

JACKSON

Issue IX, Spring 2017

BIMONTHLY

EVERY INCH OF MICHIGAN AVE. IN CITY SET FOR A REBUILD

More than 6 miles of streets and roadways in the City of Jackson are scheduled for maintenance this year, including all of West Michigan and East Michigan avenues, and the downtown Jackson loop.

“One of the most talked about issues that City residents often bring up is how there are a number of roads that need fixing, especially West Michigan Avenue,” Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said. “We hear them loud and clear, and we’re looking forward to working with the Michigan Department of Transportation to complete these projects.”

A number of projects are on this year’s construction docket, the vast majority of which are street construction, with some parking lot maintenance and crack sealing work included.

West Michigan Avenue is scheduled to begin in earnest next month. Project highlights include street reconstruction with concrete pavement, traffic signal upgrades, sidewalk replacement, and watermain, sanitary sewer and storm sewer replacements.

“It will be a complete rebuild on West Michigan Avenue,” City Engineer Jon Dowling said. “Construction is scheduled to take place from April all the way through December.”

Residents and businesses on East Michigan Avenue will see their street milled and repaved between April and June.

While West Michigan Avenue is under construction, so too will the down-



Some major streets in Jackson are scheduled for road maintenance this season, including all of West Michigan and East Michigan avenues.

town Jackson loop be under construction. The project calls for Washington Avenue and Louis Glick Highway to be converted to two-way traffic, as well as traffic signal upgrades and intersection repair work. The downtown loop is set for construction from April through December.

Other local construction projects include Kibby Road from the City limits to West Avenue, Dewey from Clinton to Lansing, portions of West Ave-

nue, and three downtown parking lots, as well as a number of others.

City of Jackson residents interested in receiving a weekly update on construction within the City this summer can sign up for the “Dig Jackson” e-newsletter by going to the website www.digjackson.com.

Employees within the City’s Engineering Division and Public Information Department collaborated to create the Dig Jackson newsletter last year.

LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN FEATURED IN MUSEUM EXHIBIT

Councilman Freddie Dancy Included as Subject

A new exhibit at the Ella Sharp Museum of Art and History features 38 African American men from the Jackson community, including pastors, local college officials and one Jackson City Council member, among a wide variety of others.

The exhibit, dubbed *Sons - Seeing the Modern African American Male*, opened last month, and will continue to be open for public viewing - free of charge - through May 27. The exhibit features all Jackson-area men and is presented in two parts, photographer and artist Jerry Taliaferro said.

"We're all guilty of jumping to conclusions about our fellow man," Taliaferro said. "We see an individual and make assumptions about them simply by how they look."

The artist said he uses local residents in his exhibits to "start a conversation" in the community.

"This is the third installment of *Sons*, with two others on the East Coast," Taliaferro, 64, said. "The way African American men are portrayed in popular culture, in the news and elsewhere, it's easy to jump to some not-so-flattering conclusions. This exhibit is used to break through the stereotypes."

The portraits of the 38 men are displayed in two parts. In the first, the men are shown from their shoulders up in high-contrast, black and white photos.



Jerry Taliaferro's "SONS" art exhibit is on display at the Ella Sharp Museum, 3225 Fourth St., through May 27. The exhibit is open to the public at no cost.

Participants are then asked to make assumptions about the individual in the photo before moving on to the second section. There, the men are pictured in color with their personality on display, sometimes with props from work or with items from their life that highlight who they are.

"The people in Jackson and at the museum were absolutely great to work with," said Taliaferro, a North Carolina resident. "I was very impressed with the museum, its staff, and members of the

community who helped with the project."

Rachel Veramay, exhibition coordinator at the museum, worked with Taliaferro for months to present the exhibit.

Accompanying each captioned image in the second section is a brief comment about the subject's views on how they are perceived, their hope and fears for their sons and more, she said.

"Defining the contemporary black American man is a daunting task," reads part of the artist's statement on

the exhibit. "His physical and social manifestations alone are practically unlimited. How do you make a composite of a man who is a celebrated author and the product of inadequate educational systems, or one who is a graduate student with a bright future, or a high school dropout with few prospects? To understand the realities of black manhood in America might require something more than a cursory examination ... (but) it is important that we make the attempt."



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

March 28 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

April 11 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

Friday, April 14
City Hall Closed
Good Friday

April 24-26
Spring Book Sale
JDL, Carnegie Branch

April 25 • 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

CP Federal City Square

Ribbon Cutting Set For May 5

After nearly two years of planning, fund raising and construction, city officials and project donors will unveil the Glidden Parker mural during a ribbon cutting event in May.

