

THE 'STATE OF THE CITY'

Address Scheduled for Jackson School of the Arts Site

City of Jackson officials are set to host the first "State of the City" address 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20. Speakers - including Consumers Energy President Patti Poppe and Mayor Derek Dobies among others - will provide attendees a clear vision of some of the challenges the City of Jackson faces moving forward.

The event is organized in the historic Masonic Temple in downtown Jackson, 157 W. Cortland St, the site of the former Vermeulen's Furniture store (pictured to the right).

"The City wants to show residents and business owners alike the amount of energy and enthusiasm that's inherent in the community," City Manager Patrick Burtch said. "What better place to do that than the new site of the Jackson School of the Arts, a 35,000 square foot Masonic Temple currently under renovation to house the arts school."

Mayor Derek Dobies said the event is a small way the City of Jackson can promote itself to outside residents and economic developers while also speaking to all the current residents of the commu-



The "State of the City" address is scheduled for Feb. 20 at the soon-to-be Jackson School of the Arts, pictured, currently under renovation.

nity and make everyone feel heard.

"To my knowledge, the city has never delivered a State of the City address in this fashion," said Dobies, who was elected in November and took his mayoral seat the month after. "It's a great way to promote the city's plans and gather enthusiasm for projects we want to undertake to better the community and help its residents.

"Having corporate part-

ners like Consumers Energy participate will not only showcase their many efforts to aid the Jackson community, but could also inspire other businesses to step forward and be part of the city's renaissance," he added.

Attendees are encouraged to dress for the venue, which is currently under renovation.

The event is expected to last roughly one hour and include speeches from Dobies, Poppe and more.

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\$5K RAISED FOR JPD OFFICER

Jackson Police Officer Craig Edmondson started last year off on a high note, as he was named the 2016 JPD “Officer of the Year” in April, but things quickly took a harsh turn when Edmondson had a stroke in July, followed by an unwelcome diagnosis shortly after his stroke.

“When I was in the hospital recovering from the stroke, doctors found that I had prostate cancer,” Edmondson, 45, said. “It was just one thing after another, nothing was going right for me last year.”

Edmondson has been on medical leave for roughly six months as he recovered first from the stroke and next from surgery that removed the cancer in his prostate.

To date, the 22-year JPD veteran said he is cancer free and looking to return to the force.

“It’s been a rough six months,” he said. “Since I’m on medical leave, I’m not paid as much as when I was working every day, and I had to discontinue my lawn care business as well.”

Bills continued to pile up



Officer Craig Edmondson, right, and Director of Police and Fire Services Elmer Hitt on the Bart Hawley Show. (Photo courtesy of JTV Jackson)

for the father of six, he said, saying that this Christmas season was expected to be especially hard.

City employees, though, stepped up to help the Edmondson family this Christmas, as they donated funds and organized a silent auction and a 50/50 raffle at

their annual Christmas party for Edmondson. The winner of the raffle - firefighter Craig Reppert - even donated his winnings to the fund to help his fellow first responder.

All in all, roughly \$5,000 was raised for Edmondson and delivered right before Christmas.

“It was amazing,” Edmondson said. “We were able to get Christmas gifts and get our bills up to date. It saved our holidays and meant so much.”

City employees typically raise funds for an employee in need every holiday season.

STAFF ATTEND POVERTY FORUM

Considering a City-wide poverty rate in Jackson **approaching 40 percent**, a median household income **less than \$30,000** and **roughly one in six** City residents lacking a high school diploma or GED, City officials recognized a need for employees to get at the root of the poverty problem in the community.

Beginning earlier this month and continuing through Feb. 26, more than

200 City employees and elected officials will complete the “Bridges Out of Poverty” workshop, organized and presented by the Nonprofit Network.

“A main priority is for City staff and officials to work toward a more inclusive and tolerant City,” City Manager Patrick Burtch said. “To solve a problem you first have to understand it, and this workshop will work to-

ward City staff’s understanding of abject poverty some in our City face and those that may be underserved can be more highly considered.”

The training is designed to tackle stereotypes about poverty and race and instead develop understanding and empathy across all classes.

The initiative is geared toward helping people understand the unique struggles of people in poverty while also

asking practical questions about helping those move out of it.

“The City is in a unique position in that we have the ability to adopt policies that can help the community as a whole.” Mayor Derek Dobies said. “Moving forward, we’ll look to change the way we approach poverty in the City of Jackson, and this training is a good first step in doing that.”





MAYOR

Derek Dobies

COUNCIL (Ward)

- Arlene Robinson 1
- Freddie Dancy 2
- Jeromy Alexander 3
- Craig Pappin 4
- Andrew Frounfelker 5
- Colleen Sullivan 6

CITY MANAGER

Patrick Burtch

MEETINGS/EVENTS

Jan. 30 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

Feb. 13 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

Monday, Feb. 19
City Hall Closed
Presidents' Day

Feb. 20 • 6:30 p.m.
'State of the City' Address
157 W. Cortland St.

