

Mayor: We're thoughtful and thankful

By September's end, with two months left in storm season, the National Weather Service had run out of storm names and was into the Greek alphabet, something that had not occurred since 2005, when you-know-what happened.

Biloxi – already facing the uncertainty of a pandemic (county numbers had dropped to 17 new positives a day by late September, by the way) – had near-misses with several storms in a season living up to its billing of being a busy season.

"We're very thankful today," Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich said to a host of interviewers on Biloxi's near-miss with Hurricane Sally, which devastated Pensacola, Fla., with 100 mph winds and 25 inches of rain.

"We're thankful," Gilich added, "and we're thoughtful, for our neighbors in Mobile, Pensacola and the Florida panhandle. We dodged a bullet, but we know what they're going through."

► **Nick L. Shrimp:** The lessons, according to Carnac, Page 2

In fact, volunteers from the Biloxi Fire Museum and the New Sharon (Iowa) Volunteer Fire Department, just arriving in Cameron, La., for Laura relief before evacuating for Sally, spent days in Fairhope, Ala. helping repair homes of first responders.

In Biloxi, the Sally impact was tropical force winds and a smattering of rain, only three-quarters of an inch, Keesler said. River levels, which were expected to crest at double their flood stage, saw flooding forecasts reduced accordingly.

Gilich, meanwhile, sounded a cautionary message: "We've had brushes with Cristobal, Laura, Marco and Sally. There's a cost in time and money when you have to shutdown and prepare, or evacuate boats from harbors. It's inconvenient. But all you have to do is look East or West – to Louisiana, Texas or Florida – to see what could have happened.

"That's the message: Be thankful, be thoughtful and be vigilant."

Cruisin' rolls forth

Cruisin' The Coast, the 2020 pandemic version of America's Largest Block Party, rolls onto local streets Oct. 4-11, with more than 6,300 entries from across the country already registered a week ahead of the event.

"Of all of the events, this one has the chance to be successful and safe," said Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich, "but it's going to take people being responsible and being safe. We've seen our daily county average drop from 50 to 17 new tests a day, and we want to keep that number low and lower."

Biloxi will host its downtown block party on Wednesday, Oct. 7, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Across town, Edgewater Mall will have four days of outdoor entertainment and the Coast Coliseum will host auto auctions and swap meets.

And, of course, thoroughfares, especially U.S. 90, will be busy. Says Biloxi Police Chief John Miller: "Be patient. Be respectful. And be safe."



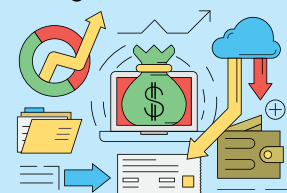
► See details at biloxi.ms.us/cruisin2020

ALSO INSIDE This month

Financially speaking

Biloxi enters a new fiscal year holding the line on fees, taxes and spending.

- Your monthly bill, Page 4
- The big picture, Pages 8-9



Space for rent

With prudence in place, the city has an array of facilities to host events, Page 10

**Space
For Rent**

Cemetery tours

It's virtually gonna happen this year, and it's chockfull of Biloxi history. Page 6.



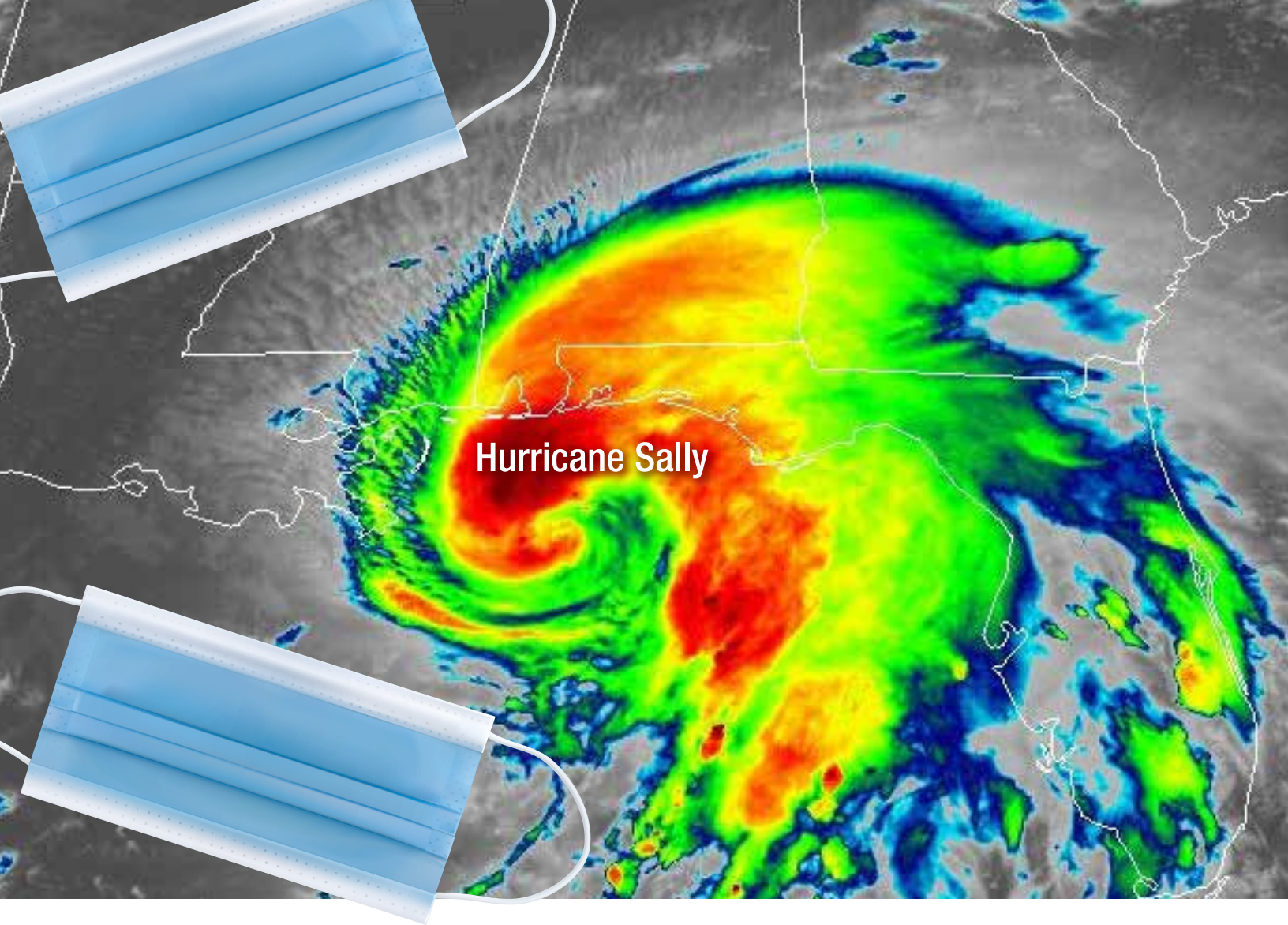
**Biloxi VA
TODAY**

The Biloxi VA Today

Learn more about the sprawling Biloxi institution in a new monthly column, Page 12

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The lessons are many, says Carnac

So, you finally wonder, what's to be made of this dumpster-fire of a year known as 2020, with the pandemic that won't go away, at a party where the uninvited guests threatened to show up, you know, Cristobal, Marco, Laura and Sally, in what's predicted to be an unseasonably high number of storms.

What could possibly be gleaned from these experiences, this unending collection of calamities impacting lives and livelihoods with uncertainty and uneasiness?

We turn to the all-knowing, the clairvoyant one, the Carnac of City Hall.

"The message right now is that we're getting back to business," he chirped. "We're meeting the challenges that come on a daily basis, and you can see the stack for yourself right here on my desk."

But, aside from the day-to-day problem solving, Oh Masterful One, what's to be learned in the bigger picture?

"You learn things," he declared. "You go



through experiences, and, as you go through them, you learn things. You learn how to prepare and what you could do better. You learn about what was and what could have been. You learn from experience. You use your experience to help guide you through the future.

"That's a big message: That you learn from your experiences, good and bad. There's always room for improvement, and the need to be vigilant is demonstrated on a daily basis.

"It's a continuing education. When it's all said and done, we'll all have doctorates when it comes to preparing for the unknown."

And what, Master, did you learn from these experiences. "Well," he says, "I already knew everything."

Of course. Silly question.

Just ask Jeanne and John, a Naples, Fla. couple who have "enjoyed several most enjoyable vacations in Biloxi" before the pandemic gave them pause.

"Somewhere along the way, we signed up for your regular emails, and we feel as though we've been able to remain connected with Biloxi even though we're not there," the duo emailed to Hizzoner. "We suffer with you when a hurricane is forecast for your area, and are grateful that you have been spared from Sally.

"Thank you for the wonderful job you do communicating with not only your permanent residents, but with those of us who have such a warm spot in our hearts for Biloxi. You are a master communicator, and we only wish you were running for President!"

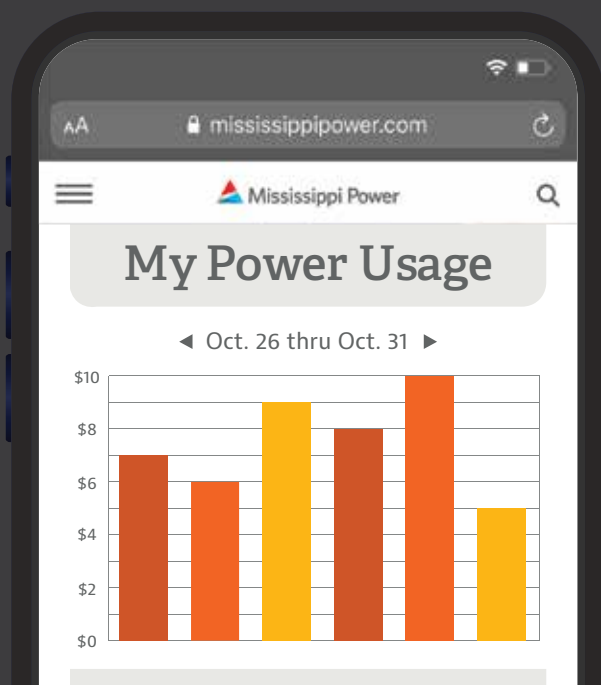
OMG. Carnac strikes again.

The nom de plume Nick L. Shrimp is a homage to the late Walter Fountain, original olde crab, longtime editor of the Biloxi-D'Iberville Press, and longtime Biloxi Chamber of Commerce manager.

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Don't blink, you'll miss the Biloxi rate increases

Nobody likes a rate increase, but the new rates going into effect Oct. 1 for Biloxi water and sewer service and garbage collection might not even be noticed by the vast majority of the city's 15,000 customers.

