

# KEYS TO OUR FUTURE

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## Jefferson Co. has a future worth sticking around for

BY GREG PETERSON • Sentinel News Staff

**A**fter reporting the news in Mt. Vernon for nearly two years and having my first child born last summer, I can confidently say that Jefferson County is a viable place to raise a family.

Being a first-time father has unsurprisingly changed my view of the world around me and the community my family lives in. Instead of thinking about the future in a dreamy, abstract way, I tend now to look at what is in front of me and consider the resources available to me. What I can offer the community and what the community can offer my growing family.

I believe that Jefferson County will be a good place for me to raise my family because the city of Mt. Vernon and the surrounding towns and villages continue to strive for a better future.

The theme for this year's Visions publication is "Keys to Our Future," which abstractly means to me — improvements and opportunities that will better the community and the people who make up that community.

Keys to the future are important to me, especially now that I'm a parent. I try to think beyond the surface value of assets in the community and think what these resources will provide for the future of Jefferson County.

Doing the research for this year's Visions publication has reinforced what I've felt about Mt. Vernon since moving back to my hometown two years ago.

There are not only a growing abundance of resources and opportunities in this county, but many of the businesses, organizations, and schools continually strive for improvement.

Education has always been important to me, and it is very pleasing to know that two of the schools in the city of Mt. Vernon are going through or have recently gone through a significant expansion, which will improve the educational standards of the community and draw in more individuals who want to live in our community.

The Casey Middle School expansion project has been a great success for District 80 and the community. Having gone to sixth grade at Dr. Andy Hall School and Middle School at Casey, I am acutely aware of the improvements for safety and education the expansion will provide.

I also greatly respect and appreciate the vision that the District 80 School Board has with their eye for continued long-term improvements of their schools.

It is exciting to think that a gym expansion project may be ongoing or completed by the time my son is attending Casey Middle School. As a father, it is promising future opportunities like that that make me want to stay in Jefferson County and raise my family.

The new Mt. Vernon Township High School (MVTHS) project is one that is very interesting to me. I can remember hearing about the construction of a new high school back when I still attended MVTHS.

To have the construction of the new high school under way is somewhat of a surreal experience. Despite my love for the old open-campus high school, I'm anxious to see the final product of our new high school, which will undoubtedly be just another draw for people to move to Mt. Vernon.

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