting.

Councilors Marilyn Morton and Tom Takacs both expressed concern that Independence's overall rates were at the top of the list of 10 cities provided for comparison by rate consultant Ray Bartlett of Economic and Financial Analysis.
Bartlett said the cities were chosen by physical proximity to Independence, as well as a couple extremes, and was not sure how meaningful the com-

parisons were.
Each city charges for water and sewer services differently, depending on what the needs are, Bartlett said. While some cities charge higher base rates, others charge based on usage.
"Most of your costs are fixed," Bartlett said, "so if use goes down, revenue goes down. Generally speaking, small communities tend to have high base rates. Those communities that are heavily indebted have higher base rates."
Those fixed costs include fire protection and annual flushing of water lines and fire hydrants, Bartlett said.
Capital projects, debt service, depreciation, insurance and compliance also are all fixed costs, he said.
"If the city decreases rates for some customers, it must increase rates for other customers," Bartlett said.
Morton and Councilwoman Nancy Lodge both said they own vacant property downtown and pay base charges for water and sewer and understand the impact of paying money for something they are not using.
"But I understand the impact to our community," Lodge said. "I want the toilets to still flush 10 years from now."

COMPARISON OF COMBINED BILLS
Single Family House Using 800 Cubic Feet (6,000 gallons)

	Water	Sewer	Total
Independence	\$55.33	\$42.93	\$98.26
Salem	\$33.94	\$44.88	\$78.82
Monmouth	\$34.17	\$37.81	\$71.98
Dallas	\$25.35	\$41.85	\$67.20

Source: Economic & Financial Analysis

KATHY HUGGINS/Itemizer-Observer
Independence water and sewer rates top the charts in the surrounding area, including Salem.

THE SWITCH

These trucks come with 6 Year/100,000 mile extended warranty at no extra charge!

2015 S9F0 Transit Connect XLT Wagon
2.5L DOHC Engine, 6 Spd Auto Transaxle with O/D, 7 Passenger, 28 MPG HWY. #184427
SALE PRICE \$29,331
Rebate - 500
SALE PRICE \$28,831

2015 Fiesta 5-Door Hatch SE
0% for 60 months available. No payment for 90 days! #118383
LIST PRICE \$18,100
Discounts - 772
Rebate - 1,000
First Time Buyer - 500
SALE PRICE \$15,828

2013 Ford F-150 Lariat SuperCrew® 4x4
Was \$51,560 MSRP
Limited Time Sale Price! \$41,397

2013 Ford F-150 Platinum SuperCrew® 4x4
Was \$53,930 MSRP
Limited Time Sale Price! \$45,163

Joe's End of the Month Clearance Sale on These Select USED Vehicles.

2013 Ford Mustang
#42145
\$19,870

2013 Toyota Corolla
#20555
\$16,870

2006 Kia Spectra
#50700
\$7,870

2002 Nissan Altima
#288714
\$4,870

2007 BMW 328 XI
#06575
\$17,870

2004 Mini Cooper
#79557
\$8,870

2007 Toyota Camry
#25742
\$14,870

2008 Hyundai Entourage
#45293
\$10,870

2004 Volkswagen Beetle
#08111
\$8,870

2006 Dodge Ram 2500
#37715
\$28,870

All vehicles under 100,000 miles come with a 6 month, 6,000 mile engine and drive train limited warranty at no additional cost.

JOE HAYWARD FORD

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