



Henry Turley owns The Henry Turley Co. in Memphis. He is a partner with Jackson's Hal Crocker in the \$40 million Healthy Community LLC at Jackson Walk project.

Turley was interviewed by The Jackson Sun last week about his work on the project.

**Question:** How did you and Hal Crocker develop a business relationship?

**Answer:** “Hal had done some **construction** work for us, and he called me one day and said, ‘Jackson is doing well on the north part of town; can you help bring some energy to the established part of town where we are not doing so well?’ ”

**Q:** How was your role defined?

**A:** “The question was, ‘Can we revitalize historic downtown?’ I told him, ‘I can give you ideas of how it can be done and I will help, but revitalization can only be done through a collaboration of the leadership of Jackson.’ That was four years ago, 2009.”

**Q:** Before you knew what you were going to do, you had to know where. What made you decide on the 17 acres where Jackson Walk is being developed?

**A:** “The property is on Highland, which is the most important entry point into downtown Jackson; think of it as a gateway property.

“It is our ambition to serve both East and West Jackson equitably and in doing so to have Jackson Walk become common ground. The property is at a spot that strategically fits that goal.

“The property was available. The city had assembled it after the ’03 tornado. That was an act of real foresight by (then) mayor (Charles) Farmer. The lack of parcels large enough to do a significant development is a real impediment to maintaining vitality in the older parts of the city.”

**Q:** Most people cannot comprehend the \$40 million price tag. With the LIFT Center, Jackson Walk apartments and the retail complex, what is the break-even point?

**A:** “First, the job is larger than that and the cost more because the assignment is revitalization of a large area. Jackson Walk, where we are investing about \$40 million, is just the nucleus. I’m not sure what our break-even is, but I know if it doesn’t work, the city is less strong altogether. We just don’t put finances first; we put the idea first ... Then we work hard to make the project successful.”

**Q:** When complete, Jackson Walk will offer 149 apartments. Since the apartment complex opened, the number of units rented has reached 30 — and is climbing. What are your thoughts about the pace?

**A:** “That’s a good acceptance of the apartments ... what, 30 leases in 30 days? That’s a good pace. Really, that’s a good pace for Nashville or Memphis. If you had asked about the apartments last month, before we opened, I would have said. ‘How do I know?’ But I am convinced people will enjoy living there. Now it seems that leasing is very good.”

**Q:** And shopping there? (Jackson Walk has 18,000 square feet for retail).

**A:** “The only business we have opened is the LIFT. I talked to Lisa Piercey (vice president of physician services at West Tennessee Healthcare) a few days ago. She is very pleased with their success. But we don’t open Jeremy (Denno, Rock ‘N

Dough Pizza) until September. And have you seen the unit Beyond Vogue has rented? It looks great.

“When we were asked if we could help revitalize the historic part of downtown, we put forward our best effort, and I like the way Jackson Walk looks and feels.”

**Q:** Do you see a ripple effect coming from your effort?

**A:** “Young people (living) in the LANA neighborhood will expand on the Jackson Walk idea. They will buy and improve homes in that area. It strikes me those are things I would look at.”

**Q:** Does the ripple effect include the farmers’ market?

**A:** “If you have a successful farmers’ market on one hand, and on the other side a LIFT Center dedicated to the health of West Tennessee, and I can’t figure out we need a farm-to-table restaurant, I need another line of work. I was thrilled to get Jeremy (Denno). Jeremy goes to at least three farmers’ markets in Memphis: Germantown, downtown Memphis and I think the one at Shelby Farms. He sees a lot of good ideas. We want to help the farmers’ market and in fact all of our neighbors — that was the task assigned to us.”

**Q:** The vacant lot where RIFA once stood is prime land — and vacant. What are the plans for the property?

**A:** “I don’t know. You’ve got me stumped there. I don’t have an answer, so you tell me.”

**Q:** Talking to you, Harbor Town in Memphis comes to mind (Begun in 1988, Harbor Town is downtown on Mud Island on the Mississippi River). Can you make any correlation between Harbor Town and Jackson Walk?

