



HUSKIES OPEN WITH TWO WINS

The Jackson County Central volleyball team opened its season with a pair of wins last week. Story, B1



JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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HEROES OF HOMECOMING

Photos by Dan Condon



Left: Members of the local Midwest Youth Football League smile, wave and toss candy while riding on a float during last week's parent-organized homecoming parade through Jackson. Right: Jackson County Central sophomore attendant Elsa Landherr tosses candy to the crowd.



Above: Jackson County Central Homecoming King Trevin Gaustad tosses a heaping handful of candy during last week's parent-organized parade through Jackson. Left: Junior attendant Olivia Anderson waves to the crowd along the parade route.



Inside... B1 The Jackson County Central football team scored on its opening drive Friday night, but had a hard time stopping Blue Earth Area in a 45-14 homecoming loss.

County seeing surge in mail, absentee votes

Nearly 900 have already voted in general election

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

Nearly half of all eligible voters in Jackson County have requested a mail-in or absentee ballot ahead of the Nov. 3 general election. As of this past Friday, about 30 percent of those ballots had already been returned.

Jackson County Auditor/Treasurer Kevin Nordquist, the county's top elections official, said as of Oct. 9, 2,886 mail-in and absentee ballots have been sent out;

that number represents 46 percent of the 6,228 registered voters in Jackson County. As of this past Friday, 859 ballots had been returned.

Nordquist said the number of mail-in ballots sent out and the number of absentee ballots requested are up over previous years, though exact comparisons are difficult to make at this point due to changes in how townships and cities are voting and an inability to compare numbers at specific points in time ahead of the election itself.

"Our numbers are up," Nordquist said. "I can't provide numbers that will not

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Inside...

A9 General election notices from Jackson County, the Jackson County Central School District and the city of Jackson are included with this week's public notices.

Severity of domestic violence on rise as pandemic wears on

Southwest Crisis Center looks to raise awareness

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

While the number of domestic violence cases in the county doesn't seem to be on the rise as the COVID-19 pandemic wears on, the severity of them does.

"What we're seeing with COVID is that it doesn't necessarily lead to more cases of domestic violence, but it is exacerbating the intensity of the violence," said Sara

Wahl, executive director of the Southwest Crisis Center. "Abusers can use COVID as another way to control their victims, especially when custody issues are involved."

Wahl said domestic violence case numbers in the area have held fairly steady thus far in 2020 after taking a big jump last year.

"The total number of people we served in 2019 was 516," Wahl said, up about 30 percent from the 398 served in 2018.

That said, Wahl said any number of domestic violence cases is too high, adding the Southwest Crisis Center continues to support victims in any and every way it can, even during a pandemic. That included

See **VIOLENCE** on A3



Sara Wahl

Congressman in town to visit local businesses, meet with constituents

Hagedorn: Walz has gone too far with restrictions

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Local U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn was in Jackson last week, visiting local businesses struggling in the wake of state-imposed restrictions designed to stem the spread of COVID-19 and meeting with constituents preparing to cast ballots in next month's general election.

Hagedorn, a first-term congressman who represents Jackson County in the U.S. House of Representatives, said one of the primary areas of focus for him over the last two years has been fighting for small businesses in his district. As a member of the House committee on small business, Hagedorn said he is uniquely positioned to



Rep. Jim Hagedorn

Inside...

A3 Local U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn says kidney cancer has not slowed him down one bit or affected his service to the people of southern Minnesota.

make a real difference — and has, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I've worked cooperatively with Democrats and Republicans on issues that matter to small business," he said, listing the Payroll Protection Program as a "big deal" for many small businesses across southern Minnesota. "That's helping to keep some small businesses afloat."

Hagedorn has also been a vocal critic of Gov. Tim Walz, the man Hagedorn replaced in Congress, who Hagedorn said has gone too far with state-imposed restrictions on small businesses during the pandemic. "This is not something that's in my job description," Hagedorn said of going toe to toe with Walz, "but the governor is shutting down small businesses — especially those in border communities like

Jackson. I'm committed to standing up for the people of southern Minnesota no matter what."

Hagedorn said the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 should be taken seriously, but added the governor has gone overboard with his one-size-fits-all restrictions on business. "We should be cautious, but we need to reopen our economy," he said.

Hagedorn also serves on the House committee on agriculture, something near and dear to his heart as a farm boy from Truman. Hagedorn said he has worked and continues to work to expand agricultural exports and increase demand for biofuels, counting the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement as a major win for local farmers. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, he also fought for programs designed to help sustain farmers in

See **HAGEDORN** on A3



PHOTO BY JEN TEWES

Construction of Jackson's new splash pad continues, nearly 14 months after its original expected completion date.

Splash pad progress slows to trickle

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Progress on Jackson's new splash pad continues at a trickle.

Originally expected to be complete by August of last year, construction of the donation-funded and city-owned splash pad is still under way nearly 14 months later.

"This has been a major undertaking for the committee and city," Jackson

City Administrator Matt Skaret said of the project, ownership and oversight of which transferred from a citizen committee to the city last November. "And people are asking about it."

It's unclear who is at fault for the delays, Skaret said — the project contractor or a subcontractor. "There is a lot of finger pointing," he said.

Regardless, Skaret said, when an inspector from

the equipment vendor arrived onsite recently, "He was not pleased with what he saw."

Much work remained to be completed, Skaret said, and neither the contractor nor subcontractor were anywhere to be found.

Skaret said the inspector — who normally spends one day onsite examining work and providing training — spent the next four days rounding

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