

THE State of the City 2002



Another year of milestones for our city

My fellow Biloxian:

I am proud to report to you on another year of historic accomplishments in our city. And I'm just as happy to report that we are continuing to make excellent progress on a number of major projects to keep our city moving on the right track.

This report is designed to give you a status report on major projects and initiatives that the City Council and I have been working on and to give you an idea of what's coming up.

You'll find a wealth of information in this newsletter, as well as online at biloxi.ms.us.

I should also point out that this report marks the 10th anniversary of gaming in our community, a period in which this city has witnessed unprecedented growth and prosperity.

2002 has been a year of milestones, to be honest. We began construction on major road projects that had been years in the planning – at Bayview and Popp's Ferry – and we'll begin work shortly on constructing a new Caillavet Street to complete the east Biloxi traffic loop to move traffic more efficiently.

And, I'm pleased to report, that our construction management program, which was designed to keep major projects on time and on budget, is fulfilling its charge. Despite three tropical storms and a hurricane that saw 30 days of rain in a two-month period this summer, these projects are moving forward.

In the Public Works Department, director Jerry Morgan retired this year. In his 11 years with the city, Jerry was the one I depended on to oversee the huge body of work we've accomplished in the past several years: \$80 million in streets and drainage improvements, and repaving, repairing or rebuilding more than 250 streets throughout our city. Our new Public Works director is Richard Sullivan, who, as the former Biloxi manager of ECO Resources and a former Public Works employee, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to this important position.

We signed a new agreement with the Secretary of State, College Board and Isle of Capri that provides room for the Isle to grow, solidifying a steady stream of revenue for the city, as well as setting aside room and a funding source for growth

of the J.L. Scott Marine Education Center and Aquarium at Point Cadet.

We're moving forward with our land-use and zoning ordinances. For more than a year now, we've had in place new regulations and controls on adult-oriented businesses. You've seen and heard about our efforts to make sure new development does not impede the operations at Keesler Air Force Base.

Telling people what they can and can't do with their property is always an emotional issue. We've worked to get input from property owners, residents and development authorities. Our goal is to balance the rights of property owners and the welfare of the whole community.

Another issue that we constantly monitor is the financial condition of this city and our local economy. Recently, I was asked about the financial condition of Biloxi. As I said before and I said then, "we're healthy, not wealthy." Gaming revenue now accounts for a third of our city budget, and property taxes account for another 15 percent. Together, gaming and property taxes make up about 50 percent of our budget.

The Wall Street analysts – who decide the city's credit ratings – see the same numbers that I see. They continually monitor how we are managing the city's tax dollars. As a result, the city's credit rating was upgraded to Grade A this year, which will save hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest payments over the years.

While I'm certainly proud of the progress we've made in those

important areas, I'm just as proud of the tremendous investment we're making in the youth of Biloxi. And what an investment it has been.

This year, we opened a \$32 million state-of-the-art high school, which is part of the school system's \$52 million construction initiative that will include three new elementary schools. Construction is underway at Gorenflo and Nichols, and, of course, the new elementary school on Popp's Ferry is already open.

We're doubling the size of the nearby Popp's Ferry library to meet the needs of those students. We've made improvements to all of our ballfields, built new soccer fields and tennis courts, and enhanced our city parks. Construction is well underway on a new \$10 million sports complex, and it's a good thing, because we're continuing to see record levels of involvement in our city youth leagues. The increased involvement, of course, is thanks to our abolishing of registration fees, which saves families anywhere from \$25 to \$75 per year per child.

As a result, we've seen our participation go from 2,000 kids a year to 5,000 kids a year. A total of 1,300 play soccer alone. More of our children are getting more involved in more of our activities – without regard to level of income.

I'm proud of the job that we've been doing for you, but we can't do it all. We need your input and guidance. Stay involved by attending City Council and ward meetings. Follow our progress through our weekly radio program, "City Desk," each Thursday morning at 9:05 a.m. on Q92.5 FM. Visit the city web site, where you can find an array of useful information about your city government, and you can even have updates delivered directly to you through our e-news briefings.

In closing, on behalf of the City Council and myself, I wish you the best in the coming year. God bless you and God bless Biloxi.

December 2002

Updated information about your city at your fingertips

The purpose of this brochure is twofold: to summarize progress made by the city in 2002 toward enhancing Biloxi as a great place in which to live, work and play and to provide residents with updated information about municipal issues of general interest. State law requires that the Mayor provide an annual report "to the Council and the public on the work of the previous year."

We invite you to read this report as well as the other information at the Biloxi website, biloxi.ms.us. There's certainly a great deal of work still to be accomplished throughout our city, but this information will help you to understand what is being done.



George Lawrence
Ward 1



Eric Dickey
Ward 2



Jim Compton
Ward 3



Charles T. Harrison, Jr.
Ward 4

City Council



Mike Fitzpatrick
Ward 5



Tom Wall
Ward 6



David Fayard
Ward 7



This FAA map and height limits tied to zoning classifications will help regulate the heights of new structures in Biloxi.

The home stretch

Work winding down on new Land Development Ordinance

Months of work, public hearings and presentations were coming to an end this month as the Biloxi Planning Commission prepared to present a proposed new Land Development Ordinance to the City Council in January.

The new ordinance is an overhaul and update of the city's zoning and land-use regulations, clearly outlining regulations on such things as uses of land, signage, setbacks, landscape buffers and other issues that govern the appearance and growth of the city.

The LDO represents the first comprehensive update of Biloxi's zoning and land-use ordinances in 40 years. The effort has been three years in the making and represents significant citizen input and field work. In fact, the city began public presentations of the plans at the beginning of the year, and the City Council held a final round of citywide presentations as late as September.

"When all is said and done on this issue, my objective is that our laws should be easier to read and easier to understand," Mayor A.J. Holloway said. "Property owners – whether we're talking about a homeowner, businessman or developer – should have no problem understanding these zoning and land-use regulations."

"The city's Land Development Ordinance will help protect neighborhoods and historic sites, and encourage green space."

– Mayor A.J. Holloway

"And with this clear understanding and the updates that will have been made, these regulations should help protect our historic neighborhoods, our historic sites and encourage green space and promote so-called smart growth that identifies the best uses of land for future growth."

The document is expected to become policy in March.

Final text revisions are being made now, and Planning Commission members are addressing final issues in the LDO, most notably the height limits on buildings in the city.

