

LOCALNEWS

KCC-TV seeks local grant

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The Koochiching Development Authority Board will consider a request to provide funding to the area's public access television channel.

International Falls Cable Commission Chairwoman Cynthia Jaksa met this month with Koochiching County commissioners about the funding needs of KCC-TV — Koochiching County Community Television — a public, educational and government station authorized under federal legislation to provide a media platform for a variety of uses and users.

The county board last week referred a portion of the funding request to the KDA Board, which is made up of county commissioners.

Jaksa asked the board to consider providing \$5,850, which would include: a \$1,000 membership fee; a one-time contribution of \$3,500 for camera equipment to distribute cameras throughout the county to allow communities to record their events and broadcast them on the TV station;



Cynthia Jaksa

and a one-time contribution of \$1,350 to pay for Internet services for web streaming broadcasts across the county.

KCC-TV may now only be accessed by cable TV customers, but Jaksa said KCC-TV, made up of volunteers, is working to broadcast via the Internet to allow all county residents access to the programming. Toward that end, Jaksa said volunteers are creating fliers to inform the public of the broadcasting schedule. In addition, she said once equipment is secured, the schedule will be available on the KCC-TV website.

Local financial support is important now as the non-profit organization seeks grants, she said. Membership fees are necessary to sustain the programming. A fall membership drive is now underway with the goal to collect \$1,500, she said. An annual meeting and membership drive is planned for March, when

a board of directors will be elected. Now, the board is self-appointed. She said the board will give direction on programming.

Meanwhile, Jaksa said KCC-TV is now supported by volunteers with the goal to eventually create paying jobs.

She said a collaboration with the International Falls Public Library will allow people to be trained on the use of video camera equipment to allow them to submit material for broadcast. She said anyone with access to the Internet will be able to upload programming to the website to broadcast. Material for broadcast can include government and civic meetings, high school sports events and local cultural events.

Volunteers will edit, schedule and cablecast the submissions for broadcast on the local channel, and through web streaming will broadcast that same programming across the county.

Commissioners indicated they did not favor membership fees, but would consider at the next KDA Board meeting the grant portion of the request.

County board OK's salary increase

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Koochiching County Board earlier this month took the recommendation offered nearly one year ago by a now former commissioner.

As former Commissioner Mike Hanson attended one of his last meetings as a board member last December, he advocated for an increase in per deims paid to commissioners.

The board on Oct. 8 agreed to set the county board salary for 2014 at \$14,057 — 2.5 percent more than in 2012. Commissioners made no changes for 2014 to the \$125 per diem rate.

The increase in sal-

ary reflects similar increases in employee contracts over the last two years.

Commissioner Wayne Skoe voted against the motion.

Nearly one year ago, when the board took no action to increase the salary and per diem rate for 2013, Hanson encouraged the board to establish a process to evaluate the per diem rate.

The per diem rate paid to commissioners when they attend meetings outside of regular board meetings increased to \$125 in 1996, but has not been raised since.

Hanson said the way commissioners are now paid does not allow some very qualified people to

run for the positions. "I'd like to see the very best people be able to get here," he said last year. Increasing the per diem rate means "the harder you work, the more you make and I like that part," he said.

In addition, the board Oct. 8 agreed to set the salary for the elected county positions of sheriff, attorney, recorder and auditor/treasurer for 2014 with a 1.5 percent cost of living increase and with the continuation of the paid health and life insurance cap adjustments as provided the other employee groups. The motion carried unanimously.

Motorists on winning side

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Average retail gasoline prices in Minnesota have fallen 9.8 cents in the past week, averaging \$3.17 per gallon Thursday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 2,856 gas outlets in Minnesota. This compares with the national average that has decreased 5.9 cents per gallon in the last week to \$3.30 per gallon, according to gasoline price website MinnesotaGasPrices.com.

Including the change in gas prices in Minnesota during the past week, prices Sunday were 13.3 cents per gallon lower compared to the same day one year ago and are 16 cents per

gallon lower than a month ago. The national average has decreased 13.3 cents during the last month and stands 26.4 cents per gallon lower than this day one year ago.

"Last week saw new downward momentum in crude prices- after staying above \$100 per barrel for 111 days since early July, crude prices fell below \$100 and just days ago closed as low as \$96 per barrel," said GasBuddy.com Senior Petroleum Analyst Patrick DeHaan. "In turn, the sudden drops in crude prices have pushed gasoline futures down as well, with motorists on the winning side of this all. The national

average has picked up some steam on it's downward trend and in some areas of the U.S., the wholesale price of gasoline is nearing yearly lows, which is adding up to significant savings for motorists. Americans are spending over \$100 million per day less on gasoline than they did a year ago, and I'm willing to bet if every motorist used the GasBuddy app, the savings would be twice as significant," DeHaan said.

GasBuddy operates MinnesotaGasPrices.com and over 250 similar websites that track gasoline prices at more than 140,000 gasoline stations in the United States and Canada.

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