

BUSINESS

Combining housing forces

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The real estate business in International Falls just got a lot more cozy, as one company has purchased another.

True North Realty, owned by Jordan Pearson, has purchased Island View Realty from its owner, Kim Bolstad. The sale became official Friday, and the process of merging the two companies should hopefully take two weeks, Pearson said.

True North will move into the Island View offices, which will help the newer company to take advantage of the larger space and organization of the older Island View.

“We were a new start-up company when I started, so we didn’t have all the systems in place and Island View Realty does,” he said. “There’s also more space for all the agents.”

Everyone from Island View will remain with the new company, which will consist of nine real estate agents and Pearson, the owner. The larger team will be better able to serve the International Falls community, he said.

“There’s 10 people trying to sell your house now, instead of four or six,” Pearson said. “And we’re not working against each other, we’re all working with each other to sell the same house.”

There haven’t been any final decisions on what the



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

Jordan Pearson relaxes behind the Island View Realty office on Third Street. Pearson recently purchased Island View and is merging it with his company, True North Realty.

name of the company will be, as Pearson has the name rights for both companies, he said. However, he’s leaning towards True North, as it’s the name he created.

“Part of me just wants to keep Island View just for the fact that it’s been an established business for a long time, and I’m a start-up,” he said. “But I think I want to keep True North Realty because it’s mine, I created it.”

Pearson has an excellent working relationship with Bolstad, as she used to work with him at True North. He said he’s looking forward to the management experience she brings to the new company.

“I have a lot of respect for her, she really knows what she’s doing,” he said. “She knows the office, she knows the operations, she’ll help us get used to the new systems.”

As owner of a larger company, Pearson said his role will be changing, as he’s “gravitating more towards agent management and office management,” he said. He’ll also be working more with Debbie Hill, his office manager, who worked at Island View for 14 years.

“Well, I’m going to be working more, if that’s possible,” he said. “I manage the agents and the agents manage the listings and the showings.”

While he smooths the merger of these two companies, Pearson said he’s willing to put in the work to make sure customers and agents win.

“I don’t want people to think I’m owning a monopoly, I want everyone to be happy,” he said. “It should work out for everybody.”

Vet hospital makes changes

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

New equipment and a new doctor will help one local veterinary hospital care for critters.

Rainy River Veterinary Hospital added Dr. Jenny Perala to its staff as a doctor last summer, after she graduated from Iowa State University in May 2013. She joins the current staff of Dr. Melody Nicholson and Dr. Wayne Hasbargen. Hasbargen started the practice 33 years ago, practice manager Carrie Erickson said.

Perala brings an advantage to the team by being up to date in the newest options in treatments, Hasbargen said. By learning from every veterinarian he brings in, he said he keeps the practice up to date.

“I tell every vet I hire, ‘if I didn’t think you could teach me something, I wouldn’t hire you,’” he said.

Over the years, the practice has added equipment in order to provide better medical service, Erickson said. Two of the most recent pieces are a digital X-ray machine and an ultrasound machine. The digital X-ray creates lower costs for creating X-rays by not using film.

“It lets us make more adjustments to the image without having to take more X-rays,” she said. “It’s also easier to send to spe-

cialists to have them look at it.”

The hospital had held off on purchasing a digital X-ray machine because of the initial cost, but were persuaded to get one after talking to other practices, Erickson said.

“The people we talked to said ‘you won’t regret it’ because of the capabilities,” she said. “The benefits definitely outweighed the costs.”

The ultrasound machine gives the practice better diagnostic capabilities, Hasbargen added. It helps them see things they might only see surgically, because of the limitations of an X-ray, he said.

“It’s another way of looking at things,” he said. “You can see the margins of a tumor. It’s more detailed than an X-ray in some cases.”

Combined with the digital X-ray machine, the ultrasound machine gives the practice a higher standard of care, Hasbargen said. Having cutting edge equipment helps the practice draw quality veterinarians to its team, because it shows the practice is progressive and up to date, he said.



