



CHEER TEAM WINS AGAIN

The Jackson County Central competition cheerleading team won a meet for the second time this season.
Story, B1



JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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School plans public survey

Board members turn to citizens for answers to tough questions

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Facing difficult decisions regarding school facilities and finances, the Jackson County Central Board of Education plans to turn to members of the public for answers.



Rhonda Moore

School board members are in the early stages of formulating a districtwide survey. Rhonda Moore, school board chair, said

questions that will appear on the survey will primarily focus on buildings and money.

“The purpose of the survey is to gather information from the public concerning our facilities and financial resources,” Moore said. “It is a tool that will help us collect information from Jackson County residents on where they see our district today and 20 years from now. It will help us assess what would work best for the communities when considering fiscal responsibility, the facilities and educational resources.”

Moore said the survey, which will be mailed out to all postal addresses within the school district, will be conducted by an independent firm within the next six to

See **SURVEY** on A3

Board chair: Closing meeting legal, right

Fate of future meetings in air

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Closing last week’s meeting of a citizen task force to the general public was not only legal, but also justified.

That’s the word from Rhonda Moore, chair of the Jackson County Central Board of Education, who said the decision — though made amid some confusion on the part

of the public and even some board members — resulted in a remarkably productive discussion on the part of task force members charged with studying district facilities and finances.

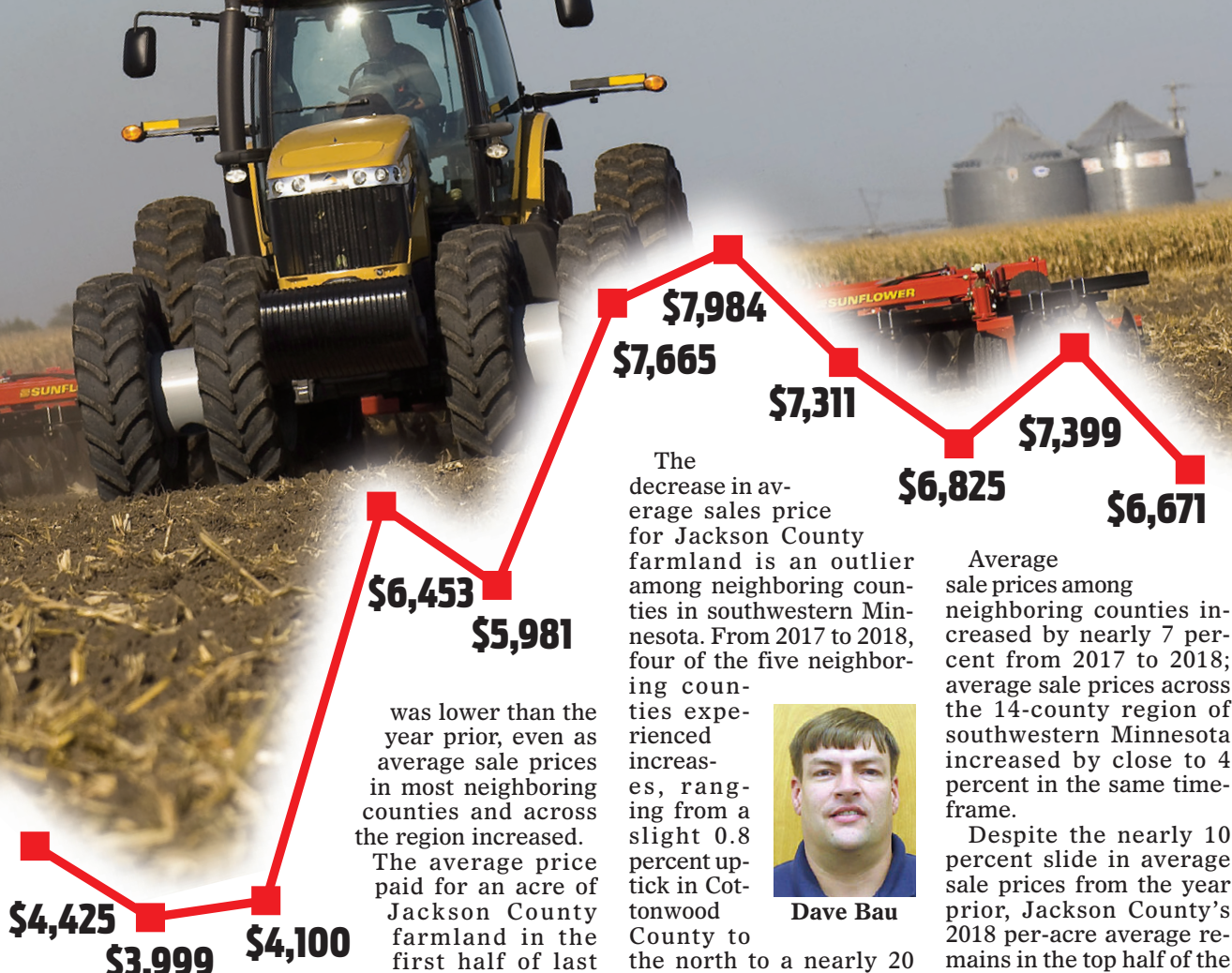
Last Wednesday evening’s meeting of the citizen task force began at 6:30 p.m. at Pleasantview Elementary School in Lakefield. Moore said there was some confusion regarding whether the meeting was open to the public or not.

