

# JACKSON



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BIMONTHLY

## 'LOFTS ON LOUIS' BREAKS GROUND

A new four-story, mixed use building development including residential and commercial space broke ground in downtown Jackson early in November.

A ceremony for the "Lofts on Louis" development took place Friday, Nov. 4, at the building site on Louis Glick Highway, just north of the Hotel Hayes. The Monday following the groundbreaking event, construction crews were already hard at work building the first such development in Jackson in at least 15 years.

The Lofts on Louis project was awarded a loan from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation on Tuesday, Oct. 25 - the final touchstone before the project could begin.

"We're so pleased to finally put shovels in the ground," said John Burtka, project partner. "We feel this project could be the first step toward more development in Jackson."

The \$5.4 million, 45,000 square foot project is expected to take roughly one year to complete. The development includes 30 apartment units and a commercial space on the first floor.

"We're very excited to be a part of this project and help revitalize Jackson," Mayor



**Construction work has begun on a \$5.4 million, 45,000-square-foot project in the heart of downtown Jackson. The "Lofts on Louis" development will include apartments and a commercial space on the first floor.**

Bill Jors said. "This is something we've worked on for years, and to see shovels in the ground and construction equipment coming to the site makes for great news."

Jackson City Manager Patrick Burtch said it's projects such as these which can help spur more development and help a city grow from the center core out. The idea of a modern downtown metropolis evokes visions of bustling sidewalks, new developments and a pedes-

trian-friendly urban core, which this particular development helps spur, he said.

"This development is a catalyst for the city of Jackson," Burtch said. "It's been too long since the city has seen new structures being built in the area. We're excited to see where this project can take us."

The apartment units will include granite counter tops, nine-foot ceilings, stainless appliances, individual washers and dryers and more.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Downtown Set For Revitalization
- 2 City to Combat Human Trafficking
- 3 Firefighter Grant Accepted by City
- 4 A Message From Mayor Bill Jors

# DOWNTOWN FOCUS SPARKS REBIRTH

City officials' continued focus on rebuilding downtown Jackson is beginning to bear fruit, with a multitude of developments ranging from the new Lofts on Louis development - the first of its kind in Jackson in 15 years (see Pg. 1) - to Gilbert Chocolates returning to the City core.

"Jackson hasn't seen this kind of growth in some time," Mayor Bill Jors said. "It seems as though every other week we're either breaking ground on a brand new building, cutting ribbons for a new business in an existing downtown structure or signing off on work permits to remodel so-to-be-filled businesses in the City's core."

Within the last year, a number of new restaurants have opened in downtown Jackson, including the Dirty Bird, which offers a wide variety of craft beers on tap and specializes in chicken wings, and the Junkyard Dog, which offers hot dog recipes ranging from a traditional coney dog to a "Chicago dog."

Other such developments are in the works, including

a new restaurant at 151 W. Michigan Ave. and the possibility of a locally-sourced restaurant and grocery store on the corner of Francis and Cortland, where Evanoff's once operated.

Rounding out new developments in downtown Jackson are Gilbert Chocolates, which returned to its downtown location after 52 years in Napoleon Township, and Community Vibrations, an organic food co-op on the corner of Washington Avenue and Mechanic Street.

"With the City's focus on attracting residents to downtown Jackson, and rebuilding the City from the center out, businesses are recognizing that downtown offers a number of viable possibilities for growth," said Andrew Frounfelker, 5th Ward Councilman, who represents downtown Jackson. "You can draw a direct line from new downtown streets, parks and apartments to new businesses in the area. It's a great thing to see happen before our eyes."

City contractors will soon finish repaving downtown portions of Francis, Me-



**Gilbert Chocolates returns to downtown Jackson with a new Jackson Street location, pictured.**

chanic and Jackson streets re-engineer Michigan Avenue and create a downtown park adjacent to the Hotel

Hayes. Next spring and summer, the downtown loop including Louis Glick Highway and Washington Avenue will convert to two-way traffic.

## JACKSON SET TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING

Jackson City Council voted unanimously this month to work toward identifying and reporting human trafficking within the City of Jackson. The resolution voted on by Jackson City Council calls for a policy that educates housing inspectors and relevant staff, such as police officers, to spot and report signs of human trafficking within Jackson.

"The Jackson County Task Force on Human Traf-

ficking appreciates the city's efforts in support of this issue," County Prosecutor Jerry Jarzynka said.