When it is approved, the LDO will set out height restrictions in two manners: using the FAA's airport regulations for height, and maximum city-imposed heights for each zoning classification. Currently, all zoning classifications have height restrictions except for C-3 and waterfront zones.

Additionally, the LDO will incorporate an airport zoning classification to address such issues as height, noise and density of development near a military installation. The city and Keesler had already examined these issues through a joint land use agreement made several years ago.

"There's been a lot of talk about heights and Keesler Air Force Base," Mayor Holloway said. "There's also been a lot of action. What we have been doing and what we are continuing to do is to work with Keesler and the FAA to make sure that any proposed development does not have a detrimental impact on the base's flying operations."



City of Biloxi/Wings of Anglers, Inc.

Sports complex taking shape

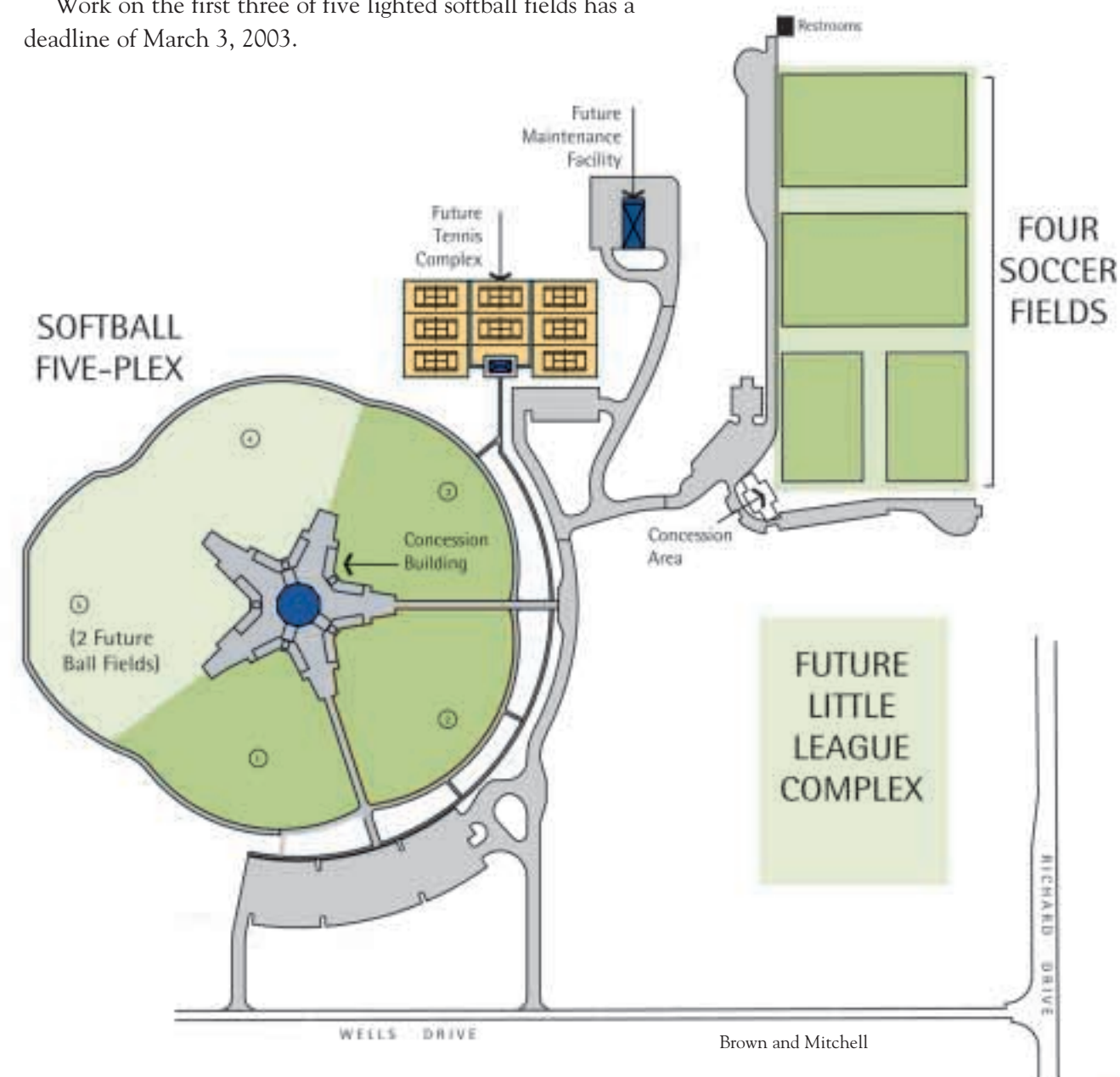
Some months ago, north Biloxi motorists may have wondered if a UFO had landed in a clearing along the new Richard Drive area off Popp's Ferry Road. Actually, passersby were seeing a concession stand and supports for covered bleachers rise from the ground.

That was one of the first phases of the new Biloxi sports complex to take shape. The \$10 million complex, which is being constructed by the city on 68.8 acres of public school land near the new high school, will feature five softball fields, eight tennis courts, four soccer fields, covered viewing stands, parking and picnic areas. Plans for a four-field Little League park are in the works, too.

"This has been a huge undertaking, and we're making excellent progress," Mayor A.J. Holloway said. "I want to see three of these softball fields ready for play early in 2003, and I'm hoping that we can have most of the other amenities completed by the end of next year."

To date, city contractors have cleared almost all of the land, built a concession stand, restrooms and covered bleachers for the softball five-plex. Construction has begun on three of the five softball fields and on the four soccer fields and their adjoining concession stand and restrooms.

Work on the first three of five lighted softball fields has a deadline of March 3, 2003.



Since this aerial photo was taken in September, three softball fields have been sodded, and the covered bleachers and concession stand have been constructed, as outlined in the site plan at the bottom of the page.

Here's a rundown of the phases of the sports complex:

Phase I

Clearing land, earthwork, and utility construction
– \$934,000
– Completed

Phase II

Concession and restroom building for 5-plex, bleacher pavilions and scorers booths
– \$698,000
– Completed

Phase III

Construct three softball fields, four soccer fields, concession and restroom buildings, lighting, roads and parking
– \$2.27 million
– Under construction

Phase IV

Construct two remaining softball fields and maintenance facility
– \$800,000
– Under Design

Phase V

Four new little league fields with concession and restrooms
– \$1.8 million;
– \$1.2 million budgeted
– Awaiting county support of \$600,000



The courtyard and amphitheater shown above are located in the center of the new high school, shown at right in an aerial view.

