

BNews Monthly

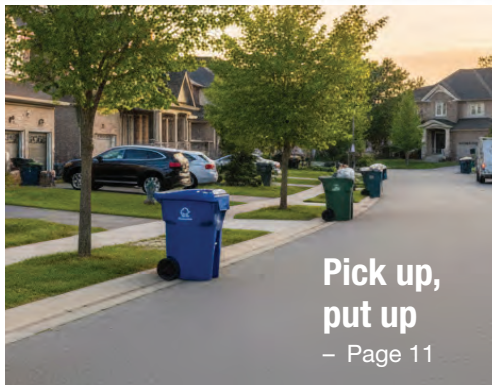
FEBRUARY 2026

A compendium of what's happening in Biloxi



Safe and warm

– Page 13



Pick up, put up

– Page 11

Leading the blue

– Page 4



Rolling with Carnival

- Message from the Mayor, Page 6
- Parades, Pages 8 & 9
- Mardi Gras Bash, Page 16
- Other happenings, Pages 17-20



Halfway there

– Page 4



Arboring growth

– Page 12

Mainly social

– Page 12



Riding the rails through the years

– Back in the Day,
Pages 22-23



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A Thousand Words



Carnival season
begins

Hattiesburg Outreach Zoo Presentation

Thursday, February 12 • 10 a.m. & 11 a.m.

Join us in front of JCPenney to get up close and personal with fascinating creatures and learn cool facts during the hands-on animal presentation.

Free admission. • Details: 228-388-3424

Bring the whole family!



princess MAKEOVER MAGIC



Saturday, February 28

11 a.m.-3 p.m. • Near JCPenney

Five princesses will be set up at different stations, offering free makeovers for guests.



Mall Hours: Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. | Sunday, 12-6 p.m.

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Edgewater Mall

Chris De Back appointed Biloxi Police Chief

The City of Biloxi has announced the appointment of Christopher “Chris” De Back as the new Chief of Police, marking a significant milestone in a career defined by service, leadership, and dedication to the community.

Chief De Back’s commitment to public service began in January 1994 with the United States Army, where he earned numerous military honors, including the National Defense Service Ribbon, multiple Army Achievement Medals, and an Army Commendation Medal. That foundation of discipline and service carried forward when he joined the Biloxi Police Department in 1998.

Over the years, Chief De Back has served in a wide range of roles, gaining experience across nearly every aspect of law enforcement. His career includes assignments as a Patrol Officer, Explosive K-9 Handler, Investigator, and supervisor of criminal and violent crime investigations. He later led both the Patrol and Investigations Divisions as Major before being promoted to



Assistant Chief of Police in 2021.

Beyond his work in Biloxi, Chief De Back has contributed to public safety and service on a broader scale. He served as President of the Special Olympics Mississippi State Board and represents the state as a proxy board

member for the Regional Organized Crime Information Center. He is also committed to education, holding a bachelor’s degree in Business Management from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master’s degree in Administrative Justice from the University of Louisville. He also served for several years as an adjunct professor in USM’s Criminal Justice program.

Chief De Back’s career has been recognized with numerous honors, including the City of Biloxi Hurricane Katrina Service Medal, three Medals of Merit, and recognition as a Law Enforcement Victim’s Advocate.

He succeeds Chief John Miller, who retired in mid-January after 35 years of dedicated service to the Biloxi Police Department. With decades of experience and deep ties to the community, Chief De Back now steps into the role of Police Chief, poised to lead the department forward with integrity, professionalism, and a continued commitment to serving the people of Biloxi.

Halfway houses vs social service centers

Many people may use the terms halfway house and social services center interchangeably, but they serve very different purposes within a community.

According to the city’s Land Development Ordinance, a halfway house is a licensed home for juveniles or adults who are transitioning from more restrictive custodial confinement or who are initially placed in a more restrictive custodial setting, where supervision,

rehabilitation, and counseling are provided to assist residents back into society, enabling them to live independently. A halfway house provides services to residents who live at the house/facility. No services are offered to the general public.

A social service center, by contrast, is a facility operated by a nonprofit organization that provides services such as training, counseling, health, or the distribution of food or clothing to the general public. These centers may include, but are not limited to, facilities offering life-skills training, substance abuse counseling, housing services, food banks, crisis centers,



community health centers, welfare agencies, job centers, or a neighborhood recovery center. This term does not include an emergency residential shelter or soup kitchens. Individuals do not live at these facilities. They visit the center to access the services.

Why are these important in a community? Each provides a vital role in providing support and resources to individuals in need, fostering long-term stability and improving public safety.

Recently, the Biloxi Planning Commission approved a conditional use for a halfway house at the Open Doors Homeless Coalition facility on Fernwood Drive. Open Doors works alongside community partners to prevent homelessness by offering housing solutions and supportive services that strengthen stability, health, and long-term success. The approval request for the halfway house was presented to Biloxi City Council on Jan. 20 and was tabled. Visit online at biloxi.ms.us to view future council agenda to see when the item will be reconsidered.



Swipe Smart This Mardi Gras

Life's a journey they say, and there's no better place to make your way than with The Peoples Bank. From parades and king cake to shopping local, The Peoples Bank credit cards help you enjoy Mardi Gras while keeping your budget in check. The Peoples Bank. With you on the road of life.

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**Coastal Family
Health Center**

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$41,324,849 with 75% financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit HRSA.gov.

Cheers to Mardi Gras



As Mardi Gras season arrives, Biloxi once again comes alive with the colors, sounds, and traditions that make our city such a special place to call home.

Mardi Gras in Biloxi is more than parades and beads – it is a 118-year celebration of our coastal culture and the strong sense of community that unites us. From family-friendly festivities to time-honored traditions passed down through generations, this season reminds us why Biloxi's spirit is unlike anywhere else on the Gulf Coast.

I encourage residents and visitors alike to take part in the many events happening throughout our city. These moments of togetherness are what make Mardi Gras truly meaningful.

As we celebrate, I ask everyone to do so responsibly and safely. Our city departments, event organizers, public safety teams, and volunteers work hard to ensure a welcoming and enjoyable experience for all, and we appreciate your cooperation and courtesy throughout the season.

On behalf of the City of Biloxi, thank you for being part of a community that takes pride in its traditions while continuing to move forward together. Whether you've lived here your entire life or are visiting for the first time, we're glad you're here to share in the festivities.

Wishing everyone a joyful, safe, and memorable Mardi Gras season. *Laissez les bons temps rouler!*

FoFo



Pick up your trash can:

City ordinance requires trash containers to be placed at the curb for collection and returned within 12 hours after they are emptied. Please pick up your trash can promptly.

Under a boil water notice?

Residents and business owners can check whether an area is currently under a boil water notice by visiting [biloxi.ms.us/boilwater](https://www.ms.us/boilwater). This page also includes a link to the Mississippi State Department of Health for detailed boil water precautions. Once a notice is lifted, updated information will be posted on the same page.



Animals stay on YOUR

property: Biloxi ordinance prohibits animals from running at large, except those participating in a trap, neuter, and release program. Pet owners must ensure their pets remain on their property and are provided with adequate shelter and food.

Get the facts: Accurate information from the City of Biloxi is available on the city's official website at biloxi.ms.us and on the city's official Facebook page, @cobiloxi.



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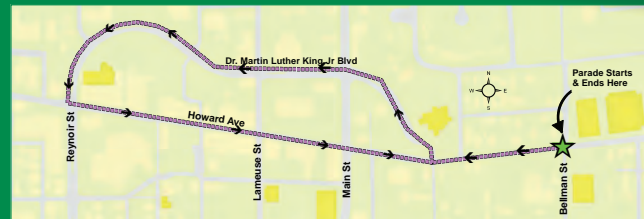


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Mississippi
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Ready
to roll.

