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SunHerald

Biloxi considers fireworks solutions after Deer Island fire

BY MARTHA SANCHEZ
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Biloxi's leaders are debating how to lower the risk of brush fires after Deer Island ignited again this year during an annual Fourth of July fireworks show. The city and its fire chief said this week they are considering several solutions for next year, including possibly adjusting the spot where fireworks launch

from a barge and stationing a fire crew on the island to quickly stamp out flames. The Boom Boom Committee, which organizes the fireworks show, plans to meet with city leaders in the next two weeks. "We're open to any suggestions," said chairman Jerry Munro. "We'll be glad to do anything we can." The fire that burned Deer Island on Friday night was "likely caused by falling debris from

the fireworks barge," according to a fire department incident report. It was the second such fire in recent years. On the Fourth of July in 2023, according to that year's fire department report, authorities patrolling the water "witnessed a firework fly off the barge and land on Deer Island." "A fire started immediately," the report says, "and grew rapidly due to high winds." Leaders promised this week to

discuss solutions and said fires on Deer Island pose little risk. Friday's flames burned between 2 and 3 acres of brush on the island, which is uninhabited. No one was injured. Fire Chief Nicholaus Geiser said an unexpected north wind may have blown a falling ember toward the island. Summer winds usually blow away from the island. "It was very minimal damage," said Joe Spraggins, execu-

utive director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, which oversees Deer Island's public land. "It looked a lot worse than what it was." The Department of Marine Resources scoured the island for hazards and reopened the trails and interior on Monday. Authorities already patrol the Mississippi Sound during the annual fireworks show to keep boaters away from the barge. But Geiser said the fire department may station more boats on the water next year. Biloxi public affairs manager Cecilia Dobbs Walton also said the city is considering shifting the barge farther south or west next year. Police officers helped ferry firefighters back and forth on

SEE FIREWORKS, 3A



The former Lucy's restaurant on the beach in Biloxi has a new owner who hasn't yet revealed plans for the property. This is one of several changes on Restaurant Row between U.S. 90 and the sand.

New venues, more changes as Biloxi's Restaurant Row evolves

BY MARY PEREZ
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Restaurant Row in Biloxi is seeing big changes that will bring new energy and a surprise to the beachfront in Biloxi. The waterfront restaurants are a favorite place for sunset views and strolls along the boardwalk. The area has seen

several changes in owners over the past 10 years. Now the restaurant that housed Lucy's Retired Surfers Bar & Restaurant, which closed in August 2024, was sold by Southeast Commercial Realty. The new owners are neighbors who have operated Shaggy's on Biloxi Beach for years. They also own Shaggy's restaurants at the beach in Gulf-

port, Pass Christian and Pensacola, Florida, and on the reservoir in Brandon. Co-owner Ron Ladner said they aren't ready yet to share their plans for the new building right next door. He and Rimmer Covington Jr. have created in Shaggy's open-air restaurants "a place where you can come in and leave in a better mood than when you got

there," Ladner said. They also are known for giving back to the community by taking local kids out fishing and supporting and by donating to local causes.

MORE CHANGES ON THE ROW

As the owners of Shaggy's

SEE RESTAURANT, 2A

Saucier man critical after being injured by boat propeller

BY LILLIAN FOSTER
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Bailee Peebles, 20, of Saucier, was severely injured in a boating accident in Ocean Springs around 11:30 p.m. Friday that left him in critical condition. While traveling on a jet ski from Deer Island to the Mary Walker Marina in Gautier, Peebles fell off and was struck by the propeller of a nearby boat. Family friend and neighbor James Roberson said he was with the family at Deer Island about 30 minutes before the incident.

According to Roberson, the jet ski and the boat never made contact. Mississippi Department of Marine Resources officials declined to comment, citing an ongoing investigation. According to Roberson, the propeller nearly severed Peebles' left arm at the elbow, fractured his collarbone and his jaw, and left him with lacerations on his cheek, armpit and forehead. Roberson said first responders took Peebles to USA Health University Hospital in Mobile, where surgeons reattached his left arm and performed four surgeries. "Pray for us," Kenneth Peebles said. "We don't want him to lose his arm. Emotionally, this has been traumatic for him."

Roberson started a GoFundMe to support the young mechanic and his family in hopes of raising up to \$7,500 for potential medical devices, transportation and medical bills. "It's going to go toward helping his quality of life so that way he can focus on getting healed," Roberson said. "Anytime I've ever needed help with anything, he's always been eager to help and anxious to get whatever we needed done. He's a really kind guy."

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Brothers Food Mart hit with 10 health violations

BY MARY PEREZ
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GULFPORT It's rare that one kitchen racks up 10 critical health violations and when it does, it brings a new level of scrutiny from the

Mississippi Health Department. On June 25, Brothers Food Mart at 6600 28th St. and Canal Road in Gulfport failed its inspection with 10 issues, any one of which would warrant a C grade. An 11th violation was corrected during the health department

inspection of the kitchen at the gas station convenience store where food is prepared. One of the most concerning issues is when inspectors find rodents, insects or animals present. Mississippi's inspection website doesn't specify which pest or animal was found.

In this case it was flies, said Adam Follett, retail food protection director for the state health department. MSDH may place a hold on, or discard, orders on any food the inspector observes may be contaminated, he said. An owner or manager was not available for comment on the violations or the response to the failed inspection.

PROCEDURES ARE FOLLOWED

Health inspections that typ-

SEE FOOD MART, 4A



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