

# JACKSON

Issue 1, Fall 2015

QUARTERLY

## DOWNTOWN ROADWORK ON PACE

The average life expectancy was younger than 50 and the majority of people still used a horse and buggy as their main mode of transportation the last time sanitary sewer lines were placed below Michigan Avenue in downtown Jackson.

Now, more than a century later, new sewer lines - along with water mains, gas mains and electrical infrastructure - have been installed between Blackstone and Francis streets, the first major step in a construction project the City began last summer.

After installing the mains below Michigan Avenue, crews from the Dunigan Brothers, the City's contractor, are currently working on the streetscape above, finishing sidewalk work, grading, and soon finishing the street with a topcoat of asphalt.

City engineers say the asphalt will likely be applied, paved and open to cars by early November, a step in the construction process. The Chase sports bar owner Randy LeMaster is excited about.

"It's going to look absolutely great when it's done," LeMaster said. "I'm happy with everything the City has done as far as keeping us in the loop on what to expect, and I really don't think the construction has hurt my



**Contractors work on the Dig Downtown Jackson project in front of City Hall this September.**

business."

After the topcoat is paved, landscaping work, including planting trees along the three-block stretch of road, will be done.

Irrigation piping was installed in the block between Mechanic and Francis street, and is underway between Jackson Street and Mechanic Street.

During the conduit and light pole base work, crews will plant trees down the thoroughfare.

"The timing will be perfect

as trees are typically planted in the fall after they have gone dormant for the season," City Senior Civil Engineer Troy White said.

Due to the complexity of the project, construction issues and delays are inevitable, but the City will ensure issues are communicated and continues to press to meet completion schedules.

We would like to thank the community for supporting our downtown businesses during this construction process.

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# FALL LEAF PICKUP IS BACK

Beginning this October, privately contracted local companies Emmons and Modern Waste will collect bagged leaves curbside for City of Jackson residents.

It's been two years since the City picked up residents' leaves curbside following a lawsuit that cut funding for the program. Every year since, residents hauled their leaves to City drop-off sites.

Now, the City has a leaner, cheaper leaf pickup model for 2015 and beyond.

"We're continuing to make the tough budgetary decisions to build a more efficient City government," said Derek Dobies, 6th Ward councilman, after council voted to restore leaf pickup.

City residents are required to use City-provided, 30 gallon paper bags for their leaves. This will limit the instances of people dumping yard waste in the City, and protect the environment - keeping plastic and non-disposable items out of area landfills.

Bags are available for pickup at the Jackson Public Works Building, 521 Water Street, during the following dates and times:

## FRIDAYS

**Oct. 9 - Dec. 4**  
**Noon - 4 p.m.**

## SATURDAYS

**Oct. 10 - Nov. 21**  
**8 a.m. - Noon**

Bags should be about one foot from the curb for pickup (see photo on this page).

United Waste will pick up City residents' leaves twice this autumn, beginning Oct. 17. The pickup days will be as follows, with crews starting at 6 a.m.:

## FIRST ROUND

**Oct. 17 • SE Section**  
**Oct. 24 • NW Section**  
**Oct. 31 • SW Section**  
**Nov. 7 • NE Section**

## SECOND ROUND

**Nov. 14 • SE Section**  
**Nov. 21 • NW Section**



**City bags for leaf pickup - residents must use these bags to have their leaves picked up.**

**Dec. 5 • SW Section**  
**Dec. 12 • NE Section**

**E. Michigan Avenue and N. Francis Street.**

The City's southeast section is bordered by S. Jackson Street and E. Michigan Avenue.

The northwest section is bordered by W. Michigan Avenue and N. Francis Street.

The northeast quadrant of the City is bordered by

W. Michigan Avenue and S. Jackson Street.

## ***\$50,000 will help small businesses in Jackson***

It's the "American Dream" - think of an idea and turn it in to a thriving business. Drastic changes in our economy, both national as well as local, have put small businesses in the spotlight as a premier economic driver.

Midtown Association President James Stovall sees the resurgence firsthand from his business, The Wandering Owl.

"I think that downtown urban centers are heading for a renaissance as younger people want to live in cities with resources as opposed to in far suburbs," he said. "The vibe of City centers they

are looking for is similar to that of Seattle, with lots of restaurants, small theaters and boutique shopping. The more Jackson can find its unique voices, the more people will flock to it."