Your guide to Mardi Gras parades taking place in Biloxi



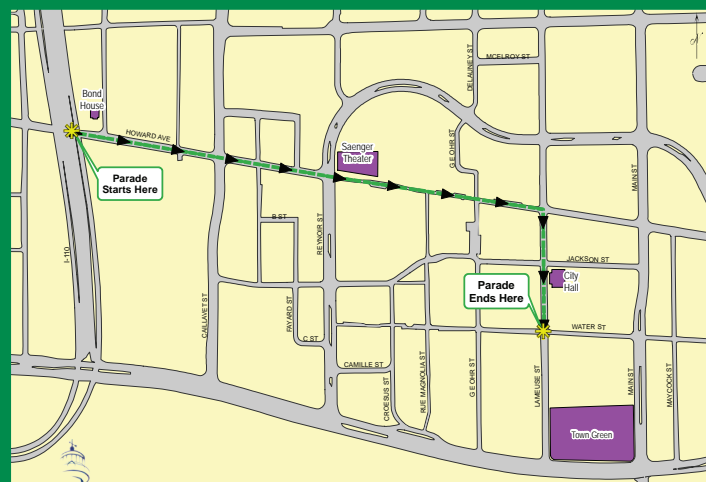
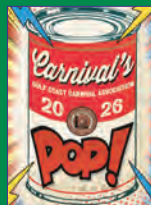
Biloxi Children's Mardi Gras Walking Parade Saturday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m.

The City of Biloxi, Coastal Mississippi Mardi Gras Museum, and the Gulf Coast Carnival Association will host the annual Biloxi Children's Mardi Gras Walking Parade in Downtown Biloxi.

Event is open to ages 12 and younger who will walk, bike, skate, or be pushed or pulled in strollers and wagons downtown! No motorized vehicles will be allowed.

The theme is "Pop" for Pop Art.

The parade will be followed by a costume and float contest. More information is available online at biloxi.ms.us/pr.



Second Liners Mardi Gras Club Parade Saturday, Feb. 14, Noon

The Second Liners Mardi Gras Club will host its annual parade along Howard Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

The parade will begin and end on Bellman Street.

Krewe of Neptune Saturday, Feb. 14, 5:30 p.m.

Dozens of decorated and illuminated floats, along with marching bands, and others will wind through downtown streets for the annual nighttime parade.

This year's Krewe of Neptune theme is "Neptune Conquers Love."

Gulf Coast Carnival Association Mardi Gras Parade Tuesday, Feb. 17, 1 p.m.

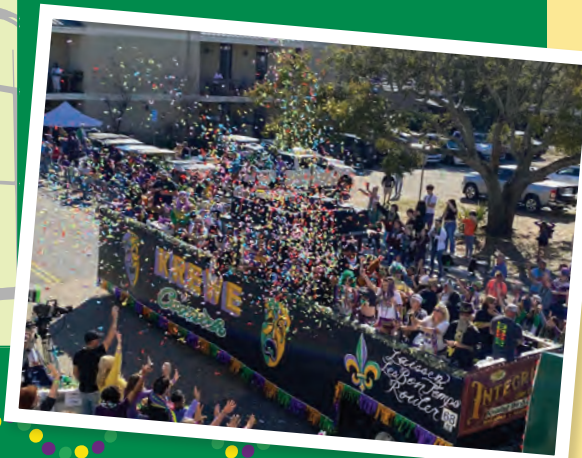
The annual Fat Tuesday parade, often including 100 or more floats, marching bands, police units, fire trucks, and more, will parade downtown Biloxi.

The Gulf Coast Carnival Association begins with dance performances on Lamuese Street in front of Biloxi City Hall, and includes the toasting of the King and Queen with Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich.

This year's GCCA theme is "Pop" for Pop Art.



Both the Krewe of Neptune and GCCA follow the same parade route.



Mardi Gras tips to keep in mind:

- No street parking in parade routes.
- Do not block traffic. If an officer is directing traffic, follow instructions.
- Obey posted speed limits and traffic signs.
- Park only in marked areas, no parking in the median or on sidewalks. Respect private property.
- No riding on tailgates, bumpers, roofs or hoods of vehicles.
- No glass containers; no underage drinking allowed.
- No animals allowed in any event area.
- No littering.
- Amplified sound is allowed only by permit.
- For safety, only cross roadways at designated locations such as a corner or crosswalk.
- Do not obstruct boardwalks or sidewalks; pedestrians only.
- Do not move or go around officially placed barricades.
- All service drives on U.S. 90 close at 10 p.m. unless posted otherwise. Vehicles not removed are subject to being towed.
- A helmet must be worn by all operators and passengers on a motorcycle.
- ATVs, UTVs, or any other unlicensed vehicle are not allowed on the roadway, on the beach, or on sidewalks or boardwalks unless being operated as an emergency vehicle.
- Licensed low-speed vehicles (such as golf carts) allowed only on designated roadways unless registered as a parade participant.

The traffic plan

- The area of Howard Avenue at Bellman Street will be closed on Saturday, February 14 beginning at 9 a.m. for the staging of the Second Liners Mardi Gras Club Parade. The remaining parade route will close at 11:30 a.m. until the parade ends.
- Traffic cones will be placed on eastbound Beach Boulevard from Porter Avenue to Caillavet Street beginning Saturday, Feb. 14 at 9 a.m.
- The Neptune Parade route will close Saturday, February 14 at 4:30 p.m. eastbound Beach Boulevard will be reduced to one lane at 6:30 p.m. between Porter Avenue and Caillavet Street for float return.
- Southbound I-110 will be diverted to Division Street at 6:30 p.m. and reopen at approximately 8:30 p.m. to help clear Beach Boulevard.
- The Gulf Coast Carnival Association Parade route will close at noon on Tuesday, February 17. Southbound I-110 will be diverted to Division Street beginning at 2 p.m.
- Eastbound Beach Boulevard will be reduced to one lane at 2:30 p.m. between Porter Avenue and Lee Street for float return.

Shuckers Release Promotions, Giveaways and More for 2026



26 giveaway nights scheduled, including new mystery alternate identity set to join King Cakes, Beach Chickens

By Javik Blake
Biloxi Shuckers

The Biloxi Shuckers are counting the days until Opening Day, with less than two months until the 2026 season gets underway. The season is set to include a new twist on daily promotions, including the brand-new Tiki Thursday presented by Coca-Cola and Kicker108 and Twofer Tuesday, with 2-for-1 deals throughout the ballpark. The schedule also sees 26 giveaway nights, including a brand-new mystery alternate identity for the season.

SHUCKERS ANNOUNCE 2026 THEME NIGHTS AND GIVEAWAYS

The Biloxi Shuckers have announced their premium giveaways and theme nights for the 2026 season, with the home opener scheduled for Tuesday, April 7.

Premium nights include Top Gun Night on May 9, Bluey and Bingo Day on May 10, SpongeBob Night on May 24, Margaritaville Night on June 18, Soccer Night on June 20, and the team's Independence Day Fireworks Extravaganza on July 3 and 4.

After the All-Star Break, the Shuckers will host their annual Fight Like A Shucker Night on August 14, Paw Patrol Night on August 16, and Marvel Night on August 29.

The Shuckers will also transform into a brand-new alternate identity on April 25 with a mystery- team-themed Hawaiian shirt, May 23 with a mystery-team-themed bucket hat presented by the Beau Rivage, and a themed water bottle giveaway for the first 1,500 fans presented by the Beau Rivage on August 15.

2026 DAILY PROMOTIONS

- **TUESDAY:** Every Tuesday home game is Twofer Tuesday with deals for all! Fans can splash in with specialty 2-for-1 deals on

tickets, merchandise, food, drinks, and more! Fans can also purchase a 20-oz souvenir tumbler for \$13 with \$7 refills at the first and third-base Beer Gardens. The first 250 fans for every game will also receive a themed Shuckers t-shirt.

