

# CITY OF JACKSON

OFFICIAL CITY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023

## A HOME IN THE CITY

### NEW HOUSES TAKING SHAPE ACROSS JACKSON

Hundreds of new homes are set to be built in Jackson in the coming years, and the Powell-Lepards will be the first family to move in.

"It's exciting. I think it's going to be a great thing for the City and families like ours," said Kristin Powell-Lepard.

The family, who currently lives outside Lansing, was looking for a new place to call home and saw a listing for new builds in Jackson.

"It made more sense to go for a new house than continue renting, especially how high rent is everywhere," Powell-Lepard said.

The first-time home buyers are getting ready to enjoy a newly constructed three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath home on Maltby Street.

Earlier this year, a real estate developer bought four vacant City-owned properties to build new single-family homes.

Along with the Maltby house, another is under construction on E. Ganson Street with a listing price



Kristin Powell-Lepard stands in front of her future home on Maltby Street.

of \$189,900.

City administration is responding to the need for more affordable housing.

In recent months, the City Council authorized the construction of more than 200 single-family homes on vacant lots.

Plans calls for making these rental and owner-occupied houses affordable for residents who have a low-to-moderate income.

Community Development Director Shane LaPorte says there has

been considerable interest from developers looking to build on the City's lots.

"The demolition of blighted homes in the previous decade has created a blank canvas for builders to construct modern homes that will revitalize neighborhoods," LaPorte said.

The City is also offering discounts on water hook-ups, sidewalk repairs and new driveways for the homes.

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## NEW LOOMIS PARK PLAYGROUND

Local families have a new playground to enjoy!

Construction wrapped up at the new Loomis Park playground in May.

A year-long construction project reshaped the north side of the park, providing a new landscape, playground, walking path, exercise equipment, pavilion and entrance to the Boos Recreation Center.

The City Council allocated \$1 million in federal funds to this substantial investment for Jackson's east side.

The new playground is a modern, open playscape with durable materials that's accessible to people with disabilities.

The former wood playground structure required constant maintenance and was becoming unsafe.

The new landscape improves safety by adding more lighting and increasing visibility.

These improvements are in addition to the new walking path, basketball court and sledding hill installed at Loomis Park in recent years.

"These updates improve quality of life for everyone in the community and helps make Jackson a more attractive place to live," said Parks and Recreation Director Kelli Hoover.

With the outside of the



Omar Coleman of Jackson enjoys the new Loomis playground.

building refreshed, construction will now focus on the interior of the Boos Recreation Center. Renovations inside the center will take place through the rest of 2023.

## STREET CONSTRUCTION SEASON

Jackson will see 14 infrastructure improvement projects this construction season.

The season kicked off in April on N. Perrine Street.

This east side neighborhood street is receiving a new water main, lead service line replacements, and improved street surface.

On S. Brown Street, a new trail to provide improved pedestrian access on the west side is being installed, along with a new

street surface.

Residents can expect to see street resurfacing projects on N. Wisner Street, Wildwood Avenue and W. North Street this year.

Water main replacements and street repairs are planned on Oakridge Drive and Blakely Avenue.

The Michigan Department of Transportation will also continue railroad overpass construction in Downtown Jackson with completion expected later this fall.



Street construction underway on N. Perrine Street in May.



## MAYOR

Daniel Mahoney

## COUNCIL

	Ward
Arlene Robinson	1
Freddie Dancy	2
Angelita V. Gunn	3
Laura Dwyer Schlecte	4
Karen Bunnell	5
Will Forgrave	6

## CITY MANAGER

Jonathan Greene

## MEETINGS & IMPORTANT DATES

### Tuesday, July 4

City Hall closed for Independence Day

### JULY 11 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

### Tuesday, Aug. 8

Primary Election

### AUG. 15 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

### Monday, Sept. 4

City Hall closed for Labor Day

### SEPT. 12 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

## NOTICE ABOUT JACKSON CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Live streams of City Council meetings have moved from Facebook to the City YouTube page. Residents with Comcast Cable can still watch meetings on Channel 21.

## AUGUST PRIMARY ELECTION

A primary election for Mayor is happening Tuesday, Aug. 8.

The top two candidates with the most votes will move on to the Tuesday, Nov. 7 General Election.

Polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Due to ongoing construction at the Boos Recreation Center, Ward 2 voters will be directed to other polling places in the City.

Impacted voters received a mailed notice about the changes this spring.

Updated polling place information for Ward 2 can be found in the mailer and on the City website.

Completed absentee ballots must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by 8 p.m. on Election Day to be counted in the election.



A secure absentee ballot drop box is installed at the front entrance of City Hall, 161 W. Michigan Ave.

