

DONATIONS TOWARD MURAL CONTINUE

Community foundations and organizations continue to step forward to help fund the construction of CP Federal City Square in downtown Jackson.

Shortly after City Council awarded the low bid to construct the amphitheater/art display in downtown Jackson this summer, four organizations stepped forward to make additional commitments toward the project.

Most recently, **Alro Steel** donated \$20,000, with **Dawn Foods Foundation** and the **Phil & Pat Willis Foundation** also putting forward \$20,000 donations to help fund construction.

CP Federal officials announced another contribution toward the project Aug. 25. The \$50,000 contribution from **CP Federal Credit Union**, is on top of the \$100,000 they already donated when the project was first announced last year.

The project calls for construction of a new facility in Horace Blackman Park that will not only protect and preserve the 280-square-foot mural designed by famed artist Glidden Parker, but will include an art exhibit viewing area, a stage for outdoor music and art performances,



The Glidden Parker Mural, pictured above, is set to be a prominent feature in downtown Jackson.

and a drop-down projector for the popular movie nights in downtown Jackson.

Experience Jackson committed to a \$25,000 contribution toward the project, stating it would help foster tourism and events within the City.

All together, the project will cost roughly \$580,000 to complete this fall. Jackson-based O'Harrow Construction trimmed their cost roughly \$40,000 to move construction forward.

Rounding out the donations include a \$50,000 grant from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and \$75,000 from the **Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs**. The **Weatherwax Foundation** and the **Jackson Public Arts Commission** also donated when the project was first announced.

Those interested in helping with the project can contact Vice Mayor Derek Dobies: derekdobies@gmail.com.

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CITY WEIGHS ITS OPTIONS WITH SAFER GRANT TO STAFF MORE FIREFIGHTERS

Eyeing a substantial and rapidly unsustainable increase in pension costs and a steady decline in fire-related calls to the Jackson Fire Department, City staff are currently holding the best interest of City residents in mind when they take into consideration a new SAFER grant from the federal government.

The \$1.67 million SAFER grant would temporarily staff nine firefighters for a two-year period. City officials have until mid- to late-October to accept the grant, with funds set to flow into the department beginning in February 2017 if accepted.

“We have time to deliberate with the firefighters

union and reach an agreement before the deadline to accept the grant sunsets,” said Will Forgrave, public information officer for the City of Jackson. “Just like the SAFER grant before it, we want to have a contract before we accept the grant. Even if we accepted the grant today, we would have to wait until February to begin using the funds.”

Forgrave said the City believes it’s critical to consider the City’s financial future and make sure the decisions made today do not negatively impact citizens years down the road. In question are conditions in the grant that would add to long-term liabilities to City taxpayers.

“Pension costs for retired emergency personnel are now costing area residents more in taxes than the entire operating millage for the City itself,” Jackson Mayor Bill Jors said. “Due to a property tax approved by voters in 1974 to fund firefighter retirement costs, those taxes will continue to rise unless we lower pension costs and come to terms with what our fire department will cost us years down the road.”

Since the Act 345 millage was established, it has grown from .4 mills to its current 7.23 mills, creating a \$4.1 million pension tax to City property owners annually - a figure that will likely grow unless City officials take a mea-

sured, conservative approach which includes consideration of the SAFER grant, Jors said.

Response times to building fires remained steady from 2012-2015, according to City records. Average response times ranged from 3.5 minutes to 4.5 minutes within that time frame, with calls to building fires dropping year after year. In all of 2012, firefighters responded to 51 building fires, while in 2015, firefighters responded to 26. In 2012 and 2013, just 4.5 and 2.5 percent of department calls were fire related.

“It would be irresponsible to accept this grant without first considering its long-term financial impact to City taxpayers” Jors said.

BAGGED LEAF PICKUP CONTINUES THIS FALL

Beginning this October, City of Jackson residents will again be able to dispose of fall leaves through the City’s bagged leaf pickup program.

Privately contracted local companies Emmons and Modern Waste will collect bagged leaves curbside beginning October 22 in three different sections of the City.

After much debate and comments from City residents, the City will allow residents to purchase their own leaf bags at a supplier of their choice instead of having to use City-supplied bags this season.

“The program is still relatively new and we’re doing our best to listen to City residents,” Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said. “Our most common complaint last year was not allowing residents to use their own paper bags.”

