

OPINION

OUR VIEW

A chance to learn

With just more than a week left before the general election, we urge voters to do their homework to learn which candidates share your views and values.

The International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce is doing some of that homework for voters as it plays host to a candidate forum Tuesday, Oct. 28.

The forum begins at 6 p.m. at Backus Community Center and will feature 16 candidates in races for local positions: Koochiching County commissioner District 1 and District 4; county sheriff, International Falls city councilor East Ward, West Ward, and Center Ward; Ranier city councilor; and Minnesota House of Representatives District 3A.

Candidates will be asked to respond to questions formulated by a confidential committee as well as questions submitted to the chamber by members of the public.

It's important to find out about these people and their views and this is a great way to do it.

The Oct. 4 edition of The Journal published the written words of many

of these candidates in response to questions we posed.

Now the chamber forum will add a layer of information about these candidates as it offers an opportunity for voters to see candidates react on their feet to questions.

These candidates are seeking election to government bodies that decide, among other things, how our children will be schooled, when roads will be repaired, what laws are created, and how those laws will be enforced.

The successful candidates are the people who will make policies and decisions that will have an effect not only on the people who vote Nov. 4, but perhaps for generations to come.

This is the time to consider who will best represent your views and move forward through votes and actions the initiatives and agendas that best fit your needs.

This is an important event for the community. Why not attend and cast an informed vote Nov. 4 to help decide who will play a role in the path this community takes?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fun Day is celebration of community

To the editor,

We invite readers to take a stand against domestic violence. October has been designated National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, so we at Friends Against Abuse encourage readers to learn more about how to end violence against women and their children. Domestic violence is a problem that is too often kept quiet, or ends with devastating results. The human cost is staggering. So far in 2014, at least 14 Minnesotans have been killed as a result of domestic violence. And, in 2013, Friends Against Abuse provided emergency safe housing 54 times and gave over 3,500 direct domestic violent services to victims

in Koochiching County.

Our community's response is critical both for victims' safety and perpetrator accountability. Women and their children must be provided protection and given the support necessary to improve their circumstances. And, perpetrators must be held accountable for their violence and be given appropriate penalties that require changes in their behavior.

Ending domestic violence takes neighbors, business owners and faith communities willing to get involved and to provide a circle of support. It takes families, friends, neighbors and co-workers saying, "We will do what it takes to

stop the cycle of violence and abuse." Please join our efforts to stop the violence and reinforce support for programs that focus on safety and justice for women and their children. By assuring that each individual is valued and supported, we may be able to stop, or at least interrupt, the intergenerational cycle of abuse, neglect and violence. Let's do it for the all the Minnesotans who have lost their lives due to domestic violence. Let's work together to end the lethality of violence against women and children.

We invite you to join Friends Against Abuse for a Family Fun Day on Sunday from noon to 3 p.m. at Timber Pins.

We are hosting the event open to the community to come together and enjoy a day of bowling, games, prizes, face painting, bake sale, and a raffle. Entry is a free will donation benefiting clients in need of emergency safe housing.

If you or someone you know is struggling with abuse, please seek assistance from law enforcement or a domestic violence program such as Friends Against Abuse. You can reach Friends Against Abuse at 218-285-7220, 24 hours a day/7days a week.

LeeAnn Meer
Executive Director
Friends Against Abuse
International Falls, MN

How to contact your lawmakers

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To the editor,

Oct. 24 is World Polio Day.

Rotary and its global partners are extremely close to making history by eliminating one of the world's most devastating diseases: polio.This will be only the second human disease to be eradicated.

Rotary, a humanitarian service organization with nearly 34,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas, made polio eradication its top priority nearly 30 years ago. When the initiative started, more

than 350,000 people were stricken by polio every year — nearly 1,000 new polio cases every day.

A highly infectious disease, polio still strikes children mainly under the age of five in parts of Africa and South Asia. Polio can cause paralysis and sometimes death. There is no cure for polio, but for as little as 60 cents worth of oral vaccine, a child can be protected from the disease for life.

In 2013, there were only about 400 cases, a 99 percent reduction in cases. In 2014, Southeast Asia

was certified polio-free after India eliminated the disease from its borders, an incredible feat for a country once considered the hardest place on earth to stop polio.

Today, only three countries (Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan) have never stopped transmission of the wild poliovirus. In 2014, several polio outbreaks prompted the World Health Organization to declare polio a public health emergency of international concern.

Local Rotarians have

been supporting the fight against polio since 1985, and along with its Rotary's, partners are on-track to achieve a polio-free world by 2018. Of note, under a current fundraising agreement with Rotary, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will match 2:1 donations to Rotary to end polio. Readers can learn more about donations and the fight to end polio now by visiting www.endpolionow.org.

Carol Grim
Rotarian
International Falls, MN

Story failed to challenge statements

To the editor,

I was disappointed by the recent article comparing traditional hunting ammunition (which utilizes lead as one component) to copper ammunition (Seeing is Believing?).

The article failed to challenge the commentator's statements implying that traditional ammunition poses a health risk. Ammunition containing lead as one component has been used by hunters for well over a century and not one

case of lead poisoning in humans has been linked to eating hunter-harvested game.

Likewise the article was silent regarding the commentator's statements regarding eagles. Our eagle population has increased dramatically during the past 40 years and is now the second-largest in the U.S. To imply that hunters' use of traditional ammunition is having a population-level impact upon our eagles ignores the facts.

Finally, the article

failed to challenge the commentator's statements regarding the negative impact the high-cost and scarcity of copper ammunition can have on hunting. Copper ammunition is extremely scarce and can cost more than double (\$50 per box and more) the cost of traditional ammunition. In fact, one of the most radical, anti-hunting groups — the Humane Society of the U.S. — is seeking to ban the use of traditional ammunition in an effort to price hunters

out of the sport and reduce access to ammunition.

Hunters deserve all information necessary to choose the right components and ensure a safe, enjoyable, and successful hunt. However, allowing inflammatory and erroneous statements to go unchallenged does a disservice to us all.

Ryan Burt
president
Minnesota Chapter
of the Safari Club
International
Minnetonka, MN

Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal's Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author's city address will be published.

Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.