

Jasper identified as “skyrocketing suburb” for real estate prices

But that’s not all good, say real estate experts

By Dan Pool
Editor
dpool@pickensprogress.com

On December 14th Realtor.com, a leading national real estate site, identified Jasper as #6 in their “Skyrocketing Suburbs: The 10 Urban Escapes Where Prices Are Rising the Most.”

The article stated, “Just an hour’s drive from Atlanta, this little mountain town feels like it’s on another planet. With an easy-living, country vibe, the area has been a hotbed for second-home owners for most of the past decade. However, as COVID-19 has left office workers free to telecommute, there have been far more buyers than homes for sale in this affordable getaway—which has driven the prices up astronomically.”

The article calculated Jasper at sixth on the list of 10, with a Median listing price: \$259,900, Percentage increase: 32.2. The article explained that they based it on prices from Oct. 2019 to Oct. 2020. And went on to say, “To keep it geographically diverse, the team limited the selection to one suburb (with a minimum of

100 listings) per state.”

The article called the suburbs “a mixed bag right now, a combo of traditionally sought-after places situated near some of the nation’s most expensive cities; lesser known towns in more far-flung regions; and even a couple of popular vacation spots.”

Few available homes and high demand lead to skyrocketing prices

Local realtors Joanna Kearns and Lydia Spink with Century 21 Lindsey & Pauley, said it wasn’t clear exactly what set of data had been used to create the list and whether Jasper truly warrants a number six, but without a doubt prices are skyrock-

eting here.

Kearns, the broker at the local C-21 office, said prices right now in Pickens are the highest she has ever seen.

As anyone who has tried to find a home to buy or rent recently found out, there is very little inventory, particularly below \$250,000 and not

much below a \$300,000 price.

Kearns said the skyrocketing prices may sound like a good thing but there is the downside that people can’t find homes to buy.

Spink added, “It’s just hard to buy a house.” She said the lack of inventory and the many people who can now work from home and want to move out of the city have caused the prices to shoot up.

Kearns added that another factor may be the people who

See **Suburbs** on 8A



This article on Realtor.com lists Jasper among the high flying suburbs in home price increases.

School moves to distance learning for 3rd time

By Angela Reinhardt
Staff Writer
areinhardt@pickensprogress.com

The Pickens County School District announced Monday, Jan. 4 that school would not open on January 6 as planned, and would be closed the remainder of the week due to issues regarding COVID-19 spread. Officials also announced that in-person students would move to distance learning on January 11 for an undetermined period of time.

This is the third time this school year in-person students have moved to distance learning, including once in October and briefly before Christmas.

Later in the evening on January 4, the system announced that extracurricular activities could continue, with restrictions. This was a reversal of their original statement that extracurricular activities would be cancelled this week.

According to the press release, system leaders said their decision

See **School** on 8A

Rapid COVID spread poses challenge for new chairman



Kris Stancil was sworn-in by Probate Judge David Lindsey. Stancil’s father Johnny holds his Bible for the ceremony to make his son the commission chair for Pickens County.

By Dan Pool
Editor
dpool@pickensprogress.com

When Commission Chair Kris Stancil went into work Monday, his first day as the head of county government, he arrived early but was slowed down trying to recall which of the numerous keys on the mas-

sive county keyring opened his office.

That may have been an appropriate symbol: Instead of moving directly into plans and goals, the commission chair first had to meet with department heads and assess how they were going to keep the doors open in the face of a county staff hard hit by COVID.

In the last week, the administration building had to close after several people tested positive for COVID. And the new commission chair had only arrived back in Pickens County late Sunday night after being in Camilla, Ga. for the funeral of his father-in-law who died of COVID issues.

See **Stancil** on 8A

How chickens factored into moving the Appalachian Trail out of Pickens County

By Chris Feldt
Contributing Writer

The next time you eat chicken, take a moment to think about where it came from. I’m not referring to the obvious egg answer. The modern food industry chicken is far different than the one Americans were eating in the 1940s and before. World War II created an agricultural demand for chickens. President Roosevelt went as far as to seize control over part of the chicken industry with his War Food Administration, and by the time the war was over, Americans were eating nearly three times as much chicken as before.

In 1951, a Chicken of Tomorrow contest was held in 42 states to see who could produce a broiler that would be able to make chickens so thick you could cut them like

steaks. Charles Vantress, a farmer from California, won the contest. In fact, his chicken breeding method (crossing California Cornish males with New Hampshire females) is still employed today.

In 1930, Colonel Sam Tate had just built his Tate Mountain Estates – which included his stunning Conahaynee Lodge, Lake Sequoyah and a beautiful 18-hole golf course. That October, Colonel Tate gathered with state legislators, Georgia’s Governor Hardman and the Mayor of Atlanta to unveil the monument dedicated to the founder of the Colony of Georgia, General James Oglethorpe, and to celebrate the changing of the name of Grassy Knob to Mount Oglethorpe.

It also served another function, beginning that same day, the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail began at the monument. From

there, one could begin the 2,050-plus mile trek to Mount Katahdin in Maine. And people did just that. Thousands of people arrived to start their journey. Some would travel east from Tate and then approach from the south, coming through what would later be Bent Tree Drive to the Dude Ranch (located where the gated community’s golf course hole 6 is) and then up Hendrix Mountain to Mt. Oglethorpe. Others would travel from Jasper up Highway 136 to what then was known as Firetower Road (Present

See **Chickens** on 11A

The chicken that destroyed the trail - named after Charles Vantress and his successful hybrid chicken, the free range birds on Monument Road were more than hikers would tolerate.

photo/USDA John Weidlich Collection



Editorial

A thanks to elected officials

Page 4A

Help

Self care for the new year at Mt. Light Unitarian Church

Page 3B

Health

COVID-19 vaccines headed to Georgians over 65, and first responders

Page 2A

Obituaries - 9-10A

- Alex Williams
- Amie Stone
- Angela Jones
- Donna Warren
- Helon Hammontree
- Jack Hughes
- James House
- Jerry Ellis
- Joan Ward
- Junior Southerland
- Kenneth Jarrett
- Martha Gaskins
- Mary Ruth Parker
- Maurine Pruitt
- Mitchell Silvers
- Reba Isaac

Contact Us

94 North Main Street
Jasper, Ga. 30143
706-253-2457
www.pickensprogress.com
Open for business during these hours: Mon-Thurs, 9-5, and Fri, 9-4:30