Jackson is one of only 25 cities nationwide to recently receive a \$50,000 grant to help small business entrepreneurs realize their dreams.

The "Startup in a Day" grant aims to create a one-stop-shopping experience to alleviate the headaches associated with getting a small business off the ground.

The grant was spearhead-

ed by Jackson City Councilman Derek Dobies.

"There's a lot of different ways that we are planning to use it," said Dobies, vice mayor and 6th Ward representative.

The new program is designed to "make things easier and more intelligible for small businesses who want to locate in the City," he said. The grant will pay to have all of the relevant information put directly on the City of Jackson's website.

Dobies said the idea behind the grant was to offer something to help entrepreneurs, the backbone of the

American economy.

One such business is The Fourth Wall, which started in the City more than four years ago. Co-owner Marjory Minix says a one stop database of information would have made their first months much easier.

"I can't tell how many hours I spent on the Internet researching regulations, permits and other information such as how to apply for small business loans," she said.

Jackson is the only Michigan city to be awarded the grant.





**MAYOR**

Jason Smith

**COUNCIL (Ward)**

- Arlene Robinson 1
- Kimberly Jaquish 2
- Daniel Greer 3
- Laura D. Schlecte 4
- Andrew Frounfelker 5
- Derek Dobies 6

**City MANAGER**

Patrick Burtch

**MEETINGS/EVENTS**

**OCT. 13 • 6:30 p.m.**

City Council Meeting  
*City Hall, 2nd Floor*

**OCT. 17 • 6 a.m.**

Leaf Pickup Begins  
*Southeast City Quadrant*

**OCT. 27 • 6:30 p.m.**

City Council Meeting  
*City Hall, 2nd Floor*

**NOV. 17 • 6:30 p.m.**

City Council Meeting  
*City Hall, 2nd Floor*

**NOV. 20 • 6 p.m.**

Christmas Parade  
*Downtown Jackson*

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

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## City Code Enforcement Officers

Whether it's heading off a threat to the health safety and welfare of City residents or getting chased out of a basement by a raccoon, the work of a code enforcement officer in the City of Jackson is anything but typical.

"I've seen it all," said Sven Harrison, who's spent the last three years as a code enforcement officer for the City. "We once inspected a home where there was a carbon monoxide leak - who knows if the tenants would have ever found out.

"Years ago, we had two employees overseeing the entire City's housing stock," Harrison continued. "Now, we're starting to see positive changes."

Since Harrison began working at the City's Neighborhood and Economic Operations Department, officials hired more inspectors and created a rental registry and inspection program to oversee non owner occupied homes in the City.

Both state statutes and local ordinances govern housing within the City of Jackson. Those statutes range from replacing broken windows and entry ways to making sure the electrical outlets in any given apartment are in safe working order.

"Its about the safety of the tenants," Inspector Jerry Stackhouse said. "We used to go to a home and we were met with immediate anger. 'Go away, I don't want you on my property.' Things like that.

"Now, property owners are starting to see the values of their properties rise," Stackhouse continued. "Much of that initial anger has gone away."

The inspection process is the same for every property owner in Jackson, Harrison said. There's an initial inspection by a code enforcement officer, followed by a 90-day window for homeowners to make any repairs listed by the officer after their inspection.

"We work with landlords," said Harrison. "We understand that, for instance, there's a two-month wait for area electricians and a six-week wait on window contractors. We get it, and we move that



**Code enforcement officer Jerry Stackhouse oversees construction work on a Jackson apartment.** deadline accordingly."

Stackhouse suggested one repair deadline which he oversaw last month would be extended due to a death in the family.

"The property owner will get some extra time because of that," Stackhouse said.

Jeff Lammers, a property investor with eight units in the City, echoed Harrison's sentiments.

"I believe the City's rental registry is a great program," said Lammers. "Units were going uninspected for decades. Now the City is taking the lead and it's benefiting the community.

"If I wouldn't live in one of my apartments, why would I rent it to someone else?"



# CITY NABS \$15K TRAIL GRANT

Jackson is one of 16 communities to receive a portion of roughly \$250,000 from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to connect a 1,300-mile-long hiking and biking trail in the state.

Jackson's portion of the Iron Belle Trail will run through the City's downtown area and connect existing trails like the Martin Luther King Equality Trail to a system that runs from the Detroit area in the state's Lower Peninsula to the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

"Jackson is located in an area of the state where we find ourselves eligible for grant money to connect hiking and biking trails," said Kelli Hoover, City parks and recreation director. "Our community is doing a great job of staying on top of available funds to expand the state's trail system."

