

## Clark Housing Study meeting is very informative

A Choose Clark County housing study report meeting was held Wednesday, July 21, at the Ulyot Building. Steve Griesert of Community Partners Research, Inc., Faribault, Minn., led an in-depth report of the 87-page City of Clark Housing Study.

Community Partners Research, Inc., was hired by Choose Clark County to conduct a study of the housing needs and conditions in the cities and towns in the County. Separate documents have also been prepared for the City of Willow Lake and for the towns in the County.

The multiple goals of the study include: •Provide current demographic data. •Provide an analysis of the current housing stock and inventory. •Determine gaps or unmet housing needs. •Examine future housing trends that the area can expect to address in the coming years. •Provide a market analysis for housing development. •Provide housing recommendations and findings.

Choose Clark County Executive Director Kristin Vandernick stated that this 87-page study was a prerequisite for any action going forward, such as grants and loans.

The direction of the housing study meeting was one of a positive nature, to grow the small rural economy and to see exactly what consensus statistics provide, as any avenue for growth and building.

In the 90-minute presentation, along with a question and answer session, Griesert used trends, projections and household information to help with findings and recommendations. The plans differ from theory and practice, but new housing, new rental housing and continued development is the direction Griesert and the housing plan would like to see implemented and pursued, to keep the city growing.

Griesert had many good things to say about the vibrant community, excellent school and maintaining



County and city leaders attended the Clark Housing Study report meeting, Wednesday, at the Ulyot Building. Presenter Steve Griesert, on the left and Choose Clark County Executive Director Kristin Vandernick is on the right. The 87-page handouts are next to Vandernick.

job security.

When he commented about inexpensive housing, Clark Mayor Kerry Kline was quick to point out that she has seen a 40 percent jump in housing costs the last year. Plus, building costs are skyrocketing at this time.

A map of the current workforce shows 367 people who do not live in the city of Clark, work in the city of Clark. One hundred nine individuals live and work in Clark. Two hundred eighty-six people live in Clark, but do not work in Clark.

### Findings on Growth Trends

As part of this Study, Community Partners Research, Inc., has examined growth patterns for Clark and Clark County over the past few decades. These historic growth trends assist in projecting future demographic changes in the area.

Clark's population decreased by 0.5% from 1990 to 2000. The population decreased from 1,292 in 1990 to 1,285 in 2000. From 2000 to 2010, Clark's population decreased by 146 people, which was a population loss of 11.4%.

Esri, a private data services provider, estimates that from 2010 to 2020, the City had a loss of only 31 people. However, applied Geographic Solutions estimates that Clark had a loss of 110 people from

2010 to 2020 and the Census Bureau estimates that from 2010 to 2019, Clark had a loss of 78 people.

Clark County's population decreased from 4,403 in 1990 to 4,143 in 2000, which was a decrease of 5.9%. The population continued to decline in the 2000s from 4,143 in 2000 to 3,691 in 2010, which was a loss of 10.9%.

Esri estimates that Clark County had a gain of 100 people from 2010 to 2020. AGS estimates that from 2010 to 2020, Clark County gained 53 people, an increase of 1.4%. The U.S. Census estimate shows a gain of 45 people from 2010 to 2019.

Household levels also decreased

### Housing study (continued on page 10)

#### WEATHER

Robert Cole - Official Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
July 20.....	85	62	0
July 21.....	85	62	0
July 22.....	84	68	tr
July 23.....	90	70	0
July 24.....	91	62	.22
July 25.....	89	64	0
July 26.....	90	66	.02
2021 precipitation to date	11.72		
2020 precipitation to date	12.99		



## Twentieth annual Clark County 4-H Rodeo is a huge success

The weather was rodeo-like, hot and arid, just the norm for late July in South Dakota. Scores were good and competition was at a high level for the 20th annual Clark County 4-H Rodeo, Saturday and

Sunday at the 4-H Fairgrounds.

Competing in barrel racing is an unidentified participant. More 4-H Rodeo pictures can be found on the back page.

## Proposed Clark School budget estimate is \$4.1 million plus

The Clark School Board, at the July Budget Hearing, examined a proposed budget for the 2021-2022 school year that calls for \$4,127,567 in spending in the six budget areas.

