

We often take for granted hearing the sound of water slowly dripping out of our faucets and we expect to see clear water fill our cups, but what if it was all stripped away from us? Jackson residents started living this reality on August 29th when the water stopped running. The water supply of Jackson went into the drain after the water pressure suddenly dropped. Family and friends around North Mississippi were worried for their loved ones amid the crisis.

“Avery-Claire Littleton is finding out just what it’s like to live in a third world country except [in] Jackson not Somalia,” said Amy Lynn Gewin Littleton about her daughter in a Facebook post.

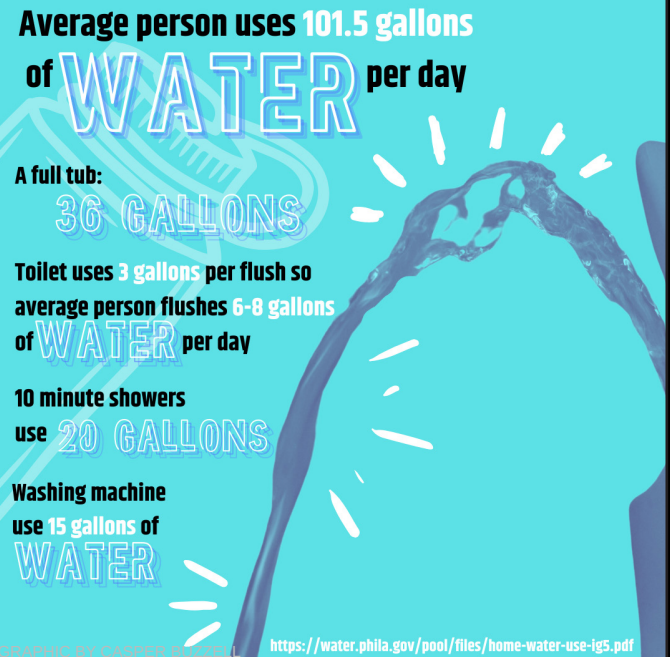
Avery-Claire Littleton, a 2018 Tupelo graduate and former THS Alum staff member, is currently in Jackson working towards a Masters in Biomedical Sciences at UMMC. She said businesses such as the University of Mississippi Medical Center opened their doors to staff in need of clean water for showering and other necessities.

Central Mississippi experienced a large amount of rain in late August causing the Pearl River to crest over 35 feet. Mississippi Emergency Management provided 126,000 sandbags to help combat the flooding. However despite their best efforts, flooding of the Pearl River caused the O.B Curtis Water Treatment plant in Jackson to fail. A malfunction of the pumps at the only other treatment plant in Jackson, J.H. Fewell, also contributed to the crisis.

As a result, residents were left with no drinking water and no water to power the plumbing systems. Jackson Public Schools shifted to virtual learning amid the crisis. The National Guard was deployed to Jackson and lines were set up so residents could have access to clean water.

A rental water pump was installed on September 5th to correct the water pressure

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GRAPHIC BY CASPER BUZZELL

so the 150,000 residents of Jackson could have running water.

“We are flushing bad water out of the system and making mechanical improvements to prevent an even more catastrophic failure,” said Gov. Tate Reeves in an update given on August 31 by the Mississippi Department of Health as reported by multiple news outlets such as the Clarion Ledger.

