

Hometown hero Gracin coming to Hoedown

FULL SCHEDULE, 1D



Josh Gracin



Justine Blazer

Dwaun Anderson of Suttons Bay

MR. BASKETBALL IS MR. VERSATILITY

SPORTS, 6B

ON GUARD FOR 179 YEARS

Detroit Free Press

Tuesday 3.22.2011

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TECH TUESDAY

Testing 4G networks: How fast are they really?

LIFE, 1D



LEONARD PITTS

Good, hard facts won't dispel old stereotype

EDITORIAL, 8A



MUSIC

Supreme Court backs Eminem in dispute over online royalties

BUSINESS, 2C

40 High 27 Low



Where's spring?
Cooler today with rain
FORECAST, 2A

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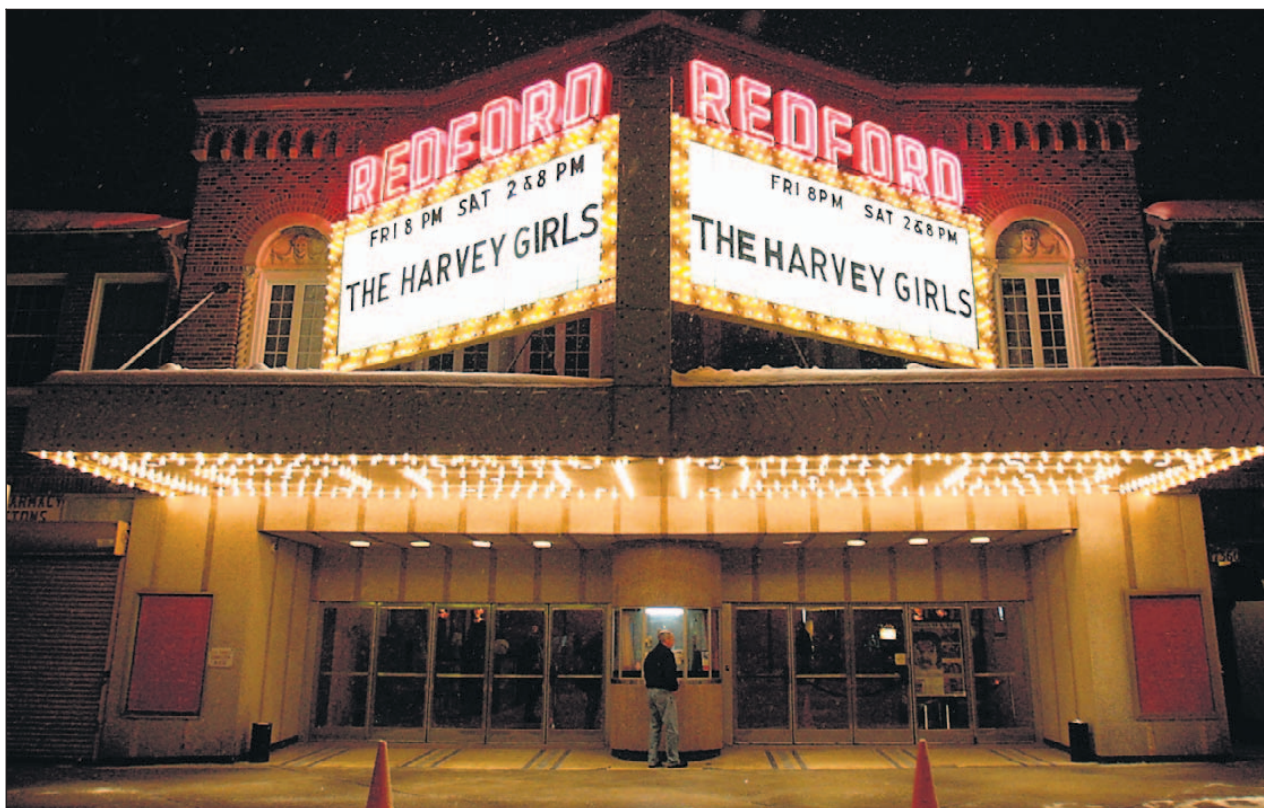
\$1.00



ANDRE J. JACKSON/Detroit Free Press
Gov. Rick Snyder outlined his reform plan Monday.

