

CITY OF JACKSON

OFFICIAL CITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024

FIRE PARTNERSHIP IMPROVING EMERGENCY RESPONSES

An expanded partnership between neighboring fire departments is proving to be a success for the Jackson area.

In Aug. 2023, the Jackson Fire Department (JFD) and Summit Township Fire Department (SFD) agreed to a new plan that allows fire units to respond to medical emergencies outside their township or city limits if the call is closer to where they are stationed.

A partnership already existed for fire responses.

More than half a year into the new agreement, fire officials looked at response data and found many benefits.

JFD Deputy Fire Chief Tim Gonzales says data shows the two departments are not being overwhelmed by responding to more emergencies.

"I was pleased to see that call volumes for both departments have been nearly identical to what they were before the expanded partnership," Gonzales said.

Firefighters have seen



Pictured left to right: SFD Lt. Bill Warner, JFD Capt. Ryan Hendricks, JFD Firefighter Harry Crawford and SFD Firefighter Grant Miller.

improved response times from this collaboration.

"When every second counts, an efficient response can save lives and improve patient outcomes," Gonzales said.

There's also fuel cost savings from reducing travel distances.

Records show Jackson has saved around \$6,000 on fire truck fuel since the partnership began.

Summit Township Supervisor Todd Emmons

says the township fire service has seen fuel costs go down as well.

"Because of the shorter distances traveled, there are also considerable savings in routine maintenance costs for the vehicles," Emmons said.

Crews have found that dispatching the closest unit frees up other resources to respond to additional calls.

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- Help for home rehabs
- Grant boosts businesses
- Boos Center renovation
- City website redesign

CITY RECEIVES GRANT TO DEMOLISH INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS DESTROYED BY FIRE

A \$3 million grant from the State of Michigan will be used to demolish and cleanup an industrial complex destroyed by fire.

On Aug. 22, 2023, fire crews responded to a massive fire at the vacant complex along W. North Street.

Although this is private property and it's first the responsibility of the property owner to arrange demolition, the City of Jackson and Jackson County decided to intervene, given the property's negative impact on the community.

In Feb. 2024, the Jack-

son County Land Bank was awarded \$3 million from the State's Blight Elimination Program to demolish the fire-damaged portions of the complex.

The City of Jackson is overseeing the demolitions and cleanup of the site, which is contaminated with asbestos.

City Manager Jonathan Greene appreciates the opportunity to partner with Jackson County on such an important effort.

"Thanks to the intervention of local government, an eyesore and dangerous



Firefighter responding to W. North Street fire in Aug. 2023.

building will be eliminated sooner rather than later," Greene said.

City staff are working to-

ward starting the demolitions later this year with the assistance of a contractor.

2024 STREET CONSTRUCTION SEASON

Orange barrels and road closure signs are returning to Jackson this year for the street construction season.

The City's Engineering Division has planned 13 infrastructure improvement projects, including street resurfacing, water service replacements, and reconstructing traffic signals.

The season kicks off in April with construction on Arnold Street, Oakridge Drive, W. Biddle Street, Williams Street, and Blakely Avenue.

These neighborhood streets all over the City of

Jackson will receive new water mains, lead service line replacements, and pavement reconstruction.

Mitchell and Burr streets will see similar construction projects start later this spring.

Efforts to replace the entirety of the MLK Equality Trail will continue, with construction planned this spring on the pedestrian trail from S. West Avenue to the Optimist Rest Shelter and S. MLK Drive to W. Prospect Street.

A full 2024 planned construction project list is avail-



Street construction crews will be a familiar sight this spring.

able on the City website, residents to see where cityofjackson.org. construction is happening

The City website also has an interactive map for around Jackson, project updates, and street closures.



MAYOR

Daniel Mahoney

COUNCIL

Arlene Robinson

Freddie Dancy

Angelita V. Gunn

Conner Wood

Shalanda Hunt

Will Forgrave

Ward

1

2

3

4

5

6

CITY MANAGER

Jonathan Greene

IMPORTANT DATES & MEETINGS

Friday, March 29

City Hall Closed for Good Friday

APRIL 2 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

APRIL 16 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

MAY 14 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

Monday, May 27

City Hall Closed for Memorial Day

MAY 28 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

JUNE 11 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

Wednesday, June 19

City Hall Closed for Juneteenth

Thursday, June 20

First Day of Summer

HOME REHAB ASSISTANCE, 100 HOMES UPDATE

The City of Jackson offers two homeowner programs to bring new homes to neighborhoods and help repair existing homes.

HOME REHABS

Managed by the City's Community Development Department, the Homeowner Rehabilitation Assistance Program offers no interest, low repayment, short-term loans to homeowners.