Learn more about voting in this election by visiting the Elections section of [cityofjackson.org](http://cityofjackson.org).

Elections for City Treasurer and City Council seats in Wards 2, 4 and 6 will take place in Nov.

## LEAD LINE REPLACEMENTS

Lead service line replacements are ramping up this year in Jackson.

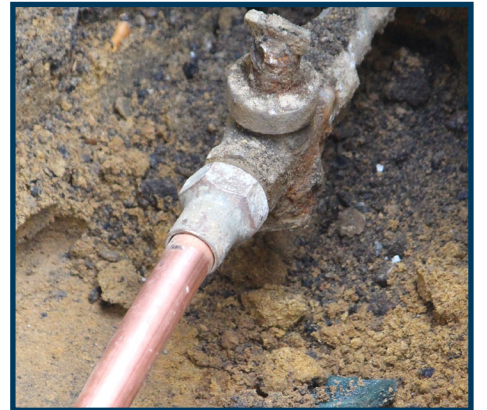
In addition to the replacements that happen through street construction projects, a lead service line replacement team from the Department of Public Works (DPW) is working through a list of properties that need partial replacements.

These properties are receiving attention because only a portion of the water service line is made of lead.

Partial replacements are often easier to swap out and require less construction work.

The DPW says it's important for residents to work with crews when contacted to make sure the lead line can be replaced with copper as soon as possible.

The replacements do not bring



Copper service line after installation.

any extra cost because they are funded through water/sewer rates and federal funds.

This work helps the City of Jackson move faster toward its goal of replacing all 11,000 lead service lines, which is mandated by the State of Michigan.





**Message  
from  
the Mayor**  
**Daniel Mahoney**

I had the honor this past spring of delivering my second State of the City Address.

Residents and officials packed the MLK Recreation Center to be a part of the City’s vision for 2023 and beyond.

In my speech, I highlighted key priorities for myself as Mayor and the Jackson community.

While fixing streets has been a talking point for decades, it’s important to keep the issue top of mind.

I called on City leaders to work together on a realistic plan to fix streets that doesn’t rely on special assessments.

As we work to make Jackson a place where everyone can thrive, it’s vital that we make it a more sustainable place as well.

That’s why I’m advocating for a single-hauler trash system to make sure we are not polluting our neighborhoods with trash that doesn’t get picked up, along with saving residents money.

My address also highlighted the need for more broadband access for Jackson residents, so everyone has fair and equitable access to the internet.

A task force will be formed to help close this digital divide.

I look forward to the challenges and opportunities we face and the work ahead to bring all of our plans to fruition.

Based on the great strides we’ve taken as a community over the past year, I am confident we have what it takes to get this all done.

Sincerely,  
*Daniel Mahoney*

**Continued: NEW HOMES**



**New house under construction on E. Ganson Street.**

Powell-Lepard currently resides in a rural area and is excited to live to an established neighborhood that’s close to schools, parks and businesses.

“I love all the breweries, awesome restaurants and the art that’s everywhere downtown. Being able to walk and go grab dinner just blows my mind, because where we live right now it’s a 20 minute drive to go anywhere,” Powell-Lepard said.

Mayor Daniel Mahoney says

new homes being built shows the City’s affordable housing efforts are working.

“In the coming years, we are going to build the most homes in Jackson since the end of World War II. I’m excited to see this growth for our community,” Mayor Mahoney said.

The Powell-Lepards are looking forward to moving in later this summer.

“Moving to Jackson will definitely provide a fresh start for our family,” Powell-Lepard said.

**MLK CORRIDOR SURVEY**

The MLK Corridor Improvement Authority (MLKCIA) is starting its work of improving the community.

Help the MLKCIA increase business ownership, home improvement, and investment along the S. MLK Drive and Prospect Street corridors by taking a quick survey.

Share your thoughts on how the authority can revitalize Jackson’s south side neighborhood.



Use your device to scan the QR code on this page.

Thanks for participating!



# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## HISPANIC HERITAGE FESTIVAL RETURNS TO JACKSON FOR SECOND YEAR

When Leticia Albarran thinks back to the Jackson's first-ever Hispanic Heritage Festival in Sept. 2022, two words come to mind.

"Thrilled and proud. Thrilled because I saw everybody in one place being happy, and proud because my community showed up," Albarran said.

The lifelong Jackson resident was inspired to organize the festival after attending a similar event in Chicago.

"I wanted to replicate that feeling of belonging and bring it home," Albarran said.

She collaborated with Jacob Inosencio and other community leaders to put on 2022's landmark event.