Snyder turns up heat on cities to reduce benefits

TURNAROUND IN REDFORD BLUEPRINT FOR DETROIT WORKS



KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/Detroit Free Press

The Old Redford Theatre, open since 1927, symbolizes a neighborhood's rebirth. The theater showed "The Harvey Girls" on Feb. 26. Allen Fitzgerald, the theater's director of operations, says the area's revitalization "just warms my heart so much."

Bustling business corridor is model mayor's office hopes to duplicate

By NAOMI R. PATTON
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

In the six months since Mayor Dave Bing launched the Detroit Works Project to reconfigure the city, in part by building up viable neighborhoods and concentrating resources there, Detroiters have wondered how the city will execute its plan.

The Old Redford Business Association could offer one model.

Without incentives, 13 for- and non-profit members of the association are helping transform a once-moribund neighborhood into a thriving commercial tract along a narrow block on Lahser at Grand River in northwest Detroit.

The Motor City Java House coffee shop, which opened in October, is the newest member of the association, joining two bakeries, a barbershop, a hair salon, a pharmacy, a shoe repair

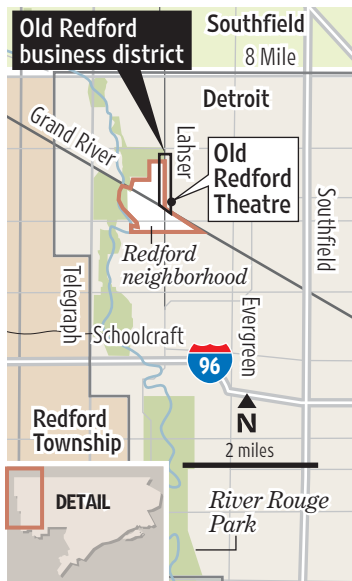
shop, Motor City Blight Busters, the Old Redford Theatre and others.

In a little more than five years, members have constructed new spaces and renovated old spaces — all while frustrated by common Detroit woes, including a dearth of streetlights, trash problems and dilapidated buildings whose owners feel no pressure to maintain them.

Karla Henderson, Bing's group executive of planning and facilities and part of the Detroit Works leadership, said the association's development is exactly the kind of commercial revitalization the city wants to help create.

"We can piggyback off that corridor," said Henderson, who, along with other administration officials, frequents the Sweet Potato Sensations bakery on the block.

■ NEIGHBORHOOD IS A MODEL OF COOPERATION. 2A



See a photo gallery of Old Redford district

WHAT HE IS URGING:

- Workers pay 20% for health coverage
- Make major cuts in retirement expenses

By CHRIS CHRISTOFF and KATHLEEN GRAY
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

GRAND RAPIDS — Gov. Rick Snyder called Monday for local government employees to pay at least 20% of their health insurance premiums, and for less expensive retirement plans as a condition for communities to get some of their revenue-sharing money.

In a statement on government reform at Grand Rapids City Hall, he also proposed ways to make it easier for communities to merge police, fire and other services without violating state labor laws.

Snyder's budget would cut revenue sharing by about \$100 million — an effective reduction of 10% for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. He would distribute nearly \$200 million in revenue sharing based on local governments' willingness to cut costs and make their spending more visible to the public.

Snyder said the change, which needs legislative approval, will prod communities toward spending reform.

"The goal here isn't to punish people, it's to reward success and create a new culture based on best practices," Snyder said.

Some municipal groups gave the proposal cautious praise.

Robert Cannon, supervisor of Clinton Township, said his community has made some of the changes Snyder recommends. But he doesn't like linking revenue sharing to the outcome of bargaining with employee unions.

"The governor is making a good effort, but he doesn't have to do it," Cannon said. "We do."