New classrooms, facilities greet Biloxi students

The Biloxi School District is in the midst of an historic year.

High school students opened the new school year Sept. 3 into a new state-of-the-art, \$32 million campus off Popp's Ferry Road; junior high students moved into the former high school on Father Ryan Avenue; and construction is ready to begin on two new elementary schools, at Gorenflo and Nichols.

It's all part of a \$52 million construction program that voters approved in 1999.

In all, the program includes the new high school, the new elementary school at North Bay, new Gorenflo and Nichols elementary schools, and major renovations at the former Biloxi High School, Michel Junior High School, and Beauvoir. Jeff Davis, Lopez and Popp's Ferry elementary schools.

The public school system currently has about 6,200 students.

The centerpiece of the construction program, of course, is the new high school. The expansive campus – located south of Popp's Ferry Road near the two year-old North Bay Elementary School – features an academic wing with 54 typical classrooms, vocational-technical classrooms, science labs, and resource rooms, a 113-seat lecture auditorium, a drama department and band hall with two separate practice areas; an administration area; a health and PE area with gymnasium for male and female practice areas, concessions, a co-ed weight training room; and an exterior courtyard

and amphitheater larger than a football field and featuring outdoor computer hookups.

While most residents can see the physical improvements in neighborhood schools, Dr. Larry Drawdy, superintendent of schools, noted that improvements are also being made in the curriculum.

"Students in grades 7-9 will for the first time be able to study French or Spanish or Latin, and students presently enrolled in the eighth grade will be required to have a minimum of two years of a foreign language before graduating.

"Students in grades 7-9 also will have an increased number of choices in other curricular areas, together with expanded athletic programs."

Biloxi High School graduates, meanwhile, will far exceed the minimum state requirements for graduation. For instance, the state requires three courses in math, Biloxi requires four; the state requires three science credits, Biloxi requires four; and the state requires two credits in technology, Biloxi requires three.

Additionally, Biloxi High School offers more than 145 courses for students to choose from.

Said Drawdy, "The Biloxi School District provides a program of studies and activities designed to prepare students for future employment, further education, and active citizenship. A note on our web site sums it up: Building a Brighter Tomorrow. We're well on our way."



The sports arena, in the top right corner of the aerial, is more akin to a facility more commonly found on a college campus instead of a high school. See more photos in the online Photo Gallery at biloxi.ms.us.



The new Gorenflo Elementary school will face Elder Street.



The new Nichols Elementary School will face Division Street.

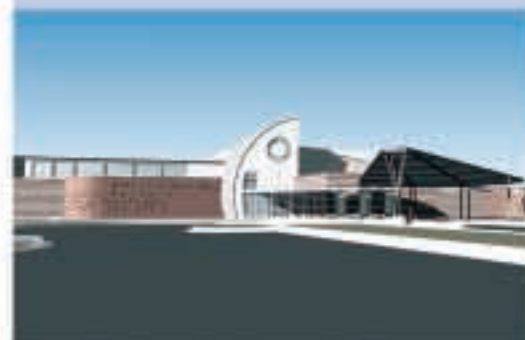


A side view.



A view of entrance.

Guild Hardy Associates Architects



A view of the entrance.



A side view.

Guild Hardy Associates Architects

Popp's Ferry Road Widening Progress



A view of the traffic plan



New curbing and a wider roadway



Laying material for a wider roadbed

Construction management showing progress

It's been 10 months since the city entered into its construction management program for road projects at Bayview Avenue and Popp's Ferry Road.

And since that program began on Bayview Avenue back in February, the work to build a new Bayview Avenue and widen Popp's Ferry Road has been interrupted by one hurricane, three tropical storms and a timeframe that saw 30 days of rain in a 60-day period.

"Under ordinary circumstances, people might expect us to be months behind on these projects," Mayor A.J. Holloway said. "But, the truth is, our team has dealt with the obstacles and worked long hours to keep these important road projects close to their schedule."

Under the construction management program, which was hotly debated when the mayor originally proposed it in late 2001, the city hired a firm, W.G. Yates & Son Construction Co., to oversee major road projects at Bayview and Popp's Ferry. Yates would divide the construction work on each job into several components or bid packages for contractors to bid on, and Yates would then be responsible for overseeing the overall project.

Holloway and city administrators have been updated on the two projects on a weekly basis, and the City Council has been given progress reports every two months.

The construction management team includes Yates and road designers Wink Engineering (on Bayview) and Neel-Schaffer Inc. (on Popp's Ferry and the new Caillavet Street).

"It's been a lot of work, but these are major projects, and we felt confident on the front end that this construction management process was what we needed," Holloway said. "I think we'll see the results of our work – projects done on time and on budget – when all is said and done."

The \$6.5 million project to construct a new Bayview Avenue, which will provide a boulevard connecting Oak Street and Back Bay, was the first project in the construction management program. Work on the road, which includes three bridges, began in March and has a 365-day construction schedule.

A portion of the new road, from the Old Brick House to Lee Street, is expected to open in a few months.

Yates has also been overseeing the phase of Popp's Ferry Road widening from Cedar Lake to Jam Lane, where a traffic plan was implemented, making a section of Popp's Ferry one way and detouring traffic to the newly constructed Richard Drive.

"Major roadwork always has inconveniences to motorists, residents and business owners, but we think our traffic plan is working on Popp's Ferry. Traffic is moving safely and efficiently, and the construction workers have been able to get more work done since they have adequate room to work."

The Popp's Ferry work from Cedar Lake to Jam Lane has a deadline of August 2003.

The next phase of Popp's Ferry will be from the Popp's Ferry causeway to the Margaret Sherry Library, and should be finished within a year after construction begins. After that, the phase between the library and Jam Lane will begin.

On Caillavet Street, Yates will be working side by side with engineers on the new Caillavet Street project, thanks to the City Council in October approving a request by Mayor Holloway to expand the construction management contract.

"By having the construction management team in place early in the project, we think we'll speed things up even more on Caillavet," Holloway said. "We've acquired enough of the property along Caillavet that we should be able to start work from the railroad to a block or so north of Division Street."

Bayview Route



*City of Biloxi/
Wings of Anglers, Inc.*

The new Bayview Avenue begins near the Old Brick House (bottom of photo) and transitions eastward into a five-lane boulevard that connects to Oak Street.

Caillavet Street: Today and Tomorrow



Neel-Schaffer Inc.



Neel-Schaffer Inc.

