

COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Jackson continues to come together to meet community needs during the COVID-19 crisis.

Partnerships between local government, non-profits, organizations, businesses and resident-led groups are making a big impact to meet those needs.

This time of the year, the Boos Community Center is often packed with residents enjoying recreation activities.

But in summer 2020, the center is functioning as the distribution center for Jackson's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stacks of boxes ready for residents in need fill the center, packed with food, cleaning supplies and personal care products.

"It's phenomenal. I've seen people stepping up in so many amazing ways," said Colleen Sullivan, AFLCIO Community Services Liaison for the United Way of Jackson County.

When the emergency began in March, the Jackson Community Foundation and the United Way of Jackson Coun-

ty created the COVID-19 Response Fund.

The donation fund has raised \$343,349 over the past four months.

Those funds are used to purchase supplies that are distributed from the Boos Center to local non-profits for relief efforts, along with supporting area organizations with COVID-related work.

In recent months, 170,000 pounds of food, 57,213 personal care products, 46,335 diapers, 22,728 cleaning products and 6,394 baby supply items have gone out to the community.

The United Way's Colleen Sullivan oversees supply distribution at the center.

She says these efforts have helped thousands of residents.

"Jackson has a high poverty rate, so a lot of the need is always there. But when we have a crisis like this, it really pushes people over the edge," Sullivan said.

Sullivan and fellow United Way employee Lois Dunning work alongside City of Jackson em-



Boos Center workers (left to right) John Willis, Roy Ryan, Marshawn Norris and Colleen Sullivan stand with supplies.

ployees John Willis, Marshawn Norris and Roy Ryan to distribute the supplies.

"We couldn't have done any of this without the City. The City brought all of the people together and offered up places like the Boos Center, which enabled us to focus on other things for the relief effort," Sullivan said.

Other local organizations have been assisting with efforts at the center through Jackson County's emergency response.

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CONTINUED: RESPONDING TO CORONAVIRUS

One resident-led group that's stepped up is Residents in Action; a group of community influencers who mobilized as a support system for one another and to personally learn what the coronavirus was, why it was important and how to prevent and minimize the spread.

The group's coordinator, Tashia Carter, says they created and shared educational materials, worked with the Jackson COVID-19 Action Network (JCAN) and Jackson County's emergency response to organize response services for residents and initiated several projects.

One undertaking was a neighborhood party store project.

"With no inner-city grocery stores, residents go to party stores for essential items. We shared free disinfectant cleaner and a COVID-19 informational flyer to educate staff on proper cleaning of high traffic areas. COVID-19 is ravaging African American communities nationwide. We did not want that in Jackson," Carter said.

Carter says they've shown what residents can do when they come together.

"My hope is that businesses, organizations, non-prof-



City employee Marshawn Norris distributing supplies.

its and funders continue to partner with resident-led groups more in the future," Carter said.

The COVID-19 Response Fund is still taking donations and allocating funds.

Donations are accepted online at uwjackson.org in the "Donate" section.

If you're looking for help, call the 211 helpline to get connected with response efforts.



MAYOR

Derek Dobies

COUNCIL

COUNCIL	Ward
Arlene Robinson	1
Freddie Dancy	2
Jeremy Alexander	3
Laura Dwyer Schlecte	4
Karen Bunnell	5
Will Forgrave	6

INTERIM CITY MANAGER

Jonathan Greene

NEW COUNCILMEMBER APPOINTED FOR WARD 5

Karen Bunnell is the new councilmember for the City's Fifth Ward on the Jackson City Council.

Councilmember Bunnell was appointed by the council to the vacant seat at a special meeting in May.

The City Charter states that council vacancies are to be filled by appointment by the City Council.

The seat was vacated following the April resignation of Kelsey Heck. Bunnell is a Jackson area native and has been a resident of the Fifth Ward for six years.

She works for a local insurance company as a Group Benefits Administrator and has been active in several community organizations.



Councilmember Karen Bunnell

Bunnell's term ends in Nov. 2021 when this council seat is up for reelection.