The new water rate increases by 2 percent, or about 3 cents a month per thousand gallons for those who use between 3,000 and 5,000 gallons of water, the majority of Biloxi users.

The new garbage and recycling rate increases by 30 cents a month, to \$15.10 a month for the weekly service.

"The impact of these rates is far less than the cost you see in everyday life, and we're glad to be able to hold the line," said Biloxi Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich, who saw the rates approved unanimously by the Biloxi City Council.

"We're far below anybody around us and our goal is to keep it that way."

The 2021 comparison, according to Biloxi Chief Administrative Officer Mike Leonard, for 4,000 gallons:

Ocean Springs: \$11.87

Gulfport: \$11.30

Biloxi: \$5.83

Biloxi has a water distribution system that includes 11 on-ground and elevated tanks, 23 wells, and 272 miles of distribution pipe. The sewer collection system includes 116 lift stations, three treatment plants (which the Harrison County Utility Authority is paid to operate), and 210 miles of gravity and 54 miles of force main sewer pipe.

About half of the city's \$16 million in annual collections for water and sewer service are paid to the Harrison County Utility Authority for operating the waste treatment plants, water services, debt payment, and other services.

Revenues collected greater than expenses

► [Overview of the Biloxi budget, Page 8-9](#)

► [Background on water rates, biloxi.ms.us/residents/water-quality/](https://biloxi.ms.us/residents/water-quality/)

are invested in extending water-sewer services to those unserved as well as funding repair of the water and sewer system.

Projects underway presently include:

- Cleaned, repaired and painted four on-ground water storage tanks, \$135,000
- Cleaned, repaired and painted the Kuhn Street elevated storage tank, \$303,000
- Lorraine Road and John Lee Road new water line, \$587,000
- Water line replacement in Tanglewood neighborhood of West Biloxi, \$1 million.

Projects planned for FY 2021 include:

- Extension of Lorrain Road Water line to city limit, \$500,000 (in design)
- New water well in West Biloxi at Bay Vista, \$750,000
- Extension of new water line Lorraine Road to Shorecrest and south to Boyette, \$500,000
- Continued cleaning, repair and painting of the elevated water tanks.

Small wonders!

No consolation if you were stuck in traffic, but the Popp's Ferry bridge, which makes news occasionally because of malfunctions, performed without major incident during the brush with Sally: The bridge opened (and closed) 66 times for evacuating and returning boats, according to tender Ashlyn Aguilar. The peak: 14 openings and 117 boats in four hours in Sept. 13, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.



News & notes

ONLINE EDITION

Groundbreaking event:

Mayor Gilich and Councilman Nathan Barrett say it's been 20 years in the making, and when the new Eagle Point Park opens in several months, with its walking track and other planned features, it's only the beginning. See the five-minute groundbreaking ceremony at biloxi.ms.us/eaglepointpark.

'New' wheels: Learn about the Biloxi Fire Department's innovative "new" vehicle, a vehicle to carry smoky gear, at biloxi.ms.us/BFDnewwheels.

Real Men:

No one will accuse the councilman (left) and state



representative as being pinkos, but the two leaders are raising thousands of dollars and having fun while raising money for the American Cancer Society's monthlong Real Men Wear Pink campaign. Learn how you can help at biloxi.ms.us/realmen2020.



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Legendary cemetery tour goes virtual for 2020 edition

By Laurie Rosetti

Preserve Biloxi continues its annual exploration of the colorful warp and weft of Biloxi's 321-year-old tapestry with "Family Legends and Lore 2."

The Old Biloxi Cemetery Tour, 2020 version, is a slightly-amended event this year. The actual graveside performances will be presented virtually to the public, on BTV, the city's municipal TV channel, beginning on Tuesday, Oct. 20, with a preview by the Biloxi Local History and Genealogy Library.

The preview will walk viewers through the upcoming tour and also provide a fascinating look at a discovery made this year in the oldest section of the cemetery, concerning the headstone of Michael Batet, heretofore believed to be the oldest existing headstone. Hosts Jane Shambra, an authority on Biloxi history, and Nick Black of NOLA Cemetery Renewal will reveal findings and mysteries solved using state-of-the-art technology.

Next up: The main event! "Family Legends and Lore 2" will take center stage with the entire tour making its debut on BTV on Tuesday, Oct 27 at 7 p.m. The public was asked to submit ideas for portrayal from their own family histories. Submissions were received and the tour began to take shape. Scripts were written, actors were chosen, and rehearsals took place. The process is nearing the finish line.

This year's subjects are:

Leda Anglada, worked for 50 years in Downtown Biloxi; Beach Boulevard seafood market operator Henry C. Agreggaard; Ida Champeaux & Teresa Ewing, two longtime Biloxi seafood industry workers; Lessaint Broussard, a Louisiana native who comes to Biloxi for seafood work; Josephine Miguez and Erica Mount, whose eerie tale involves a grandmother and granddaughter who each died in their 20s from unnatural causes; Wilhelm Wallis, a German immigrant who settles in Biloxi; Nicholas Christian Ladner, a Cat Island resident whose descendants number in the hundreds of thousands; Paul Taconi; John Amazon Becnel, a civil engineer and friend to Judge Walter White; and Verta Lee Swetman, U.S. Commissioner and Deputy Clerk.

The Preserve Biloxi Committee, producer of the award-winning Old Biloxi Cemetery Tour, is comprised of the City of Biloxi, Biloxi Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, Biloxi Main Street, the Biloxi Public Library's Local History and Genealogy Division, Biloxi Public School District, and the University of Southern Mississippi History Department, Gulf Coast Campus.

► See more online at biloxi.ms.us/cemeterytour2020



Btv

► See sneak preview Tuesday Oct. 20 at 7 p.m.

► See the premiere, Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 7 p.m.

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Edgewater Mall

By the numbers

Biloxi's municipal finances have always been feast or famine, and 2020 presented its own share of challenges

It's become a political football over the years: With eight casinos, more than any other city in the Southeast, and as many as 13 million visitors a year, Biloxi ought to be flush with cash, they'd say. "We're healthy, not wealthy," longtime Mayor A.J. Holloway used to say when questioned about the city's finances. Fact is, he'd say, the majority of the money is committed – "encumbered" was the word – for improvements in service and services, new facilities and general financial standing.

Truth is, in the 25 years since gaming was legalized, Biloxi – which receives 3 percent, or about \$20 million a year, in gaming taxes – found itself in a position where city services, namely Police and Fire, had to be ramped up to a level to accommodate a huge building boom and an increase in millions of visitors. Fueled by the attraction of casino resorts, Biloxi saw its visitors increase from a million a year to 20 million pre-Katrina, and today at 13 million, tourism leaders say.

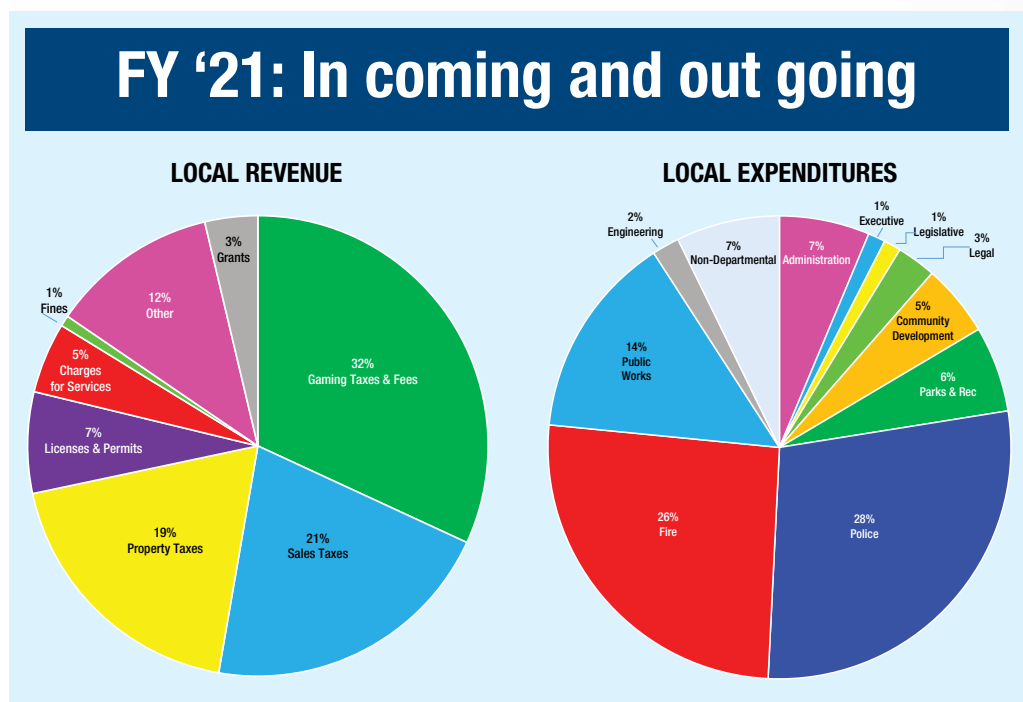
The recurring cost of basic city services, fueled by the new demand, expanded. For instance, Police and Fire budgets, at \$5 million combined a year pre-gaming, today are at \$34 million, half of the city's operating budget, owing to the increase in police officers, firefighters, fire stations, fire trucks, police cars and all the equipment needed to keep residents and visitors safe.

In Biloxi, where property taxpayers fund only 19 percent of city operations, the city has had a history since gaming arrived in 1992 of underestimating revenue, overestimating expenses and using its financial reserves to help offset any operating shortfalls.

This year is no different. The city begins the year with an \$8 million beginning fund balance, which will help offset any differences in revenues and expenditures.

In recent years, the Gilich administration has implemented long-suggested measures of having such services as water, sewer and garbage collection funded by reasonable rate structures and not subsidized by other revenue. (Even with increases this year – 30 cents a month on garbage and recycling collection and less than 35 cents a month on the average water and sewer bill – Biloxians pay the lowest fees of any city around us.)

In fact, from October through March of 2020, the first six months of FY 20, Biloxi was set to achieve new milestones. All revenue streams were on the increase.



Enter the coronavirus pandemic, which essentially shut down Biloxi's hospitality-based economy for two months and had a chilling effect on the city's top two revenue streams: gaming and sales taxes, which account for two thirds of the city's annual operating revenue.

But the lingering pandemic was only the beginning. Forget not storms named Cristobal, Laura and Marco. Each of the events increased expenses while reducing revenue.

"Fiscal Year 2020 has been rough on everyone," Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich said. "However, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck at the middle of our fiscal year, our financial position was well ahead of budget for the year at that point.

"We took immediate action to minimize spending through the remainder of the fiscal year. All travel was canceled, a hiring freeze was put in place, we tightened belts, and we

refinanced some of our long-term debt, which we had been looking to do for more than a year. In the refinancing alone, we saved \$1.5 million. So, despite \$5 million in lost revenue during the FY '20 Fiscal Year, we will have managed to finish the budget year in positive territory.