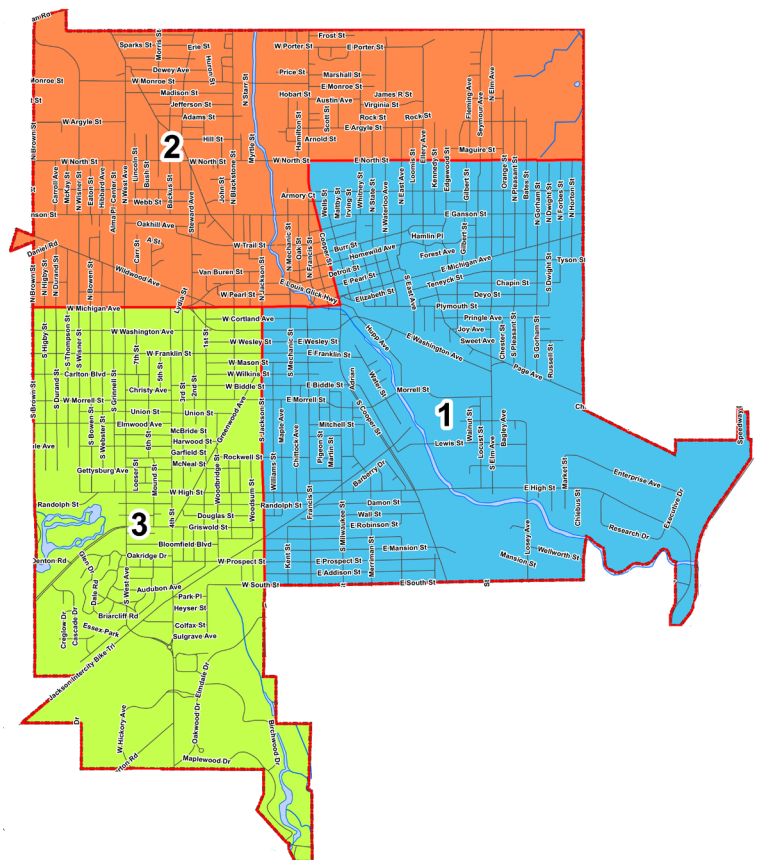
Bags should be about one foot from the curb for pickup. The pickup dates will be as follows, with crews beginning at 6 a.m.:

- Oct. 22 • Section 1**
- Oct. 29 • Section 2**
- Nov. 5 • Section 3**
- Nov. 12 • Section 1**
- Nov. 19 • Section 2**
- Dec. 3 • Section 3**

Section 1 is bordered by North Street to the north and Cooper Street, Michigan Avenue and S. Jackson Street to the West.

Section 2 is bordered by North Street to the south, Cooper Street to the east and Michigan Avenue to the south.

Section 3 is bordered by Michigan Avenue to the north and S. Jackson Street to the east.





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

SEPT. 20 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

OCT. 11 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

OCTOBER 22

Leaf Pickup Begins
Sec. 1 • Southeast City

OCT. 25 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

OCT. 31 • 6-8 p.m.

Trick-Or-Treating
Citywide

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

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Police Officer Warren Johnson

When most people return home from work and begin to unwind and relax, there are always City police officers beginning their night shift and looking to protect and serve Jackson citizens.

Included in their ranks is Jackson Police Officer Warren Johnson, a 10-year police veteran and patrol officer for the City of Jackson. A 6-foot former football player, Johnson has found his niche. Always polite and professional, Johnson determines whether each situation needs his calm and police demeanor, or his tactical skills, and responds accordingly.

While every day brings with it new challenges and situations, we join Officer Johnson during his evening shift Tuesday, Sept. 7.

Officer Johnson's day begins with a call to assist other officers and emergency personnel with a violent heroin user who had just been revived with a "Narcan" shot - an emergency medication that counteracts heroin or opiate overdoses.

"A lot of times the addict will become violent after receiving the shot, which saves their lives," Johnson says. "Sometimes they hallucinate or become extremely schizophrenic from the heroin, you never know what to expect."

This particular incident ends with a subdued and handcuffed addict going into police custody after a brief tussle.

As Johnson returns to the department, there's no time to dwell on the case, as Johnson is again called to an alleged breaking and entering case in his designated patrol area.

Each of the officers on the night shift are given a specific area of the City they are primarily responsible for, also called a "Police & Community Team Area." While each officer patrols the City as a whole, they usually answer the calls within their districts unless they are needed elsewhere.

After checking the area and finding no signs of forced entry and no suspicious people, Johnson is called to a domestic situation where the subject involved has a warrant. On the way, Johnson pulls over and waits for backup to arrive.

Officers support and check on each



Officer Johnson

other throughout their shifts, he explains.

After backup arrives, the officers approach the home and begin to search for the subject, who they eventually find hiding in the basement beneath a stairwell.

The subject is taken into custody and Johnson drives the alleged perpetrator to the Jackson County Jail, followed by paperwork.

While most people would say an overdose case, a B&E and a domestic disturbance all in one day would be a daunting day to say the least, it's all in a day's work for Johnson and crew.

The rest of the night continues in a similar fashion - another B&E report, a larceny call, a recovered property call, more paperwork, a few traffic stops and more. A loved one might call to check on an officers' safety, a oftentimes welcome interruption.

Johnson and others at JPD consider themselves keepers of the city, and enjoy their jobs. City residents are fortunate to have a great police officer like Johnson, and a great department that's proud to keep Jackson safe.