The loan can be used on houses with leaking roof systems, heating/cooling issues, electrical problems, malfunctioning furnaces/water heaters, structural concerns, and any other immediate threat to the safety of residents.

To be eligible, you must own and occupy your home as your primary residence and be up to date on all property taxes, special assessments, utility bills, mortgages, and homeowners insurance.

Qualifications are also based on income and the number of people living in your house.

100 HOMES

New homes continue to be built in the City of Jackson thanks to the 100 Homes Program.

Launched in Oct. 2023 by the Community Development Department, the program is constructing 100 new single-family homes on vacant lots by providing \$25,000 in down pay-



First home completed through 100 Homes Program.

ment assistance and connecting buyers to home builders.

As of March 2024, 100 Homes has accepted 476 applications, pre-approved 17 homebuyers, planned construction on six homes, started building four homes, and completed, sold and occupied one home.

The program is open to both City and non-City residents.

There are three plans buyers can choose from, which are a mix of one and two story houses with up to three bedrooms and one and a half baths.

All home prices are capped at \$175,000.

Scan the QR code with your device to learn more about the 100 Homes and Home Rehab programs from the City website.





Message from the Mayor

Daniel Mahoney

Dear Citizens of Jackson,

As I sit here in the Mayor's Office overlooking the heart of our city, I'm reminded of the rich tapestry of our past, the vibrant pulse of our present, and the promising horizon of our future. In the words of Maya Angelou, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

I'm genuinely elated to share the remarkable progress of the City of Jackson 100 Homes Program—a testament to our collective dedication to ensuring that every family has a place to call home and thrive.

Our collaborative efforts with the fire department stand as a beacon of efficiency and effectiveness, embodying the spirit of service that defines our community. Together, we're not just saving dollars; we're safeguarding lives and livelihoods.

The revitalization of the Boos Recreation Center symbolizes more than just bricks and mortar—it's a symbol of our commitment to nurturing healthy bodies, minds, and spirits within our community.

I'm thrilled at the unveiling of our new website, a digital gateway designed with you in mind. Easy to navigate and brimming with resources, it's our virtual town square—a place to connect, collaborate, and celebrate our city's journey.

A heartfelt congratulations to the five businesses who have been awarded MLK CIA grants: Jack's Take Out, Hampton's Place, M-Power Fitness, Mikey's Barbershop, and Pryor's BBQ House. Your dedication to Jackson's South Side is leading the way for economic redevelopment and creating a path for others to follow.

In the spirit of togetherness, let's continue to write the next chapter of our city's story—one filled with hope, resilience, and boundless opportunity.

As we embrace the changing seasons, let's eagerly anticipate the festivities and cultural celebrations that bind us together as one vibrant community—celebrating our diversity and strengthening our unity.

With warmest regards,
Daniel J. Mahoney
Mayor of Jackson

Continued: FIRE PARTNERSHIP



Jackson firefighters respond to an emergency call.

"This is particularly important in situations where multiple emergencies are happening at the same time," Gonzales said.

Summit Fire Chief Tim McEldowney says the expanded collaboration has improved responses to the township's hard-to-reach areas, such as neighborhoods along Francis Street.

"A crew from Jackson's Station No. 2 can be there in a matter of minutes, whereas it can be a six minute arrival time for us," McEldowney said.

The SFD chief says this partnership has increased public safety for Summit residents.

"Fire departments are expensive to run. This makes the departments more sustain-

able while providing high-quality service to citizens," McEldowney said.

Jackson City Manager Jonathan Greene thanks Summit Township for this shared service.

"Quality of life improves when local governments collaborate. It's fantastic to see neighboring communities work together to make our area safer," Greene said.

The success of the partnership has brought additional agreements for the two departments, such as responding to vehicle crashes and fire alarms.

SFD fire trucks are also now being repaired by Jackson's Department of Public Works.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

GRANTS BOOST SOUTH SIDE BUSINESSES

Mikey's Barbershop has seen a lot of ups and downs on S. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive since it opened in 2005.

"Sticking together as a community, we've been able to make it through hard times," said barbershop owner Michael Parker.

That community support continues with the MLK Corridor Improvement Authority (MLKCIA) Entrepreneurial and Real Estate Fund, which recently disbursed \$50,000 grants to small businesses located along S. MLK Drive and Prospect Street.

Parker says this grant is the boost he needs.

"To wake up one morning and have \$50,000 sent to you at a time when you really need it, then you know it's God answering your prayers. I'm thankful for that," Parker said.

Four other businesses received \$50,000 grants: Pryor's BBQ House, M-Power Fitness, Hampton's Place, and Jack's Take Out.

The \$250,000 in grants come from federal American Rescue Plan Act funds given to the City of Jackson.

This funding was made available to support South Side businesses and help them grow.