■ REACTION TO THE REFORM PLAN. 5A

■ LOOK AT STERLING HEIGHTS, HAMTRAMCK. 5A

Snyder's proposed revenue-sharing incentives

- Require public employees to contribute at least 20% to their health care costs
- Put new employees into a 401(k)-style retirement program rather than traditional pension
- Make public finances accessible to the public
- Pursue plans to share, consolidate municipal services
- Change laws to allow immediate reopening of employee contracts after mergers of communities
- Prohibit minimum staffing requirements in local charters

Nation+World Obama on Libya: 'Gadhafi has to go'

STORY, PAGE 7A



ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS/Associated Press

Libyans celebrate Sunday atop a destroyed tank belonging to the forces of Moammar Gadhafi on the outskirts of Benghazi in eastern Libya.

A pain in state's pocketbook: high auto insurance

1 study says premiums are highest in U.S.

By DAWSON BELL
FREE PRESS LANSING BUREAU

Two recent studies of auto insurance rates rank Michigan among the nation's most expensive — one had it in first place — with both citing the state's unique mandate for unlimited coverage for personal injuries as a primary cause for high rates.

Michigan auto insurance rates led the country — \$2,541 a year for a hypothetical 40-year-old man with a clean driving record — in an annual survey released last week by the consumer insurance information site insure.com.

The Michigan rate jumped

more than 21% from the same survey a year earlier, overtaking Louisiana, which topped the list last year.

Vermont, at \$995 a year, was the cheapest place to buy auto insurance, the survey found.

Insure.com calculates rates by pricing policies from six major insurers in each state, adjusting for geographic differences and vehicle type, said Amy Danise, the site's managing editor.

By contrast, a national study by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, released in December, ranked Michigan 11th most ex-

Insure.com auto rate study

A study released last week ranks Michigan first in the nation in auto insurance rates. It is based on a 40-year-old male driver with a clean driving record.

1. Michigan	\$2,541
2. Louisiana	\$2,453
3. Oklahoma	\$2,197
4. Montana	\$2,190
5. Washington, D.C.	\$2,146

Sources: Insure.com (a consumer advocacy group)

KOFI MYLER/Detroit Free Press

pensive.

The NAIC report, based on the cost of actual policies purchased in each state, found the average premium in Michigan in 2008 was \$1,032.

Pete Kuhnmuensch, executive director of the Insurance Institute of Michigan, said Monday that he expects efforts to make unlimited personal in-

jury protection optional rather than mandatory to begin in the Legislature later this year.

Prospects for insurance change are uncertain, as Gov. Rick Snyder and the Legislature appear to be focusing almost exclusively on jobs and business-climate issues.

■ CONTACT DAWSON BELL: 517-372-8661 OR DBELL@FREEPRESS.COM

Today's weather

Weather Underground

wunderground.com

freep.com

Today in metro Detroit

DRIVE TIME TEMPS

8 a.m. 36 Partly cloudy

5 p.m. 38 Rain

SNOWFALL

Today

Record (2008) 82.6"

Norm. 41.4"

Snow Mon. (by 6 p.m.): 0.0 Sun.: Trace

Sunrise: 7:32 a.m. Set: 7:46 p.m.

Moonrise: 11:59 p.m. Set: 8:49 a.m.

Across Michigan

Ironwood 34/22

Iron Mountain 34/20

Munising 34/20

Sault Ste. Marie 29/13

Mackinaw City 31/16

Alpena 31/20

Traverse City 34/22

Ludington 38/29

Houghton Lake 34/20

Flint 39/27

Lansing 38/25

Benton Harbor 43/40

Detroit 40/27

Across the nation

51/38 Seattle

Portland 51/37

61/45 Las Vegas

Los Angeles 62/49

60/28 Denver

St. Louis 77/56

83/71 Honolulu

35/23 Anchorage

39/25 Minneapolis

40/27 Detroit

54/36 New York

Philadelphia 56/36

Atlanta 81/57

80/64 Houston

80/64 Miami

Long-range metro forecast (daytime highs/nighttime lows)

