

## FROM FOOD CART TO NEW RESTAURANT PRYOR'S BBQ HOUSE OPENS ON CITY'S SOUTH SIDE



Larry and Stephanie Pryor cut the ribbon to their new restaurant on S. Prospect Street at an event this past fall.

After working out of a food cart for the last 30 years, Larry Pryor says he's excited to have more elbow room in his new restaurant.

"This feels really good to have a legitimate kitchen and to move around freely," Pryor said.

The opening of Pryor's BBQ House was celebrated this past fall with a ribbon cutting event.

Pryor says he's thankful for the big response from the Jackson community since opening.

"Business has been steady and we've had more people experience what we have to offer

now that we have a real building," Pryor said.

Pryor's BBQ House serves barbecue favorites like ribs and pulled pork, along with fish, seafood, Coney Islands and much more.

The restaurant owner has been a familiar face to hungry customers for the past three decades, taking his food cart to festivals in Jackson and all over the country.

Along with needing more space, Pryor says he opened the restaurant at 221 W. Prospect St. so he could put down some roots in his hometown.

"I also want to build a business for the next

generation of my family," Pryor said.

Pryor's family-run business is located on Jackson's south side.

Neighbors have been sharing with Pryor what it means to them to have a locally owned restaurant in the south side community.

"Customers that come in here talk about how they're glad we're doing something positive in the neighborhood. These things make you feel real good. I think it's a positive thing in Jackson that's being noticed," Pryor said.

### INSIDE

- 2 Helping DPW crews during winter weather
- 3 New members join City Council
- 4 Message from the Mayor
- 5 Local non-profit making houses into homes
- 6 Redesigned City website
- 6 Black History Month

CONTINUES ON PAGE 4

## PREPARING FOR WICKED WINTER WEATHER HOW TO HELP DPW CREWS KEEP ROADS SAFE THIS WINTER SEASON

When harsh snow and ice strike, crews from the City of Jackson Department of Public Works (DPW) are out in salt and plow trucks helping to make sure streets are safe to use.

Bob Stolarz is a DPW worker who's been battling winter weather for 21 years in Jackson.

"During big snow events, workers like myself often spend up to 12 hours a day behind the wheel of a plow or salt truck," Stolarz said.

Crews target major roads and emergency snow routes first and then turn their attention to neighborhood streets.

The City uses a mixture of salt and sodium chloride to treat roadways.

Sodium chloride helps make the salt more effective

during freezing cold temperatures.

Seeing as Jackson has many narrow neighborhood streets, the DPW asks residents to please remove parked vehicles from streets when there's a winter weather event.

"Removing vehicles from streets means the City can efficiently treat the roadways. Vehicles left on streets slows us down and often leads to big sections of streets not getting attention because it's difficult for our large rigs to get around parked vehicles," said DPW Supervisor Randy Lybarger.

As crews travel cautiously around vehicles, they also ask residents do the same for them.

Drivers should keep their distances from salt and



Bob Stolarz drives a DPW salt truck during a snow event.

plow trucks so they can safely treat roads.

That includes not following the trucks too closely, staying out of blind spots, and not trying to pass them.

Attempting to pass these trucks during a weather event can cause serious crashes.

Residents should also be aware of a winter weather emergency being declared by the City.

Depending on the severity of the event, residents may

be asked to remove parked vehicles from streets or to stay off roads entirely.

Information about winter weather emergencies is distributed through CodeRED, the City's website, and social media.

DPW crews appreciate the help they get from the community.

"The more assistance we get from residents, the sooner roads will be made safer for everyone," Stolarz said.

### DON'T FORGET ABOUT FIRE HYDRANTS!

It's important to not forget about fire hydrants during the winter.

Fire hydrants are often hidden by snow drifts and piles.

Hydrants obscured by snow make them difficult for fire crews to find during an emergency and could delay response times.

This is a potential issue on every street, but especially along busy roads where more snow builds up from clearing efforts.

While Jackson firefighters routinely dig out hydrants, the fire department is asking residents to help keep their neighborhood hydrants clear of snow.



## MAYOR

Derek Dobies

## COUNCIL

	Ward
Arlene Robinson	1
Freddie Dancy	2
Jeromy Alexander	3
Laura Dwyer Schlecte	4
Kelsey Heck	5
Will Forgrave	6

## CITY MANAGER

Patrick Burtch

## MEETINGS & IMPORTANT DATES

**Jan. 14 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting

**Monday, Jan. 20**  
City Hall closed for MLK Day

**Jan. 28 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting

**Feb. 11 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting

**Monday, Feb. 17**  
City Hall closed for Presidents' Day

**Feb. 25 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting

**Tuesday, March 10**  
Presidential Primary Election

**March 17 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting

**March 31 • 6:30 p.m.**  
City Council Meeting

## CITY COUNCIL STARTS NEW SESSION WITH TWO NEW MEMBERS



Laura Dwyer Schlecte, Ward 4



Will Forgrave, Ward 6

A new year has brought new terms for four members of the Jackson City Council.