Human trafficking - the trade of people for sexual slavery, forced labor and other aims - generates more than \$30 billion a year in the trade of nearly 21 million people across the country. Closer to home, Michigan ranks second, behind only Nevada, in the number of prosecuted human trafficking cases.

"The plan is to work with human trafficking expert Dr. Jeremy Norwood and others to help train the city to be a factor in fighting human trafficking," said Freddie Dancy, 2nd Ward councilman.

Norwood said the next step is to work with city administration and the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office to continue training inspectors and other relevant staff to recognize signs of human trafficking during home in-

spections and patrols.

"The proposed new policy will have the city playing a key role in helping to detect indicators of human trafficking in the community," said Norwood, a professor of sociology at Spring Arbor University and an expert on human trafficking. "Partnerships like these are crucial in not only identifying victims and helping them, but also bringing this issue to light so more don't fall victim to it."





**MAYOR**

Bill Jors

**COUNCIL (Ward)**

- Arlene Robinson 1
- Freddie Dancy 2
- Daniel Greer 3
- Craig Pappin 4
- Andrew Frounfelker 5
- Derek Dobies 6

**CITY MANAGER**

Patrick Burtch

**MEETINGS/EVENTS**

**Nov. 18 • 6-9 p.m.**  
Annual Christmas Parade  
*Downtown Jackson*

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

**DEC. 20 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting  
*City Hall, 2nd Floor*

**Dec. 23, Dec. 26**  
City Hall Closed  
*Christmas Holiday*

**Monday, Jan. 2**  
City Hall Closed  
*New Year's Holiday*

For more information about City programs, visit the City's website at [www.cityofjackson.org](http://www.cityofjackson.org)

# DID YOU KNOW?

## Grant Accepted to Staff Firefighters

Jackson administration last month accepted \$1.67 million from the federal government to staff nine grant-funded firefighters for two years.

“Officials at the Federal Emergency Management Agency were quick to work with the city when they saw that negotiations with the firefighters’ union were going smoothly, and a contract agreement was forthcoming,” City Manager Patrick Burtch said. “We very much appreciate their efforts and their willingness to work with us on acquiring the SAFER funds.”

Jackson City Council members voted Oct. 27 to ratify a new, five-year contract between the City and the Summit-Jackson Professional Firefighters Union Local 1306.

The agreement highlights, among other provisions, wage increases for firefighters, health insurance changes and

pension reforms which will help stabilize retiree costs associated with former City firefighters and the City’s Act 345 pension fund.

“The union is very pleased with the way negotiations went,” union president Scott Stoker said. “The outcome was fair. Changes to our pension system were done in the best interest of our membership and the city.”

Wage increases agreed to by both parties range from 1.75 percent to 3 percent. Employees hired on or after July 1, 2012, who were on a lower wage scale, received larger raises over the life of the new contract.

Grant funds will begin being distributed to cities, including Jackson, in February.

Job postings for new firefighters at the City have already been advertised.



**City officials accepted a \$1.67 million grant from the federal government last month to hire nine firefighters for two years. (Photo courtesy of Jackson Citizen Patriot • MLive.com)**



# A REMINDER TO CLEAR SIDEWALKS

City of Jackson officials within the Public Works Department would like to remind all owners or occupants of property within the limits of the City to clear sidewalks of snow this winter season.

According to city law, residents are required to clear sidewalks to a minimum of three feet in width and the entire length of sidewalk when more than 4 inches of snow have accumulated.

The ordinance authorizes the City to remove such snow and ice that constitutes a threat to public safety at the property owners' expense. For more information, contact the City of Jackson at 517-788-4170 or visit the city's website at [www.cityofjackson.org](http://www.cityofjackson.org).

"If either weed mowing or sidewalk snow removal isn't

taken care of by the property owner, the City will sometimes take care of it without a written or verbal warning beforehand," Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said. "This is why we want to inform as many people as possible about it before the snow hits. It makes the City safer to navigate on foot, and it saves property owners a bill if a City contractor is required to take care of it."

If the property owner is unable to clear their own driveway or sidewalk, there are a number of options to pursue, including volunteers who often help in these situations, Forgrave said.

"If a property owner or citizen calls the City we can usually find a volunteer organization to help," he said.



## A Message from Jackson Mayor Bill Jors

Many area residents can now look forward to the holidays with the election season behind us and Thanksgiving and Christmas just around the corner. It's a time to be with family, relax and look back on the year that was.

