

# Kroc Center expected to break ground in matter of months

By Cecilia Dobbs  
Biloxi Parks and Recreation Department

The Salvation Army hopes to begin construction on the Kroc Center within the next couple of months.

The Yankee Stadium, located on the corner of Lee and Division Street in Biloxi, is the site for the new \$7.5 million Kroc Community Center. The Kroc Center will feature an indoor lap pool, an outdoor recreational pool, a performing arts center, a gymnasium, and a library. It will also provide an area for several community programs.

"We are currently undertaking a mission study that will identify what the needs are in this region", stated Major Rob Vincent of the Salvation Army, Southern Mississippi Command. "The real obvious needs that jump out are the needs for youth programs and the needs for senior programs. Many of the facilities that housed these programs were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina."

Before the storm, the Salvation Army was within months of breaking ground on the project.

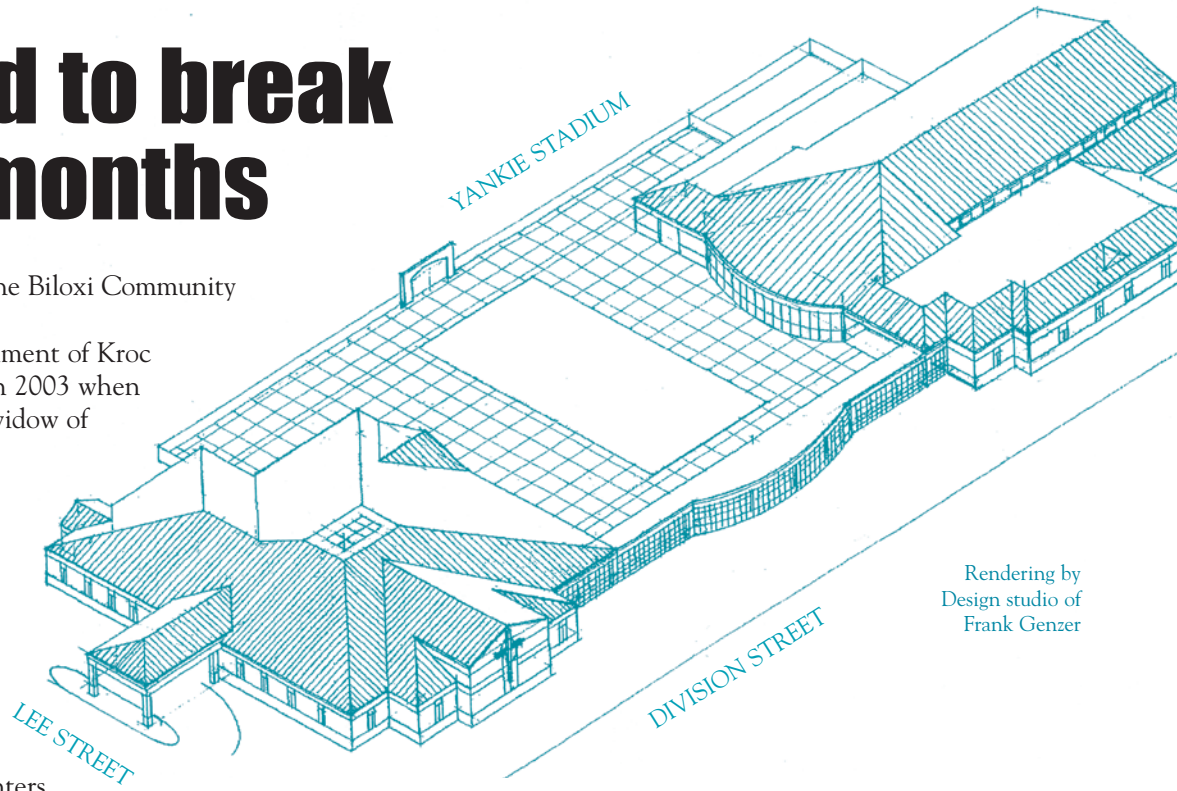
The Biloxi proposal began in 2004 with a land swap between the Salvation Army and the City of Biloxi. The City exchanged the Yankee Stadium for the former Dukate Elementary School property on Howard Avenue. The Salvation Army outbid the City in July of 2004 for the Dukate property which is located across

the street from the Biloxi Community Center.

The establishment of Kroc Centers began in 2003 when Joan Kroc, the widow of McDonald's restaurant founder Ray Kroc, donated \$1.5 billion to the Salvation Army for the purpose of creating Ray and Joan Kroc Community Centers throughout the country.

The Salvation Army divided the gift into equal amounts to each of the four territories, Central, Eastern, Southern and Western. In the Southern Salvation Army territory there are only ten cities to be selected as Kroc Center sites and Biloxi is the only city in Mississippi.

The Salvation Army is hoping to divide the construction of the Biloxi Kroc Center into two phases. The first phase will be the construction of office areas and the second will be the construction of the community center. This will allow the Salvation



Rendering by Design studio of Frank Genzer

Army to continue operations of their current recovery center functioning out of the large dome.

"We are within \$900,000 of raising the complete amount needed to for the Kroc Center", said Vincent. "This allows us enough money to get started on the project."