Parker is using the grant to renovate and add on to his barbershop, a former gas station.

"By adding four additional barber chairs, this will also bring more employment for residents," Parker said.

The MLKCIA was launched in 2020 by the City of Jackson to focus on redevelopment in the S. MLK Drive and Prospect Street corridors.

The authority uses a por-



Michael Parker of Mikey's Barbershop.

tion of existing tax dollars from these areas to reinvest in the neighborhood.

It does not bring any new taxes.

The authority's board is made up of residents, business leaders and local officials.

Having heard rumors about how the MLKCIA was negatively impacting the neighborhood, Parker says he attended meetings to get an understanding of what was really going on.

"With City administration collaborating with South Side residents and businesses, it's the first time in a long time that people are working together," Parker said.

John Willis, City staff liaison to the MLKCIA, says the authority will release another \$250,000 in grants to South Side businesses

later this spring.

"The authority is also working on initiatives to bring more housing and business to the neighborhood, along with launching a new street design for S. MLK Drive," Willis said.

Planned for construction in 2025, S. MLK Drive from Morrell to South streets will be completely redesigned to make the street more walkable, livable and ready for redevelopment.

While construction gets started on the barbershop, Parker says he's also ready for the MLK corridor to get a fresh look.

"It's going to beautify the neighborhood. There's been different parts of the City that have been upgraded and I believe it's time for this area to be uplifted," Parker said.



Renovation underway at Mikey's Barbershop on S. MLK Drive.

BOOS REC CENTER RENOVATION

A staple of Jackson's east side for more than 50 years, the Boos Recreation Center is receiving a major renovation project so it can continue to be a community gathering place.

Construction at the center started in Feb. and is expected to take place through late summer.

With sections of the building coming apart, construction crews will first stabilize the center.

After the building is structurally sound, renovations will begin on the center's bathrooms, lighting, heating, kitchen and ceiling.

Federal funds through Community Development Block Grants and the American Rescue Plan Act are being used for the renovation.

The Boos Center is located in Loomis Park, which has received substantial improvements from the City of Jackson over the past five years.

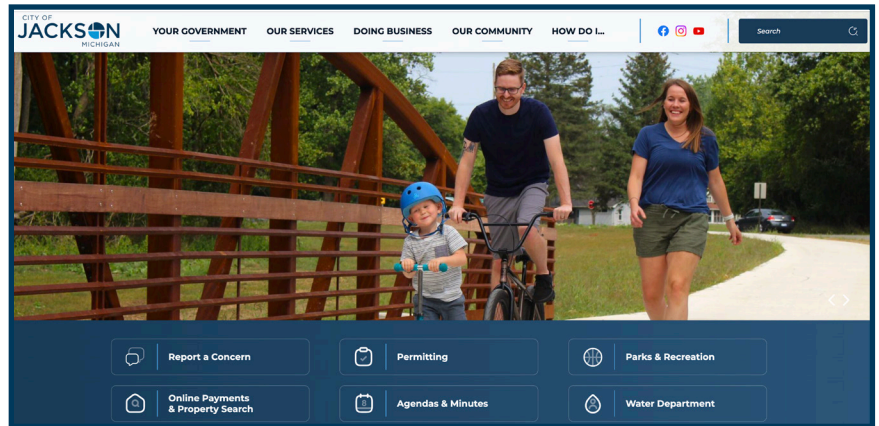
A new center entrance, playground, walking path, sledding hill, landscape design, basketball court, lighting system, and pavilion have rejuvenated this neighborhood park.

The center's recreation programs will be shifted to other facilities during the construction.



Construction starting at Boos Recreation Center. Renovations will take place through summer 2024.

REDESIGNED CITY WEBSITE



New City website homepage.

A new design for the City website, cityofjackson.org, is bringing a fresh look and faster access to City services.

The City of Jackson launched its redesigned website in Feb.

A free redesign was provided by website vendor CivicPlus.

The homepage has been completely redesigned so residents can easily find the information they're looking for.

City staff researched website

data to determine the pages with the most views and plugged those pages directly into the homepage.

The updated site also features an expanded community news section, language translation, photo slideshow, improved meeting and event calendar, and connections to elected officials.

Improvements also make it appear more consistently on mobile devices.

GRASS CUTTING RULES

Before getting out your lawnmower this spring, it will be helpful to know grass cutting rules in the City of Jackson.

The City's mowing ordinance says residents are responsible for maintaining lawns and must keep grass and weeds below 8 inches in height.

Letting grass grow beyond 8 inches can result in a fine and

City contractors coming onto your property to cut the grass.

The average fine for this is around \$200, but it can sometimes cost more depending on how much grass and weeds have to be removed.

Please help us keep Jackson's neighborhoods looking their best by staying on top of grass cutting this spring, summer and fall.