I wish everyone in the community a safe and happy holiday season.

In Jackson, the last year has brought with it a lot of great news and positive developments for taxpayers and residents.

Most recently, a new four-story, mixed use building development broke ground in downtown Jackson after months of meetings and discussions. Now, there are finally construction crews on site - the first

development of its kind in some 15 years - which is news that anyone in the area can be thankful for.

Not only has the new \$5.4 million development broken ground, but other businesses continue to move to downtown Jackson.

In the last year, the city has seen an influx of businesses such as Gilbert Chocolates, the Dirty Bird restaurant, the Junkyard Dog restaurant and Community Vibrations, an organic food co-op in the heart of downtown Jackson.

Looking forward to next year, residents can expect to see more exciting developments, including a new restaurant at 151 W. Michigan Ave. and the possibility of

a locally-sourced grocery store and restaurant on the corner of Cortland and Francis streets, where Evannoff's once stood.

In addition to exciting new businesses and developments, the City of Jackson will also have nine new firefighters come February, thanks to a \$1.67 million federal grant. The grant is expected to last two years.

Come this spring, residents will also be able to enjoy a new bandshell and art exhibit area adjacent to the Hotel Hayes in Horace Blackman Park. Construction crews have been working around the clock since last month to complete the project, which will bring with it a new gathering place in downtown Jackson



to enjoy live shows and outdoor movies put on by the Downtown Development Authority.

For these reasons and others, the future looks bright in Jackson!

**Mayor Bill Jors**



# Harold White Breakfast

*Molly Kaser, Rev. Amos Williams Awarded*

*"Be the change you wish to see in the world."*

*-Gandhi*

In the spirit of Gandhi's famous quote, the City of Jackson's Human Relations Commission organized its 11th Annual Harold White Jr. Memorial Awards Breakfast honoring outstanding volunteers in the Jackson community.

About 100 guests gathered last month at the Cascades Manor house to recognize the outstanding volunteers selected by the Human Relations Commission to receive the Harold White Jr. Memorial Awards plaque and to have their names engraved and placed in stone in Blackman Park downtown in Jackson.

This year's recipients include Molly Kaser, the CEO of the Jackson Center for Family Health, and the late Rev. Amos Polk Williams, former Pastor of Second Missionary Baptist Church in Jackson.

The award, named in honor of the late Harold White Jr. for his outstanding participation in many community and grass roots organizations, recognizes those who "walk the talk" and give back to the com-



**The award winners at this year's Harold White Memorial Breakfast.**

munity their time and effort making the city a better place to live.

"I believe this was our best turnout ever", said HRC Chairwoman Alice Lewis. "The community really came out and supported this wonderful event".

Pastor Darius Williams, current pastor of Second Missionary Baptist Church led the invocation, and the programs was professionally emceed by Terry Langston of the Center for Family Health.

City of Jackson Mayor Bill Jors spoke and re-

presented the City and the Human Relations Commission's efforts. While the guests enjoyed a tasteful buffet style breakfast catered by Cascades Manor House, William Patterson of Jackson Public Schools introduced Molly Kaser, and Darrell Edwards, the daughter of the late Pastor A.P. Williams spoke about and received the award for her father.

Several local officials and businesses attended as well as members of the White family and a host of others.

## GET THE JACKSON BULLETIN VIA EMAIL

The City of Jackson's bi-monthly newsletter, mailed to every household within the City every two months, is now available in an email format.

Those interested in getting an e-copy of the City's newsletter can visit <http://eepurl.com/chL8Wr> to sign up.

Hard copies are also available at the Jackson District Library's downtown branch and on various floors of City Hall, 161 W. Michigan Ave.

Other ways of keeping up with City news and announcements is by following the City of Jackson and "liking" its Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/cityofjacksonmi/](http://www.facebook.com/cityofjacksonmi/). Finally, the City's Twitter page can be found at [@CityOfJacksonMi](https://twitter.com/CityOfJacksonMi).

"We've made a concerted effort the last couple of years to reach out to City residents and others with up-to-date information on goings on within the City," Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said. "We've had a great response from the newsletter mailed to residents, and we've had increased impact on social media channels."

Forgrave said any way to keep connected with Jackson residents and citizens is important.

"We welcome debate and dialogue with residents, and one of the best ways to move Jackson forward is to keep everyone informed," Forgrave said.



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

[www.facebook.com/cityofjacksonmi/](http://www.facebook.com/cityofjacksonmi/)