- **WEDNESDAY:** Military Wednesday, presented by Keesler Federal Credit Union, will return in 2026, offering a \$3 discount on Dugout Box and Reserved Level tickets for all military personnel. Wednesday is also Wild Card Wednesday with rotating food, drink, and retail deals throughout the season.
- **THURSDAY:** Tiki Thursday presented by Coca-Cola and Kicker108 puts the Corona Premier Tiki Bar front and center all night long! Enjoy live music at the Tiki Bar, a pregame happy hour, and \$2 beers, hot dogs, and Coca-Cola products throughout the ballpark. Fans can enjoy the beach area and Schooner's Splash Zone free of charge during the game. Fans can also cash in on almost 60% savings with the 'Tiki Thursday Deal', which includes a Reserved Level ticket and two drink vouchers for \$17 in advance.
- **FRIDAY:** Join the Shuckers for Fireworks Friday with the best fireworks show on the Coast, featuring different music, themes, and colors throughout the season.
- **SATURDAY:** Saturday is all about giveaways! From bobbleheads, t-shirts, hats, jerseys, and more, join the Shuckers for a different giveaway during every Saturday home game.
- **SUNDAY:** Every Sunday is Family Sunday at Keesler Federal Park. Enjoy character appearances for the kids, special kids-themed giveaways, catch on the field, player autographs, and more! Fans can purchase a Sunday Fun Day Package with

four tickets, hot dogs, chips, and drinks for \$76 plus \$19 for each additional ticket.

MISSISSIPPI STATE BULLDOGS SET TO RETURN TO BILOXI

The Biloxi Shuckers have announced that the Mississippi State Bulldogs will return to Biloxi for the 2026 Hancock Whitney Classic on Tuesday, March 10, against the Tulane Green Wave. It marks the fifth consecutive season and eighth season total that the Bulldogs have visited Keesler Federal Park. Tulane previously visited Keesler Federal Park during the 2016 season with a game against Southern Miss.

GOLDEN EAGLES SOAR TO KEESLER FEDERAL PARK

The Southern Miss Golden Eagles will face the Nicholls Colonels at Keesler Federal Park on Tuesday, March 17, at 6:00 p.m. as part of the Hancock Whitney Classic. Gates will open at 5:00 p.m. The teams previously met at Keesler Federal Park in 2017, 2024, and 2025.

BANANA BALL IS HEADED TO BILOXI!

Keesler Federal Park will host The Firefighters and the Loco Beach Coconuts for two games on Friday, September 25, and Saturday, September 26, 2026, as part of the 2026 Banana Ball Championship League. All ticket sales for the seating bowl will be conducted through the Savannah Bananas and Fan First Entertainment. Biloxi Shuckers Season Ticket Members will also have access to an exclusive presale. Suite and hospitality options are available by contacting the Shuckers Front Office and Sales Team at 228-233-3465 or sales@biloxishuckers.com.

► For more info: biloxishuckers.com

► Javik Blake is the Media Relations Manager and voice of the Biloxi Shuckers. See "Shuckers Insider" daily on BTV at 6:15 a.m. and 6:15 p.m.

CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCES?



Individually and collectively, we make a difference.

When people say “beautification,” most of us think of flower beds with perpetual blooms, or volunteers getting together to pick up litter at a city park or along a busy roadway.

Yes, those things are “beautification,” but there’s so much more!

It’s the simplest of things, really, and if enough of us do them, the results are amazing.

It’s as easy as taking out your trash cans in a timely manner – the night before the scheduled pickup – and then

bringing in the cans later the day they’re emptied. Legally speaking, that’s the city ordinance. The ordinance also says the cans are not supposed to be visible from the street on non-trash days. We can do this.

It’s amazing how that one simple thing – done over and over – can dramatically change the appearance of a streetscape. It says we care how we look. And that’s a beautiful thing.

Thanks for doing your part, Biloxi!



Keep Biloxi Beautiful

A continuing project of the Biloxi Beautification Commission, and, well, all of us.

biloxi.ms.us/beautification

It's Arbor Day.

LET'S PLANT SOME TREES

By Susan R. Peterson,
Chairperson, City of Biloxi Tree Committee

Happy Mississippi Arbor Day! It is traditionally celebrated on the second Friday in February, unless that is also Mardi Gras weekend. This year, the celebration falls on February 20.

Biloxi has proudly participated in this celebration for decades. In fact, Biloxi has been a "Tree City USA" for the past 42 years – the second-longest tenure in the state. Not only is the celebration important to the City of Biloxi, but it is also important to many citizens and the Tree Committee. Together, we must work to continue building on this legacy by protecting and building on the city's tree canopy.

Arbor Day was originally initiated in 1872 by the Morton family in Nebraska. Their goal was to encourage citizens of the Nebraska and Kansas barren plains to plant trees. They kicked off the celebration in 1874 by leading a state-wide effort to plant over a million trees that first year. I have been to their hometown just south of Omaha, and what was once a grass-covered prairie is now a lush homestead, covered in trees.

Over the past year, I've shared many stories about our city's Majestic Trees, covering specimens like the Old Brick House Oak, the Danny Guice Oak behind City Hall, the Querens Magnolia just north of our Fire Station Museum, the Osage Orange on the old Tullis Manor property, and the Edgewater Park Oak. Perhaps the most informative article covered the Trees of Keesler and their tree management over the past seventy years. Of the 8,000-plus registered trees on Keesler, thousands have been planted since the base first opened in the 1940s. Today, you can only imagine how bare the property must have looked when it was

cleared to construct the runway and hundreds of WWII era buildings. Many of the live oak trees lining the major boulevards are now reaching their 75th birthday.

For this article, I will highlight the Wallace Oak on Hopkins Boulevard, just north of Beach Boulevard (look behind the house on Hopkins). The tree is named after Doctor George Walton Wallace, a physician who practiced in Biloxi for most of his career. He passed away in 1960. The tree, estimated to be over 500 years old, is still radiant, though it has faced challenges over its lifetime. A decade ago, developers decided to construct a hotel on the property. One of their first actions was to remove one of its major limbs to permit first responder access to the property. The hotel was never built. George Walton Lawrence, lifetime Biloxi advocate and long-time city councilman, even told me he had been named after Dr Wallace, who delivered him during a house call in 1941.

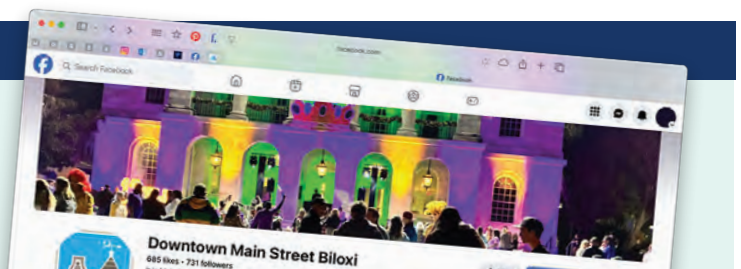
I bring up the Wallace Oak to remind us all that age, disease, and occasionally development will, over the years, continue to reduce the long-time and treasured tree canopy in our city.

Back to Arbor Day. This year, we have teamed with the State of Mississippi Forestry Commission. They have arranged to donate 250 native trees for the residents of Biloxi to plant on their properties. We very much want you to take them, plant them, and help them grow.

Late February/March through mid-April is the perfect tree planting time in south Mississippi. So, join me and the tree committee as we hand out these trees in late February/March. The specific time and location are still being settled as I pen this article. Look for details in an upcoming B-Mail, on the city's website, and social media pages. We need to keep our canopy strong and growing!

Biloxi Pulse

Biloxi Main Street returns to Facebook



Yes, it's true, the Biloxi Main Street Facebook page was HACKED! Ironically, the hacker struck on Thanksgiving Day! Cut off from our social media audience, Main Street had no "social" way to promote the December festival which changed dates due to weather. For weeks, we tried to recover the original page, but to absolutely no avail. We learned some valuable info during this absence:

1. Social media is vital for nonprofits. Fifty-five percent of engaged users take action: by donating, volunteering or attending events
2. Facebook has 3.05 BILLION monthly active users. Sixty-five percent of them access the site daily and spend an average of 40 minutes a day on the platform. We knew we needed to get plugged back in ASAP.
3. You, our audience, were looking for us. You could see our page had been hacked and were wondering how to reconnect with us.

