



YOUTH LIVESTOCK EXPO UNDER WAY

The first-ever Minnesota Youth Livestock Expo runs through this Sunday in Jackson and Fairmont. Preview edition, **INSIDE**



JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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County to dole out a share of CARES money

Local businesses, nonprofits must apply by Sept. 15

by **JOSHUA SCHUETZ**
Staff Writer

Money the county received through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act will be distributed to local businesses and nonprofit organizations that have suffered expenditures or losses related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



James Eigenberg

Jackson County's share of federal CARES funding totals \$1.26 million. County commissioners have set aside \$700,000 of that for small businesses and local nonprofits. A business or nonprofit that has experienced losses in revenue or a spike in expenses as a consequence of the pandemic may apply for funds.

"Organizations with eligible losses are able to apply and get up to \$5,000 in grants each," said economic development coordinator Chris Giesen of Chatfield-based Community and Economic Development Associates, who the

county has tabbed to help disburse the funds. "We're encouraging everyone to at least take a look at it, especially if they have seen losses."

One stipulation of the grant program is funds cannot be put toward expenses already covered by other government funds.

"The big thing is that they can't double dip," Giesen said. "We can't fund the same expense twice."

CEDA is working with the county to administer the funds and will oversee the distribution program itself.

"The county is urging folks to contact CEDA for guidance on the application process rather than the county," said Jackson County Coordinator Steve Duncan. "What people will hear from the county is, 'Contact CEDA.'"

Duncan said county officials are keenly interested in the response to the program from businesses and nonprofits and added more money may be on the table if demand outstrips supply. "If demand is greater, then there is more money that the county may discuss," Duncan said.

In addition to overseeing the grant program, CEDA will also handle marketing and applications, Giesen said.

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PHOTOS BY JUSTIN LESSMAN

Above: Andrew Bengtson, an industrial technology instructor at Osseo High School, lights up the welding lab at the Jackson campus of Minnesota West Community and Technical College last week. Right: Northfield High School teacher Jacob Dayneko works a joint in the welding lab.



TEACHING TEACHERS

Program aims to connect college faculty with high school educators

by **JUSTIN R. LESSMAN**
Publisher

Nearly 25 high school agriculture and tech-ed teachers from across the state were in Jackson last week getting a crash course in small engines, welding and energy from the experts at Minnesota West Community and

Technical College. The teachers-turned-students — ranging from a first-year rookie to a 41-year-veteran — spent three days in Jackson listening to college-level instructors, getting hands-on lab experience and networking with each other. The pilot training program was a joint effort of MnWest and the Minnesota Centers for Excellence.

Paul Lanoue, dean of agriculture and business at MnWest, said the teachers who participated in the

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Local real estate market stays hot

Lack of housing causing concern

by **JOSHUA SCHUETZ**
Staff Writer

Jackson County's real estate market has stayed hot through the COVID-19 pandemic, with low interest rates and an abundance of buyers making it a good time for those considering selling their homes to do so.

That was true before the state-imposed lockdowns, and remains true now.

"Last January, February and March was the best quarter I've had in 15

years," said Bull Market Realty broker Scott Bahr. "We had 14 sales pending."

April and May were slow for the agency, but summer brought with it new buyers looking to snap up homes.

Bahr's biggest problem? A lack of housing stock.

"In Jackson and Lakefield, there's not a lot of housing left," Bahr said. "Supply is tough right now."

Lee Porter, who runs Exit Realty's Jackson branch, said the hot market has his agency setting records too.

"Two-thousand-nineteen was a record year for us,"

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Left: Brittani Oyster works on a solar energy kit during last week's training program at the Jackson campus of Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Right: Jason Bohl, power sports instructor at the Jackson campus of MnWest, offers some one-on-one instruction to Nathan Thompson last week.



PHOTOS BY MIKE JORDAN

TAKING SHAPE

Above: With the rafters up and the work to re-enforce them nearly complete, the Jackson County Historical Society Museum's new addition is readied for a metal roof last Thursday afternoon. Right: Crew members from Welp Construction work to re-enforce the rafters recently erected on the new addition to the Jackson County Historical Society Museum building in Lakefield last week.



Fall semester will look a bit different at MnWest

by **JOSHUA SCHUETZ**
Staff Writer

Plenty of changes are in store for students and staff at the Jackson campus of Minnesota West Community and Technical College as the fall semester begins Monday. Among the measures being taken in light of the

See **MnWEST** on **A3**

Inside...



Meet the new teachers who will help usher in the 2020-2021 academic year at Jackson County Central schools this fall.

Inside...



The new academic year will look different at Jackson County Central schools, as classes resume Monday in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Primary election sees higher local turnout

by **JOSHUA SCHUETZ**
Staff Writer

Voter turnout in last week's primary election was up in Jackson County. Jackson County Auditor-Treasurer Kevin Nordquist, the county's top election official, reported a voter turnout of 22.9 percent, an improvement over recent years.

See **ELECTION** on **A3**

Races for Jackson City Council competitive

It's a race for the Jackson City Council.

Incumbent Brandon Finck will seek another term on the council in Ward 1, along with newcomers Nicole Hall and Michael More, all of whom will vie for two open seats. Incumbent Matt Madden is not seeking re-election.

Newly appointed council member Nathan Peterson has filed for the Ward 2 seat he currently holds, as did Marcus Polz. Polz is currently the council's liaison to the Southwest Minnesota Broadband Services Board of Directors; Peterson is his alternate.

The general election is scheduled for Nov. 3.