C’mon, Biloxi, come to your Census

Census 2020, the once-a-decade snapshot of the United States, is falling short in Biloxi, and city leaders are asking for help.

“Right now, 58.1 percent of the people in Biloxi have responded, and we need to do better,” Mayor Andrew “FoFo” Gilich said. “At least 41.9 percent of the people in Biloxi who were mailed postcards have not responded, and, to be honest, there could be even more people living in Biloxi than that.

“It’s critical that we get an accurate count.”

Census responses, which are kept confidential by federal law, are used to produce statistics about how many people live in what areas and who they are by age, sex, race and ethnicity.

When those statistics are combined with other data, federal, state and local policymakers are better armed to make decisions about how to allocate billions of dollars in federal funds for critical public services such as hospitals, schools, road repairs and emergency response services for the next 10 years.

Here’s how to respond:

Online: Go to 2020census.gov. All you need is your address. If you don’t have online access, ask a friend for help. Ask friends if they need help.


Biloxi masks up as cases increase

Facemasks, which have been recommended by the city going back to May, became mandatory for the public and workers at city buildings in Biloxi and at most businesses throughout the city.

The mandate from Gov. Tate Reeves in mid-July was the result of a continuing spike in cases statewide – with a one-day high of 1031 new cases on July 10 – and was part of a plan that put tighter restrictions on 13 counties, including Harrison and Jackson counties.

In Harrison County, by mid-July, the daily average has climbed from 5.5 cases a day to 35.29 cases a day, by the mayor’s count.

Ahead of the Fourth of July holiday, Biloxi gave away 27,000 face masks in four hours as part of the city’s “Mask up, Biloxi” campaign.

“As great as that turnout was,” the mayor observed, “people need to make masks part of their regular routine. It’s the safe thing to do, and it’s part of what we all need to do: social distance, do business by phone or online as much as you can, and just be careful.”

Biloxi Artful greetings from Biloxi

Artful greetings from Biloxi:

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A new series of murals, primarily in downtown but branching out, highlights Biloxi’s past, in a colorful manner.

It’s all part of the Main Street Biloxi Public Art Project, a volunteer-and-artist-driven project that has seen a dozen colorful murals, one as wide as 60 feet, applied to exterior walls of downtown fixtures.

To name a few, there’s George Ohr on the side of Mary Mahoney’s, “Gulf Coast Strong” outside Jacked Up Coffee shop, “Hurricane Camille” outside the Seafood Museum, and “Greetings from Biloxi” on Ohr Street, just south of Howard Avenue. None of the eye-striking murals has an explanation attached. They’re just there as eye candy, maybe spark conversation, say the organizers.

Throughout the month of August on BTV, you can meet the artists who created the murals and learn their inspiration, in a 20-minute documentary. See the special it each day at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and each afternoon at 1:30.

Even more inside

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CASINOS: 28 YEARS AND COUNTING

It was Aug. 1, 1992 when the Isle of Capri ushered in a new era in Biloxi, legally, Pages 22-23

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It’s true. By the federal government’s count right now, Biloxi will have a population of about 27,000 or so.

The headlines will be catastrophic over the next few years:
- “Biloxi announces school closures”
- “Cut backs on the way in public safety”
- “Three fire stations to close”
- “Fewer free and reduced meals available for children in Biloxi public schools”
- “Federal funds slashed for public transit”

Over the top? Perhaps, but possible if, once again, Biloxi and Mississippi don’t follow through on a mandate that dates back to the founding of the country. Forget not that not too long ago Mississippi went from five representatives in Washington to four. Why? The Census.

The U.S. Census Bureau earlier this year mailed notices to known residents of Biloxi to help provide an accurate count of those living in Biloxi. And now, months later, only 60 percent of those mailed the card have taken the eight minutes or so it takes to respond. In fact, we haven’t even reached the level of numbers from Census 2010.

Today, in an environment where wearing a facemask is an infringement of personal rights for some, we face another possible – and easily unavoidable – catastrophe. And, yes, it all goes back to personal rights and freedom.

The Declaration of Independence asserted our liberation. Everyone seems to have a grasp for that: the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness thing. The Constitution is a guide for how we’ll get there.

When the forefathers of our country – Madison, Jefferson, Washington, Adams, Franklin and Co. – set about charting a course for the new country, they sought to guarantee for us (as in U.S.) the Blessings of Liberty. They wrote the cherished document as a roadmap to how we might form a more perfect union.

One of the most important things, they agreed, was that we needed to know who was being united. In fact, it’s right there in Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution. Every 10 years there would be a count of the country, an “enumeration,” they called it.

And right now, in Biloxi only 60 percent of the people the Census knows about have responded to the Census. We should have somewhere near 50,000 residents or more, not 27,000 or 30,000. The lower numbers mean Biloxi will be shortchanged in all types of federal and state funding – public services, emergency services, schools, road and bridge construction, public transit, programs for low- to moderate-income residents, small businesses, and the list goes on and on.

The Census, whether you realize it or not, impacts your life in many ways, and its impact will be for the next decade. It’s far easier to get it right the first time instead of spending years on appealing the count. But it takes involvement. It takes following through on that Constitutional mandate.

There is no good reason for Biloxi not to have a 110 percent response rate on the Census. It takes only a few minutes – eight to nine minutes, in fact – and for the first time ever, you can do it online, conveniently.

Go to this website -- census2020.org -- and all you need to do is fill in your address and you’ll be promptly guided through a number of easy-to-answer questions. Please take a moment to do it. And if you know someone who does not have online access, please help them.