Jackson received \$15,000 from the DNR to conduct a route planning study through downtown Jackson that considers safety, cost and easement availability, state officials said.

When the state's Iron Belle Trail is complete, it will link up to something much larger. The hiking trail will become part of the North Country Trail, a national scenic route that spans seven states - from North Dakota to New York.

Portions of the City trail will connect to existing hiking and biking routes, including the City's Martin Luther King Equality Trail, formerly the Inter-City Trail, which connects to Concord.



**A portion of the Martin Luther King Equality Trail near Fourth Street, which will connect to the Iron Belle Trail.**

## *A Message from your Mayor*

Over the course of the last two years, our City Council has made significant strides to improve our community by right-sizing our budget, improving infrastructure and fostering economic development.

All those things go hand-in-hand when it comes to revitalizing a community faced with a declining population and tax base.

First, we continue to right-size your government and approve an annual budget that shows positive revenue trends. Second, our council has made a strong commitment to improve not just the roads, but what's underneath them.

Scheduling water and sewer main replacement at the same time as road

construction has saved the City time and money. It has also prevented the destruction of previously repaired roads just to replace mains underneath.

Our Michigan Avenue project not only replaces century-old lines, but provides a safer, more walkable downtown to live, work and play.

Finally, our council has continued the efforts to develop new business construction and current business expansion within the City, highlighted by new establishments such as MedExpress, Panda Express, the Chase and Chilangos. These novel businesses are shining examples of our commitment to business owners and our desire to help them succeed.



I want to thank all of you, and all City staff, for their continued commitment to our community.

**Mayor Jason Smith**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Smith'.



# DID YOU KNOW?

City employees treat roughly 12 million gallons of wastewater and 14 million gallons of water at the wastewater and water treatment facilities in Jackson, enough water to fill 39 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

## WATER TREATMENT

The City's water treatment plant processes water from one of the purest aquifers in the world, facility supervisor Bob Koehn said.

"The Saginaw Aquifer is about 500 feet beneath the surface and our wells bring the water directly to our plant," he said. "We are capable of processing up to 24 million gallons per day, depending on the demand."

Most domestic water use goes to toilet flushing (26 percent), washing clothes (23 percent), showers (18 percent) and running faucets (15 percent).

## WASTEWATER PLANT

At the City's wastewater treatment facility, Bill Wynngaert oversees the process that treats upwards of 14 million gallons of wastewater per day before it's deposited in the Grand River.

"I never planned on working in a wastewater plant," Wynngaert said laughing. "I actually started my career treating drinking water."

The head of the plant takes on the wastewater first, where the solids are removed before the wa-



**Settling tanks at the City's wastewater plant.**

ter is filtered to a settling tanks. Any sediment at the bottom of the tanks after settling are scraped and sent along with the waste from step one.

On the way to the next tank, microorganisms are added to the water to eat away filth and germs.

After the microorganisms, or biota, are removed with chlorine and the chlorine is removed with sulfur dioxides.

It takes 14 hours for

wastewater to make its way through the plant, before it is channeled back into the Grand River.

In 2003, a nation-wide blackout caused several states to go without power for several days, and - closer to home - caused the City's wastewater plant to overflow.

Today, the plant has a backup retention pond that holds more than 30 million gallons of water in case of an emergency.

# NEW DAY HONORS LATE ARTIST

Marking the birthday of famous sculptor and artist Louise Nevelson, Jackson City Council members declared Sept. 23 to be "Louise Nevelson Day" during their meeting Tuesday, Sept. 8.

The late, Russian-born artist created the sculpture "Summer Night Tree" and presented it to the City of Jackson in 1978. The 30-foot tall steel compilation of geometric shapes painted black currently rests on the corner of Francis Street and Michigan Avenue in downtown Jackson.

"Louise Nevelson is one of the most celebrated 20th Century American sculptors," said Janet Meyer, chairwoman of the newly created Jackson Public Arts Commission. "Her vision and gift to Jackson is priceless and we are thrilled to be honoring her by celebrating Louise Nevelson Day in our community."

JPAC submitted the proclamation marking the new holiday to City Council on Tuesday, Sept. 8. Council voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

JPAC officials are currently working with two art conservation companies, both referred by the Henry Ford Museum and University of Michigan, to review how to preserve the sculpture this spring.