TODAY

40/27

Rain

WEDNESDAY

40/26

Sleet

THURSDAY

36/18

Partly cloudy

FRIDAY

35/19

Partly sunny

SATURDAY

36/23

Partly sunny

SUNDAY

35/25

Partly sunny

MONDAY

38/25

Partly sunny

World cities

Today Hi Lo W

Auckland 69 60 pc

Baghdad 86 59 pc

Bangkok 102 78 pc

Beijing 48 28 s

Cairo 73 46 s

Dublin 55 39 s

Frankfurt 57 35 pc

Istanbul 44 41 pc

Jakarta 86 75 pc

Jerusalem 68 51 pc

Karachi 87 69 s

Lagos 87 60 pc

Lima 75 66 pc

London 59 39 pc

Madrid 57 35 pc

Manila 89 75 c

Mex. City 77 44 s

Montreal 35 19 pc

Moscow 32 30 pc

Mumbai 87 71 s

Ottawa 32 15 pc

Paris 59 35 pc

Rio 80 71 t

Rome 59 39 s

Seoul 41 28 pc

Shanghai 46 32 pc

Tehran 62 42 pc

KEY STATS

Monday: 55/39 18 0.27

Sunday: 48/30 26 0.71

Normal today: 48/30 26 0.09

Record today: 81 (1938) 0.93 (1916)

Monthly total: 584 3.19

Monthly departure: -54 1.57

Season total: 0.01

Yearly departure: 0.01

Heating degree days

By 6 p.m., not included in totals

For a 5-day forecast in your area, send text message with W and your CITY to 44636 (4INFO)

COVER STORY

Redford has a recipe for success

Neighborhood's loyalty is the heart of revitalization in business district

By NAOMI R. PATTON
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The last Saturday night in February, the Old Redford block on Lahser at Grand River in Detroit was jumping.

The Old Redford Theatre, open since 1927, was showing "The Harvey Girls," starring Judy Garland and Angela Lansbury. As always, the 8 p.m. movie was preceded by the 7:30 p.m. organ concert performed by a member of the Motor City Theatre Organ Society.

The crowd of regulars and new fans came from Farmington Hills, Royal Oak, Birmingham and other suburbs.

At Sweet Potato Sensations, Espy Thomas hosted a natural-hair forum where dozens attended, clearing out inventory in the bakery owned by her parents, Jeffrey and Cassandra Thomas, on the block for nearly 17 years.

The crowd of regulars and new fans came from Farmington Hills, Royal Oak, Birmingham and other suburbs.

At Sweet Potato Sensations, Espy Thomas hosted a natural-hair forum where dozens attended, clearing out inventory in the bakery owned by her parents, Jeffrey and Cassandra Thomas, on the block for nearly 17 years.

Allen Fitzgerald, Old Redford Theatre director of operations for 20 years, grew up in Old Redford.

Fitzgerald remembers the down times in the neighborhood and credits Motor City Blight Busters for its role as an incubator for some of the businesses in the association. The area's revitalization "just warms my heart so much," he said.

Business association

The Old Redford Business Association existed decades ago, and Espy Thomas, president of the association, re-established the organization that meets once a month. She and Java House owner Alicia Marion have taken the lead in pressing the city for services.

The association wants better lighting, with the existing globe streetlights restored, better snow removal, more Dumpsters for trash collection, better parking signs, parking meters removed and more pressure on owners of dilapidated buildings.

They appreciate improved police presence, with a recently assigned community officer

Small-business owner Meida Oliviera, standing right, sells aromatherapy products to Tracey Robinson at an event at Sweet Potato Sensations.

Detroiters Reginald Hyter, 39, left, and Mark Payne, 27, are members of the Public Art Workz Chess Club in Detroit. This game was on Feb. 26.

Motor City Java House owner Alicia Marion of Detroit, left, talks with patrons Sue Briese of Northville, center, and Lois Ball of Kalamazoo.

to patrol the area.

Two years ago, Thomas' family moved Sweet Potato Sensations to a larger property across the street from their old shop.

"We didn't want to leave. ... We have a fan base and a loyalty in this community," said Thomas, who grew up in the neighborhood.

Paul Bologna has owned Paul's Barber Shop since 1964, when "everything was booming ... all the storefronts were occupied," he said.

He and Fitzgerald point to businesses leaving the neighborhood when Northland Mall opened in Southfield in 1954. After the 1967 riot, Bologna

said, most of the businesses left.

