

OPINION



PILOT EDITORIAL

Housing in Greater Minnesota getting attention, but more action is necessary

Just about everyone in Jackson County seems to agree we have a housing crisis, and this year has brought the most aggressive efforts to deal with the problem yet. Lakefield passed a tax abatement program and brought it before the county and local school district for consideration. Jackson is working on a major housing development project and the state housing commissioner is coming to Jackson.

The local housing crisis is, in many ways, the single biggest challenge we face in attracting new people. Kozy Heat and AGCO are planning expansions, along with other local businesses.

At the same time, efforts are under way to preserve the housing stock we have. Both Jackson and Lakefield have applied for Small Cities Development Program grants through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Lakefield won more than \$900,000 to be used on residential and commercial projects, while Jackson applied for about the same amount and will hear word on whether it's receiving the funds this summer.

Rebuilding Together, a volunteer organization working to help low-income people fix up their homes locally, with a special focus on older homeowners, has set up shop in Jackson, Nobles and Cottonwood counties, but has struggled to find volunteers here. The organization is already doing projects, but it needs more help.

So, what can citizens do to address the housing shortage? First, we must continue to press local politicians to enact pro-growth policies like tax abatement programs to make building more affordable. Second, we should push for a re-evaluation of any municipal ordinances or zoning regulations that may impede our ability to build more housing. Third, those who have the time and ability should volunteer with Rebuilding Together to help get improvement projects done on our older housing stock.

Local officials can continue working on housing development programs and tax abatement. The county and school district should approve Lakefield's request to abate the city's property taxes on new construction and Jackson should investigate whether similar steps would make sense.

This is a statewide problem, but the solutions start locally. Progress has been made and we need to continue pushing forward to sustain it.



Voluntary benevolence, or forced community?

I have been questioned as to where I get my news. Well, I can proudly say it is not the mainstream media. The reason I don't listen to or read their reporting is because it is, for one thing, primarily one-sided, or — as some would say — jaded. They basically report what they are paid to report regardless of accuracy.

In fact, the other day my wife, Pam, was watching a mainstream media channel that was reporting on the war between Ukraine and Russia. I looked over at the video supposedly showing some kind of rescue effort and I couldn't believe what I was seeing being shown as actual war footage. It looked like a cut from one of the M*A*S*H episodes I had watched more than once in reruns. Even the ambulance shown looked like one used during the Korean War (it was later revealed that, indeed, early footage from the Ukraine war was a montage of clips from other conflicts).

Speaking of factual reporting, I would like to see actual inflation numbers for our country at this time as well. I have heard it is in the double digits percentage-wise and highest in more than 40 years. But I didn't get that from the mainstream media reporting either.

And no one seems to be reporting the number of babies aborted since Roe vs. Wade opened the door to abortion-on-demand in many states. So, I checked it for myself, and the number of innocent

babies killed is now more than 62 million and growing daily.

Then there is the issue of open borders and the continuing flow of illegal persons into this country. Now that the Ukraine-Russian War is on, our border catastrophe has little or no consequence and certainly isn't newsworthy if you get your news from the mainstream.

Then there is the defunding of our law enforcement. I did hear our president is including funding for law enforcement in his budget, but no one is reporting how much funding there will be, who will get the funds and what they can be used for.

Then there are the broken promises to our allies and to the American people. Any word on that in the national news media sources?

And there is the push for Critical Race Theory to be taught in all our schools to all our children at every level. Have the mainstream media bothered to address that theory or just the supposed pluses of it?

No one is reporting on the violations of our Constitution either and nothing is being written about the violation of our Bill of Rights at all on the national level.

Have you read anything about any of our incompetent leaders over the past few years or seen anything about it?

Has any national news source actually dug into the real source of our supply-chain disruption or, for that matter, the

persecution of Christians and churches here?

We have had many attempts by certain groups to rewrite our history, and monuments to our Founding Fathers and heroes have been destroyed or taken down. Has any mainstream media source really found out who was behind the destruction and why?

Our so-called defenders of freedom and democracy in other countries have ignored our own border crisis that has put our freedoms here in jeopardy in this, our democratic republic.

Who's been reporting on the why and wherefore of that?

And another question not being asked of the powers that be is, "Who is involved in human trafficking here and what is being done about it?" That, too, seems to be of little interest to the national news media.

The atrocities go on and on with few being questioned, as little if anything is being done about it.