In the Nov. 2019 election, both Mayor Derek Dobies and Second Ward Councilmember Freddie Dancy won second terms.

Joining the council are two new representatives who won elections in the Fourth Ward and Sixth Ward.

Laura Dwyer Schlecte is once again the councilmember for the Fourth Ward.

She previously served this ward on the council from 2011 to 2015.

Representing the Sixth Ward on the council is Will Forgrave.

This is his first elected office.

Councilmembers serve four year terms while the Mayor serves two year terms.

Oaths of office were administered by City Clerk Andrea Muray at the first council meeting in December.

Also at their first meeting, the council voted to retain First Ward Councilmember Arlene Robinson as the Vice Mayor, and named Third Ward Councilmember Jeromy Alexander the council's Chief Parliamentarian.

The Chief Parliamentarian makes sure council rules and procedures are followed during meetings.



The Mayor and Jackson City Council pose with the City Clerk and City Manager for the official photo of the 2019-2021 session.



## From the Desk of the Mayor Derek Dobies

Happy New Year to everyone in the City of Jackson! With 2020 here, many of us are making plans for the year ahead and looking for ways to make an impact in the community.

Now that a new city council is seated, I look forward to working with fellow councilmembers and City officials to set priorities for our new session.

However, this crucial work can't be done alone, so resident engagement is sure to be a key goal of the council moving forward.

We've already seen a great start.

At our first full meeting as a new council, we appointed 14 residents to serve on various City of Jackson boards and commissions, such as the Human Relations Commission, Historic District Commission, Public Arts Commission and Planning Commission.

These residents will now collaborate with other commissioners to enforce City ordinances, help resolve conflicts, initiate special projects, and advise the city council on proposals and programs.

The City is currently accepting applications for vacancies on boards and commissions and welcomes all residents to lend their insights and talents to these volunteer positions.

Applications can be obtained from the 14th floor of Jackson City Hall or on the City's website, [cityofjackson.org](http://cityofjackson.org).

With a busy 2020 on the horizon, the City looks forward to helping residents get involved in local government.

We are grateful for those who step up to help make a difference in Jackson.

Sincerely,  
*Derek Dobies*

## BBQ HOUSE: Continued from front page



Smoked turkey legs are one of many menu options at Pryor's.

He also hopes his partially catered the business will inspire recent City employee further investment on holiday party. Jackson's south side.

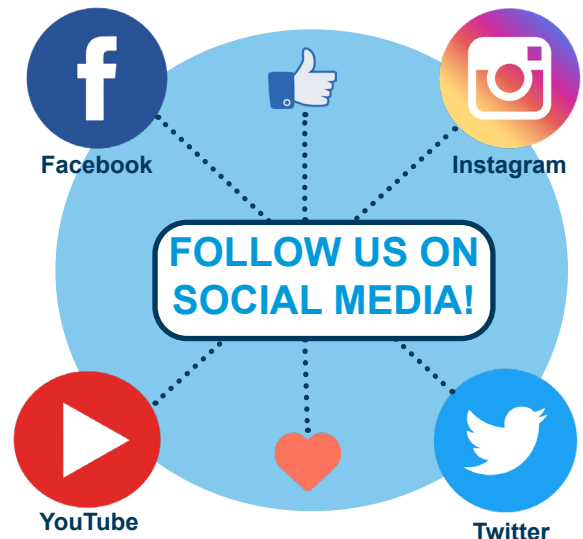
"This is just one part of the picture. I've heard from other people who want to invest in this area, so that's exciting," Pryor said.

With the new restaurant in full swing, Pryor says they're also considering ways to expand their offerings in the coming years.

The BBQ house has become a popular lunchtime destination for City of Jackson workers.

"I really appreciate the Jackson community for all of the support. We look forward to continuing to provide service to them in the future," Pryor said.

## Get the latest news from the City of Jackson



# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## MAKING HOUSES INTO HOMES JACKSON NON-PROFIT HELPS THOSE IN NEED WITH FREE FURNITURE & HOME GOODS

Stacks of dishes, appliances, home decor, and towels have taken over the front of Patricia Gougeon's house on Jackson's east side.

All of these items are ready to go at a moment's notice for anyone in need.

"We all deserve the comforts of home," Gougeon said.

That belief is the driving force behind the local non-profit Our Neighbor's Keeper.

Gougeon is the organization's Executive Director.

Working with a board and volunteers, she helps people with the transition from homeless to happy home.

"After getting a referral from a local agency or community member, we work with clients on what they need for their new home. I do a needs assessment to help fill those needs," Gougeon said.

From there, clients pick out items from Gougeon's house or furniture from the non-profit's storage unit.

"They put their selections in our cargo van and unload it at their house so it's almost like they're moving. It empowers them. Instead of getting a hand out, they're getting a hand up," Gougeon said.

She says the people they

work with come from all types of situations.