Feb. 27 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

For more information about City programs, visit the City's website at www.cityofjackson.org

A DAY IN THE LIFE

City of Jackson DPW Mechanics

For most of the services the City of Jackson provides its residents, there's a vehicle involved. Whether it's a snowplow clearing and salting streets, a ladder truck or police interceptor transporting first responders to a crime scene or emergency, or a sedan carrying a City inspector from one house to the next, all these vehicles have one thing in common: engines and engine parts that (like any vehicle) eventually will fray, freeze and, ultimately, fail.

When City vehicles do break down, there are three employees who step forward and come to the rescue. Tucked away in the back of the Department of Public Works headquarters, three state-licensed and multiply-certified mechanics wrench on everything from Chevy SUVs to 15-ton ladder trucks: **Scott Boden and master mechanics Mike Hunter and Jeff Schmeltz.**

More than 50 years of combined professional mechanic experience allows Boden, Hunter and Schmeltz to fix whatever gets thrown at them, from a simple chainsaw repair to a complicated ladder truck engine repair.

"We all have our specialties," Boden said. "Jeff primarily handles the cars and small trucks, Mike's our guy that does the fire trucks, engines, gauges and all, and I do the road trucks and equipment."

Even though they each have their specialty, they're all cross-trained to do other work, Boden explained.

"Should an emergency repair arise, we stop and make sure that gets done," he said. "Certain pieces of equipment have to get back on the road immediately, so a regular maintenance or repair job takes a temporary back seat until we get that piece back up and rolling."

Although Boden, Hunter and Schmeltz aren't in the public eye, they quietly and effectively perform a public good - and not everything you readily see is always the most important. As any good mechanic will tell you: **It's what's under the hood that counts.**

FUN FACT:
Snow plow blades are resharpened after **8 hours** of use.



Scott Boden, Jeff Schmeltz and Mike Hunter work behind the scenes to keep Jackson running.



JACKSON NATIVE EYEING NFL

To date, no person born and raised in Jackson has been drafted into the NFL.

While there have been undrafted NFL players more known for their coaching careers and accolades (here's to you, Tony Dungy), one hometown hero is hoping to break that dry spell.

Khari Willis is heading into his senior season as a starting safety for Michigan State University. After a breakout year for the Spartans in 2017, Willis is hoping to continue to improve and, ultimately, achieve a lifelong goal of playing in the NFL.

Some pundits have rated Willis as high as a third round draft pick, though the Lumen Christi graduate says he has more pressing issues to focus on first.

"Main thing right now is continuing to win," Willis

said. "If we win the East (Division), we have a good chance of winning the conference and playing for more."

Willis more than doubled his tackling totals in 2017, earning 39 solo tackles and 32 assists last season. He also recorded four sacks, 5.5 tackles for loss, one forced fumble and two interceptions, helping the Spartans go from a 3-9 record in 2016 to a 10-3 record and a convincing Holiday Bowl win.

Willis said his parents and his family have helped him stay grounded as he continues to perform for MSU.

"My whole family allows me to be who I am and relax," he said. "At MSU I'm a student athlete - at home in Jackson I'm just me."

"They've been a huge support system for me," he added.



Jackson native Khari Willis is entering his senior year as a starting safety for the MSU Spartans.

From the Desk of Mayor Derek Dobies

This January I delivered an address at Jackson College's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration Dinner and had the opportunity to reflect on Dr. King's legacy. It's clear to me that, while we live in a time where top elected leaders openly embrace a rhetoric of hate, intolerance, and division, there remains a lot of energy and enthusiasm within our community for change.

Some positive proposals have already come to pass in our community: it was one year ago around MLK Day that our City resolved to pass the non-discrimination ordinance and prohibit discrimination in housing, employment and public ac-

commodations based on protected classes including sexual orientation and gender identity.

As MLK Day passes, we recommit ourselves to continuing to build a more tolerant, inclusive city - one that views diversity as a strength. That's why we've enrolled the entire city staff in racial equity training, and poverty training to better understand the abject poverty our city faces (Pg. 2). Let us not forget: in addition to being a civil rights champion, Dr. King was also an anti-poverty crusader. As your mayor, I look forward to the City taking a lead in combating poverty, inequality and discrimination.

It's clear we must do more, and I believe that as we rebuild our city, Jackson can be a leader in Michigan on a number of fronts through new projects and initiatives. I'm excited to touch on many of these proposed changes and a vision for the future of our city at our inaugural State of the City address Feb. 20.

I'm happy to be joined by Consumers Energy President Patti Poppe, as we elaborate on the strong partnerships built with the business community and corporate citizens that can maintain the momentum building within the City for new and exciting developments (Pg. 1).



