

CITY OF JACKSON

OFFICIAL CITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

SCHOOL RESOURCES JACKSON OFFICERS MAKING IMPACT AT JPS



Left to right: Abasi Earl, Officer David Stallworth, Dominic Johnson, Carter Joseph, Officer Warren Johnson & Catrina Smith.

Walking the halls of Jackson High School during the lunchtime rush exchanging smiles, fist bumps and hellos, it's clear that Jackson Police Officers Warren Johnson and David Stallworth are making an impact with students.

"I love walking in, seeing the kids, giving them a fist bump and asking how I can help them," Officer Johnson said.

While the officers do patrol duties on an as-needed basis, being a School Resource Officer (SRO) is a full-time assignment.

Johnson is the SRO at

Middle School at Parkside and Stallworth is posted at Jackson High School.

"We provide that level of safety and security for them to have a productive learning environment. A lot of our work is behind the scenes," Officer Stallworth said.

The SROs have offices in their respective schools to hold meetings with students, parents, teachers and staff, but they're often spotted all over campus.

Resource officers work alongside staff to provide a robust response when a student is struggling.

"I will touch base with

some kids who I know have academic or attendance issues, seeing how I can help them understand the importance of school and see if there's anything I can provide to help them with that," Officer Stallworth said.

Three years after bringing resource officers back to Jackson Public Schools (JPS), the program is building community trust.

"The students see you in a different light. They see you as a human and not just a police officer," Officer Johnson said.

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S. MLK DRIVE PROJECT LEADS 2025 STREET CONSTRUCTION SEASON

Dozens of Jackson streets are receiving improvements this year during the street construction season.

The 2025 season ramps up in May with the first phase of the S. MLK Drive reconstruction project.

S. MLK Drive between High and Morrell streets will be down to one lane through Nov. as crews reconstruct the street, first addressing the water main and sewer systems.

The overall goal of the S. MLK Drive project is to improve the streetscape for the ongoing redevelopment of Jackson's south side.

Reducing the street width will calm traffic, improve pe-

destrian connectivity and provide more parking, along with increasing room for lighting and green space.

The City is using a \$6.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to fund nearly half of the project.

The second phase of the project will continue in 2026, with construction centering on S. MLK Drive from High to South streets.

Preparatory work started in 2024 with lead service line replacements at properties along S. MLK Drive.

The City's Engineering Division has planned 40 infrastructure improvement projects for 2025, including



Lead service line replacements on S. MLK Drive in May 2024.

street resurfacing, water service replacements, pedestrian trail work, and reconstructing traffic signals.

A full 2025 planned construction project list and interactive map can be found on cityofjackson.org.

NEW NAME FOR PARK HONORS LOCAL FAMILY

New Leaf Park on Fourth Street has been renamed Griffin Park to recognize the Griffin family for their contributions to public service.

The recent renaming from the City Council honors Michael Griffin and his sons Martin and John.

Michael Griffin (1933-2024) represented Jackson in the Michigan House of Representatives for 26 years and served on the Jackson City Commission (now City Council).

Martin Griffin is the longest serving Mayor in Jackson's history, in office from

1995 to 2006 and 2011 to 2013.

He also represented Jackson in the Michigan House of Representatives for two years and currently serves as City Treasurer.

John Griffin was recently elected Summit Township Supervisor and served two terms on the Jackson City Commission.

Griffin Park is an access point for both the PAKA and MLK Equality trails, featuring a parking lot, bike repair station and green space.

A new sign for the park will be installed this spring.



Resident Scott Slagor enjoys the MLK Equality Trail through New Leaf Park (now Griffin Park) in Sept. 2024.



MAYOR

Daniel Mahoney

COUNCIL

	Ward
Arlene Robinson	1
Freddie Dancy	2
Angelita V. Gunn	3
Conner Wood	4
Christy May Davis	5
Will Forgrave	6

CITY MANAGER

Jonathan Greene

IMPORTANT DATES & MEETINGS

APRIL 15 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

Friday, April 18

City Hall closed for Good Friday

APRIL 29 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

MAY 13 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

Monday, May 26

City Hall closed for Memorial Day

MAY 27 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

JUNE 10 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

Thursday, June 19

City Hall closed for Juneteenth

Friday, June 20

First Day of Summer

NEW POLICE CHIEF

Jackson has a new top cop.