It’s that simple. We can avoid a Census crisis and get back to debating the wisdom of wearing a face mask.
EDGEEWATER MALL PRESENTS

Mystery of the Sea
Sand Sculpture Exhibit

See it daily through October
75-ton “Mystery of the Sea” sand sculpture near JC Penney

Find the hidden items in the sculpture!

- Boot
- Corona
- Flip flop
- Glasses
- Hook
- Key
- Mask
- Mermaid
- Pineapple
- Skull

There are also 15 crabs to find throughout the sculpture.
Cross them off as you find them!

Edgewater Mall has a million-square feet of retail, restaurants and entertainment in a safe and climate-controlled environment.

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, 12-6 p.m.
City eyes finances with an eye to FY ‘21

Mayor Andrew “FoFo” Gilich had good news, sort of, for Biloxi City Council members in the first of a series of budget meetings in July.

The $5 million hole in the city’s $60 million operating budget created by the coronavirus shutdown has been reduced by nearly $3 million through refinancing city debt at a lower interest rate and through a hiring freeze, and the mayor says the city plans to “tighten belts” to make it through the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30.

The mayor and council members, of course, are also focused on creating a spending plan for FY ‘21 in an environment of uncertainty.

Biloxi’s budget relies on three revenue streams:

- About $20 million from taxes on casino revenue, about $12 million from sales taxes, and $10 million from property taxes.
- “We face the same issues as every business and household in Biloxi faces,” Gilich said. “Our goal is to get through this fiscal year, to cut expenses where we can, and do it in a way that puts us in a good position to begin the new fiscal year on Oct. 1.”

The city aims to have a balanced budget in place by mid-September.

Budget workshops, typically held before or after council meetings, are open to the public, with social distancing requirements. Meetings and agendas are published online, and meetings are streamed online live and archived on the city’s YouTube channels.

To hear Councilman Nathan Barrett tell it, the new city park now being constructed at Eagle Point could be akin to Hiller Park, the city’s prized public recreation area in West Biloxi.

“This new park at Eagle Point is going to be the city’s largest park outside of Hiller,” Barrett said, “and it’s going to be the first city park for Ward 7, so we want it to be special.”

The park, being constructed with $415,000 in state and local funds, will offer a walking track, basketball and pickleball courts, playground, pavilion, a sports field for soccer and football, and restrooms. It is scheduled to open after the first of the year.

Police: Your cameras can help solve crimes

More and more homeowners and businesses are using outdoor security cameras to protect their property, and the Biloxi Police Department wants to make use of those cameras in helping solve crimes.

The department is inviting business and residential video camera owners to register their security camera locations with the department as part of a new public safety initiative.

This will enable Biloxi Police, with the permission of the camera owner, to quickly and securely obtain recorded video in the event of an incident near a particular location.

The new initiative – fūsusREGISTRY – involves registering a camera with the department through a quick-and-easy online process.

In the aftermath of crime, officers often must engage in time-consuming neighborhood canvases, looking for nearby private cameras to develop suspect information.

The voluntary fūsusREGISTRY process allows investigators to know almost immediately if video evidence might be available at a particular location and whom to contact to retrieve it.

Camera registration does not give live video access to the police department; it gives only camera location information for use when an incident occurs. Investigators will contact camera owners only if they need assistance collecting camera recordings.

Registrant information and any video files provided will be kept confidential and used only in the event of a criminal investigation. The Biloxi Police will not disclose registrant information related to the fūsusREGISTRY program.

To visit biloxi.ms.us for links to agendas, YouTube channels and Live stream.
POWERING THROUGH FOR YOU

Rain or shine, our team works to make sure if your lights go out, we get them back on as safely and quickly as possible. This year, we are continuing improvements to our system to help reduce the length of outages caused by storms. We are replacing more than 100 miles of wire and adding 100 automated devices to get the lights back on faster for you.

Mississippi Power

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Telehealth Appointments Now Available

Virtual visits are open for new and existing patients. Call now to make an appointment.

Lakeview – 228-354-9300
Cedar Lake – 228-392-7760
Promenade – 228-456-0173
Cowan Road – 228-523-8800

Whether it's a checkup or something more serious, you and your family want convenient, accessible healthcare. Fortunately, the providers at Merit Health Medical Group are making it easier than ever to get primary care.

www.MyMeritDoctor.com
We’re in August, typically the peak of storm season each year, but, as Harrison County Emergency Manager Rupert Lacy says, storm season doesn’t watch the calendar.

Lacy, whose lengthy career stretches back to the ’70s and the days of the legendary Civil Defense Director Wade Guice, is in charge of developing plans and responses to any sort of emergency that we could face in Harrison County. Of course, storm season generally occupies his time. Generally.


A few words with Rupert Lacy:

What is your message for people as we approach August of the 2020 storm season?

The main thing we want people to remember this year is that not only are we in what’s predicted to be an active hurricane season, but we are also in the middle of a pandemic.

COVID-19 has not gone away just because it’s hurricane season. In fact, the opposite has happened.

The message is for people to revisit, refresh and prepare for hurricane season while we are in a pandemic. Revisit your plan, refresh your supplies, and prepare while there’s time. And, be sure to make sure that PPE is part of your plan.

Also, we encourage everyone to have an active evacuation plan because our shelters will look different this year because of COVID-19.

Why is August typically the peak of the season?

As we are seeing this year the storm season doesn’t watch the calendar. Mid-July we are already seeing temperatures that would normally be in August.

The one main message is be ready for what Mother Nature and the Good Lord Above might send our way.

Let’s not base our actions on the past but what is facing us to protect everyone from the danger of a tropical storm.