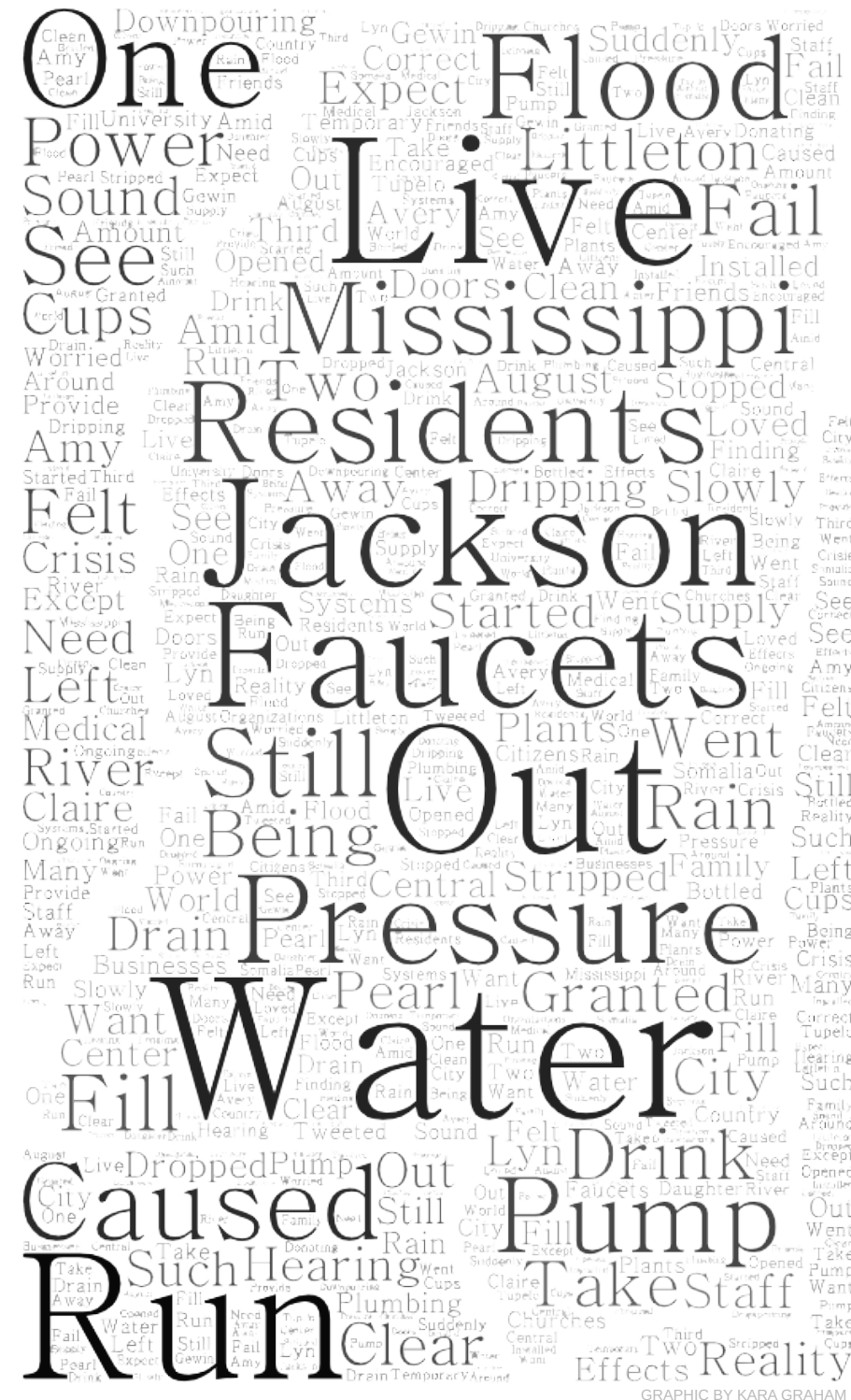
The low water pressure caused dangerous bacteria such as E.Coli, Cryptosporidium, and Giardia to infiltrate the water supply. Residents were placed under a boil water notice until the city reports two clean water samples which has not happened as of September 14.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has started an investigation into the events occurring in Jackson.

“Investigatory sampling will continue today to monitor water quality,” Jackson Mayor ,Chokwe Antar Lumumba, said in a press conference on September 12 at Jackson City Hall. “The distribution system is not ready for full sampling to clear the boil water notice.”

The Mississippi Department of Health continues to provide updates on the situation in Jackson.

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— Amy Lynn Gewin Littleton



GRAPHIC BY KARA GRAHAM

Desperate FOR A Drip
Jackson Residence Wait for Water



MEET THE AUTHOR



Kara Graham is sports editor for Wave Media. She has always had a passion for writing and often writes poems and reads in her spare time. She is the recipient for the MSPA Best of Show Lede, MSPA Best of Show Caption, and was awarded first place in the Gum Tree poetry competition earlier this year. This summer she participated in a virtual newsroom called Headliners of Summer where she was joined by writers from 16 states and 4 countries to write stories of local and national interest. You can access more of her work on the Headliners of Summer website. She hopes to major in journalism at the University of Mississippi. This is her second year writing for Wave Media