

## CITY POISED FOR DOWNTOWN BOOM

City officials' continued focus on rebuilding downtown Jackson is beginning to bear fruit, with a multitude of developments on the horizon for the City's core.

The recent announcement of newly paved roads along downtown portions of Francis, Mechanic and Jackson streets this summer, a new four-story apartment complex along Louis Glick Highway, the demolition of two blighted structures on the corner of Jackson and Louis Glick and developers interested in the Hayes Hotel building - downtown Jackson is poised for a rebirth this summer.

Other developments include three new restaurants at 151, 140 and 128 W. Michigan Ave. locations, along with the possibility of a new restaurant on the corner of Francis and Cortland, where Evanoff's once operated.

"With the Michigan Avenue construction project and greenspace adjacent to the Hayes Hotel projects behind us, downtown Jackson is set to look a lot different in the coming year," Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said.

Other businesses that will soon call downtown Jackson home include Gilbert's Choc-



**An artist rendering of possible real estate developments in downtown Jackson next to the site of a new four-story apartment complex.**

olates, which announced their move back to the city center along Jackson Street in April. Notch 8, a store now at 125 W. Michigan Ave., sells overstock items from Amazon ranging from toothpaste to coffee makers and opened in early May. Another developer is currently in talks with the city to build four loft apartments, a yoga studio and a coffee shop at 159 W. Michigan Ave., right next door to City Hall.

Jackson City Council recently voted to demolish two structures on the west side of the 200 block of N. Jackson Street (pictured above), with developers already interested in building on the soon-to-be vacant parcels, Jackson Mayor Bill Jors confirmed.

"Jackson hasn't seen this type of growth in my lifetime, and we will do our best to continue pushing for this type of growth for as long as possible," Jors said.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 New Business in Jackson
- 4 Stay in the Know on Street Repairs
- 4 A Message From Mayor Bill Jors
- 5 Unemployment Drops in City

# MANUFACTURING BUSINESS MOVES INTO JACKSON, NETS ROUGHLY 80 NEW JOBS

City of Jackson and Enterprise Group of Jackson officials are happy to announce Multimatic, a Canada-based company, has moved part of their operation into the City limits.

The new 100,000-square-foot manufacturing facility will be a supplier of instrument panel beams and other structural components for the Buick Enclave and Chevy Traverse crossover utility vehicles assembled at GM's Lansing plant.

Scheduled to begin production in April 2017, Multimatic Michigan will initially employ roughly 80 production, manufacturing engineering, quality control and administrative staff in three operating shifts, the company released in a statement last month.

Hiring has already begun at the plant, and the organization is currently looking to fill more new roles at the facility. For career opportunities with the company, visit [careers.multimatic.com](http://careers.multimatic.com).

"We're extremely excited to have a new business come into the City and bring with



**Multimatic's new location in Jackson's industrial park. Company officials expect to hire 80 people in the coming months.**

it new jobs and new tax revenue - it's great for the community," Councilman Freddie Dancy said. "It's one more new business and one more piece of good news for Jackson citizens within the 2nd Ward."

The City, Enterprise Group and Multimatic have worked behind the scenes

for months to make the new development possible.

"Multimatic's growth continues with the announcement of this new facility," the company reported April 18.

"Multimatic's recent decision to locate a facility in Jackson is great news," said Tim Rogers, president and CEO of the Enterprise

Group. "The EG and the City worked in partnership to address all the company's location criteria. Jackson provided Multimatic with a great location, a skilled workforce and a building that meets their needs.

"We are excited to welcome a first-class manufacturer to Jackson," he added.

## **\$250,000 GARNERED FOR NEW CITY TRAIL**

City of Jackson officials recently announced a \$250,000 grant from the Weatherwax Foundation has been set aside for a trail project through Summit Township and the City.

The funds are earmarked for a new trail along Horton Road in Summit Township that will connect to a new City trail along Fourth Street by the Ella Sharp Park

and the Middle School at Parkside. The trail will then connect to Jackson's Martin Luther King Equality Trail (formerly the inter-city trail) to the north.

The \$250,000 is bundled with a \$300,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the same project. An additional \$50,000 is slated to come from the City's major street

fund to complete the project next year.

At its meeting in April, Jackson City Council voted to have the trail named the "PAKA Trail" in memory of Peter A. and Kenneth A. Weatherwax, who founded the Weatherwax Foundation. Council approved the concept for the trail and the DNR grant in March.

"The City has worked with

outlying townships and Jackson County to connect its trail systems for some time," Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said. "We're excited that we're receiving the necessary funds through grants to help us do that now."

The state DNR also granted Summit Township \$94,000 and Jackson County \$173,500 for similar work late last year.





