

On display
Fourth-grade students
show off dioramas

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The Journal



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Changes coming to FHS

**Juniors and seniors
will have more
freedom next fall**

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

When juniors and seniors return to Falls High School next fall, they will have more freedom and opportunities than in previous years.

In an effort to keep students at the high school instead of enrolling in classes across the field at Rainy River Community College, incentives will be offered to students that high school officials hope will help them retain enrollment.

According to a report last month from FHS Principal Tim Everson, 41 percent of seniors and 19 percent of juniors are now enrolled full time in classes at Rainy River Community College through the Post Secondary Enrollment Option, or PESO, program.

"This has adversely affected our school climate and our culture, in addition to a loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars (to the high school)," he said during a February school board meeting.

With the high school's enrollment decreasing monthly, school officials are putting their heads together to come up with a solution to encourage students to continue their education at the high school.

One answer is to offer more FHS classes worth both high school and college credits.

"We are going to have core classes for concurrent enrollment where we offer college

FHS to A7 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

Cathy Tysz discusses the dragon boat festival in Fort Frances on July 1 at a cross-border brainstorming session at Lenard's Wednesday.

No name, no problem

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The two feet of snow and ice on the ground didn't stop International Falls and Fort Frances community leaders from thinking about summer Wednesday night.

Leaders from both sides of the border came to Lenard's at the AmericInn to discuss the different events taking place during this July's as-yet-unnamed cross-border festival. Events include a dragon boat

festival, fireworks displays, the peace pull, Riverfest, a "medical NAFTA" meeting, and much more.

Fort Frances resident Cathy Tysz discussed the dragon boat races, now in its third year in Fort Frances. This year's event is 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 1, which is Canada Day. Having the event on a national holiday with stores closed gives employers an opportunity to put teams together, Tysz said.

Dragon boat racing features teams of 22 on a long, skinny boat that looks like a canoe, Tysz said. Fort Frances has its own dragon boat, and a Montreal-based business called 22 Dragons will provide two more boats, she said, so teams don't have to worry about providing their own boats.

The sport promotes community spirit and charity, as well as being a fun, free family event, Tysz said.

"It's a sport of teamwork, not strength, so anybody can

do it," she said.

International Falls city officials have indicated interest in participating this year.

The next day of the July cross-border festival features the peace pull across the Rainy River, now in its eighth year. Fort Frances City Councilor Rick Weidenhoeft said Fort Frances leads the series 3-2, with two rainouts in the other two years.

Because Wednesday, July 2,

Border to A7 ►

Loyalty led Menards expansion

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Koochiching Economic Development Authority Board Wednesday discussed the recent expansion at the local Menards store with the store's general manager.

Jay Hamm, general manager of the Menards store on Valley Pine Circle, said the renovation should be complete in the next three weeks. When it's done, the store and lumberyard will measure in at 202,000 square feet, which makes it one of the largest stores in the company, he said.

The main factor driving the expansion was a large, loyal customer base, Hamm said. Expanding the store allows it to carry a much larger range of products, so it can provide customers with

what they need, when they need it, he said.

"Now we've got the space to keep it on the shelf," Hamm said. "Just put it on the shelf and cart it right out the door and have it when you're looking for it, not everybody wants to wait a couple weeks to get in their flooring."

In order to make things easier on customers in this specific climate, Hamm said Menards built a pass-through between the lumberyard and the store, so customers don't have to be exposed to the elements when going into the lumberyard.

"It's snowing outside, you need a 2x4, you don't have to get exposed to the elements," Hamm said. "You can walk right out there, got a nice sliding glass door, bring you right out there, you're not going to get snowed on."

Hamm emphasized the difference between Menards and other large home improvement centers. While other stores may offer installation and other construction services, Menards does not and promotes local contractors instead.

"We advertise in the store for local contractors, and that's kind of our slogan," Hamm said. "We're your supplier, not your competitor."

The renovation has also provided jobs for local contractors, Hamm said, including electricians, plumbers, carpenters and more.

"It's keeping a lot of people busy all winter, usually the slower time of year, and it's a slower time of year for us, so it was prime time to get the bulk of the construction done," Hamm said.

KEDA to A7 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

Jay Hamm, general manager of the local Menards, left, discusses the store's recent expansion at Wednesday's Koochiching Economic Development Authority meeting. At right is board member Pete Kalar

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