

CITY OF JACKSON

OFFICIAL CITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020

CITY RESPONDS TO CORONAVIRUS WHAT'S BEING DONE TO COMBAT ILLNESS & HELP COMMUNITY

The City of Jackson is responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and is leading the community through these difficult times.

On March 17, Mayor Derek Dobies declared a Local State of Emergency in the City of Jackson.

This declaration allows City leaders to activate the City's Emergency Operations Plan, direct community resources, and make City government more flexible for a response.

Since then, the City has been taking decisive action to combat the spread of COVID-19 and keep the community safe.

These actions have included closing all City facilities and playgrounds to the public, canceling meetings and events, having dozens of City employees work from home, and allowing employees time off to recover from illness or care for family members.

Further steps have included suspending water shut offs to aid hand washing and overall public health, and halting interior rental and building

inspections.

City employees continue to work behind the scenes to maintain important operations of the City.

Staff who serve in critical operations, such as police, fire, water and utilities, are still working to continue essential services.

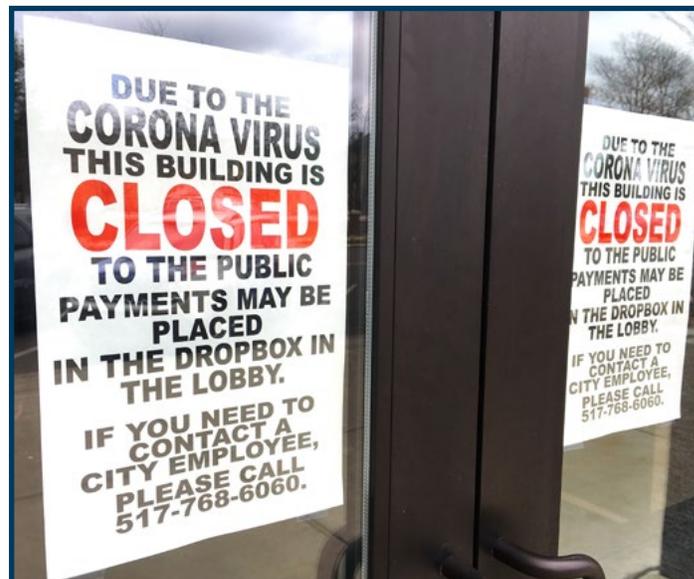
The City is following the directives made in Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order No. 2020-21 and urges residents to do the same.

Staying home and avoiding contact with those outside your home is an important way to stop the spread of this illness.

It's important to note that residents are still able to leave homes for food, medical needs, to care for family, essential work and exercise.

The City advises residents and businesses to reference the order to understand how this relates to their families and businesses.

While our playgrounds and gathering places are closed, open areas of parks and trails can be



Signage on the front doors of Jackson City Hall.

safely used while practicing social distancing and using caution.

City leaders recognize the devastating impacts COVID-19 is having on the Jackson community, and has been working with other government agencies and local non-profits in a group called JCAN, which stands for the Jackson COVID-19 Action Network.

JCAN is rallying the community to raise funds, donate items, and volunteer for a coordinated COVID-19 response.

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CONTINUED: RESPONDING TO CORONAVIRUS

10 hand washing and sanitizing stations have been placed all over Jackson by City staff to make sure everyone has access to proper hand washing.

Staff are also working with Jackson Public Schools to provide meals for youth and seniors during this crisis.

Various public information efforts continue to keep the

community informed.

A special section of our website has been created to share accurate information about COVID-19, community resources, and the City's response.

It can be found under the "Our Community" section of the website, or by searching cityofjackson.org/coronavirus.

Residents can stay updated by signing up for CoDeRED, our mass communication system, along with following the City's social media platforms and visiting the coronavirus section of our website.

The City urges residents to seek out verified health information about how to avoid contracting the illness

and how to get medical attention.

The Jackson County Health Department, State of Michigan, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are all trusted sources.

The City of Jackson will continue to provide updates about this ongoing response when they're available.

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS CONTINUE



On Monday, March 23, Mayor Derek Dobies presided over the first digital meeting of the City Council.

During this time of COVID-19 concerns, temporary changes to the Open Meetings Act allows governments to hold digital meetings with a limited audience.

At the March 23 meeting, Mayor Dobies was the only official physically in the Council Chambers.

All other councilmembers and officials joined by phone or video conference.

Meetings will continue us-

ing this altered format until further notice to prevent the spread of the illness.

Residents can watch live broadcasts of the meetings on Comcast Cable Channel 21 and the City's Facebook page and website.

Recordings are available on the City's website.

Comments can be submitted to the City Clerk to be read aloud during the meeting.