What’s the one thing people often overlook in preparing for a storm?

The one thing people can easily overlook in preparing for a storm is flood insurance. Make sure your insurance is up to date while there is time.

We also want people to remember to make masks a part of their disaster kits this year.

Favor us with a few colorful Wade Guice quotes.

• “That’s the price we have to pay when you live in paradise.”
• “We can’t just call it a nuisance storm, or a budget builder.”
• “We better buy bread, cheese and bologna to have here at the EOC to eat as it comes on shore. We won’t be able to get Spider ‘wheel burgers’ or McDonalds because they’re going to be closed.”

15 years after Katrina, there’s only one definitive Katrina story on the market.

It’s a two-volume set – two photo albums and two DVDs – for only $15.

Available at:
Sharkheads
Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art
Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum
Biloxi Visitors Center

Revisit, refresh and prepare for storms, pandemic
HALF PRICE LUNCH OR DINNER BUFFET

MONDAY - THURSDAY IN AUGUST

Earn 10 points for HALF PRICE LUNCH BUFFET
or earn 20 points for HALF PRICE DINNER BUFFET!

Print Half Price Lunch Buffet voucher at the kiosk 10 AM - 2:30 PM
or Half Price Dinner Buffet voucher at the kiosk 3 PM - 8 PM.

Voucher valid only on date issued and nontransferable.
Valid Monday - Thursday. Holidays excluded.
This mural takes a look back at Abbie’s Lil Diner and Barq’s Root Beer, staples of Biloxi’s unique cuisine. Burger Burger

There’s an art to attracting downtown

Public art, creative place making, cultural-tourism: all drive economic development. You’ve heard the buzzwords before, but what do they actually mean? Simply put, ART ATTRACTS PEOPLE!

Proven repeatedly, public art projects placed throughout downtowns become beacons, calling to locals and tourists alike. Inspired by the positive data, Biloxi Main Street set a fuzzy, undefined public art as a long-term goal. The goal sat on paper through many planning sessions.

Enter Corey Christy, a fire-soul, who saw the need and prioritized public art on his way to becoming this year’s Biloxi Main Street’s Guardian and Board President; and voilà, the Biloxi Main Street Public Art Project was born!

To date, the project boasts 12 completed murals in varying artistic styles, each revealing slices of Biloxi’s cultural history. The murals cover an entire exterior wall of the host buildings.

Getting the project off paper and onto buildings took the financial contributions of public and private donors. “A generous grant from the Knight Foundation really put wind in the sails of this much-needed project,” says Kay Miller, Biloxi Main Street’s executive director. “Projects like this one are all just a dream and a wish until a funding source is found. We are still requesting and accepting donations so the project can continue with more murals and other public art pieces.”

The herculean effort to coordinate Biloxi Main Street’s vision with building owners’ expectations and artists’ interpretations has been a labor of love for Chrisky: “My passion for art is Biloxi comes from my love for the city,” he says. “I want to do my part to help Biloxi realize its potential and the best way to do that is through the arts. Public art is a great way to tell a city’s story; it is one of the few things that can remain truly unique. It will always be a reflection of a place and its people.”

The mural project spans roughly five miles in the downtown area. When driving or walking, the mural route takes the art-lover through the heart of downtown Biloxi, passing shops, eateries, museums and historic sites.

Generating foot traffic is the “holy grail” of goals for most Main Street organizations. Public art accomplishes this goal almost effortlessly. “Greetings From Biloxi” wasn’t even on yet on G.E. Ohr Street near Howard Avenue, when people began taking selfies, group photos and even some professional shots. The nearby vinyl record store, Merley’s Music, realized people were flocking to that spot because of the mural. The store benefits from its proximity to the mural. Green House Biloxi owner Martin Merley spoke about the mural, “It’s having a similar experience; these are two of the newest businesses in Main Street’s district.”

Local artists like Cali Rob and Zach DePolo are the latest threats in Biloxi’s colorful art tapestry. When asked about his “Gulf Coast Strong” mural, artist Cali Rob says, “I wanted to do something, an idea that would be more than a nice piece of art or pretty picture on a wall. I wanted it to be something that people would drive by and do a double take on – take a second look, maybe even take a photo with it.”

How visionary of him! “Gulf Coast Strong” has already become an icon of resiliency during the COVID-19 crisis. Graduates in cap and gown were photographed for weeks in front of the mural, a symbolic reminder that even in disappointment and adversity, the human spirit is strong. So, what’s next for the Biloxi Main Street Public Art Project? More murals are on tap, including one honoring a Biloxi native and globally renowned abstract-impressionist, Dusti Bongé. In the near future, an interactive musical sculpture will be placed on Howard Avenue.

Christy says he relishes the thought of a city filled with art. “I’d love to see 30 pieces up by the end of the year and to see it continue from there. It has been amazing seeing this project come to life, the interaction of all artists has been unbelievable. This will definitely help the city become a more viable place to live, work, play.”

Biloxi Main Street has produced a T-shirt honoring the “Greetings From Biloxi” mural and a notecard set that includes one notecard with envelope for each of the twelve murals. All proceeds from the mural merchandise will help the businesses of downtown during difficulties associated with COVID-19. You can purchase them at the Biloxi Visitors Center or online at www.mainstreetbiloxi.com.

More about the project

The Main Street Public Art Project is a collection of murals – as large as 40-foot tall and 60-foot in some cases – where artists can Biloxi buildings as their canvas.

Right now, a dozen murals have become part of the streetscape in Biloxi, and, they say, more are on the way.

