

GJCP ANNOUNCES MOVE FROM HISTORIC OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN JACKSON

In January 1980, the offices of Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership, then known as Jackson Chamber of Commerce, moved from the Lamar Life Building to the Central Fire Station located at 201 S. President Street. The GJCP has occupied this 14,400 square foot building, constructed in 1904, since that time. After the building was vacated in 1974, there was much discussion on what could be done to utilize and preserve the building, but nothing was done. In the late 1970's the Jackson Chamber of Commerce began looking for a new location for the chamber office and a Search Committee was appointed.

Since the chamber wanted to remain somewhere in the downtown area, the possibility of the vacant Central Station was placed on the list of potential locations. An agreement was reached between the Chamber and the City of Jackson that called for the Chamber to renovate the building and for the city to lease it to the Chamber. Jimmy Fowler, who later served as the Chamber President in 1988, was named Chairman of the Building Committee and Robert Parker Adams of Jackson was selected as the architect.

Following a renovation of approximately \$800,000 the Chamber moved into the renovated building in January of 1980. A second renovation of approximately \$1,200,000 took place during the 1999-2000 time frame. The architectural firm was JBHM of Jackson.

This building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 and designated as a Mississippi Landmark by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in 1985. All renovations and repairs to the exterior of the building were approved by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Jackson.

Additionally, The Fallen Fire Fighter's Memorial Statue was erected in 2000. The granite bench near the statue was given in memory of Paul Pitts and in honor of those who made the Memorial a reality was added a few years later. Each year in October a memorial service is held in front of the Memorial in memory of all Fire Fighters who died in the line of duty since July 10, 1907 and in honor of all Jackson Fire Fighters who have ever served and protected the citizens of Jackson.

Today's Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership has differing space needs than yesterday's entity. As our world has changed, so has our staff size, thus we find ourselves underutilizing this amazing historic building. Seeing the potential for something new, Alon Bee, Interim President/CEO for the Greater Jackson Chamber has worked diligently over the past six months to assist the chamber in finding new office space that better suits the needs of the chamber budgetary expenses. The Board of Directors approved this request at the March 2019 board meeting and the chamber is pleased to announce their plans to relocate to the Regions Operations Center on I-55 North for the next year and occupy space generously offered to them by Robert Leard, Market Executive for Regions. President Bee is particularly pleased that we will be able to turn the building over to the City of Jackson for its use as quality office space. The building is situated next door to City Hall and directly across the street from the Hood Administrative building and the Porter JRA building. This completes the block for the city and will provide a platform for growth and future expansion.

A celebration and presentation of keys to the City of Jackson is being planned for late June.