This Sunday, the West Iron County and Forest Park communities will recognize, honor and send off the class of 2011. We hope the weather will be great, and the parties a blast.

We hope the best for our grads. Stay safe, have a good time, cherish the memories you have of your school days.

It's amazing we're more than a decade into the 21st century. The future that many of us envisioned when we were high school graduates is here, for better or worse. Reading science fiction novels "way back" in the 1960s and 70s, it wasn't too much of a stretch to picture micro electronics, computer chips and instant communications. Heck, even Dick Tracy went from having a two-way wrist radio to a two-way wrist TV by then, and used atomic laser beams to fight crime.

This year's graduates have grown up with cell phones, social networking and interactive (as well as hyperactive) video and computer games. Their music collections fit into the palms of their hands. Just about anything that can be imagined can be viewed, experienced and replayed.

Our grads are facing a challenging future. They should be proud they are graduating from our two school systems—we know they've been given a good educational foundation for whatever paths they choose. Both Forest Park and West Iron teachers maintain high standards of educational excellence, no matter what the financial picture of the districts is, or the economic constraints the state hands them.

Our grads head off next week with many choices, many challenges. We wish them well, and keep them in our thoughts and prayers. The future is yours.

--Marian Volek