WE ARE BACK! Our new Facebook page is Downtown Main Street Biloxi. We are back at the job of keeping you informed about Downtown Biloxi. It is Main Street's primary objective to be the catalyst in promoting, preserving, revitalizing and enhancing the economic growth of the downtown Biloxi area. Now, please go find our new page and follow us! We know you won't want to miss a moment of what 2026 has in store for Downtown Biloxi. Here's

a snippet:

- **First Fridays begin again on Friday, March 6!** The HowHop Entertainment district is being prepped. There will be six First Fridays in 2026: March, April, May, June, July, and September
- **There will be a new October Festival on historic Howard Avenue!** No specifics yet, but let's just say great gumbo and great blues!
- **Look for some fun POP-UP events this year.** They will be themed and include fabulous food and drinks. You are going to have to follow our new Facebook page to find out all the particulars like when, where, and everything else!

Look for brand new Facebook pages for First Friday and Preserve Biloxi too. They will go live very soon. Thank you for always supporting Biloxi Main Street. Here are two easy ways to help Downtown thrive, become a PARTNER or just send us a **FIRST FRIDAY** donation to be used in production of the fantastic, live-music events!



Main Street
Partnership



First Friday
Donations

Heat smart this winter



Winter's cold and freezing temperatures lead many households to use heating equipment, making this a high-risk season for home fires. The National Fire Protection Association identifies heating equipment as the leading cause of home fires in December and January. Cooking is a year-round concern, while electrical equipment ranks third, with nearly one-third of electrical fires happening between November and February. Here are some tips to help reduce the risk of a home fire as winter sets in.

- Make sure all heating equipment is in good working order.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, or space heaters.
- Keep portable generators outside, away from windows, and as far away from your home as possible.
- Make sure space heaters are in good working order and used by the manufacturer's instructions.
- Avoid using electrical space heaters in bathrooms or other areas where they may come in contact with water.
- Make sure every bedroom and common area outside the bedrooms has a working smoke alarm. Be sure to check the smoke detectors monthly.
- Plug only one heat-producing appliance, like a space heater, into an electrical outlet at a time.
- Never use a range or an oven as a supplemental heating device. It is a safety hazard and can be a source of potentially

toxic fumes.

- Frozen water pipes? Never try to thaw them with a blowtorch or other open flame. The pipe could conduct the heat and ignite the inside of the wall. Use hot water or a UL-labeled device such as a hand-held dryer for thawing.
- If windows are used as emergency exits in your home, practice using them in the event of a fire. Be sure that all the windows open easily. Home escape ladders are recommended.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, you can assist the fire department by keeping the hydrant clear of obstacles so it can be easily located. Plan and practice a home escape plan with your family.

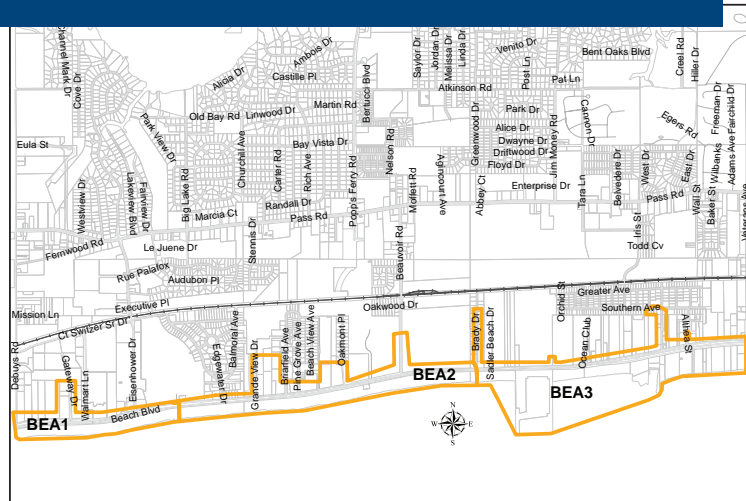
► For more safety tips, call the Biloxi Fire Department at 228-435-6200 or visit online at biloxi.ms.us/winterfiresafety.

Infrastructure work in Biloxi

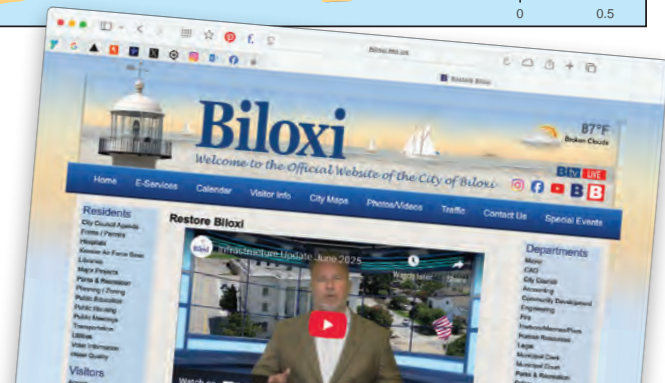
Project: BEA1, 2, & 3

Adjacent to Beach Blvd. from Debuys Road to Veterans Avenue
(Contractors: Necaise Brothers Construction)

- Installation of new water, sewer, drainage
- Work began June 2022
- Watch video updates for project details, including estimated completion date.



Areawide map of infrastructure work



► See monthly update maps and videos online at biloxi.ms.us/restore-biloxi/.

Random Notes



TIME CAPSULE:



A Royal Valentine in Biloxi Mardi Gras History

The 1983 Mardi Gras season in Biloxi marked a special moment of love and legacy. That year, Melissa Schloegel was crowned Queen Ixolib, becoming the first daughter to inherit the title after her mother, Peggy Schloegel, then Peggy Harry, reigned in 1959.

Reigning alongside her was King d'Iberville, Harroll D. Castle. Their year was made even more memorable when Mardi Gras Day fell on Valentine's Day, inspiring the Gulf Coast Carnival Association's theme, "Legendary Lovers of the South." Costumes celebrated local love legends such as The Ring in the Oak, The Singing River, Winnie Davis and Her Yankee Lover, and The Legend of the Spanish Moss.

Today, Queen Melissa's gown from that historic season is on display at the Gulf Coast Mardi Gras Museum on Howard Avenue, preserving a royal chapter of Biloxi's Mardi Gras history for future generations.

Den of creativity

For decades, the Gulf Coast Carnival Association has brought Mardi Gras magic to life inside its float den in Downtown Biloxi. Known as the Walter "Skeet" Hunt Gulf Coast Carnival Association Den, the warehouse is filled with brightly colored floats that reflect the spirit and creativity of the season.



In the early days of Mardi Gras, carnival dens were more than storage spaces — they served as gathering places where krewes planned events, stored costumes, and prepared their throws, a tradition that gave the den its name. While the term remains, today's GCCA den functions primarily as a bustling workspace where volunteers decorate floats, make repairs, and load beads and other parade treasures. Located in East Biloxi on Esters Boulevard, the float den remains a vital behind-the-scenes hub of the Coast's vibrant Mardi Gras tradition, where months of hard work transform into moments of parade-day joy.



Amtrak reports record



When the Amtrak Mardi Gras Service rolled along the Coast in August 2025, it carried more than passengers; it brought the Gulf Coast's long-awaited return to rail. In the first month, the service carried more than 18,000 riders. By the end of the first two months, the route had become one of Amtrak's most successful launches, welcoming 46,000 riders and averaging 458 passengers a day.

Trains sold out for Saints home games and major events like Cruisin' The Coast, as travelers filled seats bound for Bay Saint Louis, Gulfport, Biloxi, Pascagoula, and Mobile. With a 96% customer satisfaction rate, the highest in the nation, the service quickly proved its value.

As it concludes its inaugural quarter, the Mardi Gras Service stands as a moving celebration of connection, community, and renewed Gulf Coast spirit.

FEBRUARY TRIVIA Mardi Gras in Biloxi A Century Ago

By Jane Shambra

What day was Mardi Gras celebrated on in 1926? February 16.

