



Chief offers advice on holiday safety

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

During the holidays, Jackson Police step up surveillance to help citizens feel and stay safe, particularly while shopping.

But recent shootings and murders in the capital city may have residents more leery about venturing out, and JPD Chief Lee Vance acknowledges those concerns.



Vance Stokes

"I can certainly understand how it can make people on edge," Vance

said.

This week the Police Department will once again implement its Operation Safe Shop campaign. During the campaign, JPD officers with blue-lights flashing will have an increased presence in different shopping areas in the city and/or areas that attract opportunistic criminal activity.

The campaign targets the city's

four geographical precincts with officers on both foot and mobile patrols. The hope is that with officers nearby, criminals will have less of a chance to commit crimes, and if they do, officers will have a quicker response in order to apprehend suspects. Officers will also

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100 Black Men of Jackson, Inc. holds its 25th anniversary scholarship celebration. See photos on page 5.

Beyond Thanksgiving

Church feeds, ministers to homeless every month



Members of Vision Outreach Church and Ministries await individuals to give meals to on Rose Street in Jackson. PHOTOS BY SHANDERIA K. POSEY

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

The holidays are an ideal time to help those less fortunate.

But for one local church, helping those in need is a monthly operation of service.

Each month members of Vision Outreach Church and Ministries, located at 2893 Terry Road in south Jackson, along with Pastor Sandra Vaughn Rucker prepare and give meals to those less fortunate – particularly those who are homeless or living in group homes in the capital city.

Last Saturday, about 30 members including children handed out canned drinks, bottled water and



Pastor Sandra Vaughn Rucker greets Nathan Jefferson at Smith Park Saturday.

plates with spaghetti, green beans, corn, a roll, and a chocolate chip

cookie to those living in group homes on Rose Street.

From there, members went to Smith Park in downtown Jackson, the Opportunity House, and Poindexter Park to give more food along with blankets and comforters to the men. Whenever food is leftover from those stops, plates are taken to the train and bus stations.

For nearly four years Vision Outreach has made the monthly outings in an effort to not only feed people but to minister to them and share the love of God with them.

"God placed it in my heart when He planted me in the church. I have a heart, and I have a heart like Christ. I want to be able to help

somebody," said Vaughn Rucker.

"This is what ministry is all about. It's awesome that He has given us four walls to preach in, but it is marvelous when He tells us in his word that we must go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come. Expressing and showing love will bring them in."

Latest statistics on homelessness in Mississippi from the point-in-time count that took place Jan. 25 of this year show that there are more than 1,600 homeless households in the state with some living in emergency shelters, transitional

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Gospel stars stop in Jackson for praise tour

By Stephanie R. Jones
Contributing Writer

New Jerusalem Church started the week of Thanksgiving with a rousing performance Sunday in the sanctuary featuring national gospel artists Pastor Charles Perkins, Michelle Williams and Byron Cage.

Jackson was a stop on the Inspired People's Holiday Praise: The Thankful Tour headlined by Perkins, pastor of Fellowship Church of Chicago.

New Jerusalem Pastor Dwayne K. Pickett said while he's been in ministry for 20-plus years this was his first Christian concert of this type. "My folks went to blues concerts," Pickett said.

He and his wife, Tracy, stayed for the entire concert, which had a packed house on their feet throughout the performance.

Pickett gave the performance a thumbs-up at the end.

The performers made the evening even more special for attendees who paid \$20-\$35 for tickets by mingling and taking cell phone photos with many before and after the concert.

Jenkins is an award-winning songwriter and pastor of the 8,000-member Fellowship Church founded by the Rev. Clay Evans in 1950. His radio smash "War" spent five weeks at No. 1 on Billboard's Gospel Airplay Chart and 55 weeks on the overall survey.

"It's been an amazing year for us, and we're all so thankful," Jenkins said.

His song "Awesome" topped the Billboard Magazine Hot Gospel Songs chart for 22 weeks in 2012 and won a BMI award in 2014 for more than 100,000-lifetime radio spins.

Jenkins and his brother Carlton Jenkins went over the last-minute song lineup before the show, which was hosted by Charles Jenkins' wife, Tyra Jenkins-Cage, known as the "Prince of Praise" for such

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Michelle Williams performs. PHOTO BY STEPHANIE R. JONES



Ericka Wheeler

Wheeler named Rhodes Scholar

By Jeff Amy
The Associated Press

Millsaps College senior Ericka M. Wheeler is a double major in English and history who has plans to become a physician after watching her grandfather suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Her journeys so far have taken her from Mississippi to Cambodia and Cuba and her next stop will be England, as a Rhodes Scholar.

Millsaps announced Saturday that Wheeler, who is the first Af-

frican-American woman from Mississippi to claim the prestigious honor, has been chosen as one of 32 U.S. men and women who will enter Oxford University next fall for postgraduate study.

"I'm shocked and overwhelmed right now," she said by telephone following her finalist interview Saturday in Birmingham, Ala. "I couldn't believe it when they announced it. I'm still trying to process it."

Wheeler, who plans to attend

medical school later, said she will study medical anthropology at the English university.

The Rhodes Trust had not yet announced the full list of winners late Saturday for the scholarships, which pay all expenses for two or three years of study.

Wheeler, who wrote a thesis tracing how police brutality and race have been treated in fiction

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