If you’re interested – as a businessowner, artist or sponsor – contact Corey Christy at coreycr1@gmail.com.

Take the tour online

Jennifer Roberts of the city’s Engineering Department has created an interactive online map to show the locations of the murals in Biloxi. To see the map, visit biloxi.ms.us/murals.

Hear from the artists

Videographer August Taconi takes a look at some of the artists and the inside story on the murals in a new special airing August on BTV. The 18-minute film daily at 7 a.m., 7 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. on BTV, which is carried in Biloxi on Sparklight 56 or Uverse 99, or worldwide at biloxi.ms.us/btv.

By Laurie Rosetti

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Help protect our new drainage systems and local waterways

The things you do around your home or business – fertilizing your lawn, blowing lawn clippings into the street, or dumping grease into the kitchen sink – can be detrimental to the city’s sewer and drainage systems and eventually harm nearby streams, rivers, Biloxi Back Bay and the Mississippi Sound.

Consider these sources of pollution: Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers; uncontrollable stormwater runoff containing sediments from construction sites; pesticides from agricultural lands; animal wastes; failing septic systems; and household chemicals released directly into the environment.

It’s called non-point source pollution, as opposed to specific points, such as discharge pipes of factories and wastewater treatment plants, which are governed by state and federal regulations.

In short, it’s the responsibility of residents and business owners to minimize and prevent non-point source pollution. Individual pollutants may not be a major concern, but collectively they can cause widespread water quality problems. Unthinking actions can close beaches, kill wildlife, poison drinking water resources, and contaminate fish and shellfish.

Please follow these best practices.

Vehicle & Garage
• Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain.
• Check your car, boat, motorcycle and other equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material such as kitty litter or sand; do not rinse spills into a nearby storm drain. Properly dispose of the absorbent material at a hazardous waste disposal site.
• Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations or a hazardous waste disposal site.

Lawn & Garden
• Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. Use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Avoid application if heavy rain is forecast; otherwise, chemicals will be washed into local streams.
• Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas or blowing debris into the street where it will compromise storm drains. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible. Do not dispose of it in the storm drain or local waterways. During the decay process, these organic materials consume oxygen in the water, leaving fish, shellfish and plants without oxygen.
• Don’t water your lawn. Water during cool times of the day; don’t let water runoff into storm drain. Select native plants and grasses that are drought- and pest-resistant. Native plants require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.
• Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard and into drainage ways. Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent soil erosion.

Household Hazardous Waste
• Before beginning an outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris and other materials.
• Do not “wash out” concrete and mortar into storm drains or ditches.
• Use hazardous substances such as paints, solvents and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible; follow directions on the label. Properly store substances to avoid leaks and spills, clean up spills immediately, and properly dispose of the waste. Dispose of household chemicals at a household hazardous waste disposal site.
• Use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products when possible.
• Properly dispose of excess paint through a household hazardous waste collection program; do not pour paint into the storm drain or sink.
• Reduce the amount of paved areas and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard. Consider directing downsputs away from paved surfaces onto lawns and other measures to decrease infiltration and reduce runoff.
• Never pour fats, oils and grease down the sink or garbage disposal. After they have cooled, pour them into a container, such as an empty glass jar or coffee can. Once the container is full, secure the lid and place in the trash. Before washing dishes containing oil or grease, scrape and dry wipe with paper towels and dispose of materials in the trash.

Pet Care
• When walking your pet, pick up pet waste and dispose of properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method.
• Keep pet waste on the ground increases public health risks; harmful bacteria and nutrients wash into ditches, storm drains and eventually into local water bodies.

Septic System Use & Maintenance
If you own a septic tank:
• Have a professional inspect your septic tank at least every three years and have the septic tank pumped as necessary (usually every three to five years)
• Care for the septic system drain field by not driving or parking vehicles on it. Plant grass over and near the drain field to avoid damage by roots.
• Flush responsibly. Flushing household chemicals such as paint, pesticides, oil and antifreeze can destroy the biological treatment taking place in the system. Other items such as diapers, paper towels, and cat litter can clog the septic system and damage components.

If you’re connected to the city sanitary sewer system:
• Check your sewer “clean out” periodically to ensure the line is not clogged or that sewage is leaking out of the “clean out” into your lawn.
• Ensure that the sewer “clean out” cap is on properly to prohibit rain water from infiltrating the sewer system and causing overflows.
• Avoid planting trees and shrubs above or near the service lateral that runs from your house or building to the sewer main. Roots damage sewers.
• Flush responsibly. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove pollutants from household chemicals such as paint, pesticides, oil and antifreeze. Never flush or pour down the sink any household chemicals or other items such as diapers, paper towels, and cat litter. They can clog the sewer system.

See a potential issue?
If you see a potential violation or issue, contact the Code Enforcement Division of the city’s Community Development Department at 228-435-0841 or email stormwater@biloxi.ms.us.
WELCOME BACK

INDIAN NATION!

Traditional return or distance learning - we're excited to see you! Let's have a great (and unique) 2020-21 school year!
The infrastructure work in Biloxi

Pages 13 through 16 contain maps that show the status of the city’s three major infrastructure projects now underway. The information on these maps is compiled by the city’s Engineering Department, based on reports from contractors and inspectors at each site. See detailed maps and video online at biloxi.ms.us/restore-biloxi/.

Sixth Street South

Lane Construction in October 2019 began a $10.5 million, 550-day project to install new water, sewer and drainage lines in a Point Cadet area south of the CSX railway. It involves three miles of roads, from the tip of the peninsula at Michael Boulevard, south to Third Street and west to Hoxie. Deadline: April 16, 2021.