Organizers are building on last year's success to hold the 2023 festival on Saturday, Sept. 16 from 12 to 9:30 p.m. in Horace Blackman Park.

This year's Hispanic Heritage Festival will feature a variety of food traditions, product vendors, local resources, music, dancing and fun for all ages.

"It's all about creating a space for community, belonging and an opportunity for people to be their authentic selves," Albarran said.

The event also brings

awareness to Jackson's Hispanic and Latinx population.

"It shows that there's a growing need for organizations and businesses to serve this community," Albarran said.

Organizers say the festival helps break down barriers.

"At last year's event, there were people who told me it was their first time visiting Downtown Jackson. It makes me think about how we can do more events to make people feel welcome," Albarran said.

The festival's momentum has inspired the creation of a non-profit named Nuestra Comunidad.

Meaning "our community" in Spanish, the organization will help support the Hispanic and Latinx community in Jackson all year.

More 2023 festival details will be posted on the event's Facebook page, which can be found under Jackson Hispanic Heritage Festival.

Albarran says the event is an opportunity for residents to celebrate their heritage while also looking toward the future.

"I'm excited to see the support of the businesses, organizations and the people that come out," Albarran said.



Leticia Albarran (holding check on left) and Jacob Inosencio (far right) pose with organizers and officials as a donation is presented to Jackson College for the creation of a Hispanic/Latinx student group.



Food traditions are a big part of the festival.



The Gonzalez-Orozco family attends the 2022 festival. All event photos courtesy Bart Hawley of JTV.

## NEW POLICE K9 TEAM

Jackson has a new K9 team serving the community.

Officer Autumn Schram is the Jackson Police Department's new K9 handler and is paired with Taz, a 1-year-old Belgian Malinois.

The duo recently completed training and are ready to assist police with search operations.

Trained to find missing people, suspects, narcotics and objects important to an investigation, K9s are a vital part of police work.

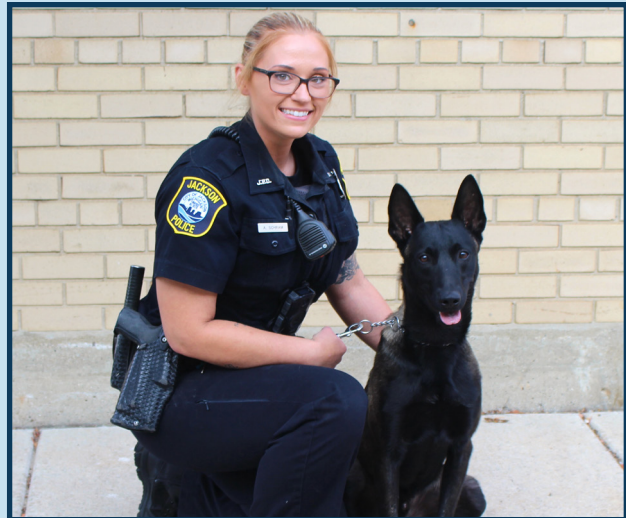
Officer Schram has been a patrol officer in Jackson for five years and is now the department's first female K9 handler.

"I'm looking forward to making a difference in the community and using this extra tool to help people, whether that's keeping drugs off the street or finding a suspect in a crime," Officer Schram said.

Taz lives with Officer Schram full time and is on duty with her at work.

When they're not working or resting, the K9 team continues to hone their searching skills.

The department's previous K9, Gleeson, retired earlier this year after working with Detective Mike Galbreath for seven years.



Officer Autumn Schram with K9 Taz.

## SUMMER FUN IN DOWNTOWN JACKSON



Cruise In classic car show on W. Michigan Avenue.

Downtown Jackson is the place to be if you're looking for summer fun!

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has a packed summer event schedule for all ages to enjoy.

The popular Cruise In classic car shows are planned for the fourth Friday of the month through Sept. in the evening hours.

Nearby in downtown's TRUE Community City Square, concerts will be happening at the same time as the car shows.

That's also where you can watch family-friendly movies in the open air for the Friday Film Nights.

If you're looking for lunch during a weekday, take advantage of Food Truck Tuesdays, which brings together food truck

vendors in the City Square the first and second Tuesday of the month through Sept.

Food truck events also feature live music.

A summer staple for decades, the Grand River Farmers Market provides locally grown produce, flowers, crafts and much more!

The market is open every Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. through the end of Oct.

This will be the first summer of downtown's Social District.

The district allows participating bars to serve alcoholic beverages to patrons, who can spread out and enjoy them in the open areas of Downtown Jackson.

All downtown events organized by the DDA are free to attend.

To keep up on all the summer fun, see a schedule online by visiting [jacksondda.org](http://jacksondda.org).