This view looking north from the CSX railway shows the contrast between the present and future roadways: a crowded two-lane road vs. a four-lane, tree-lined boulevard that will move traffic safely and efficiently, and promote economic development along the roadway.



Status of major projects

December 2002



Citywide streets and drainage projects

- Repair and replacement contact, Phase VII
\$1 million, underway
- Cured-in-place piping contract, Phase III
\$500,000, underway
- Traffic signalization analysis and upgrades
\$250,000, underway
- Upgrades to computer hardware and software
\$600,000, underway
- Maintenance of elevated water tanks
\$590,000, budgeted
- ADA improvements
\$98,000, underway

Major streets and drainage projects

(includes projects completed, under construction or under design)

1.	Final phase of First Street drainage improvements	\$100,000	under design
2.	Reconstruction of Crawford Street, final phase	\$750,000	completed
3.	Construction of new Bayview Avenue	\$5 million+	under construction
4.	Reconstruction of Holley Street	\$900,000	under construction
5.	Reconstruction of Keller Avenue	\$1.25 million	under construction
6.	Lee Street drainage improvements (design)	\$25,000	budgeted
7.	Improvements to Kuhn-U.S. 90 intersection (design)	\$10,000	budgeted
8.	Install water line from Kuhn to Main	\$500,000	under construction
9.	Nichols Drive reconstruction	\$1 million	budgeted
10.	DeLauney Street improvements	\$375,000	budgeted
11.	Construction of new Caillavet Street	\$5 million+	under design
12.	Benachi Street reconstruction (design)	\$80,000	budgeted
13.	Graham-Iroquois drainage improvements	\$750,000	budgeted
14.	Columbus-Corso-Cherokee drainage impr.	\$650,000	under construction
15.	Brister Place-St. Jude drainage improvements	\$968,500	under construction
16.	Veterans Avenue storm drain installation	\$500,000	budgeted
17.	Pass Road intersection and signal upgrades	\$550,000	budgeted
18.	Floyd Drive drainage improvements (design)	\$25,000	budgeted
19.	Popp's Ferry/Atkinson Road intersection imp.	\$400,000	under design
20.	Bay Vista drainage improvements, Phase IV	\$100,000	under design
21.	The Landing drainage improvements	\$600,000	under construction
22.	Edgewater Park drainage improvements, Ph. II	\$1 million	completed
23.	Edgewater Dr. drainage improvements, Ph. III	\$1.4 million	under construction
24.	Rue Petit Bois drainage improvements (design)	\$25,000	budgeted
25.	Install new water line at Gateway	\$50,000	completed
26.	DeBuys Road north widening (Biloxi share)	\$125,000	budgeted
27.	Popp's Ferry, Phase 2A (Country Club to causeway)	\$1.8 million+	under design
28.	Wildwood Trace drainage improvements (design)	\$25,000	completed
29.	Sunkist drainage improvements	\$1.5 million	under design
30.	Popp's Ferry, Phase 2B (Country Club to Jam Lane)	\$3.5 million+	under design
31.	Campbell Drive sewer installation	\$200,000	under design
32.	Popp's Ferry, Phase 1A (Richard Drive ext.)	\$4.69 million+	under construction
33.	Popp's Ferry, Ph. 3B (Jam Lane-Cedar Lake Road)	\$3.8 million+	under construction
34.	Popp's Ferry Road, Phase 5 (Brasher Road)	\$4.5 million+	under design
35.	Wetzell Drive drainage improvements (design)	\$25,000	budgeted
36.	Popp's Ferry, Ph. 1B (Wells Road, Cedar Lake Rd)	\$1.85 million+	completed
37.	Brodie Road water line	\$100,000	under design
38.	Popp's Ferry, Phase 4 (Cedar Lake-Gay Road)	\$2 million+	under design
39.	Install waterline north of I-10 on Cedar Lake	\$250,000	completed
40.	Cedar Lake subdivision road reconstruction, Ph. 1	\$800,000	under design
41.	Cedar Lake-Old Highway 67 intersection imp.	\$400,000	under construction
42.	Install water line in Woolmarket	\$500,000	under design
43.	Woolmarket sewer collection system (design)	\$100,000	underway
44.	Husley Road improvements	\$250,000	budgeted

+denotes cost estimate; does not include right of way acquisition

Major public works projects

(includes projects completed, under construction or under design)

A.	Point Cadet Plaza hangar improvements	\$130,000	under design
B.	Install new fencing at Point Cadet Plaza	\$63,800	pending
C.	East Biloxi elevated water tank	\$1.5 million	under design
D.	Clay Point park improvements	\$10,000	pending
E.	Construction of new fire station for east Biloxi	\$300,000	under design
F.	Crawford House refurbishment	\$200,000	under construction
G.	Main library improvements, Phase III	\$125,000	under construction
H.	Saenger Theater refurbishment	\$500,000	under construction
I.	Migues Ball Park (playground equip. and pavilion)	\$24,000	pending
J.	Keegan's Bayou restoration and conservation	\$192,000	budgeted
K.	Relocation of Bond House on Howard Avenue	\$35,000	pending
L.	Mardi Gras Museum relocation to Dantzer House	\$125,000	under design
M.	Biloxi Lighthouse interpretive display	\$100,000	under design
N.	Third floor build out of Public Safety Center	\$350,000	under design
O.	Businessmens Park (playground equip. and pavilion)	\$24,000	pending
P.	Install additional lighting at Biloxi cemetery	\$12,500	budgeted
Q.	Savarro Park improvements (playground equip.)	\$10,000	pending
R.	Swetman House repairs	\$114,000	under construction
S.	New fire truck at Veterans Avenue station	\$300,000	pending
T.	Tanglewood Park improvements (playground equip.)	\$10,000	pending
U.	Water well to serve west Biloxi	\$500,000	under construction
V.	Popp's Ferry causeway park master plan	\$22,000	completed
W.	Popp's Ferry causeway park, cleaning and grubbing	county labor	completed
X.	Popp's Ferry causeway park construction, Phase I	\$1.35 million	under design
Y.	Install pavilion at Popp's Ferry soccer complex	\$60,000	pending
Z.	Popp's Ferry soccer complex drainage, Phase I	\$15,000	under construction
AA.	Popp's Ferry soccer complex drainage, Phase II	\$60,000	under design
BB.	Expansion of Margaret Sherry library	\$600,000	under construction
CC.	Sports complex, Phase I (clearing land, install utilities)	\$934,000	completed
DD.	Sports complex, Phase II (concession and restrooms, Covered bleachers, scorers booths)	\$698,000	completed
EE.	Sports complex, Phase III (three softball and four soccer fields, concession, lights, roads, parking)	\$698,000	completed
FF.	Sports complex, Phase IV (two softball fields and maintenance facility)	\$800,000	under design
GG.	Sports complex, four Little League fields	\$1.8 million	\$1.2 million budgeted
HH.	Popp's Ferry elevated water tank	\$1.5 million	under design
II.	Water well to serve Woolmarket	\$500,000	under design
JJ.	Construction of Woolmarket water tank	\$1.1 million	under design
KK.	Construction of Woolmarket park	\$300,000	under design
LL.	Construction of new Woolmarket fire station	\$300,000	under design
MM.	Upgrade of Eagle Point chlorinator	\$401,000	under construction



This photo clearly illustrates the impact of the new signals (right), which use light-emitting diodes and enlarged signal heads, as compared to the current signals (left).