See **CLOSED MEETING** on A3

Inside...

A4 COMMENTARY: The decision to close a school board-appointed task force meeting to the public last week was a questionable move from a public-perception standpoint.

COUNTY FARMLAND PRICES TAKE A TUMBLE



by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

The average price paid for an acre of Jackson County farmland in 2018

was lower than the year prior, even as average sale prices in most neighboring counties and across the region increased. The average price paid for an acre of Jackson County farmland in the first half of last year was \$6,671 — 9.8 percent less than the average paid in the same time period in 2017. The year-over-year sales price slide comes on the heels of an 8.4 percent local price spike in 2017.

Average price paid per acre of farmland

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jackson County	\$4,425	\$3,999	\$4,100	\$6,453	\$5,981	\$7,665	\$7,984	\$7,311	\$6,825	\$7,399	\$6,671
Percent change		+32.8	-9.6	+2.5	+57.4	-7.3	+28.2	+4.2	-8.4	-6.6	+8.4
Neighboring counties	\$3,899	\$3,777	\$4,279	\$4,725	\$6,860	\$8,944	\$7,950	\$7,012	\$7,332	\$6,698	\$7,154
Percent change		+25.9	-3.1	+13.3	+10.4	+45.2	+30.4	-11.1	-11.8	+4.6	-8.6
Regional average	\$3,702	\$3,733	\$3,913	\$4,687	\$6,245	\$8,466	\$7,556	\$6,929	\$6,751	\$6,340	\$6,589
Percent change		+30.0	+0.8	+4.8	+19.8	+33.2	+35.6	-10.7	-8.3	-2.6	+3.9

Source: University of Minnesota Extension



PHOTO BY JUSTIN LESSMAN

Jackson City Electric Supervisor Jeremy Boogerd reads an electric meter last week. The task may become a thing of the past in Jackson should the city transition to an advanced metering infrastructure system.

No more meter reading?

New automated system promises benefits for both city and residents

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Meter reading may soon be a thing of the past in Jackson.

Members of the Jackson City Council last week authorized city staff to solicit bids on an advanced metering infrastructure system. Such a system would not

Inside...

A7 Upgrading water and electric meters is among the Jackson City Council’s top goals for 2019.

only transmit meter readings to City Hall automatically, but also provide additional capabilities and efficiencies for both the city and residents.

At present, residents are asked to read their electric and water meters every month and report the readings to City Hall. Jackson City Administrator Matt Skaret said the concerns

surrounding this manual process are many.

“This system is very inefficient and burdensome for customers and staff alike,” he said. “Moreover, it results in many inaccuracies, such as errors in reading meters, and delays the time in which water leaks within a residence are caught, costing

See **METER READING** on A7

Historical society kicks off fundraising campaign

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

The Jackson County Historical Society has officially kicked off its fundraising campaign for a proposed museum expansion.

The society hopes to raise around \$300,000
See **FUNDRAISING** on A3



SUBMITTED IMAGE

An artist’s rendering shows the proposed addition to the Jackson County Historical Society Museum building in Lakefield.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN LESSMAN

FLIPPING THE VINYL

Local disc jockey and record enthusiast Dave Schmidt flips the vinyl during Monday’s Lunch and Listen session at the Jackson Center for the Arts. Schmidt not only played some favorites from his record collection for those gathered, but also spoke on the history of the medium and its recent resurgence in popularity.