Who were the King and Queen of Mardi Gras in Biloxi 100 years ago? Louis Braun and Evelyn Desporte.

What's the difference between Carnival and Mardi Gras? Carnival is a time of year, and Mardi Gras is the actual day.

Who was the mayor of Biloxi in 1926? Mayor John Kennedy, serving from 1919 to 1933.

Each Coastal city had a representative Duke reign at Biloxi's Mardi Gras celebrations. Who was Biloxi's Duke in 1926? John Becnel (who was portrayed in Biloxi's annual cemetery tour of 2021).

What was the parade theme in 1926? The title float was called "The Apotheosis of Biloxi."

How many floats were in the night parade 100 years ago? 10 floats. The 10th float was the Coast Guard's 75 miles-per-hour speedboat.

What was described as the most unique float that year? "Pearl Divers – Finding the First Oyster."

What was the forecast on Mardi Gras in 1926? The temperature for the evening parade was about 57 degrees, with a slight breeze and no rain.

Which group planned Biloxi's Mardi Gras festivities that year? Biloxi Progressive Businessmen's Association.

Was music included in the parade? Yes. There were three bands, including The Biloxi Boys Band.

When and where was Biloxi's night parade on that Mardi Gras? The parade began shortly after 8:00 p.m. and rolled through the downtown district.

Where were Biloxi's grand Mardi Gras balls held that year? The Avelaz Hotel (located where the Memorial Hospital Biloxi is today) and the Elks Home (once at the southwest corner of Lameuse and Jackson Streets).

What were the official titles of Biloxi's Mardi Gras King and Queen in 1926? King d'Iberville and Queen Ixolib, [Biloxi spelled backwards].

Who designed the floats for the parades? Professor Norbert Salvador Navarro (featured in Biloxi's 2024 annual Cemetery Tour) is a famous artist who also taught at Sacred Heart Academy and the Gulf Coast Military Academy.

City of Biloxi Parks & Recreation
Department Presents



*Free
Event!*
**OPEN TO AGES 55
AND OLDER**

Friday, February 6, 2026 • 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center
2520 Pass Road, Biloxi, MS

**A KING & QUEEN
WILL BE CROWNED!**

(Chosen by random drawing)

WEAR YOUR MARDI GRAS ATTIRE!

HORS D'OEUVRES SERVED • DOOR PRIZES

DJ PLAYING THE LATEST TUNES!

**RSVP by Feb. 3, 2026
to Parks & Recreation,
228-388-7170.**

**Need more info: 228-388-7170,
seniors@biloxi.ms.us,
or online at biloxi.ms.us/pr**

**Visit online at
biloxi.ms.us**



Sign up for BMail at biloxi.ms.us



March for Mayors Extra Table Food Collection

through Feb. 27. Food drive benefiting Coast food pantries. Groups, businesses, organizations, and churches are invited to help Biloxi reach its goal of 2000 bags of beans collected! Drop off at collection locations: Biloxi City Hall, Donal M. Snyder Community Center, Biloxi Visitors Center, or any Biloxi Fire Station. For large collections, call for pickup. Details: 228-435-6339



The Biloxi Breakers Ice Hockey

MS Coast Coliseum, 2350 Beach Blvd. Admission begins at \$14 per person. Details: 228-594-3700.

- VS Columbus River Dragons Feb. 6, 7:05 p.m.
- VS Baton Rouge Zydeco Feb. 7, 7:05 p.m.
- VS Topeka Scarecrows Feb. 12-13, game times vary
- VS Blue Ridge Bobcats Feb. 21-22, game times vary
- VS Columbus River Dragons Feb. 28, 7:05 p.m.



10th Annual Krewe of Barkloxi PAWrade, Feb. 1, 11 a.m., Point Cadet Pavilion, 121 Cadet St. This family-friendly event with furry fun, presented by the Humane Society of South Mississippi. To register your dog(s), visit www.hssm.org/events/krewe-of-barkloxi-pawrade. Details: 228-435-6149 or info@biloxibayareachamber.org

Biloxi Fun Run, Feb. 5, 12, 19, & 26, 6 p.m., Altered Reality Brewing, 969 Howard Ave. Weekly fun run takes place every Thursday. Open course along the scenic streets of Biloxi with 2 or 3-mile options. Walk, run, crawl, or wheel! Meet at the brewery. Free admission. Details: facebook.com/alterrealitybrewing

Senior Citizen Mardi Gras Ball, Feb. 6, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center, 2520 Pass Road. Open to ages 55 and older. Event features the crowning of a king and queen, hors d'oeuvres, door prizes, and a DJ. Free admission. Details: 228-388-7170

Bubbles and Bonbons, Feb. 6, 6-10 p.m., Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, 386 Beach Blvd. Before Valentine's Day, there's Galentine's Day! Grab your best gal pals for a Galentine's Day Night to commemorate and celebrate the women in your life. Enjoy tasting and sampling sweet and savory delicacies from local restaurants. Proceeds benefit exhibitions and outreach for OOMA. Tickets: \$50. Details: georgeohr.org/event/bubbles-and-bonbons

Softball Registration, Feb. 7, 9 a.m.-noon, Donal Snyder Sr. Community Center, 2520 Pass Road. Open to ages 5-15. Coaches are also needed. Details: 228-388-7170, biloxisoftball.com

Baseball Registration, Feb. 7, 9 a.m.-noon, Donal Snyder Sr. Community Center, 2520 Pass Road. Open to ages 4-12. Details: 228-388-7170, biloxiyouthbaseball.com

Children's Mardi Gras Walking Parade, Feb. 7, 10 a.m., Downtown Biloxi. Open to ages 12 and younger. Children's parade featuring a costume and float contest following the theme "Pop" based on Pop Art. Registration forms available at the Biloxi Visitors Center, Biloxi Parks & Recreation Office, Coastal MS Mardi Gras Museum, Gulf Coast Carnival Office, and online at biloxi.ms.us/pr. Late registration and costume and float sign up: 9-9:45 a.m. at the parade start. Details: 228-388-7170

Museum Date Night, Feb. 12, 6-8 p.m., Coastal MS Mardi Gras Museum, 792 Howard Ave. Guests will enjoy the museum by candlelight, a tour, light refreshments, and themed activities. Admission charged. Details: 228-314-4747

Second Liners Mardi Gras Parade, Feb. 14, Noon. Downtown Biloxi. Route: Frank Gruich Community, 591 Howard Ave., travels west on Howard, west on MLK Jr. Blvd., south on Reynoir, east on Howard, ending at the Community Center. Details: 228-697-0820

Krewe of Neptune Night Mardi Gras Parade, Feb. 14, 5:30 p.m. Route: Main Street, south to Beach Blvd., north on Lameuse Street, west on MLK Jr. Blvd., west on Howard Avenue, south on Porter Avenue, ending at Beach Blvd. Details: <https://kreweofneptune.org/>

Gulf Coast Carnival Association Coronation Ball, Feb. 16, 8 p.m., Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 2350 Beach Blvd. Witness the coronation of King d'Iberville and Queen Ixolib, who will rule over Carnival for 2026! This year's theme: "Pop." Admission is free, but you must pick up a view card from the Biloxi Visitors Center or Biloxi City Hall. Details: www.msgcca.org or 228-432-8806



First Friday Downtown Biloxi, on hiatus and will return March 6! For details, call 228-435-6339 or email mainstreet@biloxi.ms.us

Stay in touch

BNews: Welcome to the 93rd 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 228-435-6336.

B-Alert: For text advisories on traffic and severe weather, follow on Facebook @cobiloxi/.

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.

BTv: Biloxi Television, city's municipal TV channel, is a mix of current events, local history and local flavor, and monthly updates. Visit online at biloxi.ms.us/btv, and on Sparklight Channel 56.

