

CITY OF JACKSON

OFFICIAL CITY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024

WELCOME HOME TO JACKSON GROUP MAKING IMPACT IN NEIGHBORHOOD

It's an organization that started five years ago to welcome home military veterans.

"We've been able to connect veterans to jobs and homes," said Vittoria Jimerson.

Since then, Executive Director Jimerson and husband Jason Overmyer have grown the non-profit to assist more people.

"We want to have a hub of resources where people can have their needs met," Jimerson said.

It all happens at the Welcome Home Organization (WHO) headquarters on First Street in Jackson's Flat Iron District.

24 hour daycare, tutoring, veteran services, youth programs, small business support and a community garden are some of the services provided by WHO.

"We are super grassroots. Getting to this point has been challenging but Jackson has been very generous. When we ask people and businesses to show up, they do," Jimerson said.



WHO leaders (left to right) Vittoria Jimerson, Kevin Hawkins and Angela Evans.

WHO has also been boosted by local, State and federal support.

In July, the City Council approved a plan for WHO to use American Rescue Plan funds to build two affordable rental homes on Woodbridge Street near their headquarters.

"One will be a veteran transition home, the other will be a youth transition home," Jimerson said.

The group has enjoyed being part of the positive changes happening in the City of Jackson.

"There's more work to be done and I think the

City is on board to listen to the changes that are needed," Jimerson.

Welcome Home is bringing more awareness to the Flat Iron District, a neighborhood southwest of Downtown Jackson named after the historic Flat Iron building at the intersection of Greenwood Avenue and First Street.

"It's great to have that community identity. There are multiple minority-owned businesses on this street. We're doing our best and want to uplift the community," Jimerson said.

INSIDE

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- New playground
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- Leaf collection
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BOOS CENTER REOPENS AFTER RENOVATION

Residents are returning to the Boos Recreation Center following a major renovation project.

Construction started in March using federal funds and wrapped up in Aug.

Construction focused on structural improvements, along with upgrades to the center's meeting room, bathrooms, kitchen, gymnasium, lighting, heating and flooring.

The Boos Center is the main gathering place for the City's senior activities through the Active Living Program.

It also regularly hosts adult exercise programs

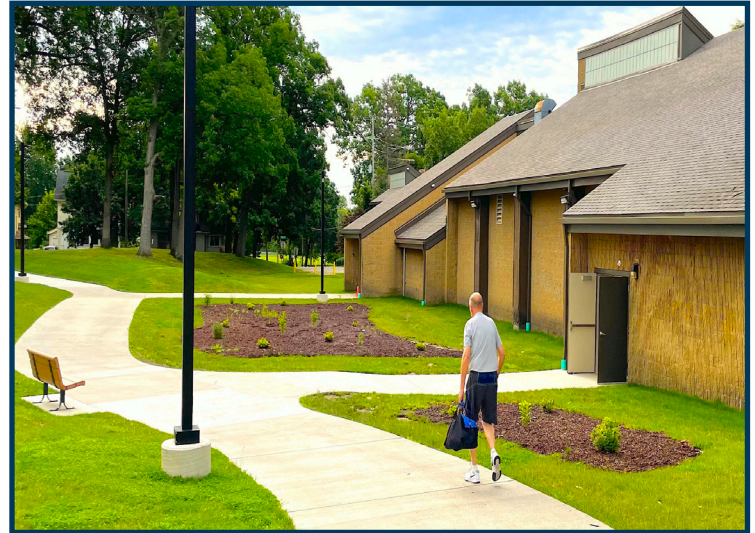
and recreation leagues.

Parks and Recreation Director Kelli Hoover says the renovation project brings fresh energy to this east side staple.

"The construction is the culmination of five years of work to revitalize recreation facilities in Loomis Park. This update strengthens recreation services for Jackson's east side and the entire community," Hoover said.

Another phase of construction is planned in spring 2025.

The next phase will bring a visitor lounge and expanded kitchen, along with



New entrance and landscape at the Boos Center.

three new classrooms.

The center is located in Loomis Park, which has seen playground, basket-

ball court, lighting, sledding hill, pavilion and parking lot improvements over the past five years.

NEW PLAYGROUND COMING TO MLK CENTER

A neighborhood park is getting a big upgrade thanks to a special grant.

\$663,600 from the Spark Grant Program, a partnership of the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, was awarded to the City of Jackson in July.

Grant funds will be used to expand the current playground and fully replace the pavilion at the Howard Woods Recreation Complex, which is the park surrounding the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center.

The new playground equipment will be accessi-

ble to people with disabilities and contain adult exercise equipment.

The current playground structure will remain in place and the new features will be additions.

Jackson is one of 29 Michigan communities to receive Spark Grant funding.

These grants, which are powered by American Rescue Plan funds, aim to expand access to healthy recreation opportunities for Michigan's historically under-resourced and under-represented communities.