"As we enter FY '21, revenues have returned to near normal, but our forecast for the fiscal year remains conservative. The new budget will allow us to maintain services, especially in the areas of public safety, while continuing to do the things we must do to keep our community safe, grow our economy and improve our quality of life.

"As I've said all along, a budget is a projection, which will be adjusted as needed. The biggest consideration is to do the things you must do, enhance services where you can and do it all without raising anybody's taxes."



Inside the FY '21 budget

Biloxi has millions of dollars in construction projects underway throughout the city funded primarily by state or federal grants, but the city's basic operations are funded by three primary revenue streams, which for FY 2021 are projected to be: gaming taxes and fees (\$19 million), sales taxes (\$12.4 million) and property taxes (\$11.3 million).

Among the new big-ticket items in the proposed FY 2021 budget:

- An increase in annual payments to the state employee retirement system
- Purchase of two new Fire Trucks and a Public Works Bucket Truck
- Purchase and outfitting of 10 fully-equipped police cruisers as well as vehicles in Parks, Engineering and Public Works to help maintain a dependable fleet
- Annual lease payment on Fire Station #7, which was put into service in 2020.

The budget also includes repair and upgrade of utility systems, including the replacement of a water well in West Biloxi and extension of water-sewer services to areas of Woolmarket.

"These are just some of the big-ticket items," Gilich said. "You're also going to see progress on our waterfront initiatives, infrastructure work, and construction will begin on the Keesler gate and the commercial corridor we're creating on Division Street between I-110 and the new gate."

► See financial info online at biloxi.ms.us/resources/financial-report/

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Space for rent

BILOXI CIVIC CENTER

With guidelines in place, city resumes rental of municipal facilities

Life has been different from what we are used to because of the coronavirus.

Social distancing and mask wearing have become the norm. Gatherings have been modified to reduce the spread of the virus.

And now, major adjustments have been made at city rental facilities in order to allow individuals or organizations to again host public and private events at city facilities.

"We want people to know that we are open for business and following all the current protocols and occupancy restrictions," Biloxi Parks & Recreation Director Cheryl Bell said. "Our rental facilities have guidelines in place limiting the number indoors as well as outdoors for meetings, sports, and special occasions. We also have protocols in place for facility logistics such as extra spacing of tables and chairs and sanitation stations.

"The bottom line is that we are open for business."

Here is a list of city's rental facilities. Please call for the most current limitations and safety procedures.

- **A.J. Holloway Sports Complex**, 765 Wells Drive
The 68-acre complex with sports fields, concession stands and more. For reservations, call the Biloxi Athletics Division weekdays at 228-388-2483 or email geleuterius@biloxi.ms.us.
- **Biloxi Civic Center**, 578 Howard Ave.
The 15,214-foot ballroom has options for use of the full ballroom or three small ballrooms, dressing rooms, kitchen, and more. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-374-3105; abwilliams@biloxi.ms.us
- **Biloxi Visitors Center**, 1050 Beach Blvd.
The 24,000 square-foot center has a first-floor foyer, second-floor ballroom, meeting rooms, a second-floor porch and more. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-374-3105; abwilliams@biloxi.ms.us

- **Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center**, 2520 Pass Road
The 43,000-square foot facility has a wooden floor gymnasium, two meeting rooms, a large multipurpose room with a kitchen on the first floor and more. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-388-2443; reservations@biloxi.ms.us
- **Dr. Frank G. Gruich Sr. Community Center**, 591 Howard Ave.
The large center features a stage, balcony, kitchen, dance floor, two meeting rooms and restrooms. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-388-2443; reservations@biloxi.ms.us
- **Hiller Park Pavilion**, 380 Hiller Drive
Large outdoor space located on the grounds of the city's largest park. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-388-2443; reservations@biloxi.ms.us
- **Lighthouse Pavilion**, 1050 Beach Blvd.
Large outdoor space located on off U.S. 90 with views of the waterfront. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-374-3105; abwilliams@biloxi.ms.us
- **Old Brick House**, 622 Bayview Ave.
Historic home built around 1850 and located on the Back Bay of Biloxi. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-374-3105; abwilliams@biloxi.ms.us
- **Popp's Ferry Causeway Park Pavilion**, 560 Causeway Drive
The large outdoor space located in the 10-acre Causeway Park off Popp's Ferry Road. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-388-2443; reservations@biloxi.ms.us
- **Point Cadet Pavilion**, 120 Cadet St.
Waterfront pavilion set against a backdrop of the Biloxi Bay Bridge. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-388-2443; reservations@biloxi.ms.us
- **Town Green**, 710 Beach Blvd.
Large green space located off U.S. 90 in downtown Biloxi. Fees, guidelines and availability: 228-388-2443; reservations@biloxi.ms.us

Woolmarket City Center off Kayleigh Cove and the **Saenger Theatre** located in downtown Biloxi are both rental facilities but are currently closed because of renovations. **For more information those two facilities, call the Biloxi Parks & Recreation Department weekdays at 228-388-7170.**

Halloween on Howard!

Oct. 24, 5-6:30 p.m.

Trick or treating drive-thru event



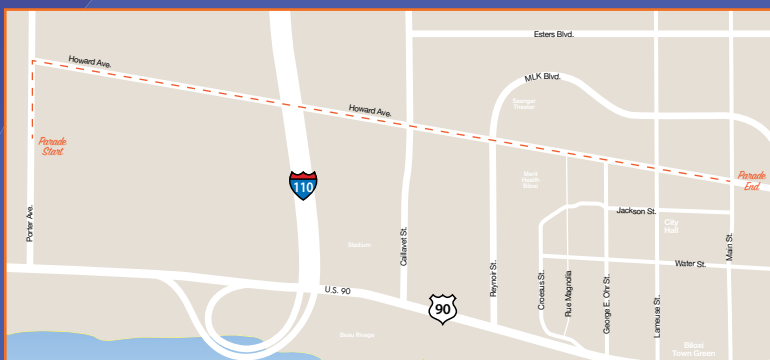
Vehicles lineup starting at 4:30 p.m. on Porter Avenue.

Vehicles then enter Howard Avenue and travel east to Main Street while trick or treating with local businesses and vendors along the way.

Free admission and participants must remain in vehicles.

Details: 228-388-7170,
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Biloxi VA remains mission-focused despite challenges

Editor's note: This is the first installment of a monthly column from the Biloxi VA.

By Bryan C. Matthews
Director, Gulf Coast Veterans
Health Care System

As an integral part of the Biloxi community for nearly a century, the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, or "Biloxi VA," is a sprawling campus in the heart of this community. As the director of this facility, I'm excited for the opportunity to work with the City of Biloxi in spreading the word through BNews about what we're accomplishing here, and at our community-based outpatient clinics along the Gulf Coast, which serve more than 70,000 Veterans.

The opportunity to share what we're doing with the Biloxi community is something I wholeheartedly welcome, and I look forward to communicating our mission and vision with the wonderful community we call home. And we're proud to call Biloxi home. Our interest in this city and the wonderful and historic community in this area stems further than us simply being located here; this is our home. VA employees live in these cities and counties, shop in these stores and send their children to area schools. They're as invested in this community as they are in caring for its Veteran residents.

And despite 2020 proving so very unique a year, with the series of unprecedented national and global events many of us couldn't have imagined altering the very way we interact, providing health care to the Veterans we serve has always remained our mission. Despite physical distancing, significant unemployment, civil unrest and the strongest storm to ever make landfall on the Gulf Coast, we have continued our services.

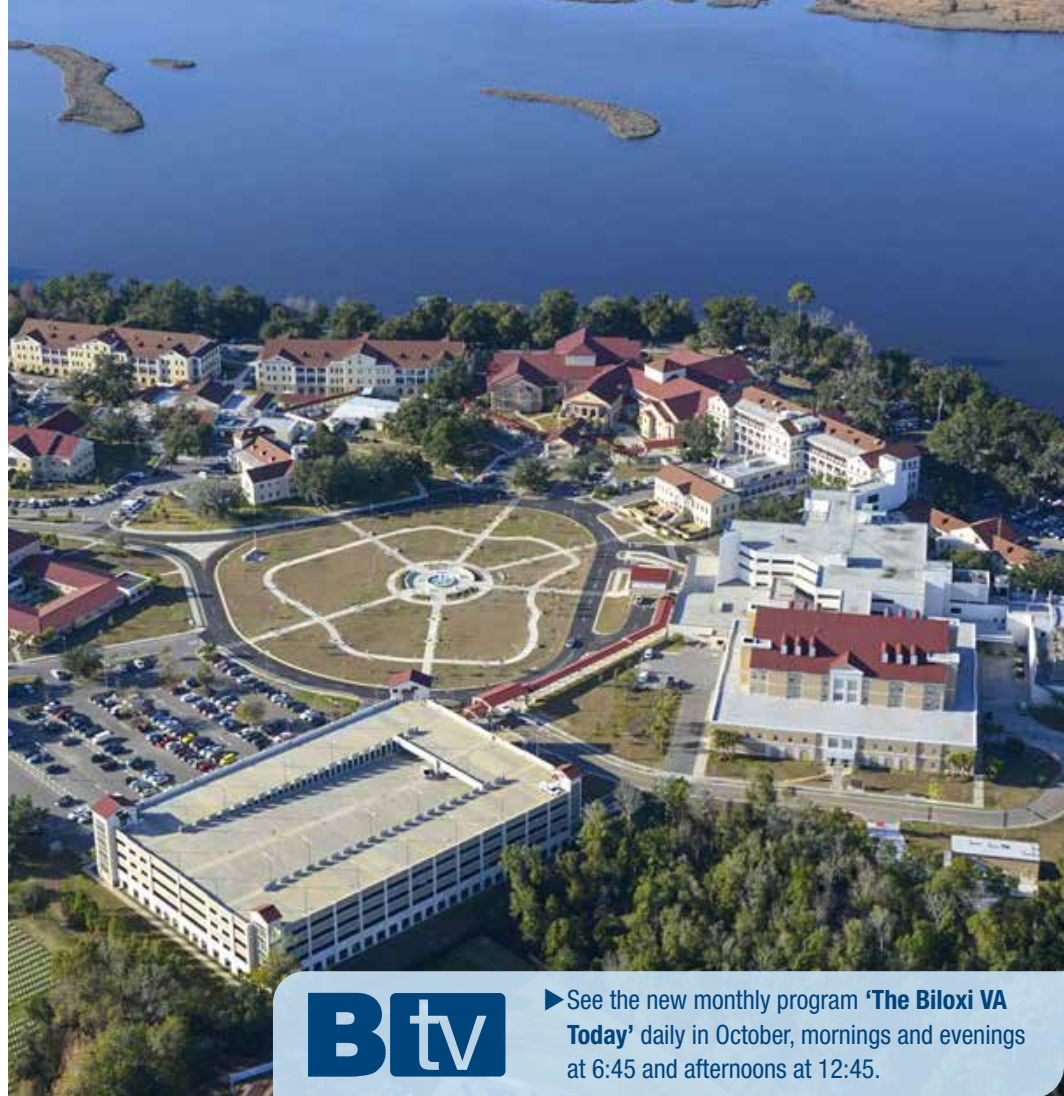
Although we have had to adapt, we have overcome and have remained committed to our mission – providing health care with integrity,



Bryan C. Matthews



Biloxi VA TODAY



Btv

► See the new monthly program **'The Biloxi VA Today'** daily in October, mornings and evenings at 6:45 and afternoons at 12:45.

commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence – to our nation's Veterans, those who have borne the battle.

