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KDA discusses RECAP project frustrations

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Koochiching Development Authority Tuesday discussed site issues with the Renewable Energy Clean Air Project, officials of which had recently considered a site near Big Falls as a possible location.

KDA member Rob Ecklund said a recent conference call with Coronal LLC revealed wetland mitigation issues with a site in the city of International Falls. Mitigating those wetlands would cost around \$275,000, he said.

Another site under consider-



Rob Ecklund



Wayne Skoe



Brian McBride



Wade Pavleck

ation near Big Falls is being used as an ash dumping site, Ecklund said, which raised flags with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for siting an industrial building there.

Coronal LLC has asked the county to consider another site east and south of Moonlight Rock, Ecklund said, because of the issues with the other sites. The new site would raise costs, however,

as a road would have to be built into the site.

"To put it lightly, I'm getting a little frustrated with the whole process, but I'll just leave it at that," Ecklund said.

KDA member Wayne Skoe said the site near Big Falls is larger than 50 acres, and the RECAP project would only require 17 acres. The ash dumping site is only one or two acres, he said, so cleanup wouldn't be a big issue.

"That whole site is still sitting there," Skoe said. "I was a little bit discouraged that I couldn't even get a straight answer out of them."

Building a new road at the site

near Moonlight Rock would cost as much if not more than removing ash at the site near Big Falls, KDA member Brian McBride said.

"To me, that's a wash," McBride said. "If there's costs? Let's go where it's wanted."

KDA member Wade Pavleck said he's "disgusted" with the progress of the project.

"I got disgusted after the 18-month rollout of this project expired, and that was nine years ago," Pavleck said.

McBride said the way Coronal

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Foreign trade zone borders expanded

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Local economic developers will now have another incentive for businesses looking to locate in Koochiching County, thanks to a recent announcement.

The Koochiching Economic Development Authority announced the county's application to designate the whole county as a foreign trade zone has been approved by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The decision to apply for this designation was approved at a December 2013 KEDA meeting, when KEDA Director Paul Nevanen explained the process could take six to nine months. To help with the application process, KEDA hired Point Trade Services, a Florida-based company, at a rate of \$3,500.

Monday, Nevanen told The Journal working with Point Trade Services was a good experience, and its follow-up communication and clarity of communication during the application process was good. Due to the complexity of the program, he said KEDA would be open to contacting Point Trade Services with questions in the future.

"There's some complexity with the programs and forms, like applying for activation," Nevanen said. "I wouldn't hesitate to reach out to them in the future."

The local FTZ was expanded using an alternative site framework process, which was developed by the federal FTZ board. The board found people were trying to fit businesses to the FTZs, and not the other way around. In order to be more flexible, the board developed the ASF process, which helps FTZ hosts bring in potential businesses.



Paul Nevanen

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STAFF PHOTOS BY LAUREL BEAGER

Kindergartner Atrius Cali just couldn't keep from smiling for the camera as he had breakfast with Nicole Korpi, left, and third grader Dawsyn Silvers, at right, with Sara Vance and kindergartner Kalvan Silvers.

MUFFINS WITH MOM

SD 361's Muffins with Mom get together brought moms and grandmoms to the Falls Elementary School Tuesday and Wednesday for breakfast before the school day. School officials said the annual event held in the falls helps students and their parents get familiar comfortable with the school setting.

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Above: Kindergartner Jillian Frank had a quiet start to the day with mom Lindsay Frank at Tuesday's Muffins with Mom.

Right: First grader Andrew Eide chats with his grandmom Denise Atchley as other members of his family also gathered in Falls Elementary cafeteria for Muffins with Mom Tuesday.



City animal holding facility nears completion

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Soon, lost or abandoned dogs and cats will be placed in a new facility to be held until they can re-connect with human companions or be adopted by a new family.

The International Falls animal holding facility is nearing completion with painting and other interior work being done this week.

The new facility is being constructed just west of Menards in a partnership involving the city and the Borderland Humane Society, with financial assistance from Koochiching County and local contributions and donations.

The city-owned holding facility in use now is in a construction zone as workers rehabilitate the North Koochiching Area Sewer Treatment plant. The location makes it difficult for volunteers with Borderland Humane Society, which manages the facility, to safely access the building, and noise and vibrations from the construction are placing stress on the animals held there.

The location and the age of the existing facility have led to the new location and building, which meets state requirements for an animal facility, BHS President Nikki Turenne said during a tour of the building this week.

Ideally, there would be no need for the facility, as responsible pet owners would have their dogs and cats neutered and spayed eliminating the many unwanted and abandoned pets in the community, she said.

But, since that is not the case, Turenne said society volunteers are excited to move into the new facility because it will make it easier for volunteers to handle and process animals, as well as to work through adoptions. The facility should be in full use sometime this month.

The city pays the all-volunteer

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