The Fifth Ward consists of Downtown Jackson and its surrounding neighborhoods.

CITY HALL REOPENS FOLLOWING COVID CLOSURE

After a COVID-19 closure that lasted nearly four months, Jackson City Hall officially reopened to residents on July 8.

Reopening City Hall comes with new safety measures to protect public health.

Anyone entering City Hall must be wearing a face covering in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders.

No more than two people are allowed in an elevator at a time.

Every floor that is open to the public has strict capac-

ity limits.

If the capacity limit is reached, residents will sit in a secondary waiting room.

Because of capacity restrictions, the City is asking residents to limit the number of people accompanying them to City Hall.

Residents are strongly encouraged to still use alternative options for conducting business before coming into the building, such as reaching staff by phone, email, and postal mail.

The City also urges residents to use the City Hall

drop box for payment and document submission, along with the online payment system through our website.

A bigger drop box has been installed to accommodate larger documents.

Virtual meetings of the City Council and boards and commissions are continuing, subject to future Executive Orders.



The new drop box located outside the front entrance of City Hall.

AUGUST 4 ELECTION

The Aug. 4 Primary Election is happening during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CDC guidelines will be utilized at all polling locations to protect the safety of voters and election workers.

Those concerned about voting in person may request an absentee ballot.

Information about requesting an absentee ballot is available by going to cityofjackson.org/elections.

New drop boxes at Jackson City Hall will accommodate absentee ballot submissions.

Due to the renovations underway at the MLK Community Center, the Ward 1 polling location has been temporarily relocated to Second



Missionary Baptist Church at 304 E. Prospect St. in Jackson.

Voters will decide local and state primary races, along with ballot proposals.

All polling places are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

MEETINGS & IMPORTANT DATES

Aug. 11 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting

Monday, Sept. 7
Labor Day

Sept. 8 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 22
First Day of Autumn





From the Desk of the Mayor
Derek Dobies

As Jackson comes together to face the new challenges of COVID-19, a long-standing hardship continues to be part of our community conversation.

At our meeting on June 16, myself and the entire City Council voted for a resolution that declares racism a public health crisis in the City of Jackson.

The resolution acknowledges the City's history of systemic racism and the impacts that racism has on the health of our African American residents.

We're now putting those words into action by advocating for policies that improve the health of Black residents, assessing City laws to make sure racial equity is a core element of our government, engaging the Human Relations Commission to further the community discussions on diversity and inclusion, and continuing racial equity training for leadership and staff.

As we take these important steps at City Hall, the community is also stepping up.

The City is proud to support two resident-led Black Lives Matter murals that were painted on two streets in June.

These murals, located on E. High Street and W. Washington Avenue (pictured below), serve as important forces for change as we work to ensure that Jackson is a great place for everyone to prosper and grow.

Sincerely,
Derek Dobies



YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO COMPLETE YOUR 2020 CENSUS!

Be counted in the 2020 U.S. Census!

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the deadline to complete the Census has been extended to Oct. 31 to give people more time to submit this important information.

As of early July, the City of Jackson has a 62% response rate, which means we need more residents represent Jackson.

Your Census response helps determine the amount of funding Jackson will receive over the next decade.

The federal government provides funding for services like education, health care, roads and parks based on our Census responses.

That's why every child, adult and senior needs to be counted.

Filling out the Census is easy and takes less than 10 minutes.

You can use your smartphone or computer to submit your Census form online at my2020census.gov or by calling 844-330-2020.

You can also respond by mail using the paper census form that was sent to your home.

The details you provide are confidential and cannot be used against you by any government agency or court.

If you need assistance filling out the Census, please call or text the City's Resident Helpline at 517-529-2047.

Thank you for representing Jackson in the 2020 Census!

PARKS REOPEN & RECREATION PROGRAMS RESUME FOLLOWING COVID-19 SHUTDOWN

A slow and safe reopening of Jackson's parks and recreation programs is now underway!