I encourage every Veteran enrolled in our health care

system to maintain contact with their health care teams. We've leveraged technology to continue providing service throughout the ongoing global health crisis, providing virtual appointments when possible, phone consults and ensuring our community care partnerships are maintained.

And like so many other organizations, we're continuing to observe Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-recommended guidelines, state and local ordinances and Veterans Affairs mandates, including a requirement for every individual visiting our facilities to wear a face covering. Measures such as these are designed to protect both our Veterans and staff. While we understand this can be an inconvenience, we're reminding

Veterans that some of our visitors are part of the more vulnerable population.

I'm encouraged at the relationship we have with other organizations in Biloxi and along the Gulf Coast. We've been able to host two contactless food distribution events during the past few months, neither of which would have been possible without the assistance of Biloxi organizations. One of my visions is to ensure transparency with our community partnerships, and the continued positive relationships we're building with organizations along the Gulf Coast will only serve to strengthen our abilities to continue providing the best care we're able to our area Veterans.

As we continue to move forward, please know that the GCVHCS will continue to place the health and welfare of our nation's Veterans at the forefront. If you are a Veteran currently not enrolled in the VA, please take the opportunity to discover the benefits and services we offer. Our website and social media page are an excellent sources of what the VA does, and can provide individuals with information on how to access the benefits Veterans have earned through their service.

I look forward to maintaining and building on our relationship with the wonderful City of Biloxi and I thank this amazing community for all they do in helping us care for our nation's heroes.

► Visit the VA online at www.biloxi.va.gov
► Follow the VA on Facebook at facebook.com/VAGulfCoast

The infrastructure work in Biloxi

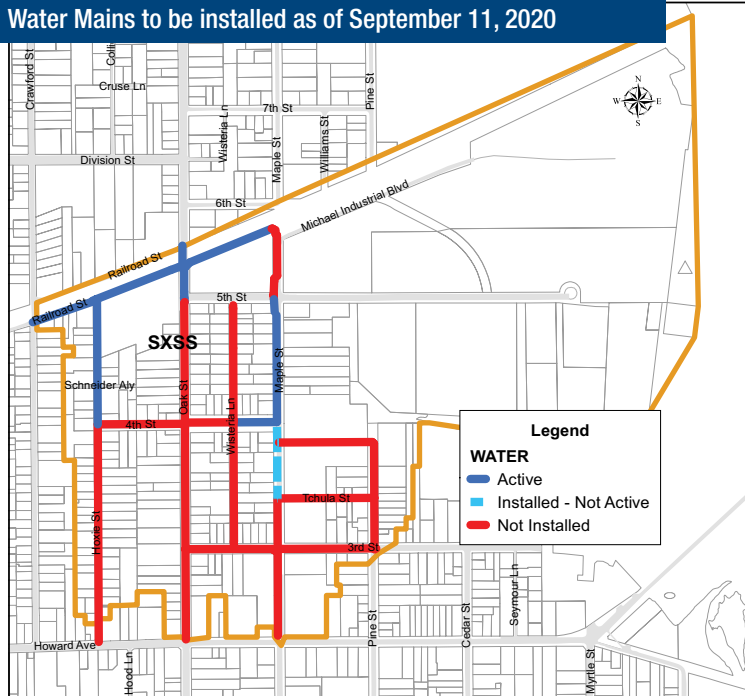
Pages 13 through 16 contain maps that show the status of the city's three major infrastructure projects now underway. The information on these maps is compiled by the city's Engineering Department, based on reports from contractors and inspectors at each site. See detailed maps and video online at biloxi.ms.us/restore-biloxi/.

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.

