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## **County and City team up to improve Courthouse's handicap access**

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By: Linda Fallon & Ken Flanagan

The George County Board of Supervisors and the City of Lucedale are teaming up to improve handicap access and sidewalk safety around the Courthouse Square. Work will begin Tuesday, Sept. 15 and is expected to take about two months to complete, weather permitting.

The major focus of the improvement project is installing five new handicap access ramps around the Downtown Courthouse Square. A new ADA compliant ramp will be added to each corner and the south entrance access ramp will be expanded. A new sidewalk will connect all five access ramps.

"The new sidewalks have been needed for some time," says Board President, Larry McDonald. "The sidewalks will be wider, more level, and much safer for pedestrians, wheelchair access, baby strollers, and the morning and evening joggers."

Sidewalk improvements include removing the current narrow 4 foot wide sidewalk and pouring a new 6 foot wide sidewalk around the entire Courthouse. The new concrete sidewalks will meet current standards and remove dozens of cracked sections and uneven joints.

Lucedale Mayor Doug Lee explains the City will be providing the labor and the County will be providing the materials for the improvement project. Before any work began, the City and County entered into an "Inter-Local Agreement" which was then approved by the Mississippi Attorney General's Office for the project.

"This is again a great opportunity for the City of Lucedale and the Board of Supervisors to work together to improve our Downtown area. The historic Courthouse, with its signature red dome, is a vital piece to our Downtown. These sidewalks and access ramps will improve safety and access to the Courthouse for all residents and visitors. We are proud to be a part of it," Lee said.

Along with the access and safety improvements, several park benches with concrete pads will be placed around the Courthouse with pillar light fixtures for better lighting.

This sidewalk and handicap access project is just the latest step in several Courthouse renovations which began two years ago by the County. Visit the County's website for more details at [www.georgecountymss.gov](http://www.georgecountymss.gov).

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