



BULLS PICK UP TWO WINS

After a rough stretch, the Jackson Bulls beat Heron Lake and Worthington to improve to 10-7 on the season.

Story, B1



JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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Waist-high, but too dry

Despite rainfall, county remains in severe drought

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Though Jackson County corn is more than knee-high by the Fourth of July — waist- and even shoulder-high in some places — moisture is desperately needed in the near term in order to keep the crop on track for a bountiful harvest this fall.



Liz Stahl

That's the word from Liz Stahl, area extension educator in crops, who on Monday said the next four weeks are absolutely critical.

"What we're seeing out there now is a really re-

silient corn plant reaching deep into the soil profile to hit those moisture reserves," she said. "The problem is those reserves are not being replenished. As we get into the pollination phase over the next few weeks, it's a very high-moisture-use time for the plants. If drought conditions continue, we could see a significant impact."

As of late last week, the entirety of Jackson County was in a severe drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Officials with the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service on Monday reported topsoil and subsoil moisture levels continue to plummet across the county.

Stahl said the county is about 4 to 5 inches below normal in terms of rainfall over the last 30 days. The half-inch or so of rain that fell over much of the coun-

See **WAIST HIGH** on A3

Inside ...

A3 Readers are invited to submit a photo showing the height of Jackson County corn on the Fourth of July for a chance to appear in the Jackson County Pilot.

Fourth back with bang in Okabena

Whole county is invited to town for celebration

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

The whole county is invited to Okabena this Sunday to celebrate the nation's birthday.

After hosting a scaled-back version of its annual Fourth of July celebration last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community of Okabena is looking forward to this year's celebration coming back with a bang. That's the word from planning committee member Ardis Hotzler, who's been involved with this year's celebration and ones past.

The fun begins with the kiddie pedal pull at 11 a.m.

"Signup is at 10:30 for that and it starts at 11; then we will have a kiddie parade at 2 p.m., followed by the Independence Day parade," Hotzler said. "Once the parade is finished, St. John's church is having an ice cream social at the city park until all of their ice cream is gone."

The park will also have plenty of games and other amusements for kids and families to enjoy, including a cornhole tournament.

"We'll have signup for the tournament an hour before the parade and a half-hour after," Hotzler said. "We'll have ball-games, concessions and other games for the family at the park, after the parade."

Live music is also

See **OKABENA** on A3

Inside ...

A3 The Okabena Antique Tractor Haul is slated to happen on July 10, giving local revelers a week to recover from Sunday's Independence Day activities.



Above: Logan Schuchart celebrates on top of his car Sunday night after winning the AGCO Jackson Nationals for the second straight year. Left: Brettly Steffensen (left) and Brooklyn Cihak reign as Little Mr. and Little Miss Jackson. The two were crowned at a pageant last Tuesday at the Historic State Theatre.



A WINNING WEEKEND

Photos by Dan Condon and Joshua Schuetz



Left: Jon Hummel sends a putt toward the hole as teammates Stacy Ott (from left), Tommy Evans and Kent Bargfrede look on during the Security State Bank Jackson Days Golf Tournament last Wednesday at the Jackson Golf Club. Right: Corey Hanson serves up cold treats from the Sumer Skhool Treats Ice Cream Truck during Jackson Days festivities last Thursday evening.



Inside ...

A10 See more photos from last week's Jackson Days festivities, which took place this year in conjunction with the AGCO Jackson Nationals.

Inside ...

B1 Find complete coverage of and results from three big nights of racing during last week's AGCO Jackson Nationals.

Stage set for return of livestock expo

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

The Minnesota Youth Livestock Expo is poised for a strong return this year after its inaugural 2020 run during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As with last year's show, the 2021 MYLE will be split between two cities, with the swine show taking place in Jackson and the rest taking place in Fairmont.

The MYLE beef, sheep,

meat goat and rabbit shows will run July 8-11 at the Martin County Fairgrounds in Fairmont, and the swine show will follow July 17-19 at the Jackson County Fairgrounds in Jackson. The MYLE shows are open to all Minnesota youth between the ages of 6 and 21 years old, including all Minnesota 4-H and FFA members.

MYLE committee member Linette Freking said the response to the MYLE last year was one of resounding approval, encouraging the committee to move forward with the event again this year.

"It was awesome," she said. "All of the families gave us a very positive

response and liked having the show in Jackson and Fairmont."

This year's MYLE is taking place in July rather than August, said committee co-chair Kent Thiesse, so as not to compete with county fairs, but complement them instead.

"A year ago, it was held in August, and we moved it this year because we wanted it to serve as a kind of preview for the fairs," he said.

Thiesse said the reason for the split weekend showing is to make the process smoother for participants, especially from a logistics perspective.

"This year, due to

See **LIVESTOCK EXPO** on A3

Lack of leaders threatens to shut down Girl Scout troop

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

This summer, local Girl Scouts had the opportunity to go on a trip to Savannah, Ga., to learn about their organization's history and enjoy the southern summer.

Unfortunately, it might be their last hurrah.

The organization is in danger of disbanding due to a lack of adult leaders and volunteers.

"I just don't have enough volunteers to keep it going," said Tami Ysker, leader of the Lakefield Girl Scout troop, which counts both Lakefield and Jackson girls among its members.

Currently, Ysker and

Amanda Hock do the lion's share of the work in keeping the organization afloat. Fundraising has generally been successful, but the lack of adults to teach kids, lead meetings and otherwise support the Scouts with their time is making current operations unsustainable.

"We just had this great trip, and we want to continue, but I don't have enough leaders," Ysker said. "We lost our Daisy and Brownie volunteers, and we don't have the people to teach our girls, and I have too much going on to do everything myself."

The Scouts recruit new volunteers every year,

and make the need known throughout the year, but still haven't been able to get enough.

The local troop isn't the only area troop dealing with volunteer issues, either.

"Windom is also struggling to get help with its scouting programs," Ysker said. "Our council is based in Minneapolis, and they've been struggling to get a volunteer coordinator for our area."

Ysker opened up the Lakefield troop to Jackson residents after its troop shut down a few years ago. Since then, the Lakefield Girl Scouts have had be-

See **GIRL SCOUTS** on A3