Christopher Simpson became Chief of the Jackson Police Department (JPD) in Feb. following the retirement of former Chief Elmer Hitt.

The new chief previously served 25 years with JPD, retiring as a Lieutenant in 2017, and four years as Undersheriff of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

Continuing the department's outreach work is a priority for Simpson.

"Ensuring that citizens of Jackson remain safe and employees of the Jackson Police Department are highly trained, professional, and ethical in all policing endeavors. I plan on looking at where we are internally and make changes if needed," Chief Simpson said.

The City of Jackson thanks former Chief Hitt for his 29 years of service.

Under Hitt's leadership, the police department expanded its involvement in the community, such as



Police Chief Christopher Simpson

launching the Group Violence Intervention Program, a community-centered strategy that is reducing gun violence in the City.

"I know Chief Simpson will do good things for the City. It was truly an honor to serve the City of Jackson as the Director of Police and Fire Services over the past eight years," Hitt said.

GRASS CUTTING RULES

Before getting out your lawnmower this spring, it will be helpful to know grass cutting rules in 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 on 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.





Message from the Mayor

**Daniel
Mahoney**

Jackson at a Crossroads: Choosing Our Future Together

Right now, Jackson stands at a crossroads. A pivotal moment where we must decide who we want to be as a city and as a community. Federal decisions are shaping the landscape in ways that will have a direct impact on our ability to grow, support our residents, and uphold the values we hold dear.

One of the significant shifts we are witnessing is the rollback of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. Efforts to delete diversity, exclude equity, and impact inclusion will have broad implications for cities like ours—potentially affecting economic opportunities, hiring practices, and the ability to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

These changes challenge the progress we've made in ensuring that every resident, regardless of background, has access to the same opportunities and resources. Elections have consequences. These consequences include the level of funding we receive, the policies that shape our neighborhoods, and the protections that ensure fairness in housing, employment, and education.

As a city, we must ask ourselves: Are we moving forward toward progress, inclusion, and opportunity, or are we turning back the clock on the rights and advancements our residents have fought for? Jackson must stand firm in its commitment to growth, fairness, and a future that works for everyone.

The time is now to decide who we truly want to be.

Continued: RESOURCE OFFICERS

Kriss Giannetti, JPS Assistant Superintendent of Communications and Community Outreach, says the resource officers play vital roles in school safety plans.

"SROs know the schools back and forth. When police respond to a school for an emergency, the resource officers know what they're going to do and help us coordinate," Giannetti said.

District leaders have noticed the officers providing a critical link between schools and the outside world.

"They give us insight into the students, families and situations that we need to know about. I can't imagine how we would continue without our resource officers. This is something we find to be impactful, necessary, and don't want to do without," Giannetti said.

Boosting safety for the entire community is a benefit of this partnership between the police department and school district.

"Positive interactions with both students and parents are having an immeasurable impact. The JPD officers who work the road are getting a better response from the younger generation, whether that's being more helpful with investigations or just having a friendly conversation," Officer Stallworth said.

The resource officers say they're happy to do their part to help shape the minds of tomorrow.

"Influence kids to make the right choices and be great humans. It's very motivating and it's hard not to love," Officer Stallworth said.



Officer David Stallworth (left) and Officer Warren Johnson (right) at Jackson High School.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

NEW DRONE FOR JACKSON FIRE DEPT. WILL HELP WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSES

A new drone has flown into the Jackson Fire Department (JFD) and is ready to assist crews with fires, investigations, searches, and rescues.

Industrial Steel Treating, a Jackson-based automotive supplier, donated the drone to the fire department last year and covered the cost of training for three firefighters to become licensed drone pilots.