Lane Construction Water
Water Mains to be installed as of July 13, 2020

Lane Construction Sewer
Sewer Mains to be installed as of July 13, 2020

Lane Construction Drainage
Drainage Mains to be installed as of July 13, 2020

Lane Construction Pavement
Roads to be paved as of July 13, 2020
The North Contract: Remaining paving  
(as of July 13, 2020)

To see detailed maps of progress and to hear the very latest directly from the contractors, visit www.biloxi.ms.us/restore-biloxi.

See detailed maps and a progress video online at biloxi.ms.us and regularly on BTV.
Detours and lane closures are becoming more evident south of the CSX Railway, especially on Irish Hill and other thoroughfares, as Hemphill Construction continues to make progress on infrastructure work on six miles of roads between downtown and Seashore Methodist. Here’s a look at the status on the $22.9 million project, which has a deadline of August 22, 2020.

Hemphill Water as of July 13, 2020

Legend
WATER - Construction Status
- Active - Installed - Not Active - Not Installed

See detailed maps and videos of progress at www.biloxi.ms.us/restore-biloxi

Hemphill Sewer as of July 13, 2020

Legend
SEWER - Construction Status
- Installed - Not Installed

Hemphill Drainage as of July 13, 2020

Legend
DRAINAGE - Construction Status
- Installed - Not Installed

Hemphill Roads Paved as of July 13, 2020

Legend
ROADS PAVED - Construction Status
- Rock - Base - Temporary Paving - Original Pavement - Not Milled
Biloxi Community Market, Tuesdays and Thursday, 6 a.m.-4 p.m., Under I-110 overpass off Hopkins and Howard. Market vendors social distanced and selling produce, plants, jams and jellies. Face covering required. Details: 228-388-7170

Biloxi Natatorium lap swimming: Weekday, 5 a.m.-8 p.m., 1384 Father Ryan Ave. The city’s Olympic size swimming pool is open for lap swimming only. Adult lap swimming – age 18 and older – from 5 a.m. to 8 a.m. and youth lap swimming – age 12 to 17 – from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Safety protocols include one swimmer per lane, entrance through southwest double doors, exit through one of the gates, and waiting area, locker rooms and showers closed. Face covering required while not in the water. Admission fee required. Details: 228-435-6205

Hiring Expo, Aug. 12, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Biloxi Civic Center, 578 Howard Ave. The East Biloxi Community Collaborative and Goodwill are teaming up to connect job seekers with local employers. Those interested, employers and job applicants, should register online at https://hiringexpo.eventbrite.com by Aug. 11. Details: 228-806-3222, info@eastbiloxicc.org

Old Biloxi Cemetery Tour story submissions: through Aug. 28. Preserve Biloxi Committee seeking suggestions from citizens for the 2020 Old Biloxi Cemetery Tour set for October and titled “Family Legends & Lore 2.” Those with a family member resting in Biloxi Cemetery with an interesting life story are encouraged to submit for possible portrayal. Submission should include family member’s name, date of birth and death, location in the cemetery, information about the person, and reason for submission in 200 words or less. Email submission: lrossetti@biloxi.ms.us

Mystery of the Sea Sand Sculpture, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Daily through October, Edgewater Mall, 2600 Beach Blvd. A 75-ton sand sculpture on display inside the mall. Themed Mystery of the sea, the sculpture includes hidden objects sculpted into the sand to create an interactive exhibit for guests. Free admission. Check out page 3 of this newsletter for an object check.

Shop local at the market!

Local market vendors set up under the I-110 overpass off Hopkins Boulevard and Howard Avenue every Tuesday and Thursday from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. and sell produce, plants, jams and jellies. The local vendors have an array of fruits, vegetables, greens and the like displayed in a social distanced area. Customers are asked to wear a face covering and to not touch the vendors items. Each vendor is ready to serve and sell their products. For more information, stop by the market or call the Biloxi Parks & Recreation office at 228-388-7170.

Events subject to change without notice.
Stay in touch

**BNews:** Welcome to the 27th issue of BNews Monthly. It’s a compendium of things you should know about your city: status reports on current and pending public works, and a calendar of community events covering the next 30 days.

**Calendar:** Biloxi Downtown Services is responsible for the Community Calendar, a compendium of events open to the public in Biloxi. Deadline for publication citywide and online is the 10th of each month. Listing must include name of event, date, time, location, one- or two-sentence description, admission fee, phone number or web address. Email to Kay Miller, downtown services manager, kmiller@biloxi.ms.us.

**Bmail:** The city provides information about projects and events via email. Sign up at biloxi.ms.us/register.

**Advertising:** BNews and Bmail represent an advertising opportunity for civic-minded businesses and organizations. In your hands you are holding the only advertising medium that is delivered to every single home, business, apartment and PO Box in the city. For rates and info, email online@biloxi.ms.us or call 228-435-6368.

**B-Alert:** For text advisories on traffic and severe weather, text BILOXI to 888777.

**Website:** The city’s website, at biloxi.ms.us, is the comprehensive digest of city information. The website also has links to the city’s Facebook and YouTube platforms.

Vincent Creel, Public Affairs Manager
vcreel@biloxi.ms.us

Cecilia Dobbs Walton, Public Affairs Specialist
cdobbstableton@biloxi.ms.us

Frequently Called Numbers

Area code is 228 unless otherwise noted.

