



LOCAL CHURCH LEAVES RICH LEGACY

For 153 years, worshippers gathered for Sunday services, baptisms, weddings and funerals at Jackson's First Presbyterian Church. This past Sunday, they gathered one last time.

Story, A10



JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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Fancy FOOTWORK

Photos by Dan Condon

Inside...

A7 See more photos from the dress rehearsal for the Dawn's Dance Connection recital performed over two nights last week in Spirit Lake, Iowa.



Above: Ava Brinkman strikes a pose while dancing to "Pure Imagination" during a dress rehearsal for the Dawn's Dance Connection recital last week. Dancers performed last Thursday and Friday in Spirit Lake, Iowa. Left: Lucie Naumann dances to "Superhero."

Online...

.com View thousands of photos from the dress rehearsal for the Dawn's Dance Connection recital online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

SRO still in mix at JCC, HL-O

Discussion comes as other districts begin to cut ties

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Local school districts continue to weigh the benefits of hiring an armed resource officer, even as other districts across the state begin to distance themselves from such positions.

Despite a recent shift in some districts away from school resource officers in the wake of a national conversation about law enforcement officers and their interaction with members of certain races, Jackson County Sheriff Shawn Haken said he still believes in the traditional



Shawn Haken

model of an armed officer maintaining a regular presence in the schools.

"But it's more than that," Haken said Monday. "It's building that rapport with students and that trust between them through the forging of relationships."

Officials with Jackson County Central and Heron Lake-Okabena schools have been discussing the possibility of adding a school resource officer since early 2018, at a time when the state and federal government began making increasing amounts of grant dollars available for such school security measures in the wake of a rash of school shootings. The JCC Board of Education even committed funds to such a position and a local deputy sheriff was selected for the position and underwent training, though momentum slowed when an application for necessary grant funds came up

See **SRO** on **A3**

Inside...

B5 The JCC Board of Education on Monday approved five resignations, five terminations, three hires and the creation of three new positions.

Number of locals with a shot three times higher than total county cases

Weekly caseload continues to fall

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

The number of Jackson County residents who have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine is nearly three times higher than the total number of locals who have tested positive for

the disease since the onset of the pandemic more than a year ago.

As of Sunday, 3,573 locals — 44.6 percent of eligible Jackson County residents — had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, an increase of 47 over the week prior. Of those 3,573, 3,268 — 40.8 percent of the county's population of those 16 years of age and older —

See **LOCALS** on **A3**

Local providers lose out on broadband funding

Winners pledge to connect rural Jackson County within six years

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

Parts of rural Jackson County are slated to receive high-speed Internet coverage over the next few years, though it doesn't look like a local provider will be behind the buildout.



Scott Reimer

The first phase of the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund reverse auction took place this past December. Industry expert Doug Dawson, president of CCG Consulting, the largest telecommunica-

tions consulting group in the United States, said the auction is designed to encourage broadband development in rural areas that would not be cost-efficient for companies to invest in otherwise.

"These are all highly rural areas," Dawson said. "In those places, you can't easily justify building without grant funding. The FCC set an amount of money for each census block. People would then bid those amounts down."

The program is theoretically geared toward funding projects that build fiber with gigabit speed capacity.

"The companies willing to build gigabit get the full amount of the funding," Dawson said. "Those with slower technology get

weighted differently."

The weighting system means if a company with slower technology were to bid for 100 percent of the reserve price and were to be assigned a weight of 10, it would only receive 90 percent of the funding at maximum.

Brent Christiansen, president of the Minnesota Telecommunications Alliance, a state trade group, said the auctions tend to benefit those companies offering fiber, due to its speed, as opposed to fixed wireless technology.

"The person doing fiber will receive a better score than someone doing fixed wireless," Christiansen said.

Local fiber providers threw their hats in the auction ring, but lost out, in part because other bidders drove the rates far below what local representatives said the industry can sustain.

See **BROADBAND** on **A3**



PHOTOS BY JEN TEWES

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Above: Jackson County Central girls glam it up at their high school prom Saturday evening in Arnolds Park, Iowa. Those gathered include (front, from left): Destiny Timmer and Georgianna Wenzel. Back: Izzy Ostovic, Avery Jensen and Samantha Kludt. Left: Clay Cranston (from left), Dan Eggink and Nicholas Stammer ham it up during the grand march. See more prom photos on B6.