CP Federal City Square will house the mural within Horace Blackman Park, 212 W. Michigan Ave. The structure also includes an art exhibit viewing area, and a staging area for outdoor music, movies and more. O'Harrow Construction began work on the structure last summer.

"Despite spearheading the project over the last three years, I've actually never seen the mural in real life, so I'm excited to see it in all its glory at the ribbon cutting" said Derek Dobies, 6th Ward councilman. "This project stands as a testament to what can happen when a community comes together to rebuild their city and make a conscious effort to preserve a piece of art history."

Funding for the project began with the success of two competitive grants - one from the National Endowment for the Arts and one from the Michigan Council

for Arts and Cultural Affairs. Since those funds were awarded in 2015, eight more community organizations stepped forward to fund the project, including CP Federal Credit Union, the Weatherwax Foundation, Consumers Energy, Experience Jackson, the ALRO Foundation, the Dawn Foods Foundation, the Phil & Pat Willis Foundation and the Jackson Public Arts Commission.

The ribbon cutting event is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Friday, May 5 at the CP Federal City Square in Horace Blackman Park. Anyone who wishes is able to attend, and light refreshments will be served.

Speakers at the event include Jackson Mayor Bill Jors, Dobies, Councilman Andrew Frounfelker and CP Federal Credit Union CEO John Crist.

"It's inspiring to see this new structure at the heart of the city's downtown development," Jors said. "It's likely that construction of a number of new structures, including apartment lofts on Louis Glick, will serve as the backdrop to the CP Federal City Square this summer."



A ribbon cutting and Glidden Parker mural unveiling is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Friday, May 5, at the CP Federal City Square building at Horace Blackman Park, 212 W. Michigan Ave.



COUNCIL SUPPORTS KAYAK LAUNCHES

Jackson City Council last month approved a resolution in support of kayak and canoe launches along the Grand River in Jackson County, including some areas within the City.

The concept plan for the launch system along the Grand River was drafted by the Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance, and supported by Jackson City Council at their Feb. 21 meeting.

Each concept for launches in the City of Jackson must go through a site plan review and gain future approval from City Council, City Manager Patrick Burtch said.

“The resolution is to assist the Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance in gathering financial support for the project,” Public Information Officer Will Forgrave

said. “The alliance has highlighted four locations within the City to building a dock and launch. We’re all excited about the possibility.”

The current concept calls for a dock and kayak launches at Ella Sharp Park, High Street, in downtown Jackson and at Lions Park.

“We know that the citizens of Jackson value their natural resources and outdoor recreation,” said Kelli Hoover, Jackson parks, recreation and cemeteries director. “We believe that area residents will benefit greatly from the proposed water trail.”

A number of statewide plans, as well as local master plans within Jackson County, call for the establishment of a statewide system of designated water trails.



Jackson City Council recently voted for a resolution in support of kayak and canoe launches within the City of Jackson, along the Grand River.

A Message from Jackson Mayor Bill Jors

Now that it’s spring - and despite the fact there will undoubtedly be a few cold snaps (this is Michigan after all) - construction season is upon us in the City of Jackson.

While it does make driving through the City more cumbersome, a number of street construction projects are slated this year to help bolster Jackson’s infrastructure and smooth its roadways.

It’s safe to say the vast majority of area residents will be happy to hear that West Michigan Avenue is slated for a full rebuild this year between Brown Street (Jackson city limits) and the downtown loop, while the whole of East Michigan Avenue is

scheduled for a resurfacing.

Included in summer construction projects is the Michigan Department of Transportation’s project to convert Washington Avenue and Louis Glick Highway to two-way traffic in downtown Jackson.

Come December, community members will enjoy new streets from the west side of the City all the way to the east when traveling down its main thoroughfares.

Both the downtown Jackson loop as well as West Michigan Avenue will be constructed with concrete instead of asphalt as well, meaning the roads will remain pothole free for much longer than if asphalt was

applied.

Most street projects will begin this month or next, with some work scheduled to continue through December of this year.

City officials have spent years to ensure that our budget is balanced and money is saved - now we can begin to use some of those funds for major infrastructure projects within the City of Jackson.

Streets won’t be the only projects under construction this summer - as new loft apartments in the heart of downtown Jackson are under construction, with more developments - such as Commonwealth Associates moving their headquarters to the corner of



Blackstone and Louis Glick Highway - on the docket.

