



HUSKIES HEADED BACK TO STATE

The Jackson County Central wrestling team dominated the Section 3A tournament to qualify for state for the second straight season.
Story, A10



JACKSON COUNTY PILOT

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POLITICAL SHAKEUP

Jackson County to unify under a single House, Senate district

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

Jackson County in 2023 will unify under a single House and Senate district for state elections.

At present, the county is split between Senate Districts 22 and 23 and House Districts 22B and 23A. Beginning on Jan. 1, 2023, the entirety of Jackson County will lie within Senate District 21 and House District 21B.

The change comes about due to a court-ordered redistricting decision issued last week. The redistricting is based on the 2020 census.

The change means Jackson County will have only two state legislators representing its interests in St. Paul, not four as at present.

Currently, western Jackson County is represented by Sen. Bill Weber, R-Luverne, and Rep. Rod Hamilton, R-Mt. Lake, while the eastern half of the county is represented by Sen. Julie Rosen, R-Fairmont, and Rep. Bjorn Olson, R-Elmore. Weber is eligible to serve in the new Senate District 21, Hamilton previously announced his intention not to seek re-election this fall, Rosen announced the same last Thursday and Olson is not eligible to serve in the new House District 21B.

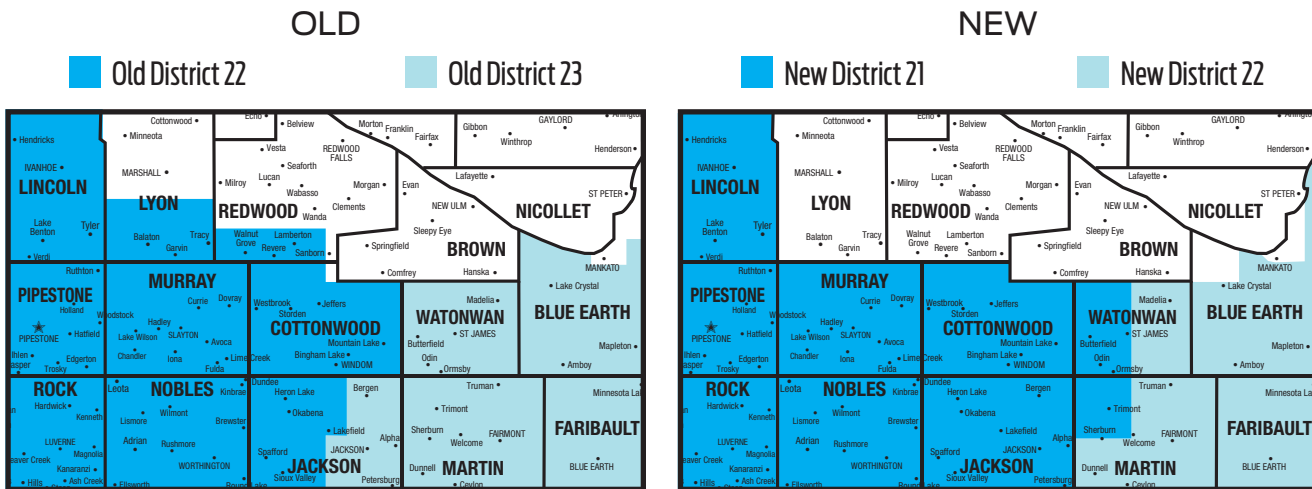
Rich Koch, chair of the Jackson County Republican Party, said the change will intensify political competition locally, especially for the House District 21B seat.

"The election is wide open because it'll take time to get candidates endorsed and we've got a number of strong candidates right now," he said.

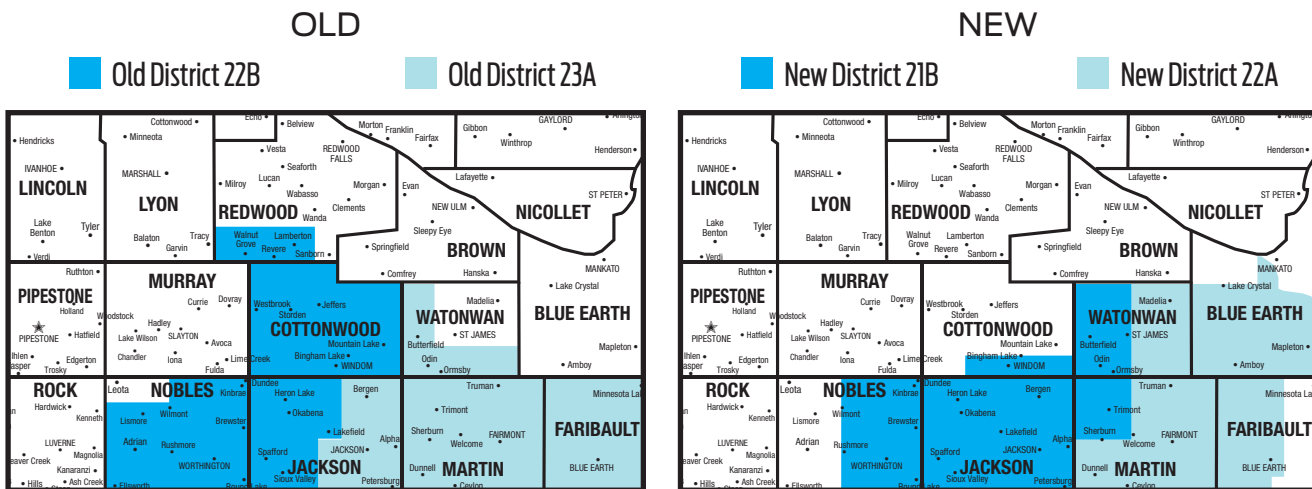
Koch said people should know their current representatives will continue to represent them until the changes take place next year.