**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**

**4th Friday • May - Sept.**  
Cruise In Car Shows  
*Downtown Jackson*

**JUNE 3 • 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.**  
Farmers' Market Opens  
*Corner of Mechanic/Pearl*

**JUNE 14 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting  
*City Hall, 2nd Floor*

**JUNE 24 • 5 p.m.**  
Jammin' In Jackson  
*Horace Blackman Park*

**JUNE 28 • 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](http://www.cityofjackson.org)

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## Lead Mechanic Jeff Heston

For well over the last decade, Jeff Heston has been the man behind the scenes at the Jackson Water Treatment Plant.

Sometimes that means making small chlorine adjustments recommended by the plant chemist, other times it means repairing the well pumps that pull in our drinking water from the aquifer, and still other times it means removing and replacing a large electrical pump the size of a small truck that moves 11 million gallons of water a day through the treatment plant.

If you visit the City of Jackson Water Treatment Plant, it doesn't take long to realize the value of what Lead Mechanic Jeff Heston brings to the table.

"Jeff is asked to do so much, and it changes rapidly depending on the needs of the plant" Plant Supervisor Bob Kuehn said. "With millions of gallons of water passing through and being treated daily, we can't afford to be down long if anything goes wrong, so Jeff's ability to troubleshoot and his expertise is so many areas helps us be efficient".

Heston normally starts his day like most - at his desk. He points out the computer screens across from him, monitored regularly.

"These tell us what's going on in areas that we can't physically see, how much water is coming in and at what pressure, if we're losing pressure, what the treatment ratios are, and so on," he said.

Heston maintains huge tanks with arms that resemble large Ferris wheels and bolts the size of softballs while also having to know high-level chemistry and biology to keep our drinking water safe.

"These have to be monitored at all times," Heston says pointing to the tanks. "There are slight changes that have to be made throughout the day to keep the Ph balance right, I just make sure the readings are right and the equipment is operating properly".

In the wells of the treatment plant, there's an actual workshop where another mechanic makes smaller repairs to necessary equipment, such as mechanical



**Jeff Heston**

pumps.

In the bowels of the plant, huge pipes and pumps can be seen pumping water into the large concrete storage tanks above. Here, Heston explains how the pipes are not only monitored with electronic systems, but that visual observation is also a part of the job. From time to time, with millions of gallons of water running through them, pipes and pumps will just wear out, requiring replacement.

With the Flint Water crisis constantly in today's headlines, the value of a smooth running, efficient water treatment plant is at an all-time high.

Undoubtedly, the expertise that City residents enjoy at the plant - from the experienced plant supervisors, treatment chemists, and technicians, to the expertise and knowledge of our lead plant mechanic Jeff Heston - help protect our community's drinking water from the ground to the tap.



# ONLINE TOOL KEEPS CITY RESIDENTS UPDATED ON CONSTRUCTION WORK

City of Jackson residents interested in receiving a weekly update on street construction within the City this summer are in luck.

Workers within the City's Engineering Division and Public Information Department have collaborated to create a "Dig Jackson" weekly email newsletter residents can sign up for to receive up-to-date information on street construction within Jackson.

"We created a tool where interested citizens can receive the necessary information on street construction projects to avoid closed streets and be in the know, and we're constantly refining it," Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said. "We understand it's difficult to get around Michigan in the summer and fall, and we're



**Construction crews work on the corner of Pearl and Jackson streets.**

doing our best to inform residents so they can do just that."

Those interested can go to [www.digjackson.com](http://www.digjackson.com) to

sign up for the weekly email.

Work started on six projects within the City, including portions of West Avenue and Pearl Street downtown.

Other projects on the docket include portions of Francis Street, Jackson Street, Mechanic Street and select parking lots, among others.

## A Message from Jackson Mayor Bill Jors

More and more every day, Jackson has the ingredients necessary to grow and become a more vibrant community.

It seems like every time I sit down to write these messages every couple of months, more good news happens within our City.

For starters, the City is in the process of purchasing, and will demolish, two blighted properties on the corner of Jackson Street and Louis Glick Highway downtown, with contractors already lining up to build bigger and better developments. Some might point to a closed meeting

where City Council negotiated the purchase of these properties as a negative - but rest assured, city leaders did so in the best interest of taxpayers, saving hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars in the process.

Downtown Jackson continues to thrive and be a magnet for positive developments, including new apartment spaces and restaurants announcing every month their intention to make downtown Jackson home.

Furthermore, manufacturing outside the City's core continues to grow, with Multimatic moving into the

City's industrial park and bringing with it about 80 new manufacturing jobs to area residents.

New jobs within the City of Jackson continue to lower the area's unemployment rate, which has recently dropped below the state and national averages and rests at 4.9 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Finally, while it does make driving in the City cumbersome, a multitude of street construction projects are bolstering Jackson's infrastructure this summer and fall, with some projects already underway.



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

**Mayor Bill Jors**



# DID YOU KNOW?

## Unemployment drops to 4.9 percent

For the sixth straight year, unemployment in the City of Jackson has fallen, according to data compiled by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The USBLS recently released unemployment data for February 2016, which shows that the “Jackson, MI Metropolitan Statistical Area” dropped to a 4.9 percent unemployment rate in February, down from 6 percent the year before. The graph below shows the downward trend for the City’s unemployment rate every February beginning in 2007.