Biloxi upgrades traffic signals; Pass Road improvements in the works

Motorists on the streets of Biloxi are seeing larger and brighter traffic signals as the result of a quarter-million-dollar traffic project the city is wrapping up.

Several months ago, Biloxi completed an analysis of the 56 signalized intersections throughout city before undertaking a \$236,000 project that involved increasing the size of red, yellow and green lights from eight inches to 12 inches throughout the city, and installing LED technology that will make the lights five times brighter and cut electricity use in half.

The analysis also recommended better synchronization of signals and eliminating signals at some intersections – two measures that will be reviewed by city leaders and the city’s Traffic Committee, which includes representatives of the Police and Public Works departments. Most signals on U.S. 90 are already synchronized.

“We’re building new roads throughout our city right now,” Mayor A.J. Holloway said, “but it’s also important that we use technology to get the most out of our current roads and move traffic quickly and safely. We can do that by making sure that we have the latest technology working for us through better integrated and better synchronized traffic signals.”

Holloway noted that a \$2.7 million project to improve all traffic signals on Pass Road, as well as improve roads at many intersections, is included in the current city budget. The federal government will fund 80 percent of the project.

East Biloxi revitalization efforts take to streets, neighborhoods

The Biloxi Housing Authority hopes to break ground in January on infrastructure work on an east Biloxi development that will see 200 single and multi-family homes, a 76-unit senior citizen complex, a 20,000-square-foot resource center, two parks and a 2,000-square-foot community building.

The work, which takes place at the sites of the former Bayview and Bayou Auguste public housing complexes, is the first construction phase of the authority’s \$35 million Hope VI project, designed to provide affordable housing and create new first-time homeowners.

The Hope VI project will work in tandem with the city’s overall plan to not only upgrade existing affordable housing but also to create new affordable housing in east Biloxi.

The city’s Community Development Department in December was surveying residents of Ward 1 and 2 to seek input on a city revitalization plan. In January, the department, working with Gulf Regional Planning Commission, will inventory existing housing in east Biloxi, and identify those properties suitable for rehab or demolition, with the goal of presenting a formal plan to the City Council as early as February.

Mayor A.J. Holloway has contended that improving neighborhoods is vital. “In order for an economic development initiative to work on Main Street, you must improve the quality of neighborhoods,” Holloway said. “You must improve the existing low- to moderate-income households. You must increase homeownership. You must create the economic power in order to attract commercial and retail endeavors to east Biloxi. The city is hoping that its multi-million-dollar road projects, coupled with affordable housing initiatives by the city and the Biloxi Housing Authority, will revitalize east Biloxi and spur more commercial activity.”

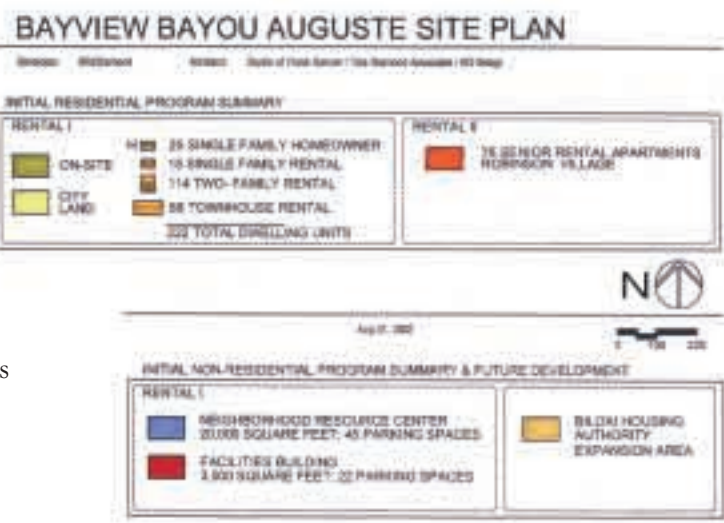
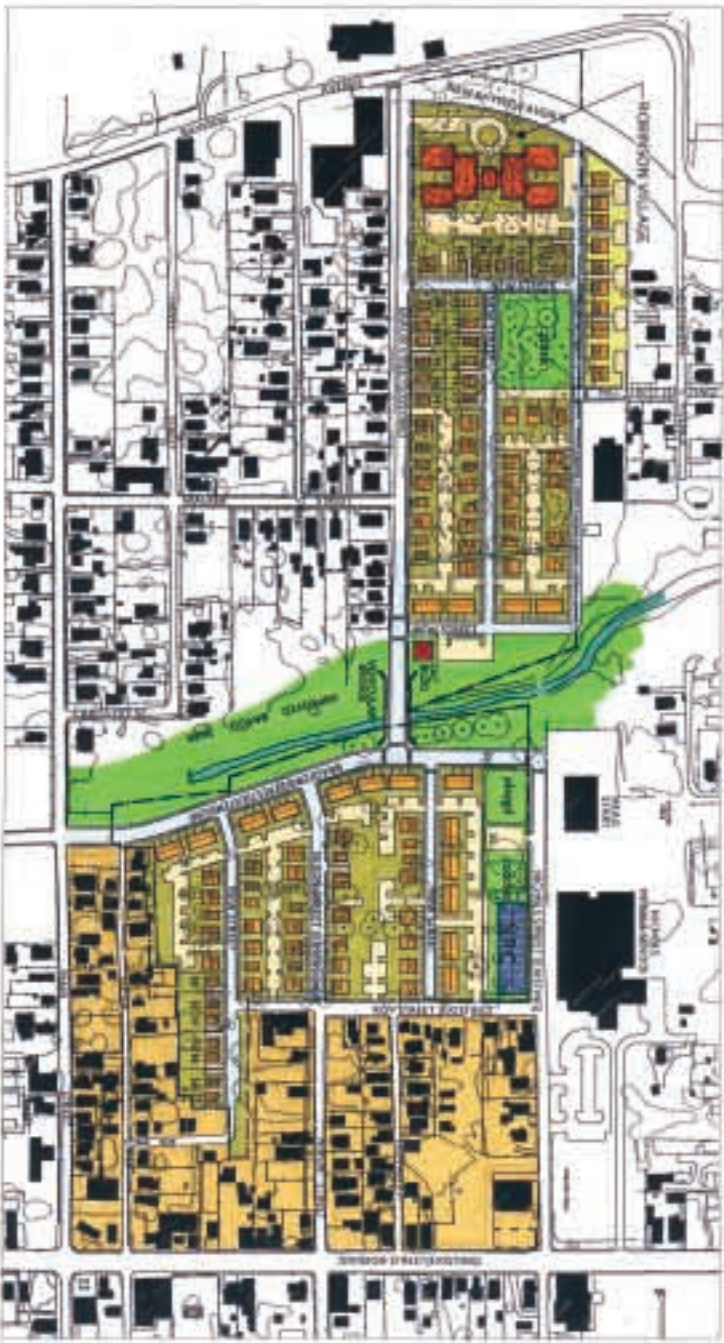
As part of its role in the housing authority’s development initiative, the city has earmarked \$1 million to re-construct Nichols Drive, and Harrison County has agreed to construct a bridge that will link the former Bayview and Bayou Auguste housing sites, which have been cleared.