Dr. Jenny Perala

Rainy River Veterinary Hospital is also adapting to an influx of new business with Falls Veterinary Clinic shutting down the veterinary practice aspect of the business with the retirement of Dr. Wade Himes.

Falls Veterinary Clinic reduced its hours and availability gradually, which means there hasn’t been a flood of new business all at once for Rainy River Veterinary Hospital, Erickson said.

“It hasn’t been a huge impact because it was gradual,” she said.

While more doctors and better equipment means better service, there have been some growing pains, Erickson said. It usually takes a year for a practice to break even after hiring a new doctor, she said, and the ultrasound machine takes a long time to pay for itself, too. They’ve also outgrown their facility, with three doctors and two exam rooms. Space is limited for people looking to board their animals, and they’ve had to turn people down, she said. Because of these space issues, they’re actively looking for solutions.

“There’s a couple spaces we’ve looked at,” she said. “We’re also looking at expanding our current space. We haven’t decided for sure yet.”

Utility bills expected to increase Jan. 1 for International Falls residents

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

International Falls residents may see their natural gas bills increase next year, after a utility company filed a request to increase their gas rates.

Minnesota Energy Resources filed a request on Sept. 30 with the Minneso-

ta Public Utilities Commission for a 5.52 percent overall increase in gas rates. Minnesota Energy projects the monthly bill increase for a typical residential customer will increase by about \$4.70 per month.

The increase will allow Minnesota Energy to update their infrastructure throughout the state, gas

regulatory services manager Greg Walters said. It’ll also be able to expand its customer base and reach new areas, which will spread costs over a larger base and keep them down.

The rate increase could begin Jan. 1 on an interim basis, pending commission approval of final rates. Minnesota Energy is a

subsidiary of Integrys Energy Group. The interim rates are usually lower than the filed increase rates, Walters said. The commission has 60 days after submission to review the materials for completeness, he said.

“They don’t judge the increased rates on their merit, just that we’ve in-

cluded all the information and the application is complete,” Walters said.

“This modest request to increase rates is a result of investing in our infrastructure to increase the reliability of our system and to enhance our focus on public safety, while we hold the line on costs,” Barb Nick, president of

Minnesota Energy said in a press release. “We’re doing more with less people and have increased employee contributions for medical benefits, for example. In addition, we’re asking employees to continually look for better and more efficient ways to do their jobs.”

2013 Flu Shot Clinic

Thursday, October 17, 2013 • 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Rainy River Community College
(Signs will be posted)

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CITY OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS
STATE OF MINNESOTA
MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

October – Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2013

WHEREAS: Families are the foundation of a healthy, safe and stable society. It is the goal of this administration for our community to be safe.

WHEREAS: The problem of domestic violence crosses all racial, social, religious, ethnic, geographic and economic lines.

WHEREAS: At least 14 women, 1 man, and 3 family members from Minnesota died last year as a result of domestic violence, according to the Minnesota Coalition of Battered Women 2012 Femicide Report.

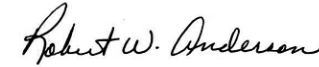
WHEREAS: Domestic Violence is the leading cause of injury to women-more than car accidents, muggings, and sexual assaults combined.

WHEREAS: A Wilder Foundation study found the most common reason for women to seek temporary shelter in Minnesota is to flee an abusive partner.

WHEREAS: Domestic violence costs more than \$37 billion a year in law enforcement involvement, legal work, medical and mental health treatment, and lost productivity at companies.

Now, THEREFORE: In recognition of the impact that domestic violence has on the health and well being of our community I, Robert W. Anderson, Mayor of International Falls, Minnesota do hereby proclaim October 2013 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Further, I reaffirm the commitment to reducing violence in our homes and streets. I urge all citizens to educate themselves about the impact of domestic violence and to become familiar with, and support the work of Friends Against Abuse. This month let us remember the victims of domestic violence, celebrate the survivors, and work together to eliminate violence against women, men and children from our community.


Robert W. Anderson, Mayor

Attest:

Betty Bergstrom, Interim City Administrator