They help the homeless who are getting back on their feet, but also families that just moved to Jackson or had to leave their homes due to an emergency situation like domestic violence.

"Our Neighbor's Keeper wants them to have a home, and not just a house. It's harder to focus on getting a job, going to school, or caring for children when you're stressed out about all these things. I think it's very important to give them the things that everyone else has," Gougeon said.

Donations from the community and grants from local organizations help them keep a well-stocked supply.

Our Neighbor's Keeper is

getting ready to move into their very own space this winter.

Those in need will soon be able to visit a thrift store that's planned in a building at the corner of W. Prospect Street and Woodbridge Street in Jackson.

Gougeon says this new space will take the organization to the next level.

"Our clients will be able to see the items better and have more of a shopping experience. We'll have a section in the back that's curtained off for privacy. In the front, we'll have a thrift store that will help fund the non-profit so we can better serve the community," Gougeon said.

The new location will also give them adequate

space to accept more donations.

Over the past four years, Gougeon estimates they've helped more than 600 people.

She says all of their hard work pays off when she hears about the impact they're making.

"I recently got a call from someone we helped several years ago. She said they still have the furniture they got from us and the family is doing well. That just warmed my heart. People just need a little bit of help to have a home and we are happy to provide that," Gougeon said.



Patricia Gougeon with the organization's supply of home goods.

Learn more about this non-profit on their website [ourneighborskeeper.org](http://ourneighborskeeper.org)

## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN JACKSON

February is Black History Month!

In 2019, the City of Jackson celebrated the month by sharing the stories of local African Americans who have made an impact in the Jackson community and nation.

In daily social media posts throughout the month, people like Lucy Thurman, Carl Breeding, Benny Poole and Shirley Pitts and many others were honored for their contributions.

This year, the City is telling the stories of important places that have impacted the lives of African Americans in Jackson.

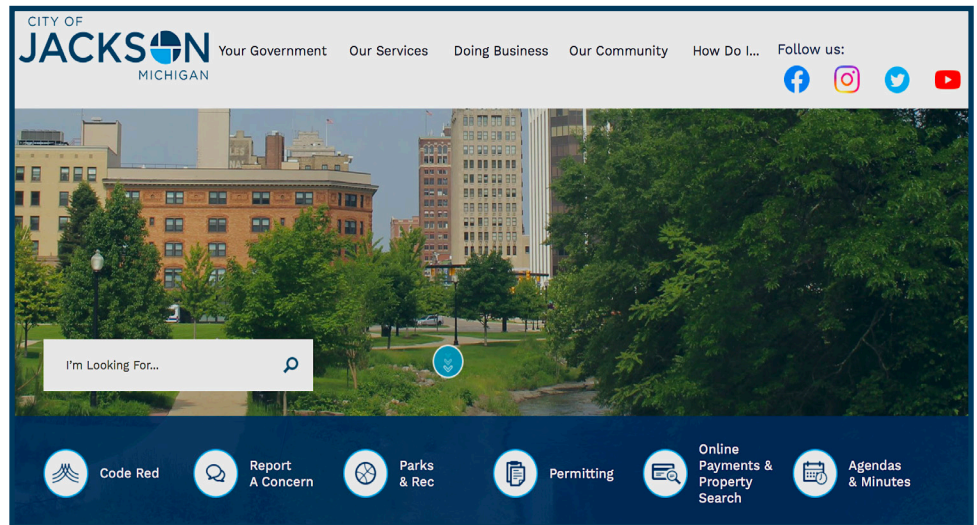
Locations like the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center and the original building where the Jackson Blazer newspaper got its start will be recognized.

You can follow these daily celebrations on the City's website and social media throughout February 2020.



Locations like the MLK Center are being recognized for their contributions to Jackson during Black History Month 2020.

## CITY LAUNCHES REDESIGNED WEBSITE & NEW RESIDENT COMMUNICATION SYSTEM



### A look at the redesigned homepage of the City's website.

The City of Jackson is unveiling its redesigned website and new resident communication system.

The redesign brings a fresh and modern look to the City's website, [cityofjackson.org](http://cityofjackson.org).

The City, which hadn't undergone a substantial website redesign in five years, benefited from a free redesign.

The biggest website change is the homepage layout.

It has been completely redesigned so residents can easily find the information they're looking for.

It includes a search bar that functions like a web search engine, a City meeting and event calendar, social media links and connections to elected officials.

The new resident communication system on the website, Report a Concern, allows residents to submit problems or questions directly to

City staff using email, voicemail, and text message.

Residents can also include photos of the issue with messages.

These messages are collected in an online system that allows City staff to correspond with residents and collaborate with other staff to solve the problem.

Concerns can be texted or called in to the new City of Jackson Resident Helpline at 517-529-2047.

City staff initiated a free redesign in spring 2019 after reviewing a contract with the website vendor, which entitled the City to one free redesign.

The redesign was completed last November.

Efforts are ongoing to edit interior web pages and update information so residents have the best City resources available to them whenever they need it.