The redesigned playground area will also include new walking paths to



Rendering of playground addition coming to the MLK Center.

provide improved access to the MLK Equality Trail, the City's main pedestrian trail.

The City of Jackson ex-

pects to start construction on the park improvements in spring 2025.



MAYOR

Daniel Mahoney

COUNCIL

Arlene Robinson

Freddie Dancy

Angelita V. Gunn

Conner Wood

Shalanda Hunt

Will Forgrave

Ward

1

2

3

4

5

6

CITY MANAGER

Jonathan Greene

IMPORTANT DATES & MEETINGS

SEPT. 24 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

OCT. 8 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

OCT. 22 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 5

Election Day

Monday, Nov. 11

City Hall Closed for Veterans Day

NOV. 12 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

NOV. 26 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

Thursday to Friday Nov. 28-29

City Hall closed for Thanksgiving

DEC. 10 • 6:30 p.m.

City Council meeting

NOV. 5 ELECTION GUIDE

WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT

Voters will decide races for federal, State and local offices in the Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024 election.

Jackson's Ward 5 will have a special election to fill a City Council seat.

There will also be millage proposals on the ballot for the Jackson County Jail, Jackson College, and the Jackson District Library.

ELECTION DAY

Polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 5.

A list of polling places is available on the City website.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Completed absentee ballots must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by 8 p.m. on Election Day to be counted in the election.

Secure absentee ballot drop boxes are available for voters to submit completed ballots at their convenience.

The drop boxes are located outside

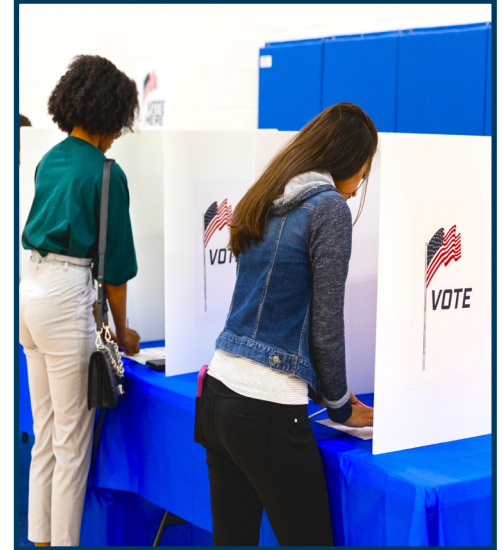
EARLY VOTING

Did you know you can skip the Election Day lines and vote before the election?

There's now nine days of early voting for every State and federal election.

The early voting site for City of Jackson residents will be located on the 2nd Floor of City Hall, 161 W. Michigan Ave., Saturday, Oct. 26 through Sunday, Nov. 3, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Early voting follows the same procedures as voting at a polling place on Election Day.



the front entrance of City Hall, 161 W. Michigan Ave., and in the parking lot of Nixon Park, 400 E. North St.

ELECTION SIGNS

Before displaying signs to support a candidate or cause, please be aware of where the signs should be placed.

According to a City ordinance, election signs are only allowed on private property where you have permission to display them.

The signs are not allowed in the City's right-of-way or "parkway", which is the area between the street and sidewalk.

Election signs are also not allowed in public parks or vacant lots owned by the City.

Signs that violate the ordinance could be removed by City staff.

MORE INFORMATION

Scan the QR code with your device for more information about voting in this election from the City website.





Message from the Mayor

Daniel Mahoney

Dear Jackson citizens,

I'm excited to announce the launch of the "Fix 36" program—an initiative aimed at making it easier for businesses to thrive in our city. As your Mayor, I understand the challenges business owners face in meeting site plan requirements. That's why we've created "Fix 36" to provide more flexibility and support, allowing businesses to grow without being overwhelmed by immediate compliance demands.

The program offers business owners a 36-month window to complete improvements not directly tied to their principal building, like landscaping, lighting, and parking lots. This extended timeline ensures that businesses can focus on their operations while meeting site plan standards at a manageable pace.

Key elements of the program include a refundable \$2,500 escrow deposit to show commitment, a full and clear site plan agreement for transparency, and regular reviews by the Community Development Department to provide ongoing support. All businesses must still meet building codes, ensuring safety while they complete improvements.

"Fix 36" is more than just a compliance initiative—it's a reflection of our commitment to building a strong, vibrant business community. We believe this program will help our local businesses succeed, and in turn, strengthen Jackson's economy.

If you're a business owner or know someone who could benefit from this program, please reach out to my office or the Community Development Department for more information.

Together, we can build a better Jackson, one business at a time.

Sincerely,
Daniel J. Mahoney
Mayor of Jackson

2024 CONSTRUCTION



Check out that smooth pavement! The 2024 construction season wraps up this fall with the City's Engineering Division completing 24 infrastructure improvement projects. Neighborhood streets throughout the City of Jackson getting refreshed infrastructure. Blakely Avenue (pictured) on Jackson's northeast side received an updated water main, lead service line replacements, and a new street surface.