I was involved in a conversation with some friends recently addressing the reason why what is happening in America now is taking place. Part of the reason it was suggested relates to the lack of students being taught history as it pertains to the world wars and the sacrifices made to keep our freedoms in America against the threats of communism and socialism.

In fact, most of us agreed the millennials had not lived during a time of war on a

worldwide scale, nor do they realize the cost involved with securing our freedoms.

Reflecting on our leadership in America on really both sides of the aisle — yet some would say one side more than the other — the present push toward socialism or communism is at hand in America.

Yet some might view what's happening as good, even citing these words from Acts 3:44-45, where Luke writes, "Now all who believed were together and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as everyone had need."

Sounds like the communist ideal, doesn't it? But a footnote on these verses makes this distinction: "This was spontaneous and voluntary benevolence as a result of truly understanding God's love. Forced community is communism."

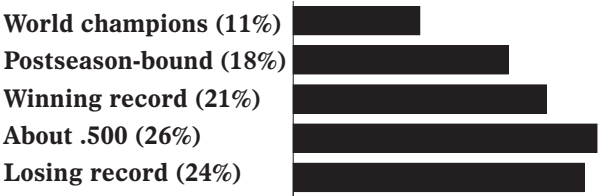
So, what have we had with the COVID-19 vaccines, indoctrination of our youth and the constant fear-mongering — voluntary benevolence, or forced community?



OUT AND ABOUT
Mike Jordan

LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: How will the Minnesota Twins fare this season?



Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: What's for Easter dinner?

Vote online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

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CONTACT YOUR COMMISSIONERS

What to do with a vehicle in water

Question: I saw your recent column about flooded roads. Do you have any advice on what a person should do if his or her vehicle plunges into the water?

Answer: The dynamics of such an incident are ever-changing, so there is no one answer that will cover it all. Having witnessed and responded to these types of situations, here is what I would recommend.

Most vehicles will float on the water's surface for 30 to 60 seconds. If your vehicle enters deep water,

make every attempt to get out immediately. If possible, exit the vehicle through open windows before the water reaches the window level.

If your vehicle becomes submerged, try not to panic. Vehicle doors cannot be opened until water pressure inside the car is equal to that pressure outside. When the vehicle is completely filled, doors can be opened, if there is no structural damage.

The engine's weight will cause the front end of the car to sink first. The rear passenger compartment

may provide an air pocket while you plan your escape strategy. If there are other people in the vehicle, determine their condition and try to exit the vehicle together.

I would advise everyone to take swimming lessons. This is a life skill that can save your life and the life of someone else.

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober.

If you have any questions concerning traffic-related laws or issues in Minnesota,

send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol, at 2900 48th St. NW; Rochester, MN 55901-5848. Or reach him at Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us.



ASK A TROOPER
Sgt. Troy Christianson

READERS WRITE

Questions must be asked

To the editor:

As a resident of Jackson County and a landowner, I have serious concerns about claims made by the out-of-state pipeline companies that want to run their projects through our county and state. These companies are taking out ads in local newspapers and on radio stations talking about all the benefits of their new pipelines. These claims lack transparency, and we should be asking more questions before we think their billion-dollar pipelines are good for Minnesota.

Who pays for these projects, and who profits from these pipelines?

How much public money is involved in these projects on an annual basis and how much do these for-profit industries stand to make?

Why are they keeping their "investors" secret if it is such a great opportunity and what is best for rural

Minnesota? Wouldn't those investors want the public to know they are engaged?

They are promising these projects are going to create 17,000 temporary jobs and 400 to 500 new jobs. This seems hard to believe, and they have not detailed these numbers.

What are the risks, hazards and liabilities to landowners and rural communities?

Do we really thank a pipeline project sequestering 12 million metric tons of CO2 per year is going to make a difference when Minnesota alone generates of 161 million metric tons and the United States is generating close to 5,000 million metric tons on an annual basis? It seems like a drop in the bucket and not worth the \$4.5 billion dollar price tag for a 2,000-mile pipeline project on the backs of taxpayers for decades to come.

Barb Pohlman
Lakefield

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Jackson County Pilot welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must include the writer's name, as well as address and phone number for verification purposes. Letters should be brief, up to 300 words. The editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and the right to edit as needed. Submit letters in person at the Jackson County Pilot office, mail them to 310 Second St. in Jackson or email them to editor@livewireprinting.com. The deadline for letters is Monday noon. All submissions become the property of the Jackson County Pilot and may be published or otherwise used in any medium.

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