At the July School Board meeting on July 12, superintendent Travis Ahrens and business manager Mary Nelson presented the proposed budget.

In visiting with the two administrators regarding the budget, the first budget item to talk about is the funding formula. It no longer is based solely on per student enrollment data.

Regarding state aid, it involves several factors, not just enrollment numbers. State aid to K-12 general education funding formula, basically: "The amount of state aid provided to local school districts for general K-12 education is based on an equitable formula that starts with the same amount of funding per student. Small schools receive more money per student. The total amount of per-student funding for a school district is paid for by a combination of money raised by the school district through local property taxes and money raised by the state through statewide taxes. School districts also have other



The concrete project on the west and south sides of Clark High School has begun.

sources of revenue for general education beyond state aid."

"Our enrollment essentially is flat for the short term," said Ahrens. "Two years ago it was 434. Last year it was 459. That is what we are predicting for this year. In two years we are predicting 467 students. Last year, with 438 students our state aid was \$2,960,877. This year the state need is \$3,122,300 for 445 students, but if the September 30, 2021 count is 459, or very close

to that number, the state aid will increase."

Ahrens had to submit a number for this count last January - February.

Per child and local needs vary from school district to school district and it challenges local districts to be competitive with teachers' salaries.

School budget (continued on page 4)



## 'Jaws of Life' training was Monday

Clark Volunteer Firemen held an apparatus training session Monday night. Primarily to practice and utilize the 'Jaws of Life' on three separate vehicles.

The training was held at Tony's Collision Center and Clark fireman Tony Werdel initiated the training

and provided the practice vehicles.

This was not a 'live mock drill', as lines were being painted on US Highway 212 at the time and with horns blasting and sirens flashing it could have caused some confusion.

## For now, masks and vaccines optional in South Dakota back-to-school plans

Barth Pfankuch  
South Dakota News Watch

Back-to-school plans for this fall are taking shape in South Dakota and — so far, at least — it looks like most teaching will take place in person and masks and COVID-19 vaccinations will be optional for students, teachers and staff.

But safety protocols could change quickly as public school officials keep a close eye on whether the highly contagious COVID-19 delta variant takes hold in South Dakota, a state with low vaccination rates among children and young adults. In schools across the state,

COVID-19 safety measures will be similar to the 2020-21 school year in that social distancing will be implemented when possible, health monitoring will be enhanced, and cleaning and sanitizing of buildings and buses will be more frequent than normal.

As of mid-July, Sioux Falls district leaders were still considering plans for returning to school, but officials in Rapid City and several other districts contacted by News Watch have approved in-person learning and guidelines that recommend but do not require masks or vaccinations.

"We will be recommending but not requiring masks for staff and students; visitors will be required to mask," Katy Urban, spokeswoman for Rapid City schools, said in an email to News Watch. "We will not be requiring proof of vaccination. The Governor's Office signed an executive order prohibiting schools or any state government entity from asking for proof of the COVID-19 vaccination."

Recent messaging from health groups at the national level has been uneven regarding use of masks in schools this fall, and the discussion has taken on greater urgency

as the COVID-19 delta variant has spread quickly across the country and caused some vaccinated people to test positive for the illness.

The most recent statement by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that fully vaccinated people can generally go without masks in indoor settings. But the CDC noted that more than 97% of recent hospitalizations due to COVID-19 were among the unvaccinated. Vaccines are not available to those under 12, and vaccine hesitancy has been highest among children and young adults, according to federal data.

On July 19, the American Academy for Pediatrics announced its position that mask usage should be mandatory for everyone in public schools across the country this fall. "AAP recommends universal masking because a significant portion of the student population is not yet eligible for vaccines, and masking is proven to reduce transmission of the virus and to protect those who are not vaccinated," the organization said in a statement, which also supported a return to in-person teaching.

As of July 1 in South Dakota, about 14% of children ages 12-17

were vaccinated against COVID-19 and about 32% of adults ages 18-24 were vaccinated, according to the health department. Overall, about 51% of state residents eligible for the vaccines were at least partially vaccinated and 46% were fully vaccinated.

Before starting school at any age in South Dakota, all K-12 students must present proof of being vaccinated or in the process of being vaccinated against polio, diphtheria, pertussis, measles, rubella, mumps,

Masks and vaccines (continued on page 4)