The bureau compiles unemployment data for metropolitan areas around the country every month.

“Every major economic indicator is showing us that Jackson is on the rebound,” City Manager Patrick Burtch said. “Whether it’s home values on the rise or unemployment trending down, the City continues to grow and prosper year after year.”

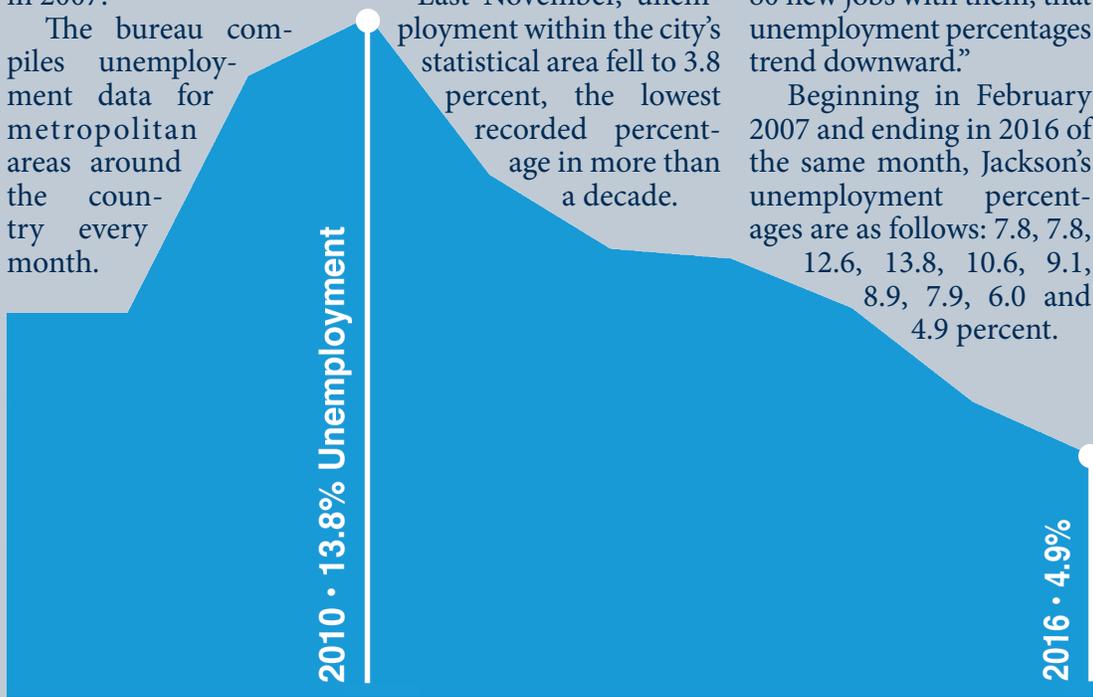
During the height of the recession in July 2009, Jackson had its highest rate of unemployment at 15.7 percent, highlighting double-digit unemployment numbers from January 2009 through August 2011.

Last November, unemployment within the city’s statistical area fell to 3.8 percent, the lowest recorded percentage in more than a decade.

Jackson is outpacing both the State of Michigan and the United States as a whole with the most recent unemployment data, statistics show. The state currently shows 5.4 percent unemployment while the U.S. sits at 5 percent.

“As the city continues to foster economic development and growth, we hope to continue to outpace state and national figures,” Public Information officer Will Forgrave said. “It’s no secret that when new businesses like Multimatic decide to call Jackson home and bring 80 new jobs with them, that unemployment percentages trend downward.”

Beginning in February 2007 and ending in 2016 of the same month, Jackson’s unemployment percentages are as follows: 7.8, 7.8, 12.6, 13.8, 10.6, 9.1, 8.9, 7.9, 6.0 and 4.9 percent.



# HOLIDAY CLEANUP A BIG SUCCESS

Jackson and Consumers Energy employees worked together last month to clean areas within the City in honor of Earth Day on April 22.

The partnership highlights the first time the two organizations have worked together to clean up trash and litter within the city as part of the utilities’ cleanup efforts every April. Consumers Energy employees and city officials worked for weeks to prepare for the cleanup efforts in four areas within the City of Jackson.

More than 100 volunteers from the City and utility picked up litter and trash at Loomis Park, the Martin Luther King Equality Trail (formerly the inter-city trail), Ella Sharp Park and in downtown Jackson.

The city provided garbage bags for the pickups.

“Consumers Energy has been a great corporate citizen for our community,” Councilman Derek Dobies, 6th Ward, said. “Partnering to clean up our downtown and other areas on Earth Day underscores that commitment.”

Jackson Mayor Bill Jors agreed with Dobies. Jors helps organize similar cleanup efforts around the city periodically with volunteers.

“Hopefully this event will spur more events on Earth Day and become an annual tradition,” Jors said. “Every little bit helps, that’s what Earth Day is all about.”



“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/)

