



SPRING SPORTS ARE BACK

Jackson County Central spring sports teams are back in action, with all of the varsity teams scheduled to open the season this week. Story, B1



JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC

County a COVID-19 'hotspot'

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Jackson County has emerged as a COVID-19 hotspot.

Mayo Clinic on Monday labeled the county as a "hotspot" for COVID-19 based on its rolling average of daily cases over the last week — a measure the Rochester-based health care system states is the "best sign of



Kevin Kimm

hotspots." As of this past Sunday, Jackson County's average daily case count per 100,000 people was 98 — by far the highest in the entire state.

And Mayo Clinic doesn't predict it's going to get any better in Jackson County over the next two weeks either. In fact, Mayo forecasts a steady increase in average daily case count per 100,000 people from now through April 18, with the county's estimated average daily case count of 122 per 100,000 that day expected to be the second highest in the state.

See **HOTSPOT** on A3

Locals urged to get vaccinated

More than 3,300 have taken a shot

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

COVID-19 vaccine is in ample supply in Jackson County and local health care officials are urging everyone 16 years of age and older to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

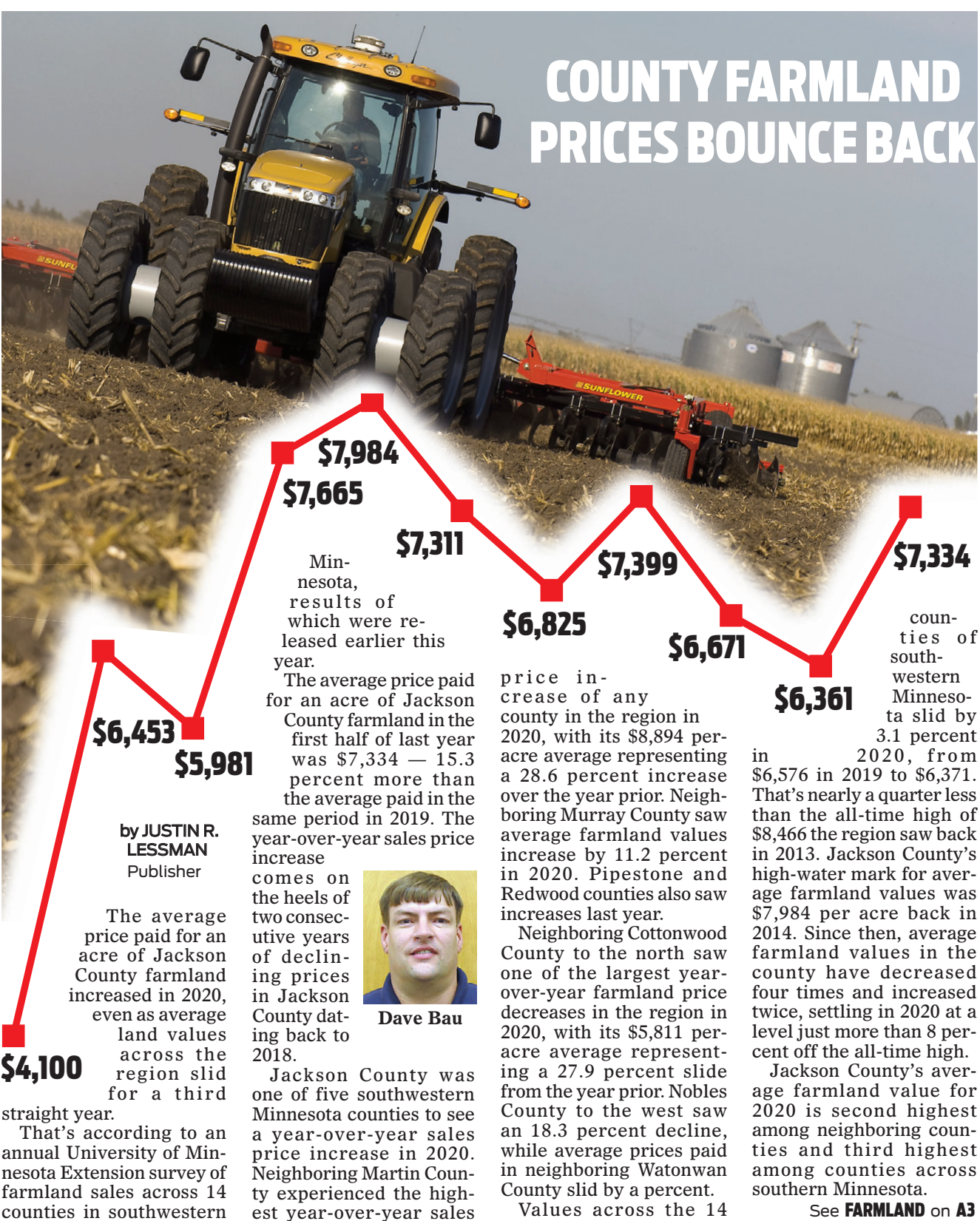
Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services hosts weekly no-appointment vaccination clinics open to everyone 18 years of age and older every Friday at 125 Torgerson Lane in Jackson. Sanford Jackson Medical Center encourages all those 16 years of age and older interested in receiving the vaccine to call 847-2200 to schedule an appointment. Vaccinations at both locations are being administered free of charge.