**A:** “They both attempt to best realize the opportunity that each of the properties afford for each city. Both projects are ambitious but are consistent with the hopes and dreams of their cities.”

**Q:** Does Jackson Walk compare to any other development of yours?

**A:** “In an abstract way, but we don’t do things similar. I’m too curious to do something over and over again, and that’s why I’m not rich and famous.”

One step at a time: 1.5-mile course incorporates Jackson streets

By David Thomas dgthomas@jacksonsun.com

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jacksonsun.com

The resurgence of downtown Jackson continues – one step at a time.

When completed, a one-and-a-half mile fitness trail becomes the most recent addition to downtown after a \$20,000 grant was awarded by the state of Tennessee assisting the efforts of several key players in this venture.

The city of Jackson was the applicant for the grant, but had support from the county, West Tennessee Healthcare, Jump-Start Jackson, the Jackson Chamber of Commerce and the Jackson Downtown Development Corporation.

“Some money is for equipment, signage, maps, directional signs and arrows,” Katie Pace said. “The Jackson Recreation and Parks Department is doing most of the work and there’s a Web site where people will be able to check in. After they have completed the trail, they can track their progress.”

Pace, the director of the development corporation, said the trail will have stations where a participant can stop for additional exercise such as pull-ups.

The trail’s head – or starting point – is in the shadows of Jackson Walk, a building project incorporating approximately 17-acres located just north of the West Tennessee Farmers Market.

Included is the LIFT Wellness Center with 25 single-family houses, 149 apartment units and 17,000 square feet of strip centers inside the area when completed.

“I probably walked 20 miles in three days to find the right trail,” Katie Pace said. “It highlights our downtown and there are a lot of employees who work and walk downtown when the weather is good.”

The trail will access Lafayette, Royal and College streets and Highland Avenue.

When asked about walkers crossing Highland Avenue, Pace said she took one of the city’s main arteries into consideration before finalizing the map.

“We’re making sure we don’t have another disconnect,” Pace said. “There are street lights and traffic lights and a walk can be interrupted because of traffic, but anyone used to walking or running downtown is used to that.”

Incorporating the new Wellness Center and Farmers Market, Pace said the trail allows participants the opportunity to see businesses, window [shop](#) and notice the architecture.

And Pace is one of those participants.

“I stay up with Healthy Community, and when the weather was warmer, I liked to park my car and take a quick walk around, just to see what is happening,” Pace said. “I walk over and see what is going on.”

Besides change in the landscape, Pace also sees a change in attitude toward downtown.

“One of the biggest things we’ve noticed is the vibe,” Pace said. “When I first came to Jackson, I encountered a lot of negativity.”

One of the reasons may have something to do with where she originally called [home](#). “I’ve been here three-and-a-half years and my perspective is very different,” Pace said. “I tell people I’ve lived in all three states of Tennessee. I grew up in the (East Tennessee) mountains and went to school at MTSU.

“I have people continually asking me, ‘Why we can’t be like Franklin and Chattanooga?’ But it takes time and you need a catalyst ... new developments.”

The momentum continues to grow and there is a pulse for existing buildings in downtown Jackson looking for tenants.

“We have a good [idea](#) of our inventory and we’ve had calls the last six months from people looking for space,” Pace said. “And we put them in touch with the property owners.”

Most folks around town have watched the downtown Jackson Walk development rise out of the ground over the past 18 months. What once was a weed infested valley with a storm drainage ditch running through it just north of the West Tennessee Farmers Market, surrounded by rundown and abandoned houses, has metamorphosed into a whole new Jackson neighborhood. Imagine!

This hasn't happened in Jackson but a handful of times in the last two decades, and essentially nowhere except in North Jackson, and a bit on the far south side of town. But from Bemis to North Parkway, the city essentially has remained unchanged, with the exception of the Jackson-Madison County General Hospital medical center campus, which is a little different animal.