The return of businesses to the block "has been bringing more people in the neighborhood ... seeing more faces," he said.

"It's a model of cooperation between neighbors, nonprofits and artists," Blight Busters founder John George said of the restoration.

Impact of Blight Busters

In the 22 years of Blight Busters' existence, George estimates about \$20 million has been invested in Old Redford's redevelopment.

In the last five years, George said construction costs for the Java House and the Artist Village gallery and performance space totaled around \$250,000.

"The community really embraced me," Marion said.

Karla Henderson, Mayor Dave Bing's group executive of planning and facilities, said the city is seeking a citywide solution to the service and quality-of-life issues the association wants fixed.

"It's definitely a community place," she said of Old Redford. "The question is, how do we — as an administration — help support that."

Gary Hoover, an economics professor and public policy analyst at the University of Ala-

bama, said it's a positive sign for the city that association members managed to revitalize the area without incentives or tax abatements.

"Now the city itself will benefit from all the tax revenue without having to cut a deal," Hoover said.

New kid on the block

The Motor City Java House features refurbished hardwood floors, copper-accented ceilings and colorful walls, adorned inside and out by artists from the Public Art Workz, managed and curated by artist Chazz Miller.

Marion, who worked at Starbucks for nine months in 2007-08 learning the barista ropes, said about 50% of the coffee shop's revenue comes from walk-ins; the other 50% of patronage comes from events at the theater, in the coffee shop and in the Artist Village gallery.

"Everybody wants a neighborhood coffee shop," Marion said.

Sisters Michelle Nelson and Candice Nelson, who grew up in and still live in Old Redford, said they satisfy their sweet tooth by walking the three blocks from their home on Chapel to Sweet Potato Sensations.

Michelle Nelson, 30, said their mother wouldn't let them

walk there when they were younger because of the danger.

Now, said Candice Nelson, 27, they meet up with friends for the open mic poetry on Wednesday nights at the Java House.

"Nobody was going around there; now it's just beautiful," she said. "It's our neighborhood, and we love it."

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NEWSSTAND RATES		
Daily	\$1.00	\$1.00
Sunday	\$1.50	\$2.00
U.S. MAIL ONLY (Monthly)		
7-day	\$43.48	\$14.78
Not same day/Mich.	\$46.53	\$15.44
U.S., outside Mich.		

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10.21.10

Corrections
The Free Press corrects all errors of fact. If you know of an error, please call the newsroom at 313-222-6600.

Lottery results
MICHIGAN MONDAY
Daily 3 and 4
Midday 819 and 7528
Evening 539 and 1057
Fantasy 5 6, 13, 33, 34, 38
Keno 1, 3, 8, 17, 21, 22, 23, 28, 30, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 49, 63, 66, 68, 69, 71, 72, 80
Today's Mega Millions jackpot: \$244 MILLION
Wednesday's Powerball jackpot: \$101 MILLION

OHIO MONDAY
Pick 3 and 4
Midday 620 and 3233
Evening 435 and 5954
Rolling Cash 5 5, 11, 16, 20, 23
Classic Lotto 2, 4, 10, 14, 20, 40
Ten-Oh! numbers
Midday 4, 11, 18, 19, 27, 32, 33, 36, 42, 46, 47, 50, 53, 61, 63, 67, 75, 76, 77, 79
Evening 2, 18, 30, 33, 35, 39, 41, 43, 45, 46, 49, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 70, 77, 78, 79

Old Redford Business Association

(All on Lahser at Grand River)

- 4 Corners (Caterer)
- Cornerstone Images (Hair Salon)
- Debi's Sewing Room
- Lahser Sew & Vac
- Lahser Shoe Repair
- Motor City Blight Busters (www.blightbusters.org)
- Motor City Java House (on Facebook)
- Paul's Barber Shop
- Redford Pharmacy
- Simply Divine (Cakes)
- Sweet Potato Sensations (www.sweetpotatosensations.com)
- The Old Redford Theatre (http://redfordtheatre.com)
- Youth Organizing to Uplift Humanity