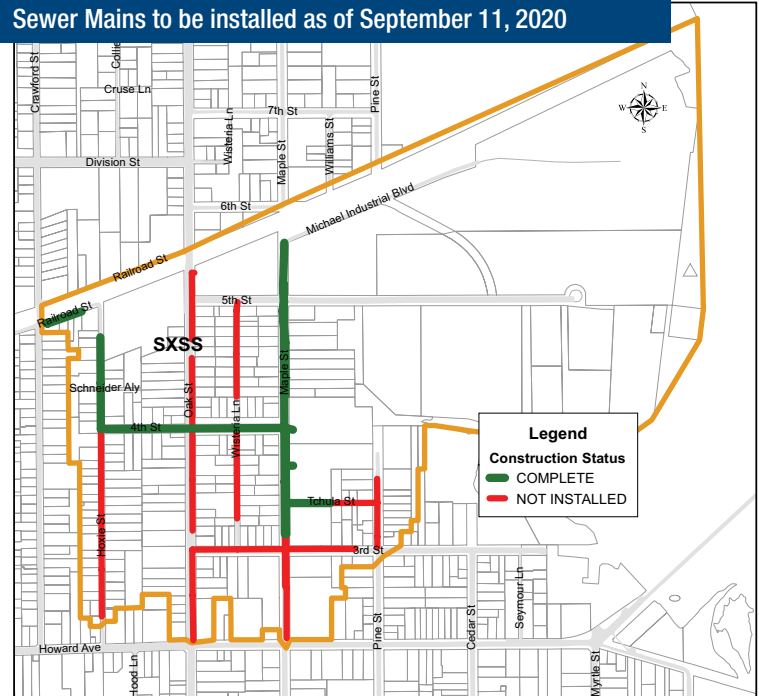
Lane Construction Water

Water Mains to be installed as of September 11, 2020



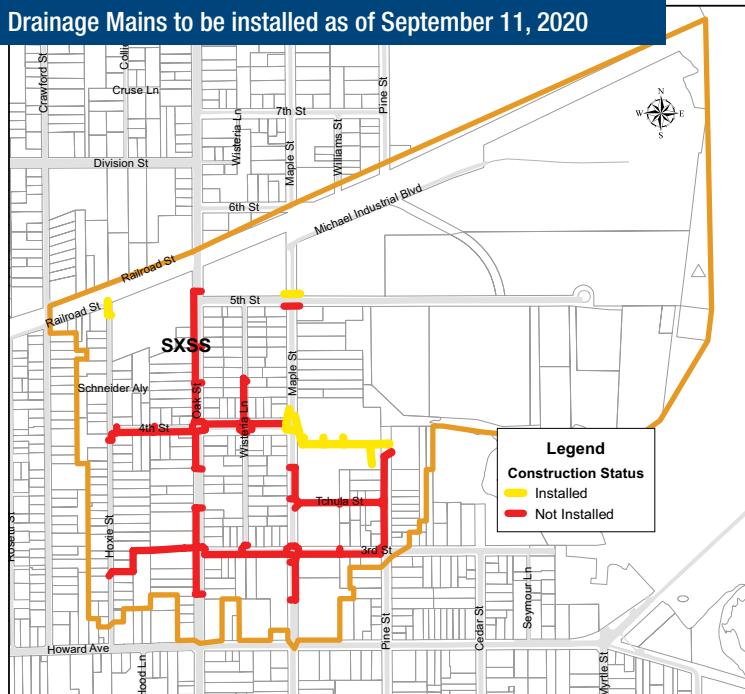
Lane Construction Sewer

Sewer Mains to be installed as of September 11, 2020



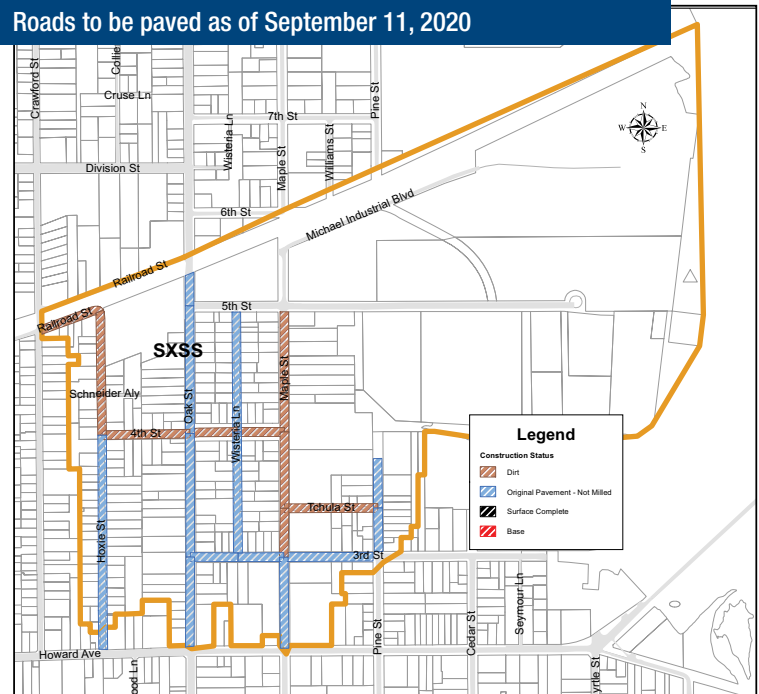
Lane Construction Drainage

Drainage Mains to be installed as of September 11, 2020

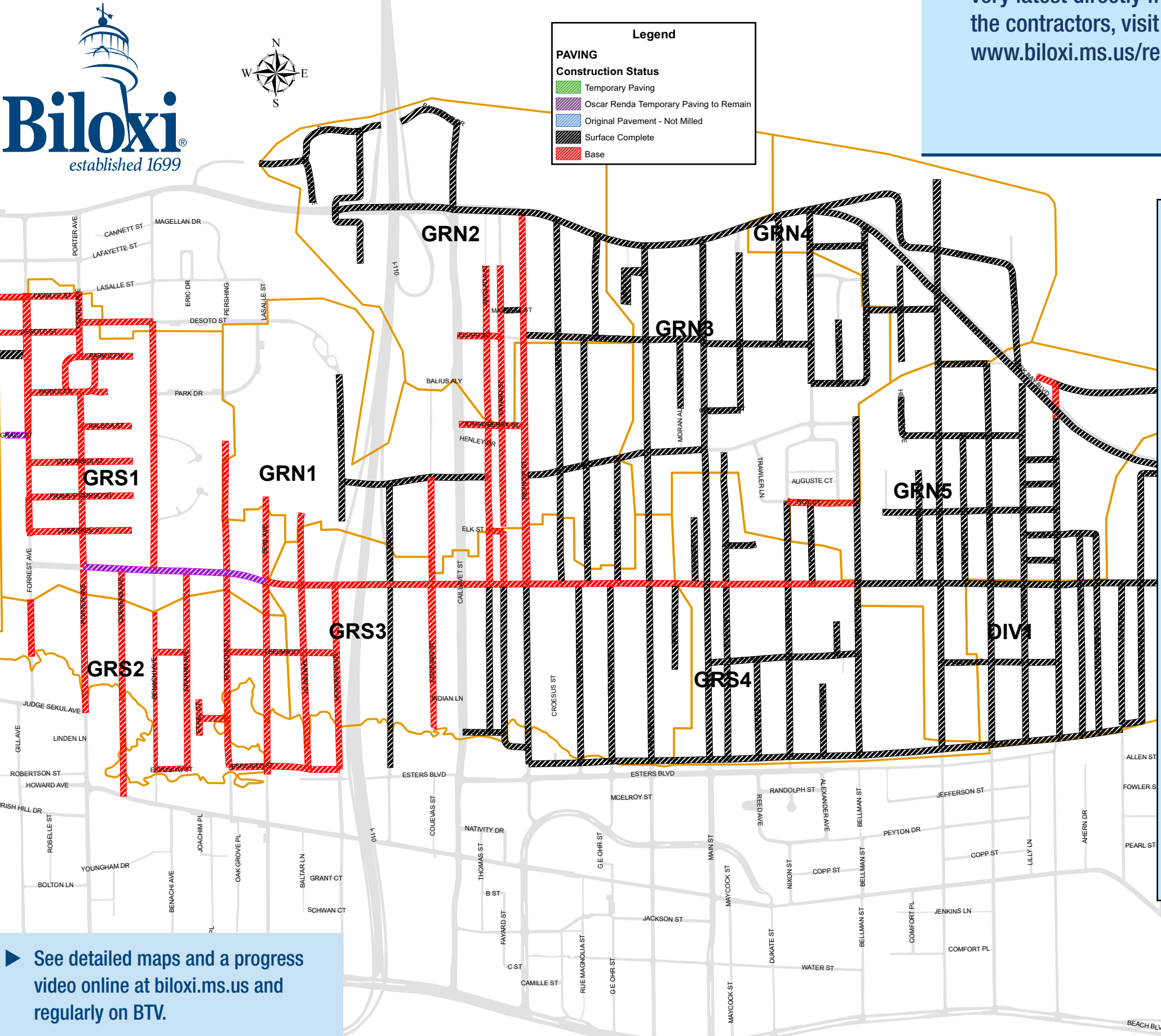


Lane Construction Pavement

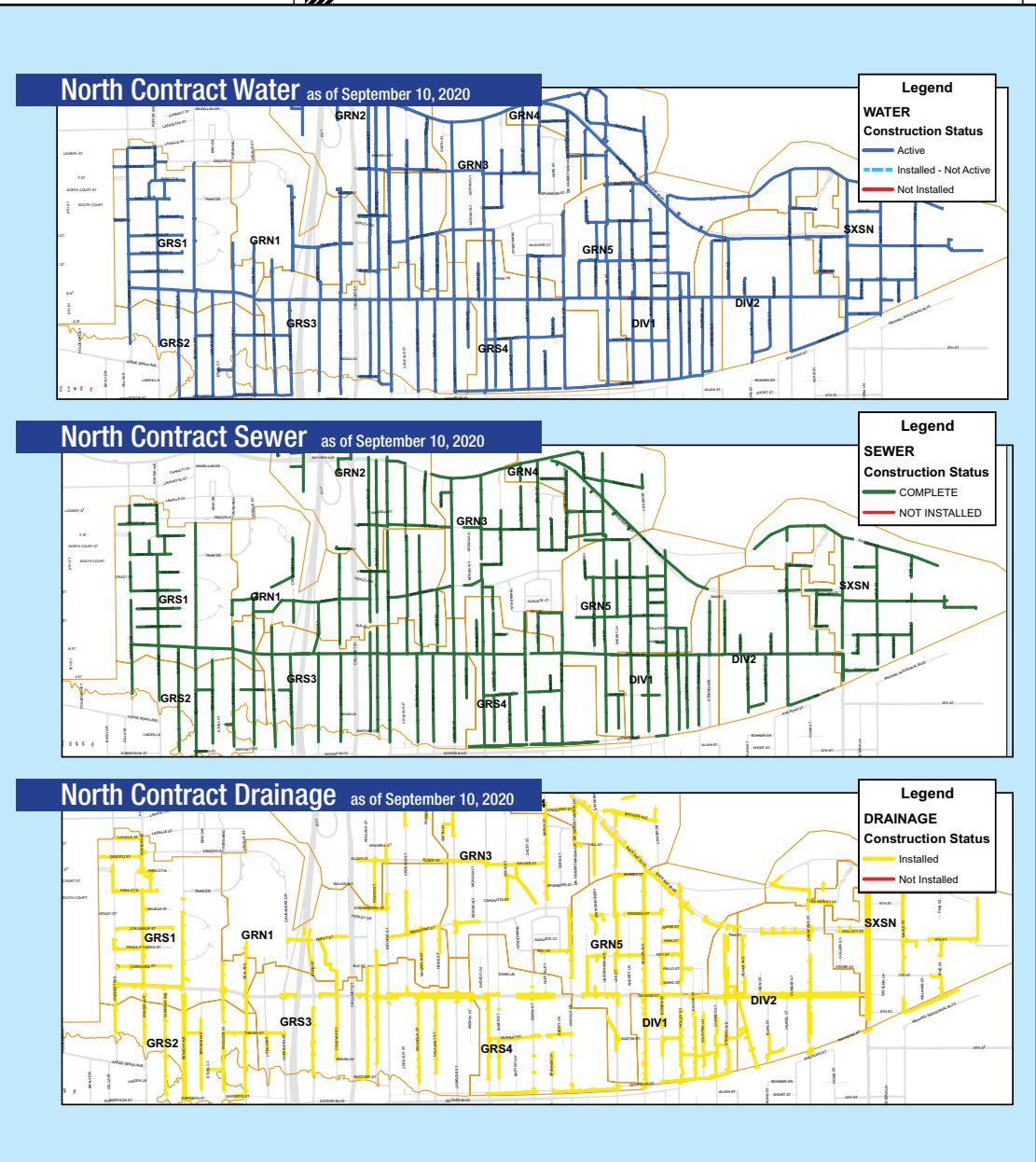
Roads to be paved as of September 11, 2020



The North Contract: Remaining Paving (as of September 16, 2020)



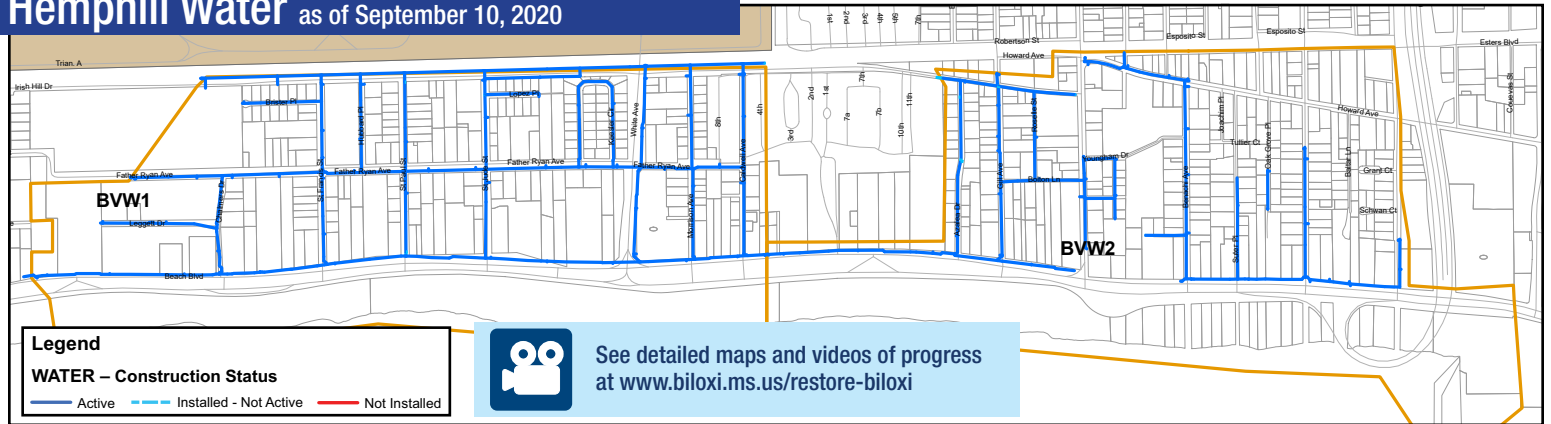
► To see detailed maps of progress and to hear the very latest directly from the contractors, visit www.biloxi.ms.us/restore-biloxi.



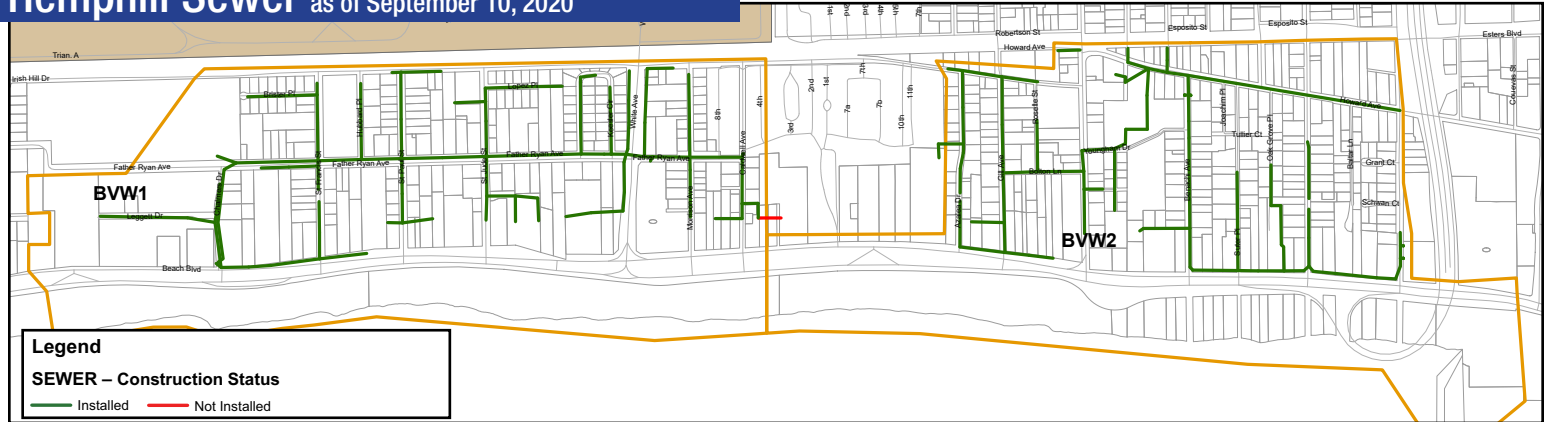
► See detailed maps and a progress video online at biloxi.ms.us and regularly on BTV.