- Animal Control .................. 392-0641
- Auto Tag/Property Tax Information . 435-8242
- Birth Certificates .................. 601-576-7960
- Building Permits .................. 435-6270
- Business Licenses .................. 435-6247
- Citizen services (streets, lights) .... 435-6271
- City Council .................. 435-6257
- City Court .................. 435-6125
- Code Enforcement .................. 435-0841
- Drivers Licenses .................. 396-7400
- Emergency Police and Fire ....... 911
- Garbage Collection .................. 701-9086
- Housing Authority .................. 374-7771
- Human Resources .................. 435-6259
- Mayor’s Office .................. 435-6254
- Museums Information ............... 435-6244
- Parks & Recreation .................. 388-7170
- Planning Commission ............... 435-6266
- Public Schools .................. 374-1810
- Streets and Drainage .................. 435-6271
- Visitor Info .................. 374-3105 or 1-800-BILOXI-3
- Water Service .................. 435-6236

Biloxi Public Schools begin, Aug. 5. All Biloxi public schools open doors to students for the 2020 school year. Details: www.biloxischools.net

Inaugural Hustle for the Hungry 5K, Aug. 15, 8 a.m., Loaves and Fishes, 610 Water St. Color run in downtown Biloxi. Features beer booths and an after-party featuring the musical talents of Gram Rae. Awards will be given to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place male and female age groups. All proceeds to benefit Loaves and Fishes. To register, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/inaugural-hustle-for-the-hungry-5k-tickets-101758564606. Details: 228-436-6172

Main Street Book Club, Aug. 27, 5:30 p.m., Jacked Up Coffee Bar, 999 Howard Ave. Check with Southern Bound Book Shop, located next door to the coffee bar to see what the book of the month will be. Interested in joining the book club? Stop by the free meeting or call Biloxi Main Street at 228-435-6339.

First Friday, Monthly downtown event for business and merchants will be on hiatus for August. The event is expected to return on Sept. 4. Details: 228-435-6339
August 2020 • Community Calendar

Lagniappe

Charles R. Hegwood
Biloxi Community Market
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6 a.m.-4 p.m. under the I-110 overpass on the corner of Howard Avenue and Hopkins Boulevard. Details: Tina Cowart at 228-388-2443.

City of Biloxi Senior Program
Activities for ages 55 and older weekdays at the Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center and the East Biloxi Senior Citizen Center. Details: Gwen Johnson, 228-388-2494, seniors@biloxi.ms.us.

Biloxi Libraries
• Biloxi Library, 580 Howard Ave., 228-436-3095
• Margaret Sherry Library, 2141 Popp’s Ferry Road, 228-388-1633
• West Biloxi Library, 2047 Pass Road, 228-388-5696
• Woolmarket Library, 13034 Kayleigh Cove, 228-354-9464
For more information call the Harrison County Library System at 228-436-3095.

Biloxi Main Street
Promoting, preserving, revitalizing and enhancing the economic growth of the downtown Main Street district. Details and membership: 228-435-6339, mainstreetbiloxi.com

City of Biloxi Public Meetings
• Architectural Review Commission: Regularly scheduled meetings: second and fourth Thursday of the month at 8:30 a.m.; Community Development, 676 MLK Blvd. Details: 228-435-6266.
• Biloxi City Council: Regularly scheduled meetings: first Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. and the third and fourth Tuesday of each month at 1:30 p.m.; City Hall, 140 Lameuse St. Details: 228-435-6257.
• Biloxi Civil Service Commission: Regularly scheduled meetings: second Thursday of the month at 4 p.m.; City Hall, 140 Lameuse St. Details: 228-435-6259, Cortney Lamar
• Biloxi Planning Commission: Regularly scheduled meetings: first and third Thursday of the month at 2 p.m.; Community Development, 676 MLK Blvd. Details: 228-435-6266.
• Development Review Committee: Regularly scheduled meetings: Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Community Development, 676 MLK Blvd. Details: 228-435-6266.
• Tree Committee: Regularly scheduled meetings: second Monday of each month at 4 p.m.; Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, 769 Howard Ave. Details: 228-435-6266.

Biloxi Schooners
367 Beach Blvd., 228-435-6320, schooner@maritimemuseum.org
• Walk-on sunset sails, charters, or sails to Horn Island. Minimum of six passengers for Walk on Sail, and available when schooners are unchartered. Guests are welcome to bring food and refreshments aboard. Ice and chests will be provided. Admission: $30 per adult; $15 per child ages 5 -12.

Biloxi Shrimping Trip
693 Beach Blvd., 228-392-8645, biloxishrimpingtrip.com
• Sunset cruises, fishing trips, and three shrimping trips daily

Biloxi Tour Train
Biloxi Lighthouse Park parking lot
South of Biloxi Visitors Center
Traffic light #40
228-374-8687, www.biloxitourtrain.com
• Tours daily. Call for reservations.
Experience the history of Biloxi with a ride on an open-air train

Betsy Ann Riverboat Cruise
173 Beach Blvd., 228-229-4270
betsyanriverboat@gmail.com, bestyanriverboat.com
• Historical & Ecological Tour, and Sunset Eco Tours

Coastal Mississippi Mardi Gras Museum

Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum
115 1st St., 228-435-6320, www.maritimemuseum.org

Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art
386 Beach Blvd., 228-374-5547, www.georgeohr.org
• Check the website for more events and studio classes at OOMA!

