

LOCALNEWS

Calling all outstanding citizens

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

The International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce is in search of someone who has contributed to the community and its people.

Forms are now available to nominate a Borderland resident for the citizen of the year award for their contributions to the community and in the lives of others during the past year. The deadline to nominate someone is April 1.

The citizen of the year is selected from the International Falls area and may or may not be a member of the chamber. The person chosen as citizen of the year will be recognized during the chamber's annual spring banquet at Lenards in the AmericInn. A date has yet to be set.

Chamber officials stress people should be nominated for their community contributions and who have made a difference in the lives of others during the past year. Nominees must also be aware of the nomination and willing to accept the award, should they receive it.

Faye Whitbeck, chamber president, said nomination forms are available in the organization's newsletter included in Wednesday's edition of The Journal, and are also available by emailing the chamber at chamber@intlfalls.org, calling 283-9400, or stopping in the office. The form was also sent to members electroni-

cally, Whitbeck said. "A campaign of letters may be attached to one nomination form, as well," she added. "But each letter should be personally signed."

NEW THIS YEAR

Instead of awarding recognition to a large and small business, this year the chamber will distribute six Pillar Awards. The awards will honor chamber members that have contributed the highest levels of collective support to the chamber of commerce, according to the chamber's newsletter.

This year the following business will be recognized with Pillar Awards: Boise Paper, Bremer Bank, Coca Cola Bottling of International Falls, The Journal/North Star Publishing, KGHS/KSDM, and Midcontinent Communications.

"The contributions of the six businesses receiving Pillar Awards are a collective sum of event sponsorships, investment dues and in-kind donations from each of them," Whitbeck said. "A baseline amount was determined and all six either met or exceed that amount."

She added that the chamber's top-contributing members are also "amazing businesses."

"Honoring them with Pillar Awards allows our community to show appreciation for more than just one small business and one large business as has been done in the past," she

said. "In a community of our size, multiple businesses have already received those awards. Recognition of several businesses helps bring the banquet back to a networking event but it remains a community celebration for the citizen of the year who really makes a difference with personal generosity."

Whitbeck added, "The chamber is very involved in positive things for the community and the six Pillar Award recipients are vital to the chamber's community involvement."

NETWORKING

Whitbeck said she would like to turn the spring award banquet into more of a networking event for the community.

"The chamber offers a summer Business After Hours and a holiday Business After Hours – it's been a long winter and the annual spring banquet puts businesses and community folks back in touch again amidst a setting that is fresh and beautiful," she said. "The banquet always feels rejuvenating and hopeful."

This year's banquet, she continued, will likely feature Packaging Corporation of America CEO Mark Kowlzan as the guest speaker. In addition, the program will be comprised of awarding the Pillar Awards, the citizen of the year presentation, dinner, cash bar, silent auction and networking. Whitbeck encouraged members of the public to attend.

KEDA to discuss Menards expansion

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Koochiching Economic Development Authority Board Wednesday is expected to hear from the general manager of a local business about why the business chose to expand in International Falls.

The board is scheduled to meet at 10 a.m. in the boardroom at the Koochiching County Courthouse.

Jay Hamm, general manager of Menards, will speak at KEDA's March meeting about the reasons behind Menards decision to expand in the community, KEDA Director Paul Nevanen said.

"They're not at liberty to talk specifics, but we want to have a generic conversa-

tion about what drives investment in a community," Nevanen said. "We want to have a general conversation around how they look at things."

At previous KEDA meetings, Nevenen said board members discussed inviting business leaders to talk about what attracts business to the area, and inviting Hamm is part of that conversation.

"We want to spend time talking about how people view us in terms of business attraction," he said. "This helps us validate or get different perspectives on that as we sell ourselves to a larger audience."

One of the economic response teams formed in the wake of the recent layoffs

at the local paper mill was tasked with determining what will keep the area's existing businesses healthy, Nevanen said. Learning from Menard's about what drove its expansion helps members of the team work toward that goal, he said.

"It's this notion of data-drive decision making – the better data you have in terms of the current health of the community and how people decide where and when to invest," he said. "We want to develop a list of economic indicators that will better gauge the economic health of the community."

The agenda also includes discussion on projects, a director's report and a public comment period.

Ranier council to approve memorial

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Ranier City Council Monday is expected to approve a motion to begin constructing a memorial to one of the city's founding fathers.

A memorial to Ed Woods Sr. will be constructed at the Big Vic park, using private funds, according to minutes

from Monday's committee of the whole meeting. Woods' son Bernie "Spike" Woods said his father helped bring the water system, parks, ice rink, and beach improvements to Ranier.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Ranier Community Building.

In other business, the

council will continue discussion on water rates, as the city of International Falls raised its water rates recently.

The council is also scheduled to consider the appointment of Councilor Ron Wilcox as a representative to the Koochiching County Hazard Mitigation Plan Steering Committee.



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Cross Border Brainstorming Session with

INTERNATIONAL FALLS & FORT FRANCES

6-8 pm. Wed. Mar. 19
Lenard's at AmericInn

\$9 DINNER BUFFET: RSVP
the Falls or Fort Chamber.

AGENDA:

- Brainstorming: Name Our International Festival!
- Peace Pull Update
- Riverfest 2014 Update
- Dragon Boat Race Update
- Medical NAFTA- Exciting Efforts
- National Geographic/Heart of the Continent Project Update

RSVP:  

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This concert is sponsored in part by the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund.
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