“We are scheduled to have ground breaking in mid January for the infrastructure, the roads and the underground power lines,” Housing Authority Chairman Delmar Robinson said. “By September, we hope to begin constructing housing and the first phase will be completed by September 2004.”

Robinson said the authority has been working with the city’s site review committee in the Community Development Department to make the development attractive.

“It’s going to be a well-landscaped development,” Robinson said. “We’re also looking to apply for Tidelands funds to make that bayou more inviting to the community. I remember as a boy I used to fish there, and I’d like to see it return to the way it was.”

The authority also plans to begin demolishing the former East End housing units off Myrtle Street

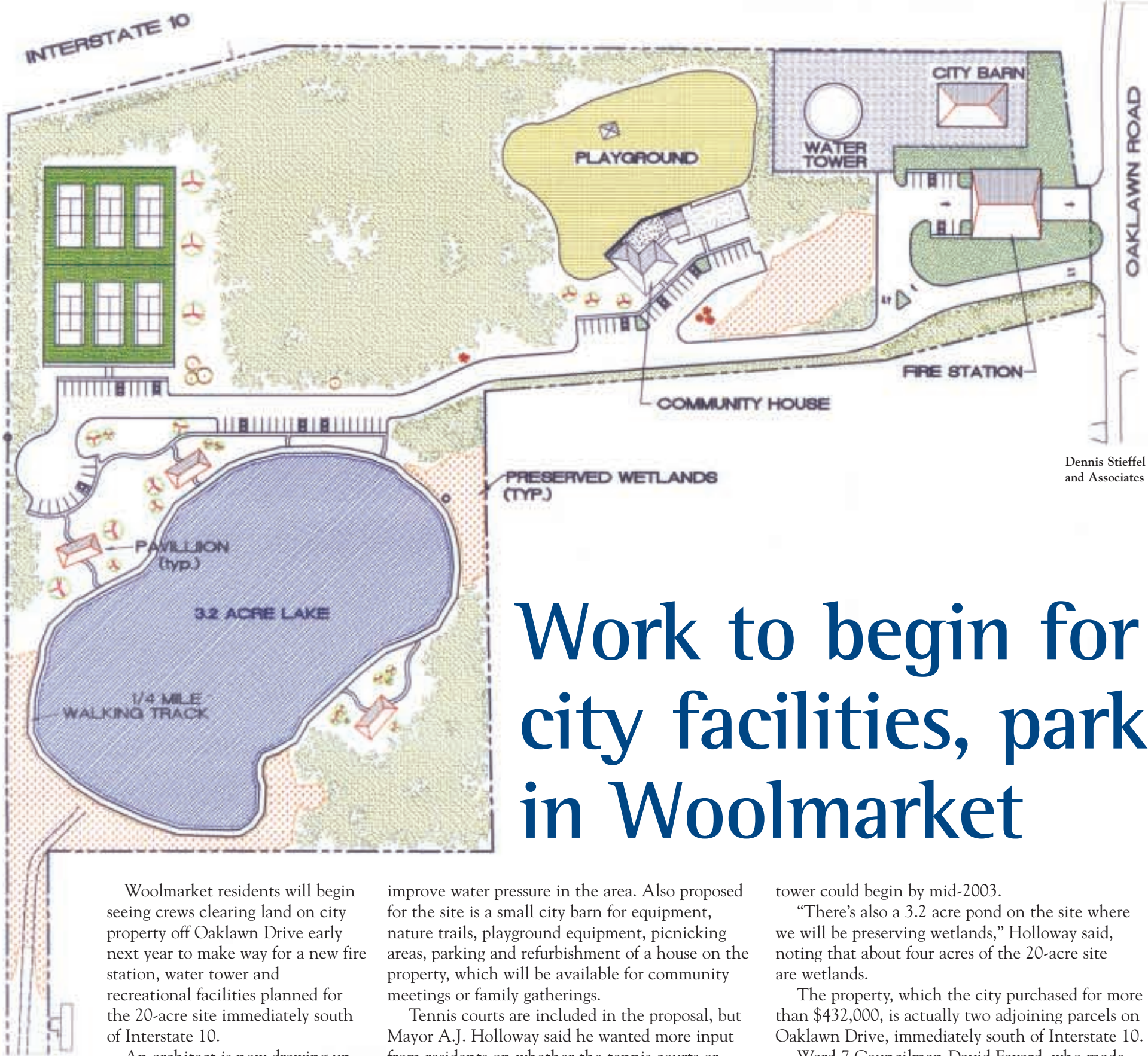


Biloxi Housing Authority Hope VI project

on Point Cadet and hopes to have the land cleared by April.

Meantime, city leaders were hoping for good input from residents through the neighborhood surveys, which were scheduled to be concluded before Christmas.