Ship Island Excursion
Margaritaville Resort boat dock
195 Beach Blvd., 228-864-1014, msshipisland.com

West End Hose Co. No. 3 Fire Museum
1046 Howard Ave., 435-6119/435-6200, www.biloxi.ms.us
• Historic 1937 fire house open Saturdays 9 a.m.-2 p.m. or by appointment

Biloxi Elks 606 Lodge of Biloxi
1178 Beach Blvd., 228-374-0606
• Friday Bingo, Aug. 7, 14, 21, & 28; Doors open at 5 p.m.; Early bird beings at 6:30 p.m.; Regular games at 7 p.m.; Kitchen open until 8:30 p.m.
• Sunday Bingo, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30; Doors open at noon; Early bird begins at 2 p.m.; Regular games at 2:30 p.m.; Kitchen open until 4 p.m.

Fleur de Lis Society of Biloxi (French Club)
182 Howard Ave., 228-436-6472

At the Casinos
• KC & the Sunshine Band, Aug. 15, Hard Rock
• Black Label Society, Aug. 21, Hard Rock

CDC guidelines followed and masks are mandatory by the Mississippi Gaming Commission.

biloxi.ms.us • BNews Monthly – August 2020 – 19
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- **Sunday, August 2:**
  - **Bingo**
  - Biloxi Elks Lodge

- **Monday, August 3:**
  - **Bingo**
  - Biloxi Elks Lodge

- **Tuesday, August 4:**
  - **Bingo**
  - Biloxi Elks Lodge

- **Wednesday, August 5:**
  - **Community Market**

- **Thursday, August 6:**
  - **Bingo**
  - Biloxi Elks Lodge

- **Friday, August 7:**
  - **Community Market**

- **Saturday, August 8:**
  - **Community Market**

**Community Market** is held on the 28th, 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, and 31st of August.

**Friday Bingo** is held on the 31st of August at Biloxi Elks Lodge.

- **AUGUST 2:**
  - All Biloxi public schools open doors to students for the 2020 school year.

- **AUGUST 11:**
  - **Hiring Expo**
  - Biloxi Civic Center

- **AUGUST 14:**
  - **Inaugural Hustle for the Hungry 5K**
  - Loaves and Fishes

- **AUGUST 19:**
  - **Main Street Book Club**
  - Jacked Up Coffee Bar

- **AUGUST 22:**
  - **Black Label Society**
  - Hard Rock

- **AUGUST 26:**
  - **Old Biloxi Cemetery Tours**
    - Story Submissions Due Today

- **AUGUST 29:**
  - **MNA Coin & Currency Show**
    - MS Coast Coliseum

For more information, visit [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us).
## Inside BTV: Seeing Katrina through the eyes of the Army

What began as a look back at Hurricane Katrina through the eyes of the Salvation Army on the 15th anniversary of the monster storm this month quickly turned into something else when filming began last month.

Instead, it turned into a heartfelt story about the people behind the shield, those who serve the Salvation Army Gulf Coast Command.

The 20-minute program airs at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. each day in August exclusively on BTV. It also airs at 1:30 each afternoon. BTV, the city’s municipal TV channel, is available in Biloxi on Sparklight 56 and Uverse 99 and worldwide at biloxi.ms.us/btv.

“People Behind the Shield” was a revealing production for lensman Renny Sherman.

“I’ve been involved in video production and marketing since the early ’80s and every now and then a project becomes more than just the work I put into it,” said Sherman, who films and edits most of the programming on BTV and the videos on the city’s social media pages.

“We lived through Katrina and saw that the Salvation Army seemed to be everywhere after the storm,” Sherman said. “Looking at it through these stories from the Salvation Army staff, I now realize that while they were doing everything they could to help us, they were personally experiencing the same loss, fear and uncertainty.

“These people really are heroes. They have a passion for what they do. They are champions of faith and the human spirit.”

Most of the half dozen staffers in the program were helped by the Salvation Army in the days and weeks after Katrina before joining the Army.

“Salvation Army: The People Behind the Shield” is a City of Biloxi production, guided by Morgan Shiyou, the Army’s local communications guru. It was filmed and edited by Renny Sherman.

### The murals of Biloxi: The story behind the story

For August Taconi, it’s a chore that could not be derailed by COVID-19.

Taconi, who has captured on camera dozens of Biloxi events over the years, has for months been working on a film to tell the story of the Main Street mural program.

It’s a dozen brightly crafted murals that now shine on the exterior walls of buildings throughout downtown and as far east as Point Cadet.

Taconi’s 25-minute program, with the catchy title “The Biloxi Main Street Public Art Project: The murals,” airs at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily on BTV in August. You can also see it at 12:30 each day.

### News & Notes: Hurricane Camille, stormwater management and more

**Camille:** See “A Lady Called Camille,” the 27-minute documentary about the original monster storm, daily on BTV in August. It airs at 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., as well as 1 in the afternoon. It’s Wade Guice at his best.

**Stormwater management:** The feds and Community Development types call it “stormwater management.” We call it common sense. See the things you need to know about how to protect our new drainage systems in Biloxi and our local waterways. “Stormwater management: Common sense info” airs at 8:30 a.m., 8:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. The 12-minute program was assembled by Renny Sherman and narrated by William Sackett, the host of the former “City Desk” podcast and the voice of BTV.

**Council TV:** You can see a replay of Biloxi City Council meetings each day at 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. on BTV. August also will incude a host of budget workshops. Meetings also are streamed live online. Click on the LIVE button at the right of every page on the city website.
The writer is manager of the Local History and Genealogy section of the Biloxi Public Library. Email her at jane.shambra@gmail.com.