They can be submitted in the City Hall lobby drop box or emailed to clerksoffice@cityofjackson.org 90 minutes prior to the meetings.

FIREFIGHTERS JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT COVID



Local firefighters are now fighting a different common enemy: COVID-19.

The Summit/Jackson Professional Firefighters Union entered into a special operating agreement on March 25 with City leaders to respond to the threat of COVID-19.

The Jackson Fire Department and Summit Township Fire Department have agreed to jointly staff a special response unit working out of a secondary station.

Firefighters assigned to this special unit will primarily respond to known or

suspected COVID-19 incidents.

If all fire crews are working a fire scene, the special response unit may be dispatched to a high priority rescue incident.

Members of the special response unit will not be assigned to other fire stations to avoid spreading the illness to fellow personnel.

The agreement will remain in effect until May 31, 2020.

By May 18, firefighters and officials will meet to determine if the agreement should be extended.



INTERIM CITY MANAGER APPOINTED BY COUNCIL

Jonathan Greene has been a familiar face around Jackson City Hall for the last 11 years, working in several different positions.

His latest job has him serving as the Interim City Manager after being appointed to the job by the Jackson City Council in February.

The council appointed him to the position for six months following the departure of longtime City Manager Patrick Burtch earlier this year.

Greene was most recently working as the Public Works Director and has previously held positions as the Downtown Development Authority Director, Economic Development Director, and Assistant City Manager.

The new interim manager says he's excited to work in this new role.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the community. We have a



lot of different projects going on, and I'd like to continue the City's positive momentum moving forward," Greene said.

The council has yet to set a timeline for officially hiring a new City Manager.

Shane LaPorte, a City Code Enforcement Officer, has been appointed Assistant City Manager.

MAYOR

Derek Dobies

COUNCIL

Ward

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

INTERIM CITY MANAGER

Jonathan Greene

MEETINGS & IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day

May 26 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

June 16 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

CITY RECEIVES \$756K FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The City of Jackson's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is getting a big boost from the federal government.

\$756,020 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) is coming to help fund Jackson's emergency response.

These funds are made available through the recently-passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

There are currently no formal plans for how these funds will be used in Jackson.

The federal government advises

they can be used for projects such as providing new medical facilities, business and economic development assistance, improving health-care responses, and planning.

Cities in Michigan will receive a total of \$2,857,209 through CDBG for activities that prevent and respond to the spread of the coronavirus.

Michigan will also receive an additional \$38 million for distribution to other local communities in the state.

The City of Jackson will provide updates on how these funds are being deployed when they become available.



From the Desk of the Mayor

Derek Dobies

These are unprecedented times for the Jackson community.

In March, I became the first Mayor in the City's 163 year history to declare a Local State of Emergency, and preside over the first-ever digital City Council meeting.

These extraordinary times call for even more extraordinary efforts to overcome the challenges our neighbors face.

City leadership is taking decisive action to stop the spread of coronavirus in the area by closing facilities, canceling events, and caring for City employees.

But we know this work has to extend outside the confines of City Hall.

We want to make sure that as this crisis develops, vulnerable people in our community are cared for.

City government and other local organizations are coming together to provide resources for the hardest hit in the community.

While the City takes leadership in Jackson, we're also asking everyone to take a leadership role in their own families and communities.

You can do this by checking up on neighbors and relatives, staying at home, practicing social distancing, and getting accurate information.

It takes the work of the entire community to get through this situation.

I strongly believe we can limit the impact of coronavirus if we stay calm and work together.

Thank you for all you're doing to keep Jackson safe and healthy.

Sincerely,
Derek Dobies

GET IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM THE CITY OF JACKSON

The coronavirus pandemic is an ever-changing situation that has communities responding quickly and updating residents several times a day.

To make sure you don't miss any important updates from the City about closures, cancellations, and health information, follow our social media platforms:



Facebook



Twitter



Instagram



YouTube

The City encourages residents to sign up for CodeRED.

This mass communication system simultaneously sends out phone messages, emails and text messages to thousands of residents. Follow these steps to sign up:

1. Access the [CodeRED](https://www.cityofjackson.org/code-red) website by:
 - Visiting [cityofjackson.org](https://www.cityofjackson.org)
 - Scanning QR code with smartphone
 - Downloading CodeRED mobile app
2. Create profile with contact information. You can edit the profile if your information changes.
3. Choose what kind of messages you want to receive. Regular updates on weather events, emergencies and City news are also sent to users.
4. Complete sign up and receive the latest information on how the community is responding to COVID-19.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

JACKSON UNITES TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

The Jackson community is coming together to respond to the impacts of coronavirus.

Following the Local State of Emergency declaration, a section of Jackson County's emergency response was activated to care for human service needs.