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 October 2, 2020.

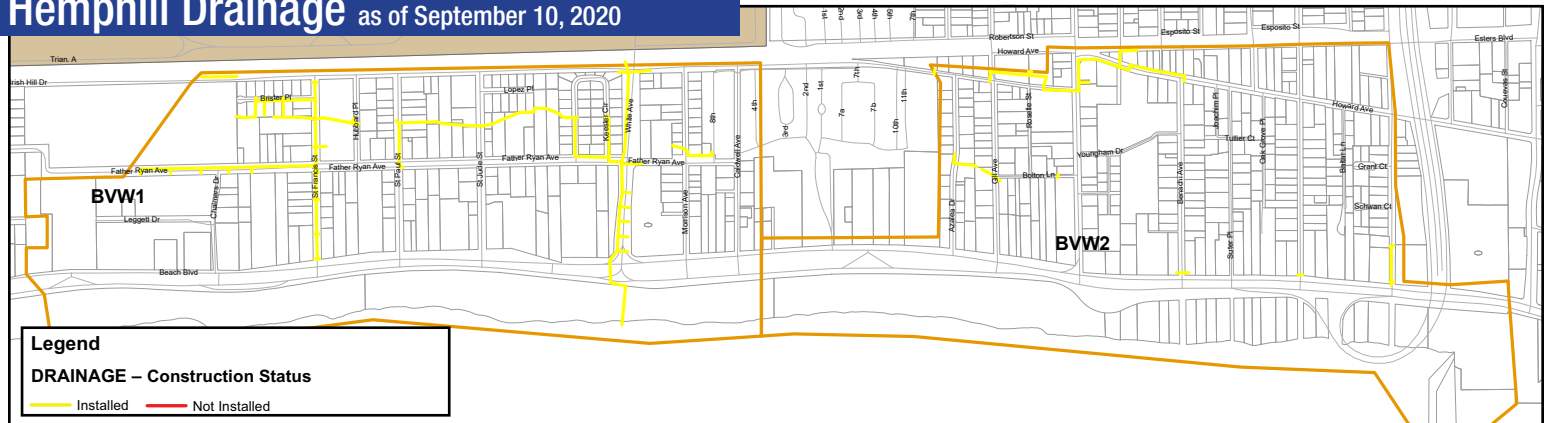
Hemphill Water as of September 10, 2020



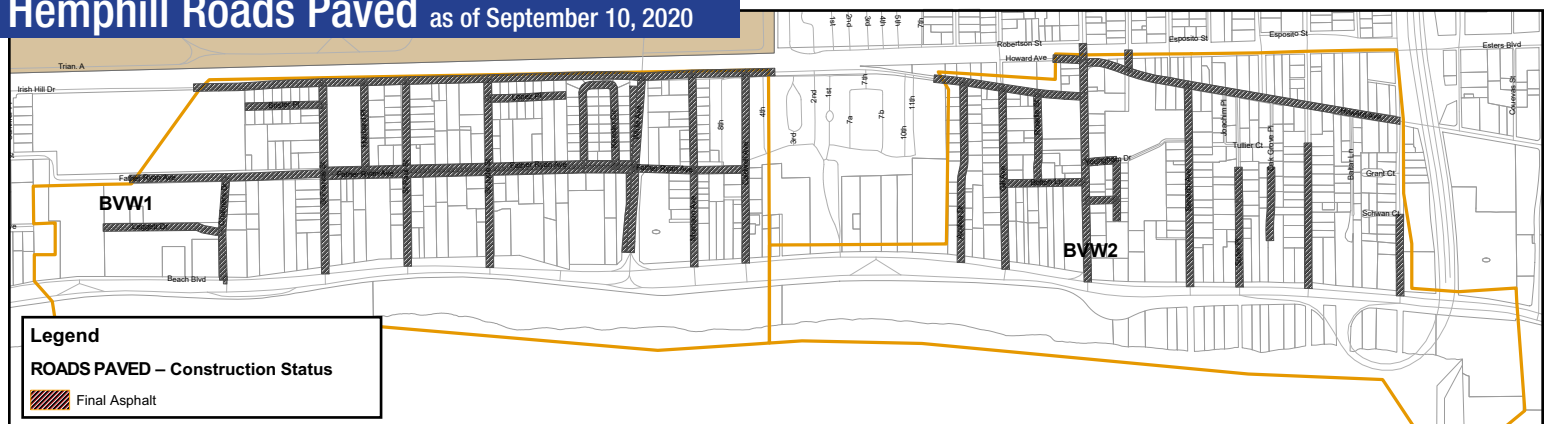
Hemphill Sewer as of September 10, 2020



Hemphill Drainage as of September 10, 2020



Hemphill Roads Paved as of September 10, 2020



Best Bet!

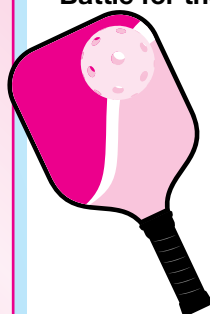


Cruisin' in Biloxi

It's that time of year again when antique cars, poodle skirts and saddle shoes fill downtown streets for the Cruisin' The Coast Biloxi Block Party. The Oct. 7, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. event will feature live entertainment, special food and drink offers from downtown restaurants and shops, and trophies including "The car I'd most like to chase" from the Biloxi Police Chief. New this year, a second stage will be set up on Howard Avenue and there will be extra spacing of vehicles because of pandemic safety protocols. So remember, vehicle space will be limited. Details: 228-435-6339

Pickleball for Pink

Looking for an active way to be charitable? Well the Mississippi Gulf Coast Pickleball, Inc. has a tournament that can serve the purpose. It's the Battle for the Pink Charity Pickleball Tournament, Saturday, Oct. 24 at 9 a.m. The event, open to ages 18 and older with a maximum of 96 players, is \$30 per player and includes lunch and a shirt. Games will be played in a round robin format and fun spirited competition will be between Real Men Wear Pink ambassador teams Felsher Flounders and Glavan Gulls. All proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society. Registration: <https://www.msgulfcoastpickleball.com/sponsored-events/>. Details: 228-233-8766



First Friday, Oct. 2, 5-8 p.m., Rue Magnolia and Water Street. Downtown shops and galleries stay open late and offer specials and refreshments. Live entertainment and prize giveaways also part of the event. Free admission. Details: 228-435-6339

24th Annual Cruisin' The Coast, Oct. 4-11. Thousands of classic cars converge on the Gulf Coast for a week of cruising along U.S. 90, along with rock 'n' roll shows, sock hops, swap meets, and more. Details: 228-385-3847; www.cruisinthecoast.com

Biloxi Block Party, Cruisin' The Coast, Oct. 7, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Lameuse Street, downtown. Thousands of cars and car aficionados cruise in for a block party near City Hall. Live entertainment begins at 8:30 a.m. and includes Ty Taylor and Gram Rea, Elvis Tribute Artist Garry Wesley, and Colin Lockey and Chase Dalgo. Free admission. Details: 228-435-6339



Annual Fall Muster, Oct. 17, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. & Oct. 18, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Beauvoir, The Jefferson Davis Home and Presidential Library, 2244 Beach Blvd. Admission charged. Details: 228-388-4400

Bike Biloxi, Oct. 20,

6 p.m. Ride begins at the Biloxi Visitors Center, 1050 Beach Blvd., and travels through downtown. Bicycle ride ends with refreshments and food at a downtown restaurant at cyclist's expense. Helmets and lights recommended. Free admission. Details: 228-435-6339



Halloween on Howard, Oct. 24, 5-6:30 p.m., Trick or treating drive-thru event. Vehicles enter Howard Avenue from Porter Avenue and travel east to Main Street while treat or tricking from their vehicle. Free admission. Details: 228-388-7170

Battle for the Pink Charity Pickleball Tournament, Oct. 24, 9 a.m., Popp's Ferry Recreational Area, 2138 Popp's Ferry Road. Pickleball tournament featuring Real Men Wear Pink ambassadors Kenny Glavan for team Gulls and Kevin Felsher for team Flounders. Benefits American Cancer Society. Details and fees: 228-233-8766



Best Bet!

Trick or Treating on Howard

Ghosts and goblins can ride along Howard Avenue this year to fill their trick or treating bags with goodies during the Halloween on Howard event. The drive-thru event will roll along Howard on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. with vehicles entering from Porter Avenue and traveling east to Main street. Participants are asked to stay in their vehicle while local businesses and organizations pass out candy! For more information about the free community event, call the Biloxi Parks & Recreation Department at 228-388-7170.



Stay in touch

BNews: Welcome to the 29th 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

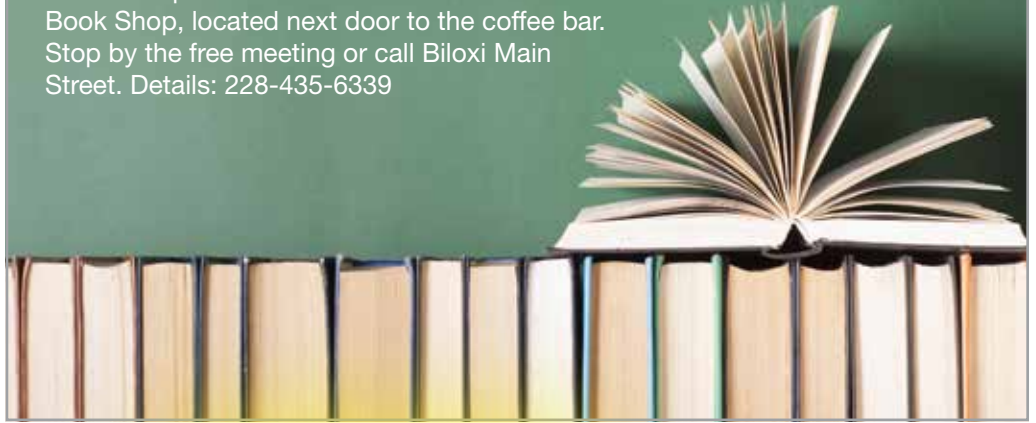
Cecilia Dobbs Walton, Public Affairs Specialist
cdobbswalton@biloxi.ms.us

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 Main Street Book Club, Oct. 22, 5:30 p.m., Jacked Up Coffee Bar, 999 Howard Ave. October's book, "The Peach Keeper" is available at Southern Bound Book Shop, located next door to the coffee bar. Stop by the free meeting or call Biloxi Main Street. Details: 228-435-6339



Annual Biloxi Chamber Craft Beer Festival, Oct. 24, 4-7 p.m., MGM Park, 105 Caillavet St. Details: 228-604-0014



INCLUSION

Gulf Coast Equality Fest, Oct. 24, The Great Lawn, Harrah's Gulf Coast, 280 Beach Blvd. Free admission. Details: gulfcoastequalityfest.org

Biloxi Community Market Festival, Oct. 29, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., I-110 at Howard Avenue. Event features community market vendors, live entertainment by Colin Lockey, outdoor prizes, children activities and Denny Wayne's Food Truck. Social distanced outdoor seating will be set up. Free admission. Details: 228-435-6339



Old Biloxi Cemetery Tours, virtual event, begins Oct. 20. Themed "Biloxi's Legends and Lore #2" and features tales from Biloxi Families. For more details, visit Preserve Biloxi on Facebook. Details: 228-435-6339

Biloxi Little Theatre
220 Lee St., 228-432-8543
www.4blt.org

Center Stage
2670 Rue Palafox, 228-388-6258
centerstagebiloxi.com

Biloxi Lighthouse & Visitors Center

1050 Beach Blvd., 228-374-3105, www.biloxi.ms.us – Open daily, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
• Lighthouse Tours Daily, 8-9:30 a.m.

