BUSINESS

9 TO 5

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who are starting a business or changing an old one.

Call the Journal at 285-7411

Chamber: New taxes create new burden

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The additions of new state and county taxes in Minnesota means changes for local businesses and individuals.

Recent changes now allow counties to impose a wheelage tax on vehicles, according to Minnesota Statute 163.051. The $10 per vehicle tax would go into a county road and bridge fund. The funds would then be used for "highway purposes," according to the statute. It's up to each county to decide whether or not they will impose the tax.

The legislation was initially enacted in 1972 for metro counties, but the recent change expanded it from the seven metro counties to all 87 counties. The tax is also made easier to pass, as a county only needs to pass a resolution to implement the tax. Also, the initial rate of $5 per vehicle was raised to $10 per vehicle.

According to Chamber of Commerce President Faye Whitbeck, the chamber and the Koochiching County Board agreed the wheelage tax should not be enacted at this time, and that it would be detrimental to businesses. The county had a deadline of Aug. 1 to enact the tax for 2014, and they chose to not enact the tax for 2014.

"The county can have another go at it again next year, but they did agree with others that it would be a disadvantage here for the community," Whitbeck said.

The 2013 legislative session's passing of $2.4 billion in tax increases put many new taxes on the business community, including two recent business-to-business transaction taxes that went into effect July 1. The first taxes labor service charges for repair and maintenance of business equipment. The second taxes purchases of telecommunications equipment by telecommunications providers.

The third new business-to-business transaction tax doesn't go into effect until April 1, 2014. This taxes storage and warehousing services of business related goods.

These new business-to-business taxes spell bad news for Minnesota businesses, Whitbeck said.

"These taxes should be repealed as they place Minnesota businesses at a competitive disadvantage, undermining job growth and economic opportunity in Minnesota," she said.

The main industries that are affected by these new business-to-business taxes are printing, manufacturing, agricultural, medical, and mining, all of which are prevalent in Koochiching County and International Falls, Whitbeck said.

The taxes are directly on labor, which means decreased pay and profit for the people performing the services, as well as higher costs for businesses paying for the services, Whitbeck said.

With a little more than a month since the taxes have been enacted, Whitbeck said the chamber has taken on its education role, and gotten the word out to businesses about the taxes. It's also been working with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to get the taxes repealed.

"We're hitting the education part of it hard, letting businesses know the taxes have happened, but we're trying to repeal it," Whitbeck said. "We have until early September to have all our information submitted to the Legislature."

The chamber is in the process of sending out a fact-finding survey to members and other businesses affected by the taxes to compile information on how the tax burden has impacted them, Whitbeck said.

"The survey is an opportunity for business owners to make their voices heard," Whitbeck said. "This also helps legislators understand the consequences of their actions."

HVAC company lends helping hand

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Lennox is teaming up with Minnesota dealers to provide 100 free furnaces to families in need throughout Minnesota.

Shannon's Inc. will be working with Lennox in International Falls to give away a free furnace to a family in need. Lennox will provide the furnace, and Shannon's employees will supply the materials and the labor needed to install the furnace, free of charge.

Shannon's won't be billing anyone for the materials or the time, service manager Mark Gierszewski said.

"We're not making anything on this, this is all about helping our community and giving back," Gierszewski said.

To nominate someone in need, you can go to heatupminnesota.org, click on "Submit Entry," and follow the instructions from there. The deadline for submissions in Sept. 10.

Last year, in the first year of the program, Lennox was able to provide furnaces for 42 families in need, free of charge. Shannon's didn't participate last year, because they missed the deadline for the program. But, Gierszewski said they're very much looking forward to being a part of the program moving forward.

"We want to see the smile on the person's face, and to know that someone is being helped," he said. "Our community has been hit hard, and it's great to help whenever you can, that's what's most important."

Local companies recognized for safety

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Minnesota Timber Producers Association held its annual safety awards recently, and some local companies received recognition for their excellence in safety. Members who had no lost-time accidents in the previous year up to March 2013 were honored.

In the logging division, Junker Logging, Inc., Littlfork, Killmer Bros., Inc., Big Falls, Mike Gates Logging, LLC, Big Falls, Northwoods Chipping, Inc., International Falls, and Page & Hill Forest Products, Inc., Big Falls, were honored.

In the trucking division, Junker Logging, Inc., Mannco Trucking, Inc., International Falls, Mike Gates Logging, LLC, Northwoods Chipping, Inc., and Page & Hill Forest Products, Inc., were honored.

For the sawmill division, Bergstrom Wood Products, Inc., International Falls, was honored.

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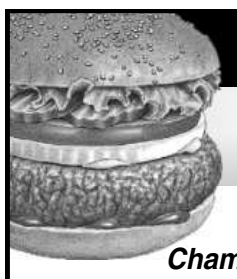

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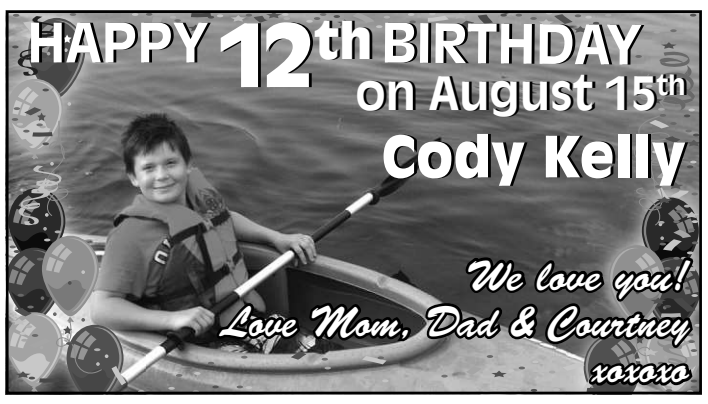

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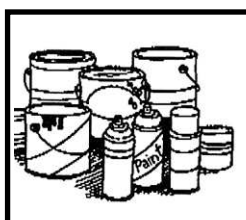

KOOCHICHING COUNTY
Household & Business Hazardous Waste Collection Day
Wednesday, August 28 • Noon - 6 p.m.
At the Recycling/Transfer Facility

BUSINESSES MUST PRE-REGISTER call: 218 - 726 - 1602
Safely dispose of household hazardous waste at no charge.

ACCEPTABLE HOME WASTE
• Paint (all types) • Home & Garden pesticides
• Button & Rechargeable Batteries
• Thinners, Solvents, Flammables
• Fluorescent Tubes • Household Cleaners
• Adhesives, Hobby Supplies

NON ACCEPTABLE HOME WASTE
• Tires • Alkaline Batteries
• Empty Containers • Propane Tanks
• Bullets/Explosives
• TV's/Computers/Electronics
• Appliances/Microwave

No products accepted before noon.
Sponsored by the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in partnership with Koochiching County.
For more information call the Environmental Services Dept. 283-1157.

We're Teaming Up For A Great Fundraiser!
The Journal prides itself on providing the most local and complete news & sports for our community.
Now we have created a program to assist local non-profits, school programs and churches with their fundraising efforts.
Program participants will have the opportunity to sell newspaper subscriptions to friends and neighbors, receiving $5 for every new subscription sold. This will help organizations pay for new uniforms, plan trips and support each organizations community.
The Journal, your local news source, wants to team up with your group or team to help reach your fundraising goal.

INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MINNESOTA
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Contact Dana at the Journal 285-7411 ext: 248 to get started.