To make a donation for the development of the Salvation Army Kroc Center, contact the Biloxi unit at 228-374-8301 or visit the website at [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org) and specify for the South Mississippi Kroc Center.

## Biloxi embarks on project to beautify U.S. 90

The City of Biloxi, with assistance from the Mississippi Department of Transportation, has embarked on a project that Mayor A.J. Holloway says will create artwork from standing dead oaks in the median of U.S. 90.

Dozens of live oaks have died in the center medians of the scenic highway in the 16 months since Hurricane Katrina, and, under Holloway's plan, the city has had international award-winning "chainsaw artist" Dayton Scoggins of Mississippi sculpt a variety of marine-related objects in a stand of trees a couple blocks west of the Biloxi Lighthouse.

Mississippi Department of Transportation crews, who were scheduled to remove standing dead trees from the center median, have topped a half-dozen trees so that the remaining trunks could be transformed into sculpted works of art.

"We've had more than 300 trees of different varieties planted in Biloxi on public property alone since Hurricane Katrina," Holloway said, "and in this particular project, we're giving a second life to something Mother Nature attempted to destroy. We were dealt lemons and now we're going to make lemonade."

Holloway approached Southern District Transportation Commissioner Wayne Brown and Harrison County Parkway Commission Director



Bobby Weaver about the project on Dec. 7. Gulfport Public Works Director Kris Riemann, who had artist Scoggins sculpt a tree in Gulfport, originally suggested the idea to Biloxi.

The mayor envisions a tree-sculpture garden where a collection of dead oak trees now stands a couple

blocks west of the Biloxi Lighthouse, with several other sculptures created in the median further west toward Rodenburg Avenue.

Biloxi paid \$4,000 for the initial sculpting, while MDOT funded the preliminary "topping" of the trees.

"We're happy to be a part of this cooperative project," Commissioner Brown said. "This is, after all, a scenic highway, and I certainly hope that people realize that it involves only those trees that have been deemed as dead, by both MDOT and the city's arborist. The last thing we want to do – and we will not do – is to take down a live oak."

Scoggins, who was born in Greene County and lives in Sandersville, Miss., has successfully represented the United States in international woodcarving competitions and has also won numerous awards in competitions throughout the country.

Harrison County crews will continue to be responsible for the maintaining the medians around the sculptures, which Scoggins will treat with an environmentally friendly preservative.

Should the artwork ever be deemed a distraction to passing motorists, Holloway and Brown said, the trunks could be relocated to nearby city parks.

To see more photos of the tree sculpture work, visit the city web site at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us).

## Frequently Called Numbers

Area code is 228 unless otherwise noted.

- **American Red Cross**  
Provides emergency disaster assistance
- **Animal control** ..... 435-6103  
To report stray or dead animals
- **Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division**  
..... 601-359-4230  
Assistance on legal questions or complaints
- **Auto tag info** ..... 435-8242  
County Courthouse at Lameuse/MLK Boulevard
- **Birth certificates** ..... 601-576-7960  
State Department of Vital Statistics in Jackson
- **Building permits** ..... 435-6270  
For permits for construction and improvements
- **Business licenses** ..... 435-6247  
To obtain a license to do business in the city
- **City Council** ..... 435-6257  
To reach council members or clerks of council
- **City Court** ..... 435-6125  
Information on traffic tickets and court docket
- **Debris removal** ..... 374-1211  
Jonathan Kiser is supervisor of debris removal
- **Drivers licenses** ..... 432-7803  
D'Iberville High School Football Stadium parking lot

- **Emergency police and fire** ..... 911  
Non-emergency: 435-6107 (police) or 435-6200 (fire)
- **FEMA** ..... 1-800-621-FEMA (3362)  
Federal Emergency Management Agency
- **Garbage collection** ..... 392-5108  
Allied Waste is city's residential garbage contractor
- **Harrison County Coroner's Office**  
..... 1-800-958-9519  
For information on missing persons
- **Housing Authority** ..... 374-7771  
To get information on public housing
- **Human Resources** ..... 435-6259  
For info on city employment; third floor, City Hall
- **Mayor's office** ..... 435-6254  
Citizen services, public records requests
- **Museums information** ..... 435-6244  
Info on city museums or to rent historic properties
- **Parks & Recreation** ..... 435-6281  
Info on programs, or to rent most city facilities
- **Planning Commission** ..... 435-6266  
To apply for a change in your zoning or land use
- **Public schools** ..... 374-1810  
Administrative office for all Biloxi public schools

- **Salvation Army** .. 1-800-SALARMY (725-2769)
- **Streets and drainage** ..... 435-6271  
To report pot holes, damaged street signs
- **Voter registration** ..... 435-6279  
To register to vote or change in address

### Utilities

- Cable TV - Cable One ..... 374-5900
- Electricity
- Mississippi Power ..... 800-532-1502
- Coast Electric Power Assoc ..... 388-3109
- Gas - CenterPoint Energy Entex ..... 896-7500
- Water/sewer - City of Biloxi 374-7953 or 435-6236

More information is available online at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us), (to receive e-news, click on "Are you in the loop?")

Information also is updated on the City of Biloxi Storm Info line at 435-6300.