As of this past Sunday, 3,307 locals — more than 41 percent of the county's population — had received at least one vaccination dose, up 216 from the week prior. Of those 3,307, 2,191 — 27.3 percent of the county's population

See **VACCINATED** on A3

Inside...

A4 COMMENTARY: With COVID-19 vaccines now available to all adults in Minnesota, it's a good time to get a dose.



Average price paid per acre of farmland

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Jackson County	\$4,100	\$6,453	\$5,981	\$7,665	\$7,984	\$7,311	\$6,825	\$7,399	\$6,671	\$6,361	\$7,334	
Percent change		+2.5	+57.4	-7.3	+28.2	+4.2	-8.4	-6.6	+8.4	-9.8	-4.6	+15.3
Neighboring counties	\$4,279	\$4,725	\$6,860	\$8,944	\$7,950	\$7,012	\$7,332	\$6,698	\$7,154	\$6,917	\$6,674	
Percent change		+13.3	+10.4	+45.2	+30.4	-11.1	-11.8	+4.6	-8.6	+6.8	-3.3	-3.5
Regional average	\$3,913	\$4,687	\$6,245	\$8,466	\$7,556	\$6,929	\$6,751	\$6,340	\$6,589	\$6,576	\$6,371	
Percent change		+4.8	+19.8	+33.2	+35.6	-10.7	-8.3	-2.6	-6.1	+3.9	-0.2	-3.1

Source: University of Minnesota Extension



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDY ALLEN

Lightning sparks above Judy Allen's pond in a photo recently named the best in a National Weather Service-hosted photography contest.

Local photographer wins photo contest

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

Sometimes, revisiting a hobby from days gone by leads to interesting and exciting places. For Judy Allen of Jackson, that hobby was photography, and that place was first

in a regional photography contest.

"I've probably had a camera in my hand since I was in middle school," Allen said. "I started back up recently with a better camera and some online courses."

While there are end-

less subjects for photographers these days, Allen said she decided to dedicate her time to nature photography.

"I like doing nature photography," Allen said. "I do nighttime photography — photos of the

See **PHOTO** on A3

New downtown mural project gets under way

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

The Jackson Center for the Arts' plan to bring a community-created mural to downtown Jackson is finally coming to fruition.

Locals got the chance to start painting the mural, pieces of which are currently at the arts center, this past Friday.

Jackson Mayor Wayne Walter, Jackson County Library System Director Carrie Dose and JCA board member Cay Gjertson broke ground on the mural Friday afternoon.

The center is inviting community members to come and contribute to the painting.

"They can call us from 2 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and set up an appointment," said JCA employee Deb Kruse. "Two people can come in and paint per session."

Students at Jackson County Central schools are getting the chance to contribute as well. Art teacher Blaise Jacobsen, who has been involved in the project since its incep-



PHOTO BY JOSHUA SCHUETZ

Jackson Mayor Wayne Walter paints the first piece of a mural destined to grace the north exterior wall of the Jackson library.

tion, has one of the mural pieces in his classroom for kids to paint.

Painting is completely free of charge, and the center is providing all painting materials for community members to use.

"People can come into paint as many times as they want to," Kruse said.

The center is taking appointments for the next two weeks, so people will have plenty of chances to

contribute to the project. "We'll be painting it through the 17th," Kruse said.

Once the pieces are painted, the mural will be installed on the north exterior wall of the Jackson library building.

Gjertson said the center is hoping to replicate the project, which was funded by a state grant, in the future by putting more

See **MURAL** on A3

