

# 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

# ACKSON COUNTY PILOT 131ST YEAR/ISSUE 14

### **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 CO-**VID-19** based on its rolling 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 Tealth and Human Sererson 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 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

\$6,453 \$5,981

> by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN Publisher

The average price paid for an acre of Jackson County farmland increased in 2020, even as average land values across the \$4,100 region slid

for a third straight year.

That's according to an annual University of Minnesota Extension survey of farmland sales across 14 counties in southwestern

#### Average price paid per acre of farmland

COUNTY FARMLAND PRICES BOUNCE BACK

## \$7,984 \$7,665

\$7,311 Minnesota, results of which were released earlier this year.

The average price paid for an acre of Jackson County farmland in the first half of last year was \$7,334 - 15.3 percent more than the average paid in the same period in 2019. The

year-over-year sales price increase comes on the heels of two consecutive years

of declining prices in Jackson County dat-Dave Bau ing back to 2018.

Jackson County was one of five southwestern Minnesota counties to see a year-over-year sales price increase in 2020. Neighboring Martin County experienced the highest year-over-year sales

### price increase of any county in the region in 2020, with its \$8,894 peracre average representing a 28.6 percent increase over the year prior. Neighboring Murray County saw average farmland values increase by 11.2 percent in 2020. Pipestone and Redwood counties also saw

\$6,825

\$7,399

\$6,671

increases last year. Neighboring Cottonwood County to the north saw one of the largest yearover-year farmland price decreases in the region in 2020, with its \$5,811 peracre average representing a 27.9 percent slide from the year prior. Nobles County to the west saw an 18.3 percent decline, while average prices paid in neighboring Watonwan County slid by a percent.

Values across the 14

counties of southwestern Minnesota slid by

\$7,334

2020, from \$6,576 in 2019 to \$6,371. That's nearly a quarter less than the all-time high of \$8,466 the region saw back in 2013. Jackson County's high-water mark for average farmland values was \$7,984 per acre back in 2014. Since then, average farmland values in the county have decreased four times and increased twice, settling in 2020 at a level just more than 8 percent off the all-time high.

Jackson County's average farmland value for 2020 is second highest among neighboring counties and third highest among counties across southern Minnesota.

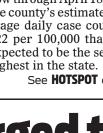
See FARMLAND on A3

\$6,361 3.1 percent



Kevin Kimm average of daily cas-

es over the last week — a measure the Rochesterbased health care system states is the "best sign of



vices hosts weekly noappointment vaccination clinics open to everyone 18 years of age and older every Friday at 125 Torg-

### Inside ....



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

	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 photog-– photos of the raphy 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 Jacsobsen, 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



CALL US **EMAIL US** SUBSCRIBE TO THE PAPER JACKSON COUNTY PILOT + JACKSON COUNTY PILOT.COM 507-847-3771 info@livewireprinting.com 507-847-3771 • jacksoncountypilot.com PRINTING COMPAN JACKSON COUNTY'S TOP SOURCE OF NEWS AND INFORMATION