LEAF COLLECTION

Loose leaf collection is returning to Jackson this fall.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is working with leaf vacuum machines and other equipment to pick up loose leaves placed curbside.

Every neighborhood will see two rounds of leaf collection.

Residents are asked to place loose leaf piles along street curbs in the street and not on parkways.

Please only place leaves along curbs 48 hours before your scheduled collection.



It's important for residents to remove vehicles and basketball hoops from streets the day of their scheduled pickup.

Leaves will not be collected if they can't be reached by crews.

Collection information will be mailed to residents and available on cityofjackson.org later this fall.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

NEW APPROACHES TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Reductions in gun violence and mental health hospitalizations are two benefits of the Jackson Police Department (JPD) using new strategies to keep residents safe.

“We’re more out in the community than we’ve ever been,” said Crisis Intervention Clinician Nikki Winans.

In July, Winans started sharing her time between mental health agency Life-Ways and JPD, becoming the department’s first social worker.

Winans responds with officers when there’s a person that could benefit from crisis intervention.

“Not every situation is going to require the same law enforcement response, so it’s important for us to meet the person where they’re at and find out what they need,” Winans said.

This extra level of care has been beneficial for domestic violence calls.

“We create a safety plan for the victim to become safe. This has been a big help, especially if they have children,” Winans said.

Within her first month on the job, the new social worker says JPD transported four people to the hospital for mental health crises.

“Which is a very low num-



Cheryl Ragland (left) and Nikki Winans (right) at the Jackson Police Department.

ber. And that’s the goal, to decrease the inpatient stays across the board in the community,” Winans said.

The social worker position is funded through JPD’s Group Violence Intervention (also called GVI).

GVI is a strategy that brings together law enforcement, local leaders, and social services to reduce gun violence.

“This uplifts our community. It can change a person’s life,” said GVI Coordinator Cheryl Ragland.

After a shooting happens, Ragland responds with a four-person team to offer assistance and get an understanding of what is needed to break the cycle

of violence.

“This really helps prevent retaliation and recidivism. We’ve had lots of positive interactions and outcomes,” Ragland said.

The City Council funded GVI in 2021 using American Rescue Plan funds.

Ragland, a retired Consumers Energy employee, says her drive to help the community brought her to GVI work.

“It’s a group effort to do this. Numbers ebb and flow, but overall the gun crime numbers are down,” Ragland said.

GVI also works to build trust between residents and police through community outreach events.

The Summer Safety

Series, holiday food distributions, and gun lock giveaways have created numerous connections.

“It’s been a void that’s now being filled. I credit Director Elmer Hitt, Deputy Chief Sergio Garcia, and the City Council for seeing the missing pieces needed to serve the community,” Ragland said.

While officers are increasingly getting more training to assist with mental health emergencies, Winans is thankful this partnership has been taken to the next level.

“It’s okay to call and ask for help. Taking that first step is difficult, but you have people who are ready to help,” Winans said.

BIKE REPAIR STATION GIFTED TO CITY TRAIL

People for the Parks and Trails (PPT) and Experience Jackson worked together to donate a new bike repair station to the City of Jackson for use on the MLK Equality Trail.

The station was installed in late Aug. along the trail at New Leaf Park off Fourth Street.

It has all the tools necessary to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance, along with an air pump that helps cyclists fix flats.

PPT is a resident-led non-profit that supports City parks and trails through volunteer programs and donations.

Previous annual donations brought additional trash cans and bike racks for parks.

Experience Jackson, the region's official tourism bureau, sponsored PPT's 2024 donation to boost bicycle connectivity and tourism in Jackson.



100 HOMES PROGRESS



100 Homes Program managers Cory Mays (left) and Christopher Herrmann (right) at completed home on E. Monroe Street.

The City of Jackson is on a mission to build 100 new single-family homes on vacant lots by 2027.

One year after the groundbreaking 100 Homes Program launched in fall 2023, new homes are popping up all over Jackson

As of Sept. 2024, there were three homes completed and sold, with 24 more under construction.

Jackson's north side is seeing lots of housing activity, with four new homes going up on one block of Maltby Street.

Managed by the City's Community Development Department, the program uses American Rescue Plan funds to provide \$25,000 in down payment assistance and connect home buyers to builders.

Buyers may also be eligible for an additional \$10,000 in down payment assistance from the State of Michigan.

All home prices are capped at \$175,000.

Program eligibility is based on household size and income.

You do not need to be a City of Jackson resident to qualify.

Buyers work with a mortgage company of their choosing to secure funding for the homes.

There are three plans buyers can choose from, which are a mix of one and two story houses with up to three bedrooms and one and a half baths.

Future homeowners also select where the houses are built.

The majority are infill housing on vacant lots, though some are being built on fresh lots that have never been developed.

Go to the 100 Homes section of cityofjackson.org to learn more about the program and application process.