U.S. REP REVIEWS DEMO PROGRAM

U.S. Representative Dan Kildee visited Jackson on Aug. 30 to review the City's demolition program and gave the City two thumbs up in its efforts to improve the community, raise property values and put money back into the hands of its citizens.

Kildee was on hand last month to view the site of a house set to be demolished, a site under demolition and the site of a new home build within the City limits. The Congressman then gave a short speech at City Hall.

Kildee applauded the City for demolishing blight within its borders, an effort that is necessary to bring up property values and increase city services through increased tax revenue.

"When someone moves out of the City, they don't take their home with them," Kildee said. "You need to lower the supply to increase the de-

mand, and thus the property values within a City."

Since the City began demolishing residential structures as a priority in 2011, some 600 residential housing units have been demolished, and residential housing values have increased substantially.

The average sales price of a home is up 45.2 percent Citywide, according to City records and realtor statistics.

Kildee took the time to speak about the City's next steps after the demolition program is complete, including new legislation he plans to introduce called "Project Rebuild."

Project Rebuild would focus more on the purchase, redevelopment and rehabilitation of properties with less emphasis on demolitions.

"Once the market is stabilized, then you can go about fixing up the properties you have," Kildee said.



From left to right, Councilman Andrew Frounfelker, Councilman Derek Dobies, City Manager Patrick Burtch and U.S. Representative Dan Kildee tour a City demolition site.

A Message from Jackson Mayor Bill Jors

It's been said that Michigan has three seasons: hot, cold and construction.

This has been more apparent recently within the City, where a number of construction projects continue and are set to go through this fall, with some continuing through this winter.

Some highlights from this summer's construction schedule include West Avenue, which was just completed early this month, and three northbound streets within the downtown Jackson loop.

Francis Street, Jackson Street and Mechanic Street are set to be milled and re-

paved this fall, with wider sidewalks and bumpouts to make the downtown more attractive to walkers and bikers looking to grab a bite at one of the many new restaurants opening up this year or relax in a downtown park.

A full reconstruction of Mechanic Street is also taking place from Washington to Morrell streets.

More and more every year, downtown Jackson and the surrounding community is looking better, with property values increasing and new developments coming to fruition.

Property values have increased roughly 40 percent

Citywide since 2011, when City leaders made it a priority to demolish blighted properties within the City's borders. Higher property values mean more equity in the hands of City taxpayers and residents, a welcome change from the financial meltdown not a decade ago.

The final touches are being put on a four-story apartment complex just south of Louis Glick Highway and two new downtown restaurants are set to open their doors.

Things continue to come up roses for the Rose City - despite the pesky construction season.



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

Mayor Bill Jors



DID YOU KNOW?

New Online Tool Helps Local Startups

The City of Jackson is open for business.

City officials hope an online tool will help Jackson entrepreneurs jump some of the hurdles they may come across when opening a new business.

The new website, buildmybusiness.cityofjackson.org, is now live.

Last summer, the city of Jackson became one of 25 cities across the nation awarded a \$50,000 prize aimed at helping local entrepreneurs discover and apply for business requirements, ranging from fed-

eral to local permits.

The site is run by OpenCounter, and includes a zone mapping tool to show permitted areas where types of business are allowed, and a running tally of expected costs to gather the necessary permits and forms from local, state and federal agencies.

For Open Counter co-creator Peter Koht, making the online tool user-friendly was his top priority.

“Most people don’t go into creating a business saying ‘I’m going to open a healthcare business with

20-plus employees, but first I’ll need a conditional-use permit,” Koht explained. “Most people go in saying ‘I want to open a yoga studio.’ It’s bridging that gap where OpenCounter comes in.”

City officials gathered feedback from other communities that used the OpenCounter service before working with the company, including Santa Cruz, California and Central Falls, Rhode Island, among others. All had positive reviews of the online tool and the company OpenCounter.

LONGTIME CITY EMPLOYEE RETIRES

Labor relations technician Angela Arnold retired from the City of Jackson after nearly 31 years. Her last day was Thursday, July 21.

Arnold, 53, began her dip into working at City Hall as a Jackson High School co-op student in 1983. Her work-study agreement had her working part-time in the City’s community development department before she began full-time after her graduation.

Arnold has worked a myriad of different jobs through different City departments in her three decades of service, ranging from an office assistant to deputy city clerk. Shortly after taking the job out of high school, Arnold worked for a company in Ann Arbor.

“I worked in the private sector for about two years before I became pregnant with my second child,” Arnold said. “I was living in Jackson and looking for a job in Jackson when I got a phone call from Randy Wrozek (now city treasurer and clerk). I thank Randy and God for that stroke of luck and my long career with the City.”

Arnold has worked with the city clerk’s office, the office of community development, the City’s finance department and in the City’s personnel department for the last six years.

Cheri Rayner is now the City’s new labor relations technician.



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