

# LOCALNEWS

## Highway 53 continues to evolve

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Road construction, Minnesota's longest annual season, is nearing completion, and local and state officials are already making plans for improvements to U.S. Highway 53 for next season.

The most recent project to expand the highway to four lanes from the Rice River to Cook was recently completed, Bob Anderson, chair of the U.S. Highway 53 task force reported.

A report from Federal Advocates, Inc., consultants with the taskforce, stated U.S. Highway 53 project engineer Mike Kalnbach recently spoke with the Minnesota Department of Transportation about seeking bids in December for additional improvements in 2015.

Those plans involve expanding existing passing lanes on the highway, as well as adding center turn lanes at various points on the highway, including near the North Woods School, the Ash River Road, the junction with state Highway 73, and the road at the entrance to Kabetogama Lake, among others.

The U.S. Highway 53 relocation project also received an update this week, as MnDOT announced it will speed the approval process for



Rick Nolan



Amy Klobuchar

the project by up to two years. The highway is in the process of being relocated between Eveleth and Virginia in order to accommodate the mine expansion needs of United Taconite and RGGGS Land and Minerals.

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said in a release under the expedited process MnDOT will recommend one rather than three options for the relocation project.

"We need to get this project moving at a much faster pace," Nolan said in a release. "And this process will speed things along by at least a year – perhaps two years – while still assuring that everyone will have ample opportunity to comment so we can accomplish the

relocation the right way for the Range Metroplex."

According to MnDOT, the final environmental documentation for the project is expected to take place in 2015, with construction from 2015-2017.

The accelerated process is made possible under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act passed by the House Transportation Committee and signed into law in 2012.

U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken also weighed in with their support for MnDOT's decision.

"Completing the Highway 53 project is essential to moving the economy forward on the Iron Range," Klobuchar said in a release. "MnDOT's announcement today is an important step in ensuring this project is finished in a timely manner."

"Relocating Highway 53 is a big concern to residents, businesses, and leaders on the Range," Franken said in a release. "I'm very pleased to hear that this process is being sped up by MnDOT – the highway needs to be relocated for the good of our communities and the mining operations in the region. Going forward, I will keep working to ensure that this project addresses community concerns and moves ahead as quickly as possible."



Al Franken

## Tribute seeks military family stories

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Designed to honor veterans and their families, a tribute planned for the Capitol Mall in St. Paul will include stories from each of Minnesota's 87 counties.

Candance Ritch, Koochiching County veterans service officer, encourages Borderland veterans and their families to submit their stories to be a part of the tribute.

The Minnesota Military Family Tribute will be the first of its kind in the nation, said Ritch. It will be created on the grounds of the Minnesota State Capitol Mall and will thank those that have made, and continue to make, sacrifices here at home.

Framing the south end of the Minnesota State Capitol Mall, the tribute will consist of three main components: the Gold Star Table, the Thank You Military and Veteran Family Walkway and Story Stones. Visit the MFT website at [www.militaryfamilytribute.org](http://www.militaryfamilytribute.org) for complete details and artist's renderings.

The MFT has partnered with county veterans service offices throughout the state to collect correspondence from military families to assist in the creation of the Story Stones. Eighty-seven Story Stones will be arranged as part of the tribute, representing each of the state's 87 counties. Excerpts from correspondence sent between military members and their family will be etched onto these stones, providing a window into the lives of military families and

their sacrifices, as well as imparting a strong educational component for the tribute.

Ritch said it's important to represent our veterans at the state level and include correspondence between local veterans and their families.

"It's a reminder of the service military veterans and their families make to our nation every day," said Ritch. "It's a way for the state to thank them and show we care and will not forget them."

Ritch will collect submissions for inclusion on the Koochiching County's Story Stone. Submissions may be from any time frame from the Civil War to the current time, and need not be from a conflict. It can be a letter, telegram, e-mail, or even video, which will be transcribed to written word for inclusion on the stone.

While only a small portion of any contributed submission will be etched into the stone – likely a portion of a sentence – the stories will depict the life of our military families.

Ritch, who calls Borderland vets her pride and joy, said it's important for the stories to be told.

"It's for our kids, our grandkids," she said. "It's history. 'If we we don't pass on our stories, who will pass them on?'"

And while Ritch said vet-



Candance Ritch

### More information

Excerpts from correspondence sent between military members and their family will be collected to provide a window into the lives of military families and their sacrifices, as well as imparting a strong educational component for the tribute.

To submit a story, provide a copy to Koochiching VSO Candance Ritch, 715 Fourth St., International Falls, MN 56649 or email to Candance.Ritch@co.koochiching.mn.us

erans and their families are often private about their service and sacrifice, she encouraged area veterans and their families to contribute their correspondence.

"Veterans are very, very proud," she said. "They don't boast, they don't brag about their service – that was our duty, our commitment to our country."

To submit a story, provide a copy to Koochiching VSO Candance Ritch, 715 Fourth St., International Falls, MN 56649 or email to Candance.Ritch@co.koochiching.mn.us

The tribute is intended to forever stand as a thank you to every Minnesota military and veteran family member – past, present and future, said Ritch. The dedication of the tribute will take place on June 13, 2015, on the grounds of the Minnesota State Capitol.

For more information, contact VSO Ritch at 283-1179.

## Public Notice

The Solid Waste Facility and Recycle Center will be **CLOSED** on **Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup>** in observance of **Columbus Day**.

Normal operating hours are  
Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.



If you have any questions please contact the Environmental Services Department at 283-1157

## Missionary Conference

October 10-12 Friday – Sunday

Fri. & Sat. 7 pm. • Sun. 9:30 am & 2 pm.

### Missionaries:

- The Weiss' from Shepherds Bethel (USA)
- The Nicholson's from Wales
- The Grotzke's from Spain

### First Baptist Church

115 Shorewood Drive

*Everyone Welcome!*

## MEET JOE SCHWARTZ

Political Fundraiser  
At Coffee Landing Metro

October 9th • 5-7 PM

Come get to know your Candidate for Center Ward Councilor.

Bars, Cookies, and Coffee provided.



Paid for by the Elect  
Joe Schwartz Committee 2006 4th Ave West

## MANAGE YOUR ARTHRITIS PAIN

WITH RAINY LAKE MEDICAL CENTER

RLMC is offering another way to cope with arthritis pain:

### The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program

This program was developed to:

- Increase flexibility
- Improve range of motion
- Help decrease arthritis pain
- Relieve stiffness

Suitable for all fitness levels!



To register or for more information, contact:  
Meghann Cassibo at 218-283-5420



### Next Session:

October 14 - December 9

Tuesdays & Thursdays

10:00 - 10:45 am

Location: Hospital Classroom (Lower Level)

Cost: \$35 per person (every 8 weeks a new session starts)

## JOIN THE FIGHT TO END CANCER

Make a 6 or 12 month payment on your Journal subscription and we will donate to the Community Cancer Walk fund. They provide gas cards to local people in need of traveling out of town for appointments related to their cancer diagnosis and treatment.

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