Biloxi Schooners

367 Beach Blvd., 228-435-6320, schooner@maritimemuseum.org

- Walk-on sunset sails, charters, or sails to Horn Island

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
betsyannriverboat@gmail.com, bestyannriverboat.com

- Sunset Eco-Tour, Hibachi Dinner Cruise, Historical and Ecological Tour

Coastal Mississippi Mardi Gras Museum

762 Howard Ave., 228-314-4747, <https://www.facebook.com/biloximardigrasmuseum/>

Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum

115 1st St., 228-435-6320, www.maritimemuseum.org

- **Oct. 3, 4:30-7:30 p.m., Schooner Cruise;** food provided by Makin' Groceries. \$50 per person. 30 spots available.
- **Oct. 24, 1-3 p.m., Hall of Fame Induction;** Free to attend.

Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art

386 Beach Blvd., 228-374-5547, www.georgeohr.org

- **Oct. 15, 5:30-7 p.m. Afterhours,** live music, cash bar, and Makin' Groceries is open late
- 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,** Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30; Doors open at 5 p.m.; Early bird begins at 6:30 p.m.; Regular games at 7 p.m.; Cash payouts and door prizes. Concessions available.
 - **Oct. 9, Cruisin' The Coast themed Bingo** with a costume contest and prizes
 - **Oct. 30, Halloween themed Bingo** with a costume contest and prizes
- **Dance,** Oct. 3, 6-10 p.m. Band Razzoo. Doors open at 5 p.m. \$8 Cover Charge. Ham & Cheese Popovers on the menu.
- **Sunday Bingo,** Oct. 4, 11, 18 and 25; Doors open at noon; Early bird begins at 2 p.m.; Regular games at 2:30 p.m.; Cash payouts. Concessions available.
- **Dance, Sock Hop,** Oct. 10, Doors open at 5 p.m.; Dance 6-10 p.m.; DJ featuring music from the oldies.
- Safety protocols: six-feet social distancing, contact tracing forms to be completed, temperature taken, hands to be sanitized, and masks required.

Fleur de Lis Society of Biloxi (French Club)

182 Howard Ave., 228-436-6472

- Every Friday night in October, 6 p.m. **Seafood Dinners with Karaoke** at 7 p.m.

Lagnippe

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, Courtney 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.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27 Sunday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	28	29 Community Market	30	1 Community Market	2 First Friday Downtown Biloxi Friday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	3 Dance Biloxi Elks Lodge
4 Cruisin' The Coast begins Coastwide Sunday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	5	6 Community Market	7 Cruisin' The Coast Biloxi Block Party Downtown Biloxi	8 Community Market	9  Cruisin' themed Friday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	10 Sock Hop Biloxi Elks Lodge
11 Cruisin' The Coast last day Coastwide Sunday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	12	13 Community Market	14	15 Community Market Pink Night for the Fight Bags illuminate City Hall steps 6-8 p.m.	16 Styx IP Casino Friday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	17 Annual Fall Muster Beauvoir
18 Annual Fall Muster Beauvoir Sunday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	19	20 Community Market Old Biloxi Cemetery Tour Sneak Preview Bike Biloxi Downtown Biloxi	21 Main Street Book Club Jacked Up Coffee Bar	22 Community Market	23 Friday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	24 Halloween on Howard Downtown Biloxi Gulf Coast Equality Fest The Great Lawn, Harrah's Battle for the Pink Charity Pickleball Tournament Popp's Ferry Recreational Area Annual Biloxi Chamber Craft Beer Festival MGM Park
25 Sunday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	26	27 Community Market Old Biloxi Cemetery Tour Virtual Event begins	28	29 Community Market 	30  Nelly – Beau Rivage Jeff Foxworthy – IP Casino Halloween themed Friday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge	31 Collective Soul IP Casino



October Schedule

Sparklight 56; Uverse 99 (follow prompts) or at biloxi.ms.us/btv

Morning	
6 a.m.	"Down in Biloxi," by Rockin' Ray Fournier (4 min)
6:04 a.m.	A Day in the Life of Biloxi (9 min)
6:13 a.m.	Biloxi Builders and Visionaries (8 min)
6:21 a.m.	Biloxi Today (3 min)
6:25 a.m.	Infrastructure video (5 min)
6:30 a.m.	Biloxi Public Schools (15 min)
6:45 a.m.	The Biloxi VA Today (15 min)
7 a.m.	Encore: Edmond Boudreaux: Living History (45 min)
7:45 a.m.	The Biloxi Lighthouse, narrated by Mary Ann Mobley (13 min)
8 a.m.	2019 Cemetery Tour (47 mins) (2020 tour debuts Oct. 22)
8:50 a.m.	Eagle Point Park groundbreaking (5 min)
8:55 a.m.	The inside story on Edgewater Mall's sand sculpture (5 min)
9:00 a.m.	City Council meetings and bonus public affairs programming (3 hours)
Afternoon	
Noon	A vintage vignette: "America's Riviera," B&W, 1950s travelogue (9 min)
12:10 p.m.	A vintage vignette: "America's Riviera," 1960s travelogue (14 min)
12:25 p.m.	Eagle Point park groundbreaking (5 min)
12:30 p.m.	The inside story on Edgewater Mall's sand sculpture (5 min)
12:35 p.m.	"New" wheels in the Biloxi Fire Department (10 min)
12:45 p.m.	The Biloxi VA Today (15 min)
1 p.m.	The Biloxi Lighthouse, narrated by Mary Ann Mobley (13 min)
1:15 p.m.	RU Ready? (85 min)
2:30 p.m.	Biloxi From the Air montage (30 min)
3 p.m.	City Council meetings and bonus public affairs programming (3 hours)
Evening	
6 p.m.	"Down in Biloxi," by Rockin' Ray Fournier (4 min)
6:04 p.m.	A Day in the Life of Biloxi (9 min)
6:13 p.m.	Biloxi Builders and Visionaries (8 min)
6:21 p.m.	Biloxi Today (3 min)
6:25 p.m.	Infrastructure video (5 min)
6:30 p.m.	Biloxi Public Schools (15 min)
6:45 p.m.	The Biloxi VA Today (15 min)
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8 p.m.	2019 Cemetery Tour (47 mins) (2020 tour debuts Oct. 22)
8:50 p.m.	Eagle Point Park groundbreaking (5 min)
8:55 p.m.	The inside story on Edgewater Mall's sand sculpture (5 min)
9 p.m.	City Council meetings and bonus public affairs programming (3 hours)
Midnight	National anthem by Ronny Broussard (2 min)



You can view individual programs on the city's YouTube channel.

Inside BTV: A look at cemetery tours, past, present and future

It's become a tradition this time of year in Biloxi:

When the temperatures begin to fall slightly and the humidity sees a downtick, Preserve Biloxi, a group of history-appreciating community organizations, transforms the Old Biloxi Cemetery into a classroom, with graveside re-enactments by period-garbed performers.

But, of course, what's 2020 think of tradition?

This year's Old Biloxi Cemetery Tour – with a host of storytellers in a production titled "Family History and Lore 2" – will be a virtual affair, on BTV: Biloxi Television, the city's municipal TV channel.

In fact, all this month, BTV salutes the cemetery tour, and, as a result, Biloxi history.

You'll see a 47-minute replay of the 2019 tour each day at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. You'll also see a homage to longtime local historian Edmond Boudreaux, who played a role for years in the cemetery tour before he died in 2019. You'll see "Edmond Boudreaux: Living History," a 45-minute compilation of Boudreaux's rolls on the years, at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. throughout the month.

A sneak peak of the 2020 cemetery tour will air Tuesday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m., and will replay daily at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Then, on Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 7 p.m., BTV airs the premiere of "Family Legends and Lore 2." The program will have encore presentations each day at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. through the end of October. It also will be online, on the city's YouTube channel.

The Biloxi VA today launches on BTV

It's been a part of Biloxi for more than a hundred years, the Biloxi Veterans Administration, or "Biloxi VA," a name that refers to the sprawling oak-filled site on Biloxi's Back Bay and home to a medical center, with its support and specialty facilities, and, of course, the graves of 24,000 veterans interred at the Biloxi National Cemetery.

And now, the Biloxi VA, the crown jewel of the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, is launching a monthly 15-minute program on BTV, coinciding with a monthly column in Bnews Monthly (see Page 12).



"The Biloxi VA Today" will air daily in October each morning and evening at 6:45, and each afternoon at 12:45.

News & notes: Mary Ann and more

Mary Ann: Who knew Miss America Mary Ann Mobley was a Biloxi native? It's true, and the 1959 titlist lent her voice to the telling of the story of the Biloxi Lighthouse. Hear it every morning and afternoon at 7:45 and every afternoon at 1 p.m.

Eagle Point: As groundbreakings go, it had the usual ceremonial turning of the shovels, but stories abounded in the five-minute replay of the Eagle Point park affair: Among them were the feat of turning a wastewater lagoon into a first-class community park, and it being done in an area annexed in Biloxi two decades ago. See the video each morning and evening at 8:50 and each afternoon at 12:25.

'New' wheels: The command staff at the Biloxi Fire Department touts a newly refurbished vehicle that will be a staple at future fire scenes throughout the city. Learn more in a five-minute video airing each afternoon at 12:45.

Stormy weather: Advice on how to prepare for a hurricane is relevant and timely, regardless of the year. See the city's 2019 "RU Ready?" workshop, an 80-minute presentation with a host of storm-prep authorities, each afternoon at 1:15 p.m.