Jackson Walk differs from other downtown and midtown efforts in that it creates an entire new neighborhood. From the Lift Wellness Center and relocated Jackson Clinic Convenient Care operation and other health venues, to apartments, townhouses and a single-family home residential community, significant new retail space development and a redesigned traffic pattern for downtown Jackson, this is whole new ballgame. It also is a big financial risk for the developers and others who have placed their bets that this type of urban redevelopment can succeed in Jackson.

Jackson Walk is a bold commitment to the city of Jackson. Jackson cannot simply continue to evolve along its borders far from the city's historic heart and soul. Fortunately, community leaders have come to recognize this in recent years. Former Mayor Charles Farmer understood this, and took advantage of downtown redevelopment opportunities following the devastating tornadoes of 2003. Developers such as John Allen, TLM Associates, Jackson Energy Authority, Aneas Internet and Telephone, the Jackson Chamber of Commerce, New Southern Hotel owner Hal Crocker and others invested heavily in saving downtown.

Their efforts helped create a remarkable turnaround for downtown from its days of decline when people calling local talk radio were said we should just put a fence around it and bulldoze it as a lost cause. Its then sorry condition even factored into a company opting to look elsewhere for a new business development location.

But that was then and this is now. Along with the other improvements in downtown in recent years, Jackson Walk is the centerpiece for what downtown and midtown Jackson can become, an urban lifestyle option in the heart of Jackson.

Big cities do this all the time. I lived through such redevelopment when I lived in Dallas. Nashville has undergone such a change for several years, as has Memphis. In fact, one of Memphis' most successful inner-city re-developers, Henry Turley, is a partner in the Jackson Walk development along with Hal Crocker and West Tennessee Healthcare.

The question now is whether local folks will warm up to an urban lifestyle in Jackson. My bet is that they will, especially young people. Walk-to convenience of amenities including entertainment and restaurant venues, health and exercise facilities, health care and retail establishments, all at a reasonable cost of living are sure to be a big draw.

As someone who lives only a mile from downtown, I'm a believer and supporter of this new direction for our city. Next summer, I expect the Farmers Market Saturday morning social fest to be bigger, better and more interesting than ever, a growing part of the new, urban lifestyle of Jackson.

Tom Bohs is The Jackson Sun's editorial page editor. Call him at 425-9686.

Our view: Take a fresh look at downtown Jackson  
Jan. 31

jacksonsun.com

If you haven't been to downtown Jackson in a while, today is a good day to visit.

The new LIFT Center, a health and fitness center that is part of the Jackson Walk development, has an open house from 2 to 4 p.m. We encourage you to stop by and take a look. It is at 101 Jackson Walk Plaza off North Highland Avenue, north of Lafayette Street.

But don't just look at the LIFT Center. Look at all that is going on around it. Jackson Walk is so much more than the LIFT Center. It is a project with the potential to transform downtown Jackson. And we're not sure many people in Jackson realize it — except maybe those who currently live or work downtown.

Tom Bohs shares his thoughts on the project on the opposite page. It would be hard to over-emphasize what this project means to the city and Madison County, which is why we are writing about it here, too. Any resident of the Jackson area needs to be aware of the magnitude of this project.

We've written recently about the LIFT Center. It is being developed by West Tennessee Healthcare, which owns Jackson-Madison County General Hospital.

We've also written about the LIFT Health Clinic, which is already open. The clinic represents a partnership between West Tennessee Healthcare and The Jackson Clinic. It takes the place of the Jackson Clinic Convenient Care center that was on West Forest Avenue near the hospital.

Last week, we wrote about the residential development that is part of Jackson Walk. This will mean change because it will bring more residents downtown, not simply people who will leave after 5 p.m.

When complete, the project will include 149 apartments and 17 single-family homes. One of the homes is taking shape at 47 W. Orleans St. These homes promise to rejuvenate what was a tired area on the edge of downtown. Eight lots are on West Orleans Street and nine lots are on Union Avenue.

The houses will have character — Charleston style with porches and balconies.