Contact:

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

John Majure, Public Affairs Specialist
jmajure@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	435-6280
• 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

Annual Gulf Coast Carnival Association Mardi Gras Parade, Feb. 17, 1 p.m. Route: Main Street, south to Beach Blvd., north on Lameuse Street, west on MLK Jr. Blvd., west on Howard Avenue, south on Porter Avenue, ending at Beach Blvd. Details: www.msgcca.org or 228-432-8806



Bike Biloxi, Feb. 24, 6 p.m. (Date change due to Mardi Gras.) Downtown bike ride. Begins at the Biloxi Visitors Center, 1050 Beach Blvd., and ends with refreshments and food at a downtown restaurant at cyclists' expense. Helmets and lights recommended. Details: 228-435-6339

Main Street Book Club, Feb. 26, 5 p.m., Jacked Up Coffee Bar, 999 Howard Ave., 124 Main Street. This month's book selection is "Those Empty Eyes" by Charles Donles. Free admission. Supporting our restaurant of the month is encouraged. Details: 228-435-6339



38th Annual Arbor Day Run/Walk/Roll for Disability Awareness, Feb. 28, Point Cadet Plaza, 121 Cadet St. Registration fee is \$25 per person. Early discount pre-registration of \$22 will be available through February 19 at www.GulfCoastRunningClub.org. All pre-registered participants receive a T-shirt. Proceeds support the Disability Connection programs and events. Details: 228-604-4020

Black History Month Program, Feb. 28, Biloxi Parks & Recreation Event. Details to be posted on the City of Biloxi, Visit Biloxi, and Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center Facebook pages. Details: 228-388-7170



Biloxi Little Theatre
220 Lee St., 228-432-8543
www.4blt.org
• **Trouble The Mind**
through Feb. 1

Center Stage
2670 Rue Palafox, 228-388-6258
centerstagebiloxi.com
• **Joe Turner's Come & Gone**
February 26-March 8

Beauvoir, The Jefferson Davis Home & Presidential Library

2244 Beach Blvd., 228-388-4400, www.visitbeauvoir.org

Biloxi Excel By 5

Lopez School, 140 St. John Ave., 228-297-6808

- Community-based certification program to improve child's overall well-being by age 5. Call for monthly calendar of events.

Biloxi Lighthouse & Visitors Center

1050 Beach Blvd., 228-374-3105, biloxi.ms.us. Open daily, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

- **Lighthouse tours daily,** 9-10 a.m., weather permitting. Admission: \$5 for ages 12 and older; \$2 for ages 6-11; free for ages 5 and younger
- **Gift shop,** featuring products from local artists

Biloxi Schooners

367 Beach Blvd., 228-435-6320, schooner@maritimemuseum.org. Open 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Group charters available, up to 44 people
- Walk on Sails, minimum of 6 passengers, \$30/adult & \$15/child ages 3-12, check website for dates

Biloxi Shrimping Trip

693 Beach Blvd., 228-392-8645, www.biloxishrimpingtrip.com

Biloxi Tour Train

Biloxi Lighthouse Park parking lot, south of Biloxi Visitors Center, traffic light #40, 228-374-8687, biloxitourtrain.com • Call in advance for tour availability

Coastal Mississippi Mardi Gras Museum

792 Howard Ave., 228-314-4747, museum@coastalmardigras.com

- Open weekdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., open Saturdays by appointment
- **Museum Date Night,** Feb. 12, 6-8 p.m.

Edgewater Mall

2600 Beach Blvd., 228-388-3424

- **Red Cross Blood Drive**, Feb. 21, noon-5:30 p.m.
- **Red Cross Blood Drive**, Feb. 23, noon-5 p.m.
- **Princess Makeover Magic**, Feb. 28, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Harrison County East Biloxi Senior Center

461 Parker St., 228-435-4192, co.harrison.ms.us/departments/senior/services

- Open 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday

KAFB Farmer's Market

625 Marina Dr., 228-376-2821, BOS.81FSS.Vandenburg@us.af.mil

- First Friday of each month, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Marina Park (open to those with base access)

Kroc Center, MS Gulf Coast, The Salvation Army

575 Division St., 228-207-1218, krocmscoast.com

- **Sweetheart Dance**, family-friendly event, Feb. 7, 4-6 p.m.
- **Valentine's Date Night -Dinner, Crafts & More**, Feb. 13, 4-7:30 p.m. Open to ages 2 months-12
- **Mardi Gras Camp**, Feb. 16, 18, 19, & 20, 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Open to ages 5 to 12

Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum

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

Hours of operation: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sunday, noon-4 p.m.

- **Art Exhibit by Scott Bollich**, through March 31, "Copper Meets Coast": A collection of hand-crafted copper and cypress art (included with admission). Details: maritimemuseum.org
- **Sea-n-Sail Adventure Camp**: Registration now open

Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art

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

- Check the website for events and studio classes at OOMA!

West End Hose Co. No. 3 Fire Museum

1046 Howard Ave., 228-435-6119, 228-435-6200, www.biloxi.ms.us

- Historic 1937 firehouse 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**, Feb. 6, 13, 20, & 27. Doors open at 4 p.m.; Card sales at 5:30 p.m.; Early Bird games at 6:30 p.m.; regular games at 7 p.m. Cash payouts. Concessions available. Kitchen open until 8 p.m.

Fleur de Lis Society of Biloxi (French Club)

182 Howard Ave., 228-436-6472

- **Dinners**, Fridays at 6 p.m.
- **Karaoke with Kenny**, Fridays at 7 p.m.

Joppa Shrine

13280 Shriners Blvd., 601-917-1027

- **Steak Night**, Feb. 13, 6-8 p.m. Last ticket sold 7:15 p.m. \$20, dine-in or carry-out. 228-392-9345
- **Dance**, Feb. 21, 6-10 p.m., \$10

Mississippi Coast Historical & Genealogical Society

Dr. Frank Gruich Sr. Community Center, 591 Howard Ave. (2nd floor), 228-438-4636

- **Meeting**, Feb. 15, 2-4 p.m., Guest speaker Eric Ball

Our Lady of Fatima Parish Monday Bingo

315 Tara Lane, 228-388-3887

- **Monday Bingo**, Feb. 2, 9, 16, & 23; doors open at 5 p.m., Early birds at 6:30 p.m., regular games at 7 p.m.

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish Bingo

870 Howard Ave., 228-374-1717

- **Biloxi Bingo Mania**, Tuesday nights behind Nativity Cathedral; 871 Esters Blvd. Doors open 5:30 p.m.; Early bird games at 6:30 p.m.; regular games begin at 7 p.m. Proceeds benefit Nativity BVM Catholic Elementary School. Details: 228-374-6472

Lagniappe**Charles R. Hegwood****Biloxi Community Market**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6 a.m.-2 p.m. on the corner of Howard Avenue and Hopkins Boulevard. Details: Biloxi Parks & Rec., 228-388-7170

City of Biloxi Senior Program

Activities for ages 55 and older weekdays at: Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center and East Biloxi Senior Citizen Center.

