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# The Journal



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February 8, 2014**

International Falls, Minnesota

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## Party caucuses drum up local support

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

Minnesota political parties are one step closer to November elections as DFL and Republican party leaders held caucuses Tuesday night.

Koochiching County DFL caucuses were held at Rainy River Community College commons, as well as Littlefork-Big Falls high school, Northome Municipal Building, Birchdale Community Building, and Big Falls City Hall.

According to DFL Party Chairman Joe Boyle, who attended the caucus at RRCC, 44 people attended the caucuses between the different locations, including some new faces.

“About 10 percent of the people were new where they had either moved to town or had not come

to the caucus before,” Boyle said.

The 44 people who attended the caucus are now eligible to attend as delegates the DFL county convention, which is noon Sunday, March 23 at RRCC, Boyle said. Various candidates and officials will be at the convention, he said, including Minnesota Rep. David Dill and Sen. Tom Bakk.

The county convention delegates will endorse candidates to represent the county, as well as choose a small number of delegates for the DFL’s congressional and state conventions, according to the office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. These delegates then endorse a candidate to represent the congressional district or statewide offices like governor or U.S. senator.

With various incumbent DFL candidates up for re-election,

Boyle said the caucus passed a motion to support the re-election of all incumbent DFLers, including U.S. Sen. Al Franken, U.S Rep. Rick Nolan, Gov. Mark Dayton, Dill, Bakk, and other office holders like Attorney General Lori Swanson.

“Considering the fact even though we didn’t have contested races for major candidates, we did have a good showing,” Boyle said. “People are energized about working to make sure everyone understands the issues.”

The caucus passed various other resolutions based on the issues, Boyle said, including a resolution to amend the U.S. Constitution concerning a U.S. Supreme Court decision involving Citizens’ United, a conservative non-profit organization. The court held that the First Amendment prohibits

the government from restricting political, independent expenditures by corporations, associations, or labor unions.

“Corporations are not people,” Boyle said. “Millions of dollars shouldn’t secretly go to oppose candidates that are representing real people and families.”

Other actions taken by the caucus include a resolution supporting the increase of the federal and state minimum wage, Boyle said, as well as a resolution to return to the proper portion of funding to public higher education, “because public education has turned out to be prohibitively expensive.”

If people missed the caucus and still want to get involved, Boyle said he hoped a local party headquarters would be set up in two weeks. People can stop by and sign up to go door-to-door, put up

signs, or make calls on the local level, he said.

“Anyone who wants to come and support the issues can come,” Boyle said. “The goal is to get the incumbents re-elected.”

**GOP**

Koochiching County GOP caucuses were held at Thunderbird Lodge and the Falls High School cafeteria, and 21 people attended between the two locations, local GOP Party Chairman Terry Stone said.

Stone was at the FHS caucus, and he said things ran smoothly and efficiently.

“It was the very nicest I’ve ever experienced,” Stone said. “Most of the people were experienced and had done it before.”

**Caucus to A7 ►**

## Northland Tackle closing Ranier facility

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

A fishing tackle production facility that has been a mainstay in Ranier since the 1960s is closing its doors at the end of the month.

Northland Fishing Tackle is ending production at its Ranier facility Feb. 28, Chief Financial Officer Matt Braun said. The facility’s final closure will be on March 31. The company will use the month of March to move the inventory and machinery from the facility and clean it, so they can turn the building back over to its owner, John Peterson of Bemidji.

The facility had approximately 15 full-time equivalent

employees, Braun said. The total number of people affected by the closure is around 25, with some working part time and others serving as full-time employees. In order to make up for the lost production, NFT will transition the load to other suppliers, he said.

The loss of those jobs will be felt throughout Koochiching County and not just in Ranier, Koochiching Economic Development Authority Director Paul Nevanen said. Combined with the loss of 265 jobs at the local paper mill in October, this announcement creates more uncertainty in the area, he said.

**Closing to A7 ►**

## Future of logging industry needs change

**Cold temps, price  
cut hitting the  
industry**

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

The future of the logging industry may be impacted by a reluctance to invest in new equipment because several conditions have reduced profit margins.

While there is optimism with investments by companies into changing products to meet the market needs and some in the industry creating a market for lower quality wood, the local logging community is facing a challenge, said Scott Dane, executive

director of the Associated Contract Loggers & Truckers.

Low mill prices, high fuel costs and other expenses are resulting in a little more than half of the logging businesses nationwide operating at a loss or at best break even, according to the report 2011 Logging Business Survey: Big Squeeze.

The largest percentage of profitable logging operations — 21 percent — are operating on a 1-3 percent profit margin.

Dane said the future of logging must include change.

“Operating the way we’ve been operating, 10, 20 or even back 100 years we’ve been logging in Minnesota, has to change,” he said.

**Logging to A7 ►**



STAFF PHOTOS BY LAUREL BEAGER

## Heading out

John Arnold, of the International Voyageurs Snowmobile Club, pilots the bright orange groomer Wednesday toward Rainy Lake to groom the ice in front of the Thunderbird Lodge for activities planned there this Saturday and next. Gordy Lindgren follows on the club’s grooming snowmobile. Once they hit the ice, Lindgren would take the lead to check ice conditions as they make their way.



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