But, again, there is more to Jackson Walk. It will also include retail space, restaurants and an amphitheater. The development is adjacent to the Farmers Market, an already vibrant part of downtown.

The people who live in Jackson Walk will be able to shop and go out to eat there, too, making it a micro-community within the city. Those restaurants and shops will also draw more people downtown who live in other areas of the city.

We hope the project causes you to look at downtown through a new lens. Today is a good day to start.

## Downtown dwelling: Housing inventory increases with new Jackson developments

Written by David Thomas

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*A new home is being built at 47 W. Orleans St. in Jackson. It is the first of many that will be constructed near downtown Jackson. / KENNETH CUMMINGS/The Jackson Sun*

A growing number of amenities and businesses that residents can walk to are making downtown a more attractive place to call home, developers say.

That's why one phase of the area's development includes housing, and a lot of it.

"We could talk about it until we are blue in the face," Chris Alexander said. "This is a great development, but until people get downtown to see it, they won't believe it ... it's amazing."

Alexander is the head of retail and residential development for Healthy Community, which includes 149 apartment units and 17-single unit homes, with one nearing completion at 47 W. Orleans St.

Those numbers only add to a growing inventory of places to live in the downtown area, once thought of as more of a daytime business destination.

The Suites of Larue opened in September, and manager Josh Allen said the apartment complex on East Lafayette Street should be full by the end of the [first quarter](#). "People don't move in the [fourth quarter](#), but by the end of March it should be full," Allen said. "I'm having bidding wars on a couple of units, and it's kind of

funny.”

The Suites of Larue consists of 18 units with one-bedroom apartments leasing for \$950 and two-bedroom units going for \$1,100.

But those 1,000- to 1,200-square-foot units are only the tip of the iceberg in the John Allen Construction Company’s portfolio of property holdings.

There are 10 units at Liberty Square Apartments, six at the Pythian Building, two at the Wig Center (107 E. Lafayette), 14 in the Renaissance Center on East Deaderick Street, a two-bedroom unit at 226 W. Lafayette and a one-bedroom unit at 215 E. Main St.

When it comes to buying a single-unit home, Alexander has a certain clientele in mind.

“There are eight lots on West Orleans and nine on Union Avenue,” Alexander said. “The homes will appeal to the young professional and the empty nesters who don’t want a big yard to keep up.”

Each of the homes will be Charleston style with porches and balconies.

Ron Petty Construction Company is nearing completion of the first home, which consists of 2,200 heated square feet with a listing price of \$204,000.

“When they move in, they will have a sense of community,” Alexander said. “You have the diversity in downtown and there’s a lot of walk-ability.

“You’ll be two blocks from the (LIFT) [gym](#), restaurants, retail and Farmers Market.”

Katie Pace, the executive director of Jackson Downtown Development Corporation, said through the end of 2011, upper story housing had reached 81 units.

“They were always full, and we had a waiting list,” Pace said. “We’re excited to have more. The type of development it is, it’s welcoming and we’re very excited.”

The brainchild of developers Hal Crocker from Jackson and Memphian Henry Turley, Jackson City Walk began construction in November 2011.

“We believe what we are doing here will help,” Crocker said. “We’re trying to make sure there is a certain synergy in the different businesses (Jackson Walk) will get.”

Alexander said his relationship with Turley goes beyond Jackson Walk.

“Henry has been a partner of mine for the last 17 years, and I’ve always envied what he had done with downtown revival in Memphis,” Alexander said. “I jumped at the opportunity to work with Hal (Crocker) and Henry.”

While some believe a project such as Jackson Walk is reserved for major cities, Crocker sees Jackson as a prime player jumping into the fray.

“There is a national movement to come back to the metropolitan area,” Crocker said. “A town of our size doesn’t offer something of this scale, but we’ve made a lot of strides in our downtown area.”

It's an area where more than one construction firm can exist.

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"People refer to John Allen Construction and Hal Crocker Construction as competitors, but I don't think so."

With approximately 7,000 people venturing into downtown on a daily basis, Josh Allen said they also head elsewhere for home at a certain hour.

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