“We’ve discussed this revitalization plan with developers, property owners, businesspeople, civic groups, the Planning Commission and the City Council,” said Community Development Director David Staehling. “Now, we’re in the neighborhoods. The survey aims to construct an accurate community development profile of east Biloxi, which will guide the planning process and facilitate the design and implementation of a community-driven revitalization plan for east Biloxi.”



Woolmarket residents will begin seeing crews clearing land on city property off Oaklawn Drive early next year to make way for a new fire station, water tower and recreational facilities planned for the 20-acre site immediately south of Interstate 10.

An architect is now drawing up plans for the fire station and funds have also been set aside for a elevated water tower, which will

improve water pressure in the area. Also proposed for the site is a small city barn for equipment, nature trails, playground equipment, picnicking areas, parking and refurbishment of a house on the property, which will be available for community meetings or family gatherings.

Tennis courts are included in the proposal, but Mayor A.J. Holloway said he wanted more input from residents on whether the tennis courts or some other recreational component should be included instead.

Construction on the fire station and water

tower could begin by mid-2003.

“There’s also a 3.2 acre pond on the site where we will be preserving wetlands,” Holloway said, noting that about four acres of the 20-acre site are wetlands.

The property, which the city purchased for more than \$432,000, is actually two adjoining parcels on Oaklawn Drive, immediately south of Interstate 10.

Ward 7 Councilman David Fayard, who made the original motion to purchase the property, said he was eager to see the city move forward with the new facilities.

Design work underway on providing sewer service to Woolmarket

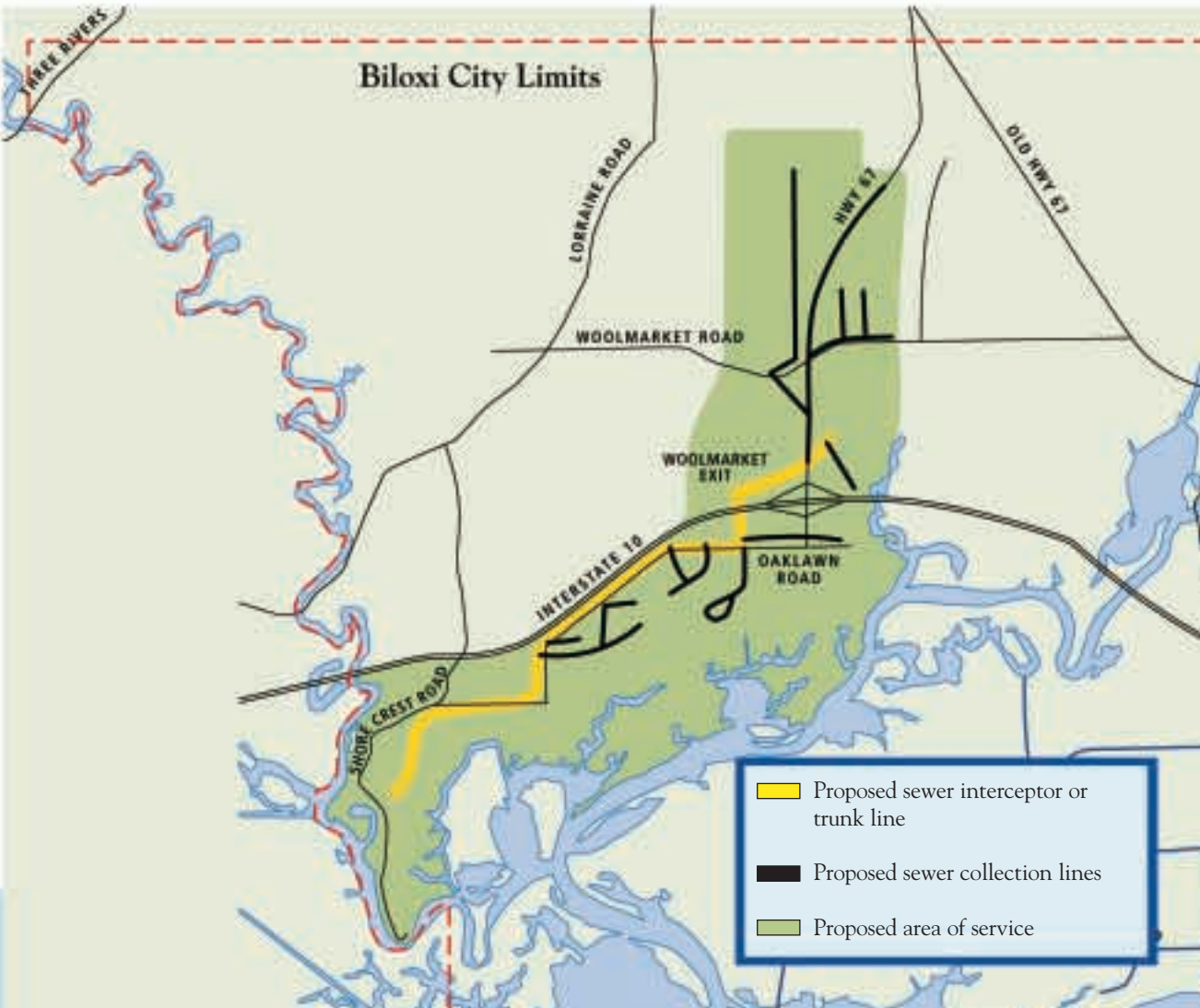
The Harrison County Wastewater Management District has begun the design of a sewer interceptor, or trunk line, that will set the stage for sewer service for residents of the Woolmarket community.

The line will run from the Eagle Point wastewater facility to just north of the Interstate 10 Woolmarket exit, and when the city installs the collection system to individual properties, the system will serve residents as far north as the Joppa Shrine Temple on Highway 67.

The interceptor line is expected to cost as much as \$1.2 million, and with installation of the collection system, the project could run as high as \$4.5 million.

“This is a major endeavor,” Mayor A.J. Holloway said. “We’re looking at a two-year project because it’s going to require the acquisition of property easements to install the interceptor line and install lift stations.

“We’re committed to providing this service, though, because it’s vital to the growth of the community, and it’s important to the health and welfare of the community.”





Workers clear the way for Popp's Ferry causeway park

Harrison County workers have cleared land on city-owned property at Popp's Ferry causeway to make way for a new multi-million waterfront park that will make the area more inviting to the public.

Meantime, a design firm employed by the city is busily drawing construction plans for the multi-million-dollar park that will be home to new concrete and wooden boardwalks, fishing piers, and improved boat ramps and parking in its initial phase.

The first phase of the project would be a joint effort funded by the city, Harrison County and grant money.