Representatives of the Jackson County Democratic Farmer-Labor Party declined comment on the redistricting, pointing instead to a statement by state party chair Ken Martin See **SHAKEUP** on A3

STATE SENATE DISTRICTS



STATE HOUSE DISTRICTS



'JACKSON HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL COMMUNITY TO WORK WITH BECAUSE YOU GUYS WORK HARD AND DO THINGS THE RIGHT WAY.'

Sen. Julie Rosen
R-Fairmont



Sen. Julie Rosen

'I'VE REALLY ENJOYED REPRESENTING THE PEOPLE OF JACKSON COUNTY AND THEY WILL ALWAYS HOLD A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART.'

Rep. Bjorn Olson
R-Elmore



Rep. Bjorn Olson

Inside...

A3 Local state Sen. Julie Rosen announced her retirement last week after two decades of service to her fellow southern Minnesotans.

Inside...

A4 COMMENTARY: Jackson County will now only have two state legislators — one representative and one senator — representing its interests, as opposed to four.

Congressman's death sets special election wheels in motion

by JUSTIN R. LESSMAN
Publisher

Though Jackson County's standing in Minnesota's First Congressional District didn't change due to last week's redistricting, locals will still be asked to vote for a new member of Congress in the wake of the Feb. 17 death of U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn.

Hagedorn, a Republican first elected in 2018, died following a long battle with kidney cancer. He was 59.

Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon issued a statement Friday indicating the vacant First District seat will be filled via special election.

On Tuesday, Gov. Tim Walz issued a writ of special election setting dates of the filing period for the seat. Affidavits of candidacy and nominating



FILE PHOTO BY JUSTIN LESSMAN
Local U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn speaks at the 2019 Jackson County GOP Convention in Lakefield. Hagedorn died last week at the age of 59 following a long battle with kidney cancer.

petitions must be filed with the Simon's office between March 1 and March 15.

The special election will take place Aug. 9 — the date of the statewide pri-

mary election — with early voting by absentee beginning June 24. If necessary, a special primary election will take place May 24, with early voting by absentee beginning April 8.

Voting will occur within the current district boundaries, not those established in the newly redistricted state maps announced last week, Simon said, adding the winner of the special election will serve the remainder of Hagedorn's term. The November race for the seat will run on the standard election-year timetable and take place in accordance with the newly redistricted boundaries. The

See **HAGEDORN** on A3

Plans for a solar farm in Jackson County go dark

Steep upgrade costs to blame

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

Plans to build a 900-acre, 125-megawatt solar farm project in western Jackson County failed to come to fruition, as high upgrade and maintenance costs stalled the project in its tracks.



Carly Goranson

"the Brewster Bright Solar Farm," was initially proposed in 2018 by Chicago-based renewable energy firm Invenery.

The company had secured agreements with landowners in Alba Township, the proposed project's location, and wanted to begin construction as early as 2021.

Around 100 construction jobs and five full-time jobs were to be created by the project, which would have

powered 27,000 homes. That was before the COVID-19 pandemic, but a

"IT WAS AN EARLY-STAGE DEVELOPMENT THAT WE WERE NOT ABLE TO PURSUE DUE TO HIGH COSTS."

Carly Goranson

early-stage development that we were not able to pursue due to high costs to upgrade the local transmission network," said Carly Goranson, communications analyst with Invenery.



PHOTO BY DAN CONDON

UP CLOSE

Preschooler Arya Wurz can't help but smile as she pets a rabbit during the FFA barnyard at the Jackson County Central High School Tuesday morning.

Milestone farm and home show set for Saturday

by JOSHUA SCHUETZ
Staff Writer

The 40th Jackson Farm and Home Show takes place this Saturday, featuring a full slate of vendors, activities and entertainment.

"We've got 55 vendors as of now," Corey Christopher, director of the sponsoring Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce, said late last week. "It's a wide variety of different local businesses and organizations, so there will be something for everybody this year."



Corey Christopher

The event will run from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the auxiliary gym at the Jackson County Central High School in Jackson. Exhibitors will be located indoors and outdoors, with some set up in the lower parking lot.

Aside from the exhibitors, the show will also feature several organizations and individuals hosting educational workshops on topics from quilting to financial literacy, giving people a chance to learn new skills and brush up on old ones. Sanford Jackson Medical Center and the Jackson Lions Club will team up to provide free vision and blood pressure screenings. And a \$250 cash drawing is planned.

"We're really excited about the education portion of the program," Christopher said. "We're having a quilting workshop, Mark Titus will host a talk on the 'History of Jackson' and we'll have financial literacy and insurance presentations as well."

While checking out the show, attendees can enjoy free pie and ice cream with a cup of coffee, which will be served by the Jackson County Central FFA Chapter.

Christopher said a full entertainment lineup is also on tap.

"V-Notes will be playing polka music from 9:30 to

See **SHOW** on A3

If you go...

What: Jackson Farm and Home Show
When: Saturday, Feb. 26, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Where: JCC High School