Sandy cause: Edgewater Mall has announced that its massive sand sculpture exhibit, tons of sand styled under the theme "Mystery of the Sea," will remain in place near JCPenney through the end of the year. Hear the inside story of the sculpture each morning and afternoon on BTV.

Biloxi's Visit with the Unusual

When Fall finally arrives, we often think of unusual happening or stories from the past. Here are a few to reminisce about.

The two little girls

Have you ever heard the story of the ghosts in the hospital Back in the Day? Well, Biloxians often recant this intriguing story exactly the same. In Biloxi's old hospital, now the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources building off Bayview Boulevard, when a patient was in serious condition, it is said that two girls about 5 to 7 years old, 3 feet in height and dressed in party attire would appear in the patient's room. They were sometimes described as having long

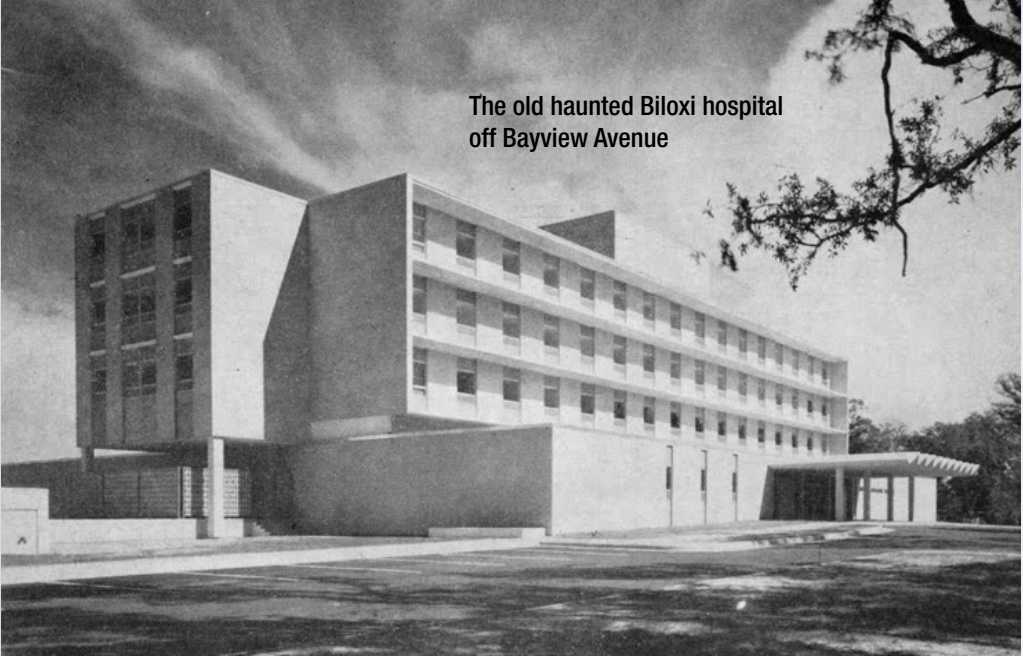
braided hair and would giggle and speak to the patient, often irritating their restful sleep. At times, they would make their presence known to staff through their mischievous antics. They would lower the thermostats to very uncomfortable degrees and make the elevator buttons suddenly appear to malfunction causing the doors to open and close. The mischievous girls were helpful at times. When an infant would be required to be rushed to intensive care, before the days of electrified entrances, the doors would suddenly pop open to allow access.

Who were these girls? Whatever happened to them? Did Hurricane Katrina whisk them away? No one knows for sure. But, they



Back in the Day

By Jane Shambra



The old haunted Biloxi hospital off Bayview Avenue

haven't been "seen" in years.

The weather witch and Gargoyle

Have you ever seen the witch and gargoyle in downtown Biloxi?

On your next visit, stroll past Ellzey's Hardware located on the northwest corner of Howard Avenue – once known as Pass Christian Street – and take a look up at the curious ornamental structure perched atop the building's copper cone.

The ornate weather-vane witch has been flying high through storms, hurricanes, and tornados since 1896. However, the hurricanes of 1947 and 1969 did cause her a brief tumble into the street below.

Her pillar was constructed well over a century ago by William Harkness for the original Peoples Bank Building. Years later, Glenn Swetman, longtime bank president, added another unusual feature atop the sturdy old Peoples Bank Building: a gargoyle sometimes called a "roof dragon." The dragon was added to keep the witch company. During Hurricane Katrina, the dragon suffered serious damage so the bank commissioned noted Coast metal sculptors, Mary and Kenneth Davidson, to reconstruct Biloxi's



Broom-carrying witch resting on a crescent moon atop Ellzey's Hardware



Roof dragon, once the witch's companion, now resides inside The Peoples Bank

gargoyle. The restored gargoyle was unveiled on the eighth anniversary of the monster storm, August 29, 2013, and now resides inside The People's Bank building for safe keeping.

The ring in the Oak

Standing in the neighborhood of the old Episcopal Church of the Redeemer is a massive oak tree tied to not one but two mysterious tales of the hole in the branch.

One is the Native American tale, a story that can be found in the poetry book "Legends and Lyrics of the Gulf Coast", written by Laura Hinsdale in 1896.

A selection titled "The Live Oak Ring" relates the legend of "A Natchez warrior from the west" who asked "a maiden of the Biloxi race" for her hand in marriage. The chieftain replied: "when a ring grows in yonder tree." That night a terrible storm occurred leaving "two branches twined into a ring."

This over a century old publication is housed in the Biloxi Library in its special archives.

The second tale is of a pirate's lure. In June 1859, the elderly Senor Cardenas, a passenger on the steamer Creole, traveled to Biloxi in an attempt to restore his health. Realizing that he was deathly ill, he gave a sealed envelope to his Biloxian traveling companion for safekeeping. Before Senor could settle in Biloxi, he passed away and his

remains were shipped to New Orleans, per his request.

In 1902, Senor's son, Don Cardenas, visited Biloxi from Madrid with the envelope. The inside of the envelope revealed clues to possible treasures on Deer Island.

How does the ring in the Oak tree fit in the story? Well, that was the deciding clue



Ring in the Oak

Biloxi, Miss.

to finding the treasure. Needless to say, Don Cardenas left Biloxi a rich man.

The story goes on to tell that apparently Jean Lafitte, a 19th century French pirate and privateer of the Gulf of Mexico, penned, dated, and signed the old letter. For years after, Lafitte's sword, which was part of the loot, was displayed in J. B. Lemon's Drug Store on Howard Avenue.

Mr. Swan's pirate chest

Inside a 1931 book titled "Biloxi Historical Sketch", writer Laville Bremer depicts a fascinating story of a pirate's chest found in Biloxi.

In 1906, Mr. W. F. Swan resided on Beach Boulevard west of Porter Avenue. One day while preparing for a new cellar for a furnace, Mr. Swan's gardener summoned his boss about some unusual finds on the property: an old pirate chest that measured about a foot deep, 18 inches from front to back and a foot long; iron hinges and a clasp with unusual hollow iron nails; pink and white beads of different sizes; and an assortment of brass buttons and sleigh bells.

An expert appraiser in New York concluded that the beads were of Spanish origin. Could this discovery have been leftover lost loot from Monsieur Lafitte and his pirate crew?

Bones under the bank

In the 1980s when the groundwork for the new Federal Building was being prepared in downtown Biloxi, a worker alarmingly reported to his foreman that his most recent dig uncovered some bones. Could they be human? After all, a funeral home was once located across the street.

After much ado and expert investigations, it was concluded that the remains were actually part of a cow that probably was left over from when a dairy farm was nearby.

Today, a new bank is being constructed on the corner of that lot. We have been assured

that no unusual discoveries have been unearthed.

Haunted books

In 2014 the Biloxi Local History and Genealogy Department received an unusual donation from an anonymous gentleman: a set of nine antique mid-1800s school books. With the donation was the warning that the publications were probably haunted.

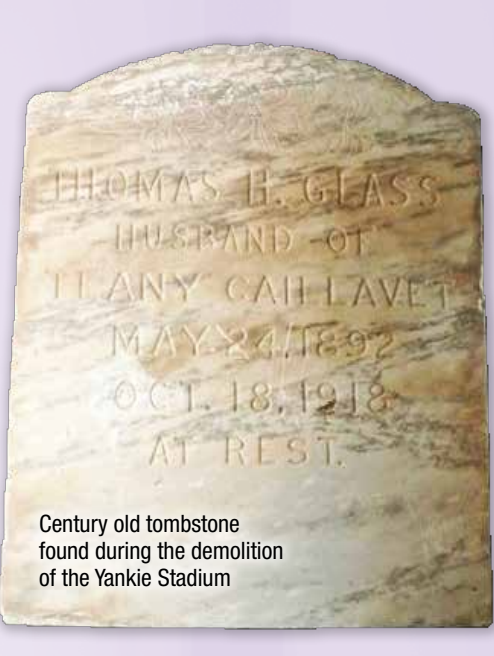
His family acquired the books from the Father Ryan House. The family traveled and lived in many places and everywhere that they went, an apparition visited them – a lady with long hair and a flowing gown.

The ghostly visitor never meant any harm to them. Each time her presence was discovered she disappeared.

We will never know who she was. Even though the Biloxi library has never been visited by this apparition, we always wonder.

Tombstone discovery

When contractors were demolishing the Yankee Stadium on the corner of Division and Lee streets in 2011 to make way for The Salvation Army Kroc Center, the Biloxi Library received a phone call from a panic-stricken worker that said he'd uncovered a tombstone and that the old stadium may have been a burial spot.



Century old tombstone found during the demolition of the Yankee Stadium

Father Ryan House, the home of the haunted books



So, research ensued. The stadium was built in 1959 to include a caretaker's apartment, where his family could also reside. In 1980, the Sun Herald featured a story about one of the family's mementoes, a real, very old tombstone belonging to a relative, Mr. Glass, who had passed away unexpectedly of the Spanish Flu in 1918. Mr. Glass was interred in the Biloxi Cemetery, and his wife's name was also etched beneath his on his cemetery stone.

Clearly, the contractor was relieved to learn the true story of a family's memento that was left behind. In fact, a few days later the stone was to be transported to a thrift store to be sold. With permission, the library rescued the stone and today, it remains intact and secure in the library's archives. It has become a great learning tool to exemplify the art of tombstone rubbings to genealogy researchers.

By the way, it has been verified that Mr. Glass and all his immediate family members, who are buried in the Biloxi Cemetery, have a newer updated tombstone in place at his burial site.

BNews Monthly

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Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich
and the Biloxi City Council
George Lawrence • Felix O. Gines
Dixie Newman • Robert L. Deming III
Paul A. Tisdale • Kenny Glavan
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