Details: Biloxi Parks & Rec., 228-388-7170

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 economic growth of downtown. Details and membership: 228-435-6339, mainstreetbiloxi.com

**City of Biloxi Public Meetings**

biloxi.ms.us/publicmeetings

- **Architectural Review Commission:** Regularly scheduled meetings: second and fourth Thursday of the month, 8:30 a.m.; Community Development, 676 MLK Blvd. Details: 228-435-6266
- **Biloxi Beautification Commission:** Regularly scheduled meetings on first and third Wednesday of month, 11 a.m., City Council room, Biloxi City Hall, 140 Lameuse St. Details: biloxi.ms.us/beautification
- **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
- **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: first Wednesday of each month at 3:30 p.m.; Biloxi Community Development conference room, 676 MLK Blvd. Details: 228-435-6266

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 10th Annual Krewe of Barkloxi PAWrade Point Cadet Pavilion Trouble in Mind Biloxi Little Theatre PCA Rodeo MS Coast Coliseum	2 Monday Night Bingo Our Lady of Fatima	3 Community Market Trivia Night Fly Llama Brewing Biloxi Bingo Mania Nativity Cathedral	4 Trivia Night Altered Reality Brewing	5 Community Market Biloxi Fun Run Altered Reality Brewing	6 Dinner & Karaoke with Kenny Fleur de Lis Society Friday Bingo – Biloxi Elks Lodge Farmers Market Marina Park Seniors Mardi Gras Bash Donal M. Snyder Sr. Com. Center Bubbles & Bonbons Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art Biloxi Breakers MS Coast Coliseum Ice Skating – MS Coast Coliseum Biloxi Boat Show – Coliseum	7 Bseeball & Softball Registration Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center Children's Mardi Gras Walking Parade Downtown Biloxi Sweetheart Dance Kroc Center Biloxi Breakers MS Coast Coliseum Ice Skating – MS Coast Coliseum Biloxi Boat Show MS Coast Coliseum
8 Joe Turner's Come and Gone Center Stage Ice Skating MS Coast Coliseum Biloxi Boat Show MS Coast Coliseum	9 Monday Night Bingo Our Lady of Fatima	10 Community Market Trivia Night Fly Llama Brewing Biloxi Bingo Mania Nativity Cathedral	11 Trivia Night Altered Reality Brewing	12 Community Market Biloxi Fun Run Altered Reality Brewing Museum Date Night Coastal Mississippi Mardi Gras Museum Biloxi Breakers Ice Hockey MS Coast Coliseum Ice Skating MS Coast Coliseum	13 Dinner & Karaoke with Kenny Fleur de Lis Society Friday Bingo – Biloxi Elks Lodge Steak Night – Joppa Shrine Valentine's Date Night Kroc Center Biloxi Breakers Ice Hockey MS Coast Coliseum	14 Second Liners Mardi Gras Parade Downtown Biloxi Krewe of Neptune Night Parage Downtown Biloxi Deep South Spirit Glow Tour MS Coast Coliseum Hank Williams, Jr. MS Coast Coliseum
15 Mississippi Coast Historical & Genealogical Society Meeting Frank Gruich Community Center Deep South Spirit Glow Tour MS Coast Coliseum	16 Mardi Gras Camp Kroc Center Gulf Coast Carnival Assn. Coronation Ball MS Coast Coliseum Monday Night Bingo Our Lady of Fatima	17 Community Market Gulf Coast Carnival Assn. Mardi Gras Parade Downtown Biloxi  Biloxi Bingo Mania Nativity Cathedral	18 Mardi Gras Camp Kroc Center Trivia Night Altered Reality Brewing	19 Community Market Biloxi Fun Run Altered Reality Brewing Mardi Gras Camp Kroc Center Rascal Flatts MS Coast Coliseum	20 Dinner & Karaoke with Kenny Fleur de Lis Society Friday Bingo – Biloxi Elks Lodge Mardi Gras Camp Kroc Center Heart MS Coast Coliseum	21 Dance – Joppa Shrine Red Cross Blood Drive Edgewater Mall Biloxi Breakers Ice Hockey MS Coast Coliseum Ice Skating MS Coast Coliseum Chris Tucker – Beau Rivage Clint Black – IP Casino Tab Benoit & Paul Thorn Hard Rock
22 Biloxi Breakers Ice Hockey MS Coast Coliseum	23 Red Cross Blood Drive Edgewater Mall Monday Night Bingo Our Lady of Fatima	24 Community Market Bike Biloxi Downtown Trivia Night Fly Llama Brewing Biloxi Bingo Mania Nativity Cathedral	25 Trivia Night Altered Reality Brewing	26 Community Market Biloxi Fun Run Altered Reality Brewing Main Street Book Club Jacked Up Coffee Bar Come & Gone Center Stage	27 Dinner & Karaoke with Kenny Fleur de Lis Society Friday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge Come & Gone Center Stage Rodney Carrington Beau Rivage	28 Run/Walk/Roll for Disability Awareness Point Cadet Plaza Princess Makeover Magic Edgewater Mall Black History Month Program – Donal M. Snyder Sr. Community Center Come & Gone – Center Stage The Price is Right Live Beau Rivage Biloxi Breakers MS Coast Coliseum Ice Skating – MS Coast Coliseum
1 Come & Gone Center Stage The Price is Right Live Beau Rivage	2 Come & Gone Center Stage Monday Night Bingo Our Lady of Fatima	3 Community Market Come & Gone Center Stage Biloxi Bingo Mania Nativity Cathedral	4 Come & Gone Center Stage	5 Community Market Come & Gone Center Stage Biloxi Fun Run Altered Reality Brewing	6 Dinner & Karaoke with Kenny Fleur de Lis Society Friday Bingo Biloxi Elks Lodge Come & Gone Center Stage	7 Come & Gone Center Stage



February Schedule

Sparklight 56 or at biloxi.ms.us/btv

Morning	
6 a.m.	"Down in Biloxi," by Rockin' Ray Fournier (4 min)
6:04 a.m.	Inside BTV
6:10 a.m.	Infrastructure report (5 min)
6:15 a.m.	Shuckers Insider
6:30 a.m.	Biloxi Public Schools (15 min)
7 a.m.	"Biloxi Cooks!" Desporte Seafood
7:30 a.m.	Storytime with Gumbo Kelly (15 min)
7:45 a.m.	Keesler Update (15 min)
8 a.m.	John Miller, a legacy of leadership
9 a.m.	City Council meetings and other 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.	Biloxi Public Schools (15 min)
1 p.m.	"Biloxi Cooks!" Desporte Seafood
1:30 p.m.	Storytime with Gumbo Kelly (15 min)
1:45 p.m.	Keesler Update (15 min)
2 p.m.	John Miller, a legacy of leadership
3 p.m.	City Council meetings and other bonus public affairs programming (3 hours)
Evening	
6 p.m.	"Down in Biloxi," by Rockin' Ray Fournier (4 min)
6:04 p.m.	Inside BTV
6:10 p.m.	Infrastructure report (5 min)
6:15 p.m.	Shuckers Insider
6:30 p.m.	Biloxi Public Schools (15 min)
7 p.m.	"Biloxi Cooks!" Desporte Seafood
7:30 p.m.	Storytime with Gumbo Kelly (15 min)
7:45 p.m.	Keesler Update
8 p.m.	John Miller, a legacy of leadership
9 p.m.	City Council meetings and other 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.

"Biloxi Cooks!" at Desporte Seafood

This month on "Biloxi Cooks!" we stop by Desporte Seafood in Downtown Biloxi, where tradition and flavor come together in a pot of gumbo. Nothing brings people together quite like this classic dish, simmered low and slow, filling homes with comfort and rich Cajun flavor. At Desporte's, gumbo isn't just a recipe; it's a shared experience.

Watch the February episode of "Biloxi Cooks!" daily on BTV at 7 a.m., 1 p.m., and 7 p.m. throughout the month. The episode is also available on demand on the City of Biloxi YouTube channel.



This month's recipe:

Gumbo

Recipe by Desporte's Seafood

Ingredients:

- ½ cup oil
- ½ cup flour
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound smoked sausage, sliced
- 1 pound chicken, cut into pieces
- 6 cups chicken stock
- 1 can diced tomatoes (optional)
- 2 teaspoons Cajun or Creole seasoning
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Cooked white rice
- Green onions or parsley for garnish

Instructions:

- Make the roux: In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Slowly whisk in flour and stir constantly until the roux turns a deep brown color (about 15–20 minutes).
- Add the vegetables: Stir in onion, bell pepper, celery, and garlic. Cook until softened.
- Build the gumbo: Add sausage and chicken, stirring to coat with the roux. Pour in stock and bring to a gentle boil.
- Season and simmer: Add tomatoes (if using), seasoning, thyme, and bay leaves. Reduce heat and simmer 45–60 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Serve: Remove bay leaves, adjust seasoning, and serve hot over rice. Top with green onions or parsley.