The city purchased the 10-acre site west of the current Popp's Ferry bridge in 2000 for \$650,000. Since that time, public meetings have been held for citizens to suggest ideas for the park, and the city has employed a design firm, Cashio, Cochran of New Orleans, that specializes in outdoor waterfront design, to create a master plan.

The firm is expected to have the final design and construction documents to the city this month, and the city is applying to the Corps of Engineers and other agencies to have the necessary permits approved so actual construction can begin.

"We're hoping that we can have the permits in hand and be ready to begin construction in June," Mayor A.J. Holloway said. "The first phases, which involve shoring up the bulkheads and improving the boat launches, are going to make this area much more accessible and inviting, not just for boaters and fishermen, but for everybody."

The rendering at top right shows the proposed layout of the improvements in the works at the Popp's Ferry causeway park. Above is a close-up rendering of the fishing features planned along the causeway waterfront.



The Biloxi Fire Department has a new tool, a fire boat, to help fight fires and make water rescues. The 27-foot craft, which can reach speeds of more than 50 mph, is powered by two 225 horsepower outboard engines, and has a pump that can provide 1,000 gallons of water per minute to fight fires. A separate engine powers the firefighting pump, which pumps either fresh or saltwater through its hull. The boat can operate in water as shallow as 2 1/2 to 3 feet, and has a side door allowing easy access for divers.

The \$160,000 fiberglass craft, which is moored at the Biloxi Small Craft Harbor, has made one water rescue, and has been on standby for fireworks displays, the Blessing of the Fleet and Christmas on the Water.

The city also is currently working on plans to construct two new fire stations, one to replace an aging East End Fire Station on Point Cadet and to build a station to serve Woolmarket.



Animal control 435-6103

To report stray or dead animals, leash-law violations

Auto tag info 435-8242

Harrison County Courthouse at Lameuse Street and MLK Boulevard

Birth Certificates . . . 601-576-7960

State Department of Vital Statistics in Jackson

Building permits 435-6270

To obtain permits for construction and improvements

Business licenses 435-6247

To obtain a license to do business in the city

City Council 435-6257

To reach council members or clerks of council

City Court 435-6125

Information on traffic tickets and court docket

Code enforcement 435-6270

To report weeded lots, unsafe structures, abandoned vehicles

Frequently called numbers

You can also find detailed information about city projects, programs and initiatives by visiting the city's web site at <http://biloxi.ms.us> or tuning to "City Desk" each Thursday at 9:05 a.m. on WQYZ-FM 92.5

(Area code is 228 for all numbers, unless noted otherwise)

Drivers licenses 432-7803

At Dr. Eldon Bolton State Office Building, Bayview Avenue

Emergency police and fire 911

For non-emergency, call 435-6100 (police) or 435-6200 (fire)

Garbage collection 392-5108

BFI manages the city's residential garbage collection.

Housing Authority 374-7771

To get information on public housing

Human Resources 435-6259

For info on city employment; located on third floor of City Hall

Mayor's Office 435-6254

Citizen services, proclamations, public records requests

Museums information . . . 435-6244

Information on city museums or to rent historic properties

Parks & Recreation 435-6281

Information on youth leagues and programs, or to rent most city facilities

Planning Commission . . . 435-6244

To apply for a change in your zoning or land use

Public schools 374-1810

Administrative office for all Biloxi public schools

Streets and drainage 435-6271

To report pot holes, damaged street signs or traffic signals

Visitor info 374-3105

or 1-800-BILOXI-3

Visitors Center is on the Biloxi Town Green

Voter Registration 435-6279

To register to vote or notify registrar of change in address

Water service 435-6240

ECO Resources manages the city's water and sewer service

City budget

No city tax increase, \$7 million in new projects

The Biloxi municipal budget for this fiscal year, which runs from Oct. 1, 2002 to Sept. 30, 2003, includes no new property taxes for city operations, forecasts no revenue growth, yet includes \$7.2 million in new public improvement projects.

The \$144 million budget includes \$22 million for Biloxi public schools. The school system, in the midst of a \$52 million citywide construction program, requested and received a 3.75-mill increase – about \$1.9 million – in funding, which may result in a property tax increase for Biloxi residents in the school district. Woolmarket residents may also face an increase through the Harrison County School District.

Most departmental spending in the city budget was kept below previous levels except for Public Works, which increased by \$1 million due to increased wastewater costs.

"We're holding the line on city property taxes, and the increase in school taxes was actually approved by voters in a referendum on the school bond issue," Mayor A.J. Holloway said.

The budget includes about \$7.2 million for new public improvement projects, and Mayor Holloway convinced City Council members to set aside \$700,000 a year for five years to be used to offset

any interruptions in taxes on gaming revenue.

"We've been lucky that we have had no major disruptions in the revenue stream," Holloway said, "but I think it's in our best interest to set aside money specifically in the event of a major hurricane or other interruption. Currently, all money that comes in is budgeted on projects. This fund is actually self-insurance."

Among the major items in the budget:

- \$1 million for Main Street urban renewal;
- \$1 million for Sunkist drainage improvements;
- \$1 million to reconstruct Nichols Drive as part of the east Biloxi revitalization project;
- \$600,000 to construct two new fire stations;
- \$550,000 to improve intersections on Pass Road;
- \$500,000 to install a storm drain on Veterans Avenue from the CSX railway to U.S. 90;
- \$250,000 for drainage improvements on Wildwood Trace;
- \$250,000 to acquire land for a new fire station;
- \$190,000 for the final phase of \$2.5 million in drainage improvements on First Street on Point Cadet.

Money for nothing? Not quite, but almost

How'd you like a loan with an interest rate just over 4 percent? Most would jump at the opportunity, considering interest rates could run as high as 10 percent, depending on credit history and the loan amount.

The City of Biloxi received impressive interest rates when bonds were issued for two projects – \$23 million for the traffic improvement program, at an interest rate of 4.7 percent; and \$6 million for water and sewer upgrades at a rate of 4.65 percent.

Neither bond issue will require tax increases, but the low interest rate is an endorsement of the city's conservative management of tax dollars, according to Mayor A.J. Holloway, whose fiscal policies have helped the city's credit rating earn an A rating.

"It's like I've always said," Holloway remarked: "Having money is one thing. Knowing how to manage it is something else."

Public safety on water and on land

For late-breaking news and up-to-the-minute
information, visit our web site at biloxi.ms.us and
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and Hot News e-news publications.

THE State of the City 2002



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