Two firefighters from the City of Jackson and one from Summit Township are trained and licensed to use the small aircraft.

One of those firefighters, JFD Capt. Shane Green, says these remote-controlled devices equipped with cameras are taking off in the fire service.

"It's just another tool that helps us do our jobs. They can be used for firefighting aspects, along with water and ice rescues. The

drone can actually detect victims underwater. When looking for missing people with the thermal cameras, you're able to pick up heat signatures of victims," Capt. Green said.

The fire department understands the privacy concerns residents may have about the drone's usage.

"We only fly the drones in emergency situations, so we're not flying it over houses or anything like that. If there's an emergency, that drone will be flown in a specific area," Capt. Green said.

On Aug. 22, 2023, a massive fire ripped through a vacant industrial facility on North Street in Jackson, injuring four firefighters during the response.

Capt. Green says considering the size of the fire scene, it was difficult for incident commanders to get



Capt. Shane Green (left) and Inspector Tyler Whitehead (right) of Jackson Fire Department with drone equipment.

a full picture of what was happening.

"If we had the drone, we could have thrown it up in about two minutes and gotten a full view of the fire. Plus the drone has the capability to find hot spots," Capt. Green said.

Tim Levy of Industrial Steel Treating, who donated the drone along with his brother Tom, says the 2023 industrial fire inspired them to take action.

"If they would have had this tool during that big fire on North Street, it would have helped the response and kept firefighters safe.

We wanted to show our support for local firefighters and know when there's a major incident the drone will help the entire community. We're pleased to be a part of that," Levy said.

Capt. Green says Jackson firefighters are thankful for the donation and they're ready to use the drone at a moment's notice.

"We're trying to make it known that we have the drone and it is capable so it can be requested. The drone will definitely be used for any big fire or major incident that happens," Capt. Green said.



JFD's new drone was donated by Industrial Steel Treating.

LEAD LINE REPLACEMENTS INCREASE

Efforts to replace all of Jackson's lead service lines continue in 2025.

Last year, the City of Jackson saw lead line replacements accelerate with replacements at 379 properties.

That's a big increase over 2023, when just 115 lines were swapped out.

Another milestone was achieved in 2024, with the City surpassing more than 1,000 lines replaced since this work began in 2018.

Progress is steadily being made toward replacing the 10,334 lines left to go.

Replacements are conducted through street construction projects and the Department of Public Works (DPW).

The DPW urges residents to work with crews when contacted so lines can be replaced as soon as possible.

The replacements do not bring any extra cost because they are funded through water/sewer rates and federal funds.

The City is replacing lines to comply with State of Michigan guidelines and this activity not does indicate a broad issue with lead in Jackson's drinking water.

A service line is the pipe that gets water from the water main underneath the street to your home's plumbing.



Lead service line replaced with new pipe.

CITY PICKS UP PACE OF TREE REMOVALS & TRIMMING



Bob Stolarz from Dept. of Public Works trims a tree on Dewey Avenue in Feb.

Timber!

The City of Jackson is picking up the pace of tree removals and trimming to address a backlog of resident complaints.

As of March 2025, there were nearly 300 properties on a wait list to receive attention for their street trees located in parkways.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) says a large amount of damage from storms, inappropriate plantings, aging trees, and overgrowth next to homes and utility lines are factors that have caused the backlog.

To help with this issue, the DPW has increased its forestry budget by 45 percent over the past six years.

DPW crews removed 293 trees in 2024, a 52 percent increase in removals compared to the previ-

ous year.

Last fall, the City Council approved an additional \$200,000 for a contract with Johnny's Tree Service to address more street trees.

This funding expansion will be used to service more than 100 trees this spring.

"We're thankful for the additional funding for tree maintenance. Removing problem trees and limbs will make our neighborhoods safer and more attractive," said DPW Director Mike Osborn.

Stumps are removed after trees are taken down and parkways are restored with grass seed.

New trees will be planted in parkways throughout 2025 to refresh the City's tree canopy.

To report an issue with a tree located on City property, contact the DPW at 517-788-4170.