Jackson is on its way to changing for the better, and we have the shovels in the ground to prove it. For these reasons and others, the future looks bright in Jackson!



DID YOU KNOW?

Commercial Construction Up \$10 Million in City

Building permits for commercial structures in Jackson are up nearly \$10 million from this same time last year, according to a report from the City of Jackson's Neighborhood & Economic Operations Department.

This time last year, roughly \$11.34 million in commercial development was permitted. Now, some \$21.2 million in commercial development has been permitted within the City of Jackson.

"The number and value of building permits in a community is a very good

indicator of economic activity and - in Jackson's case - of a strong rebound," City Manager Patrick Burtch said. "This is just one more example that strongly indicates our vision is working. An 86 percent increase over this time last year is great news, and even more astounding considering these numbers only include commercial structures."

Burtch went on to say the commercial development permit statistics do not include any of the developments in downtown Jackson.

"We'll continue to see

more development within the City as we move forward," he said.

Residential building permits are also on the rise.

Year over year, residential permits are up \$179,163, or 6.8 percent for the same time period last year. For the first seven months in 2016, 320 permits were issued compared to 295 the year before, an 8.5 percent increase.

Building permits for both commercial and residential have risen steadily over the last four years, according to statistics from the City of Jackson.

PARKS DEPT. WINS AWARD

The Michigan Recreation & Park Association has awarded Jackson's Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Department an award for "innovation in recreation programming."

Presented to the City of Jackson in January, the award was on behalf of the City's adult Wiffle ball league, started three years ago.

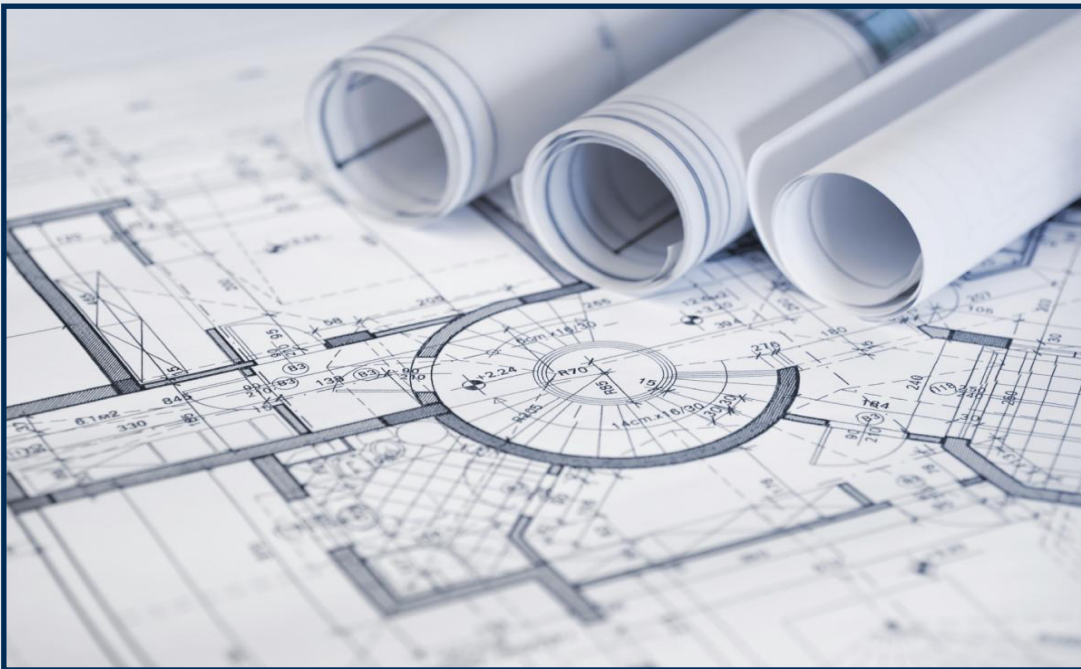
"Since we started, we've had 14 teams sign up for the league," said Joe Hawley, recreation services coordinator at the City. "This year will be the third year we've organized the league and we expect it to continue to grow."

Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Director Kelli Hoover said the league is the "best of both worlds."

"It's one of the fastest-growing leagues and it's also one of our most affordable programs to organize and produce," she said. "We're very happy to be recognized for our achievement. Any time we're highlighted for our hard work and dedication we appreciate it."

Hawley said the City spends roughly \$1,000 on supplies for the league every season. The league begins in July, and joins a list of other new programs at the department - including indoor soccer and dodgeball.

"We always look for ways to innovate and grow," Hawley said.



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