Riding the rails in Biloxi through the years

Looking back — Moving forward



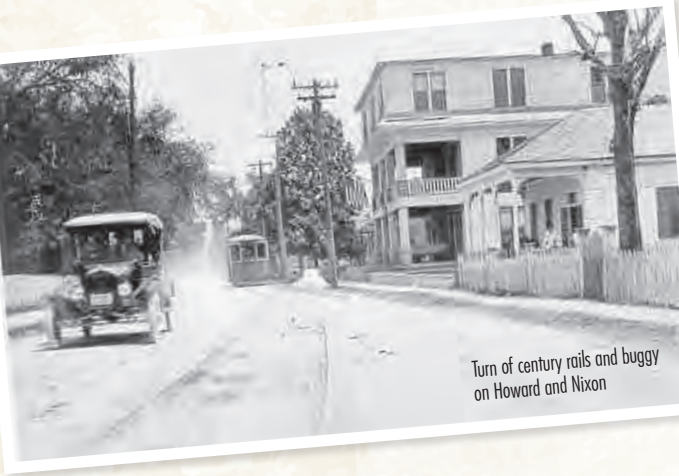
By Jane Shambra



Oyster cars in Biloxi



Trolley traveling by the lighthouse back in the day



Turn of century rails and buggy on Howard and Nixon

Way back in the early 1700s, Biloxi's modes of travel were quite simple. Our early settlers transported themselves, their food, supplies, and trading wares by foot, canoes, pirogues, and flatboats. Our first Biloxians weren't allowed to keep any of the huge wooden ocean-worthy ships. Monsieurs Bienville and D'Iberville needed them to continue their journeys.

When newcomers first arrived on Biloxi's shores, they had to make their own boats. Using tree trunks from nearby forests and the few tools they brought along with them from the Old Country, settlers carved and shaped their own boats.

Thus, Biloxians stayed close to the waters' edge, where traveling and the availability of attaining food, housing, and commerce could help them to survive.

Once horses became more plentiful, life began to change. Carts, carriages, and wagons became welcomed life-savers. Quality wheelwrights and blacksmiths could manipulate durable wood and strong metals to provide wagon wheels for the rolling transports. Wheelwrights generally built and repaired wooden wheels. Blacksmiths crafted the appropriate walking shoes (horseshoes) for the equine population. They also provided the technical skills to build the special cemetery fencing, which you can still find in our Old Biloxi Cemetery today. While perusing through old census records, one can notice the trades of "blacksmiths" and "wheelwrights" as listed occupations.

Around 1827, Biloxi's connections to the outside world expanded when steamboat service became available between New Orleans and Mobile. A few years later, in 1870, passenger rail service commenced between New Orleans and Mobile, as well. Trains not only carried travelers, but also mail, supplies, farm animals, and lumber, tying

Biloxi more closely to neighboring cities and markets.

As rail travel grew, Biloxi became home to several train stations. The main station was at Reynoir and was joined over time by stations at Oak Street, Gill, Beauvoir, and Edgewater. The early Reynoir station sat very near the spot where the Amtrak trains stop today.

Even Biloxi's seafood, particularly oysters, rode the rails. Seafood factories built their own on-site lines and carts to transport freshly caught seafood from the boats right into the factories, quickly and with little effort. Biloxi's Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum at Point Cadet has one of these original metal-wheeled seafood carts still on display! Stop by and take a look!

In 1894, Biloxi welcomed the Biloxi Electric Power Company, and by 1895, the Biloxi City Railroad Company was chartered. A new and exciting way to travel through town soon arrived. Trolley cars then had the option to use animal power or electricity to roll through the downtown streets. Electric polls were hoisted along Beach Road (now Hwy. 90), providing a modern electrified means of transportation.

We can only imagine the musical sounds of Biloxi around 1900, when Biloxi became the Seafood Capital of the world. Listening to factory whistles, trains, steamboats, and occasional church bells would fill the air as "music of the night." What a magical melody that must have been!

Old pictures of Biloxi clearly show the abundance of rails right in the middle of the streets where trolley cars once rolled. These rails provided a direct path for those electrified vehicles as they once carried passengers throughout our community for work, school, shopping, visiting, and fun. Photos from the past also show trolleys traveling along Beach Road, on the south side of where Hwy. 90 is today. After Hurricane Katrina, during infrastructure replacement, unsuspecting workers discovered a plethora of old rails still embedded below the streets' surfaces on Howard Avenue.

As rail travel grew in popularity, Biloxi became part of a legendary route. In 1946, the famous Hummingbird Train made its

inaugural route through Biloxi. Owned by the L and N Railroad Company (Louisville and Nashville), the passenger train traveled between Cincinnati and New Orleans, carrying travelers through Biloxi well into the 1960s.

Biloxi's trains were not always limited to rails. In the 1960s, during the administration of Mayor Danny Guice, the popular Biloxi Shrimp Tour train could be spotted voyaging throughout downtown Biloxi and Beach Boulevard. Visitors still reminisce about those fun, breezy rides!

While full-sized trains carried Biloxi forward, a love for trains also found its way into smaller, more personal spaces. Model and toy trains have long captured the imagination, and in the 1990s, Biloxi even had its own beloved model train shop tucked along Rue Magnolia.

Owned and managed by Pat and Margaret Tremmel Peresich, the Emporium was always a fun place to shop, both for tiny trains as well as for unique gifts, each encased in Ms. Margaret's special bow and ribbon gift boxes. Today, that little building is now recognized as The Threaded Cork, a wonderful boutique shopping option, at the corner of Jackson and Rue Magnolia. This structure is also recognized in the Biloxi Historic Downtown Walking Tour as the Cousins House (c. 1910), still maintaining its turn-of-the-century architecture.

Just steps away, another piece of Biloxi's rail history once stood. Years ago, before Hurricane Katrina, an original red caboose resided next door. With historic preservation efforts in mind, the City of Biloxi purchased an original full-size red caboose from Ruth McFalls of Ocean Springs for \$3,500. Utilizing heavy equipment, this original car from L and N Railroad was hoisted and securely placed on study metal train tracks, with the appropriate wooden ties and metal spikes then placed on a tiny piece of ground near the hospital parking lot. This historic structure was first utilized as an outlet for ceramics and handicrafts, servicing the local senior citizens groups. Later, it housed an office for Biloxi Main. Today, only a small plot of grass remains, where it once stood.

Today, the local CTA (Coast Transit Authority) provides travelers with the most modern means of public transit. With its hub situated just south of the Biloxi Amtrak stop, folks can ride through Biloxi, along Hwy. 90, and to distances as far away as Gulfport and Ocean Springs. There is even a neat green trolley route, the "Casino Hopper," which services casinos in Biloxi. This vehicle, with its unique design and wooden seats, is reminiscent of the older trolleys of yesteryear. CTA has steadily modernized its fleet, offering vehicles that run on cleaner fuels and feature environmentally friendly exhaust systems. In addition to everyday transportation, CTA plays a vital role in community safety, providing evacuation services during hurricanes and extreme cold weather events.

Biloxi's love for rail service isn't limited to trains and trolleys – it comes to life in the excitement of festivals and amusement parks. Roller coasters, with their travel at high speeds on elevated railroad tracks, twisting and turning in metal wheeled cars, offer the thrill of a lifetime. Paradise Pier in Biloxi on Hwy. 90 at Point Cadet is the place to go for the most modern roller coaster ride today.

All this history and excitement comes full circle as passenger rail returns to the Gulf Coast. Residents, tourists, and businesses alike are celebrating Amtrak's Mardi Gras Line, which now travels from Mobile to New Orleans, stopping near the CTA depot and tracing the same tracks where trains once ran decades ago. Biloxi's rail legacy continues — linking past, present, and future in a journey that keeps the city connected and moving forward.



1925 street repair on Howard and Reynoir



White House fountain and trolley in 1910



THE BEAUTIFUL COACH STREAMLINER CROSSING BILOXI BAY



The Cousins House (c. 1910), now home of The Threaded Cork boutique on Rue Magnolia.



Biloxi Shrimp Tour Train

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