Park facilities had been closed and recreation programs canceled since mid-March because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A safe restart plan by the Parks and Recreation Department began June 6 with the reopening of outdoor recreation facilities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, athletic fields and picnic shelters.

Throughout June, the Ella Sharp Park Golf Course Clubhouse, Mini Golf Course and Golf Learning

Center were reopened.

The Nixon Park Pool and Skate Park did not open for the summer 2020 season due to COVID-19 concerns and City budget restrictions.

Outdoor recreation programs are also restarting.

Adult softball and adult soccer programs are starting in July.

Outdoor yoga and pilates classes are being offered in the open air of Jackson's parks through the fall.

The Parks and Recreation Department is closely following the latest directives from the State on what



programs to restart.

Residents are still urged to wear masks when appropriate, practice safe social distancing, and be aware of COVID-19 concerns when using parks and

participating in programs.

Visit cityofjackson.org/parksandrec to learn more about the latest recreation programs that are being offered.

NO SMOKING IN PARKS

Jackson's parks and cemeteries have gone smoke free.

At their July 14 meeting, the City Council approved an ordinance that prohibits the use of tobacco products, which includes cigarettes and e-cigarettes, in public parks and cemeteries.

A person who violates the ordinance will first be asked to stop using the tobacco products.

The second step is asking the person to leave the area if they don't stop using the products.

If the person does not



comply with the first two attempts, they could receive a civil infraction and be subject to fines.

No smoking signs will be posted in parks and cemeteries to remind residents of this new ordinance.

NEW PUBLIC PARK



A new public park has been created in a neighborhood on S. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The new park, named Workers Memorial Park, was formed by the City Council in May. It makes use of an existing playground and green space on the site of the former McCulloch Elementary School. The park's name honors residents killed or injured in workplace accidents and frontline workers who continue to battle COVID-19.

NEW EXERCISE ROOM COMING TO MLK CENTER

When the newly renovated Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center reopens later this year, residents can enjoy new exercise equipment donated by Alro Steel, a local metal distribution company.

The refurbished exercise area, named the Alro Steel Weight Room, will contain new equipment such as ellipticals, treadmills, weight machines, and other exercise equipment.

The MLK Center is currently undergoing a \$1.9 million renovation from the City of Jackson.

Along with the new Alro Steel Weight Room, the center is receiving a larger kitchen, building addition for more office space, a new roof, resurfaced gym floor, and more windows throughout the facility.

Construction at the MLK Center started in March and is set to wrap up in Sept.



The MLK Center is currently undergoing renovations and will reopen in Sept.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS UNDERWAY



W. Franklin Street is under construction from S. Brown Street to S. West Avenue.

The important work of improving Jackson's streets continues this summer.

The City's Engineering Division has 16 infrastructure improvement projects planned that will bring new pavement to more than a dozen streets this year.

One of the biggest construction projects is happening on S. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive between E. Mason Street and E. Morrell Street.

Crews are fully reconstructing the roadway with new underground infrastructure and pavement, along with building a roundabout at the intersection of S. MLK Drive and E. Morrell Street.

The project is expected to wrap up in late Oct.

Another large project is happening in the City's west side residential neighborhood on W. Franklin Street between S. West Avenue and S. Brown Street.

The project includes water main

and water service line replacement, along with the installation of new pavement, curbs, gutters, driveway approaches and sidewalks.

The W. Franklin Street project is expected to be completed in Oct.

The Greenwood Avenue construction project wrapped up this summer after delays prevented its completion last fall.

The repaved Greenwood Avenue between S. Jackson Street and W. Morrell Street reopened in early July, along with the newly constructed traffic circle around Austin Blair Park.

Later in the fall, efforts will continue to resurface neighborhood streets on the City's west side.

Durand, Higby and Thompson streets between Carlton Boulevard and W. Michigan Avenue are set to receive new pavement, curbs and sidewalk ramps.

Several street lighting projects are also planned in neighborhoods all over Jackson this year.