Working together, we can build a city that works for all of us.

Sincerely,



DID YOU KNOW?

City Offering Exercise/Yoga Classes

Beginning earlier this month, Jackson officials will provide updated exercise class offerings at the Boos Center, 210 Gilbert St., in the heart of Loomis Park.

“We want people to consider the Boos Center and what the City of Jackson has to offer when gearing up for their new year’s resolution,” Recreation Services Coordinator Joe Hawley said. “We offer various yoga, pilates, aerobics, zumba and cardio classes

on a weekly basis and our instructors have more than 100 years of combined certified teaching experience.”

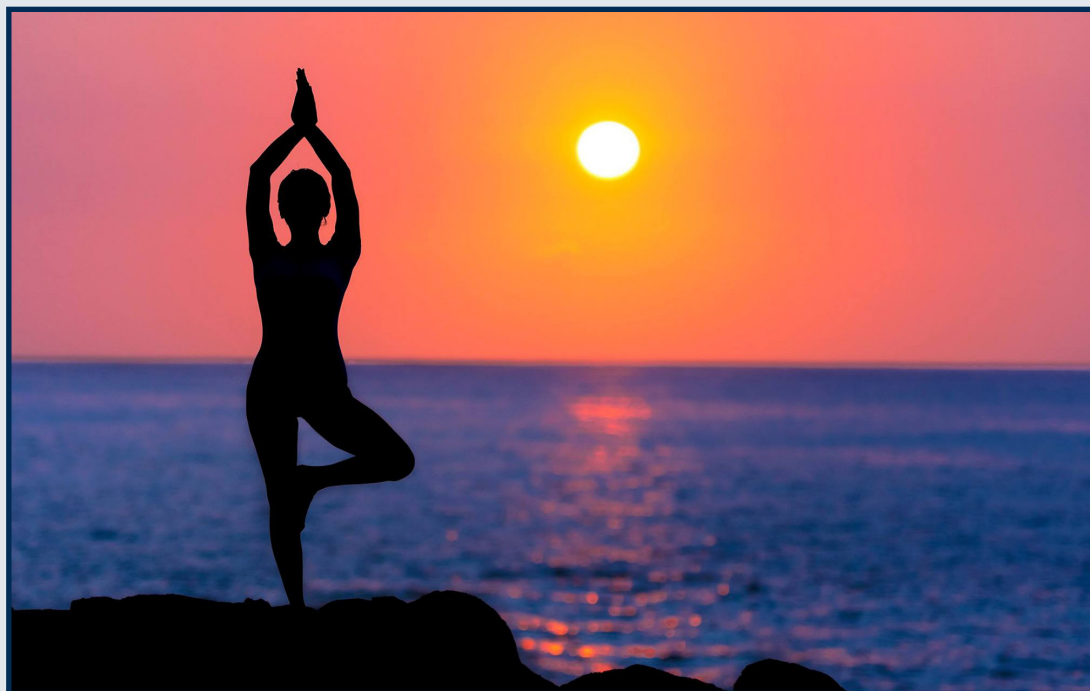
Classes are \$4 each.

Exercise classes include “Strength and Stretch” with Michelle Woods, a certified fitness instructor and personal trainer; “Rise and Flow Yoga” with instructor Beth Hall; “Pilates Barre Fusion” with instructor Amy Reamer; and more.

For a full list of class offerings in 2018, visit www.cityofjackson.org/boos.

“We will be having winter yoga workshops periodically throughout the winter and spring to help beginners learn proper technique and positioning,” Hawley said. “Be sure to call us or check the website for updated class schedules and workshops.”

Hawley said all classes offered at the center are family friendly and are designed and adaptable for people of every level and ability.



The City of Jackson’s Recreation Department continues to offer affordable and family-friendly exercise and yoga classes at the Boos Center.

CITY IS NOW TAKING ‘17 TAX FILINGS

City of Jackson officials are now accepting 2017 tax filings for City income taxes, with April 30 the deadline to file one’s taxes within the City.

Jackson is one of 18 municipalities in the State of Michigan that levies an income tax of 1 percent for City residents and 0.5 percent for non-residents who work within the City of Jackson. Other communities that levy an income tax include Albion, Flint, Ionia, Lansing, Detroit, Grand Rapids and more.

Tax forms can be downloaded on the City of Jackson’s website at www.cityofjackson.org/786/2017-Income-Tax-Forms.

Online forms for years 2008 through 2017 are available on the City’s website.

Forms can be mailed to:

**Income Tax Division
City Hall
Jackson, MI 4901**

For those who owe on their taxes remittance must be made payable to “Treasurer, City of Jackson.”

Most refunds will be mailed to residents after the April 30 deadline and in the order their tax forms were processed.



“Like” the City of Jackson’s Facebook page for up-to-date information on what’s happening in your community!

www.facebook.com/cityofjacksonmi/