Around the same time, the Jackson COVID-19 Action Network (JCAN) was taking shape.

JCAN is now working with the county's emergency response to meet the needs of the community.

The group consists of representatives from more than two dozen local organizations, government agencies, and volunteers.

With the City of Jackson included in JCAN, City staff are working closely with these organizations for this response effort.

JCAN is focused on ensuring all Jackson County residents have access to food, shelter, information and other basic needs.

Several initiatives have been launched to raise funds, obtain supplies, and organize volunteers.

JCAN is currently supported through a fund established by the United Way of Jackson County and the Jackson Commu-

nity Foundation.

The fund has already raised more than \$290,000 for the JCAN effort, with donations coming from local businesses, organizations and families.

The money will be used to purchase and distribute supplies to residents in need.

Some of the essential items include:

- Baby formula
- Baby wipes
- Diapers and pull-ups
- Tampons and pads
- Hand sanitizer
- Toilet paper
- Sanitizer wipes
- Toiletries
- Over the counter medications
- Laundry soap
- Bleach

Funds raised will also support local organizations to help residents and address long-term implications of the crisis.

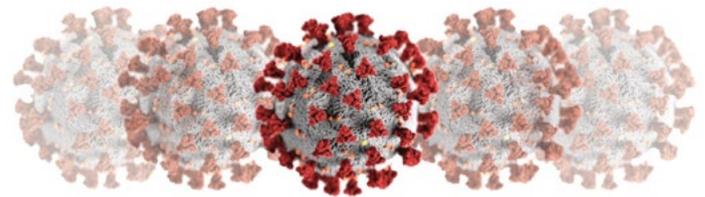
Monetary donations are accepted online by visiting uwjackson.org and going to the [Donate](#) section.

For those wanting to donate the items listed above, a donation site is established at the Boos Community Center.

The Boos Community Center is located in Loomis Park at 210 Gilbert St.



JACKSON COVID-19 ACTION NETWORK



Donations are accepted Monday through Friday from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Items will sit for several days in a secure area and regularly wiped down to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

If you're looking for help, call the 2-1-1 helpline to get connected to assistance from JCAN and other community resources.

JCAN is also looking for volunteers to assist with response efforts.

You're also asked to call 2-1-1 if you're interested in volunteering.

City of Jackson Public Information Officer Aaron Dimick is leading communication efforts for JCAN.

"The Jackson community

is putting together an emergency response like we've never seen before. While our local organizations and volunteers lead the way, we're also asking for people all over Jackson County to lend a helping hand so we can keep up with growing demands of those in need," Dimick said.

JCAN will continue to update the community on new response initiatives or services when they're available.

Learn more about JCAN's response by visiting: cityofjackson.org/coronavirus

POLICE READY TO HELP KIDS WITH AUTISM

Officers from the Jackson Police Department are now better equipped to help kids who are non-verbal or autistic.

This past winter, the Jackson County Intermediate School District (ISD) donated 25 bags to the police department.

The bags contain toys, noise-canceling headphones, blankets and communication boards.

They've been placed in every patrol car to help provide comfort and communication if officers encounter a child who is non-verbal or on the autism spectrum.

This need was identified after Officer David Stallworth found a non-verbal autistic boy who was lost.

Officer Stallworth worked with the ISD to develop tools to help in future situations.

Lt. Sergio Garcia says the bags will be a great asset to officers.

"Our department just went through autism training. We thank the ISD for this extra help in assisting kids with autism or who are non-verbal," Lt. Garcia said.



Officer David Stallworth (left) and Lt. Sergio Garcia (right) pose with bags donated by the ISD. Photo by Kaci Babineau.

RENOVATIONS BEGIN AT MLK COMMUNITY CENTER



Artwork of what the MLK Center will look like when construction is complete.

A long-awaited project that's investing nearly \$2 million into a Jackson neighborhood is now underway!

Construction began March 12 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, and is expected take place through the summer.

In January 2020, the City Council approved a \$1.9 million construction contract for the MLK Center.

Plans call for a full renovation of the community center, including a larger kitchen, a building addition for more office space, a new roof, expanded weight room, resurfaced gym floor, and more windows throughout the facility.

Over the years, the MLK Center has grown beyond just recreational offerings, and now provides after school and summer programs, free

meals, tutoring, and has become a gathering place for residents young and old.

College courses through Jackson College are now offered at the center.

The center's director, John Willis, says it has been a big part of Jackson's south side community for over 50 years.

"This renovation means a lot to the community center and the neighborhoods we serve. This investment will help the center continue to be a community resource for their next 50 years," Willis said.

Construction is expected to wrap up in mid-August 2020, but could be impacted by COVID-19 related delays.