Gambling has a history in Mississippi and has been deemed as “Mississippi’s Oldest Pastime.” Historians have cited stories of early Native Americans enjoying games and gambling such as playing stick ball. The popular sports betting game utilized sticks made of strong wood, such as hickory, and crafted balls of rock, hair, and hide sewn together with wagers made on the outcome. Monsieur d’Iberville’s crews enjoyed gambling games of cards much like the decks of playing cards we see today but with different illustrations. Bivona has a significant history of being a benefactor of gambling profits. Long ago, in the late 1800s, the heirs of a legendary Louisiana Lottery millionaire Charles Howard bestowed a wealth of benefits to the City of Biloxi through his son Frank Turner Howard and Harry Turner Howard for Biloxi schools, a hospital, and a church. The Howard family had a summer home on Biloxi’s East Beach Road, known today as U.S. 90. In fact, Harry T. Howard served as Mayor of Biloxi from 1888 to 1890 and 1897 to 1899. In August 1896, in appreciation for the family’s generosity, Pass Christian-Point Cadet Road was renamed Howard Avenue.

The Mysterious Island That Vanished

One of the most fascinating chapters of Biloxi’s gambling history includes the story about the Isle of Caprice. The island, once called Dog Keys and situated 12 miles offshore between Horn and Ship Island, was once a popular resort, supported by swim meets, family outings, fishing, a dance hall, restaurant, and, of course, the stories of illegal booze and gambling. The resort, built and operated by Col. J.R. Apperson, Arbeau Callavet and Walter Henry “Skeet” Hunt, opened May 30, 1926. Access to the island was simply by boat for a round trip fee of 7½ cents, and was graced by popular celebrities including Ethel Baranymore, a stage and screen star. By 1932, the island deteriorated, and as a result of a series of most unfortunate events, “fantasy island” became completely submerged. Years later, an iconic photo of a man standing in a boat drinking clear well water from a rusty pipe is all that remained. Today, even that iconic pipe has vanished. According to Native American legends, that island has appeared, disappeared and reappeared throughout time. Susan Hunt, Skeet’s granddaughter, says her and her sister still pay taxes on the land in case it comes up again.

Biloxi on the radar

After years of gambling on the island, betting on Schooner and horse races, placing wagers while traveling on a riverboat, and playing the slots in downtown, some still fumed upon the pastime and rightly so since it was not exactly legal. It was common to hear of raids where machines were unexpectedly seized from establishments and chopped to bits. In the early 1950s Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver organized a congressional committee to investigate gambling crimes involved in interstate commerce. Hearings were held in 14 cities throughout the United States, including Biloxi. Those called to testify included Biloxi Mayor Hart Chinn, as well as City Commissioner A. J. Creel, Police Chief Earl Weibel, Sheriff Lut Oubre, Kessler Field Commander James F. Powell, and Bank President E.C. Tonsmere. The scruit of those hearings was later published by the U.S. Government Printing Office as an official document. When the hearings ended in 1951 televisions sets were bringing homes, and it became clear that future Senate investigations could be a part of regular television programming.

Voting for the boats

In 1990, the Mississippi State Legislature voted to pass the Mississippi Gaming Control Act establishing the Mississippi Gaming Commission to regulate charitable and casino gaming. On March 10, 1991 Harrison County voters approved legalized dockside gambling. Then, in August 1992, Biloxi saw the arrival of its first floating casinos. The Isle of Caprice Casino was the first casino to welcome its two new gambling riverboats, The Diamond Lady and The Emerald Lady, to the shores. Thousands of locals and tourists waited outside for hours to be part of the city’s first legalized embrace of gaming. The two compact riverboats could handle only a few hundred guests each, causing lines that stretched more than a football field. That scene was repeated two weeks later when the President Casino opened at the legendary Broadwater property in West Biloxi and two weeks after that when the Biloxi Belle took over the deteriorating Buena Vista hotel site in downtown.

Katrina creates recyclables

Traveling against their will, and in spite of precautions to secure these mighty vessels, many of Biloxi’s dockside casino barges voyaged away from their original moorings to new locations in August of 2005 when the monster storm, Hurricane Katrina made an unwelcome visit. We are told that the barges traveled above utility poles before landing north of U.S. 90, leaving poles and wires still in place, proof of the mysterious power of the storm.

The cruise is over

In April 2005, Biloxi casino barges on U.S. 90 were awestruck to see firsthand just how immense and complicated casino structures actually were. Unprecedented recycling projects of dismantling these colossal entertainment palaces followed, separating its contents into respective piles for reuse – plastic, cement, metal, electronics, piping, etc. There were also loose coins that escaped the “one arm bandits.” These finds resulted in a new weightless technology of the next generation of Biloxi casinos essentially eliminating betting with pocket coins/casino coins. New, slot machine boards issue winning certificates and the changing of the dropping winning coins had been replaced with a prerecorded rendition of joyous coin music.

Dividing the Pie

From that uncertain beginning, dockside gaming – as it is still called – has resurrected Biloxi’s tourism and essentially eliminated betting with pocket coins/casino coins. New, slot machine boards issue winning certificates and the changing of the dropping winning coins had been replaced with a prerecorded rendition of joyous coin music.

Fun fact: The Elvis story

Along the corridors of the Hard Rock Casino in Biloxi is a fascinating museum of musical memories including guitars, attire, and vinyl records of famous performers. The facility was scheduled to open just as Katrina knocked on Biloxi’s door. Sadly, many relics of our musical past unexpectedly ended the building. One item was the famous costume that Elvis Presley wore in the movie GI BLUES. An honest Waffle House employee retrieved and returned the black coat, and a special restoration and presented it back to its home in our casino on Beach Boulevard. I’ll bet Elvis never dreamed that his uniform would swim and survive anything like Katrina!
ORCHID ROOM

GAMING ELEVATED

The latest in contemporary high limit gaming on the Mississippi Gulf Coast coming soon.