

BUSINESS

9 T O 5

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Airport grant to fund runway repairs

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Thanks to a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration, the Falls International Airport will be able to make some repairs to its runway before winter. The \$171,990 grant from the FAA is a part of the Airport Improvement Program said Bob Anderson, chairman of the airport commission. The airport has applied for the grant for the past few years, he said, as a way to pay for regular repairs.

“We’re always making sure cracks are taken care of, because we have to keep the runway in great shape,” Anderson said.

The repairs should happen this week, Anderson said, and could also include repairs to the apron, which is where airplanes are parked. There might be some depressions that need to be cut out and stabilized, he said.

Minnesota’s congressional delegation emphasized airports like the Falls International Airport are key to the local economy.

“The quality of the runway is essential to the safety of air travel and this support will make key investments to help the International Falls airport remain

strong,” U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar said in a release.

“Airports are critically important to economic development and jobs in communities across Minnesota,” U.S. Sen. Al Franken said in a release. “These grants will modernize our airport infrastructure, improve airport safety in International Falls, help create jobs, and go a long way toward updating Minnesota’s overall transportation infrastructure.”

“International airports, like Falls International Airport, play a central role in our rural economy,” U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan said in a release. “Maintaining this airport’s infrastructure will allow for more efficient air service in the region – also promoting safety and supporting good, middle-class jobs from construction to business and tourism.”

The airport is jointly owned by the city of International Falls and Koochiching County, and is governed by a commission made up of the city council and county board.



Bob Anderson

New nurse joins Falls clinic

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Nurse practitioner Elizabeth Lessard has joined the family medicine department at the Essentia Health-International Falls Clinic.

Lessard relocated to International Falls to begin her nursing education at Rainy River Community College. She then attended Hibbing Community

College and Bemidji State University, before earning her doctorate degree in nursing from the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth. She is certified as a family nurse practitioner



Elizabeth Lessard

by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

“The decision to move to International Falls has been one of the best decisions of my life, personally and professionally,” she said in a release. “I am so excited to now have the opportunity to assist in meeting the health care needs of this wonderful community.”

As a family nurse practitioner, Lessard will care for patients of all ages.

“I made the decision to specialize in family medicine due to community need,” she said. “Living in a rural area, I felt it important to be able to provide health care to all ages.”

Lessard is also connected to former state Sen. Bob Lessard via marriage, as her father-in-law is Bob Lessard’s cousin.

State unemployment rate hits new low

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Minnesota’s employers added 6,100 jobs in August, according to seasonally adjusted figures released by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

The August gains, when combined with July figures revised from 4,200 jobs lost to 100 jobs lost, put calendar year gains at 13,200 jobs in the state. Over the past 12 months, the state has added 56,311 jobs, a 2-percent growth rate compared to the U.S. growth rate of 1.8 percent.

The state unemployment rate fell to 4.3 percent in August, the lowest unemployment rate in the state in nearly eight years. The U.S. unemployment rate in August was 6.1 percent.

“Our state has added nearly 203,000 jobs since hitting the low point of the recession in September 2009,” DEED Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben said in a release. “The August employment figures are great news and a reflection of Minnesota’s healthy and growing economy.”

Locally in Koochiching County, in August there were 491 unemployed persons from a labor force of 6,619, for an unemployment rate of 7.4 percent. This is a 1.1 percent decrease from July, when there were 570 unemployed persons from



Katie Clark Sieben

a labor force of 6,728, for an unemployment rate of 8.5 percent.

Since peaking recently in April at 10.5 percent, the local unemployment rate has steadily dropped to 7.4 percent in August.

In July 2013, there were 479 unemployed persons from a labor force of 6,681, for an unemployment rate of 7.2 percent.

Construction and professional and business services both added 2,500 jobs in August, for the biggest gains among sectors. Manufacturing added 800 jobs, information gained 400 jobs, government added 400 jobs, logging and mining gained 300 jobs, other services added 300 jobs, trade, transportation and utilities gained 200 jobs, and education and health services

added 100 jobs.

Financial activities reported 800 jobs lost in August, and leisure and hospitality also lost 600 jobs.

Leading all sectors in job gains over the past 12 months are government, which gained 17,875 jobs. Manufacturing added 9,921 jobs, professional and business services gained 9,791 jobs, construction added 7,446 jobs, education and health services gained 6,257 jobs, trade, transportation and utilities added 4,360 jobs, leisure and hospitality gained 3,004 jobs, logging and mining added 575 jobs, and information gained 540 jobs.

The only sectors to lose jobs in the past year were financial activities, with 1,885 jobs lost, and other services, with 1,573 jobs lost.

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The Journal

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