

Saturated start

June is wettest on record

A10



Don't break the wall down

Officials say sandbags should stay

A4



The Journal



Saturday, June 28, 2014

International Falls, Minnesota

www.ifallsjournal.com

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2014 FLOOD

Estimated 13-20 inch rise in Rainy Lake

Officials stress the estimate is a projection; monitoring situation

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Rainy Lake could rise another 13 to 20 inches in the next seven days with the potential for heavy rainfall, according to an estimate made by a Lake of the Woods Control Board official.

Koochiching County Sheriff Brian Jespersen stressed the rise could be a lot less should the area

receive less rain than an Ontario meteorological model predicts.

“At this time it’s just a projection,” Jespersen told The Journal. “We can prepare, but don’t panic. If we get it, it will be a slow rise and rivers might come up again.”

Matt DeWolfe, with the Lake of the Woods Control Board, said in a report Thursday there is large uncertainty with forecast inflows and lake levels as meteorological

conditions can change rapidly and computer models are never completely accurate.

“Actual lake level changes could be higher or lower if the actual rainfall amounts differ from forecast amounts,” the report said. “Preparations for rising water should be made with a conservative margin for error.”

DeWolfe delivered the information in a phone call to county

officials Thursday afternoon. He noted in the report a June 19 forecast made under similar conditions significantly overestimated the seven-day rise.

Jespersen stressed the rise is an estimate based on a report from a Canadian meteorologist. National Weather Service meteorologists told Jespersen they predict less rainfall for Borderland, with isolated areas receiving

half to three-quarters of an inch, he said.

“Don’t panic,” Jespersen said. “Mother Nature will give us what she’ll give us.”

DeWolfe’s report said the seven-day level rise estimation is not to a peak elevation, further lake level rise beyond seven days is likely if the rainfall forecast is accurate.

Flood to A7 ►



A barrel-lined public dock in Ranier has been closed as surrounding waters continue to rise.

Closed signs are popping up left and right in Ranier and surrounding areas as Rainy Lake and portions of Rainy River continue to rise.

While some areas, like the Ranier lift bridge aren’t closed, boaters are encouraged to use caution if they choose to pass under it.

With more rain predicted for the weekend, new closed signs could appear early next week.

FOR MORE PHOTOS, TURN TO **PAGE B10**.



STAFF PHOTOS BY LAUREL BEAGER

Crews continue to build and fortify sandbag dikes at residences along County Road 46 Wednesday. According to members of the International Falls Fire Department, the water is unsafe to walk through without proper gear.

County board finalized loan

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Koochiching County Board Tuesday finalized a loan to the city of Littlefork to pay for critical upgrade needs at the Littlefork Medical Center.

The loan of up to \$1 million will pay for three upgrades the LMC facility needs: a new roof, a new boiler and heating system, and an upgraded information technology system. The loan will be paid back by the city in \$100,000 annual payments over 10 years.

To fund the payments, a subordinate service taxing district was created, encompassing the borders of Independent School District 362. A tax will be levied on taxable properties to pay back the loan.

County Administrative Director Teresa Briggs said the county board authorized the release of the loan funds on a per project basis, to help manage the money. The city of Littlefork will submit a project budget to the county board for each project, she said, and the county board will then release those funds to the city.

Once the project is completed, Briggs said, the city of Littlefork will submit a final cost report, both for audit purposes and to track the money.

“For example, if the roof project is \$50,000 under the initial budget, then the under is deferred into another project,” Briggs said.

The county board Tuesday also created a service board for the new taxing district, Briggs said. The service board will consist of

County to A7 ►

Waters wash out local businesses

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The flooding Koochiching County has experienced the past three weeks has affected many, with businesses, as well as individuals, susceptible to the rising waters.

Lakeside resorts and lodges have been battling the rising tide, trying to hold back the water with sandbag dikes and keeping things as dry as possible with pumps

running 24/7.

Birch Point Camp on Rainy Lake, run by Pat and Mary Hogan, is one such business trying to stay above water, both financially and literally.

Before the flooding began, Mary Hogan said her and her husband’s biggest problem was securing their dock in the high water. It’s a very expansive dock, Mary said, and has always been an issue when the water rises. They cur-

rently have boats weighted down on top of the dock to try and keep it secure, she said, but it’s still a daily worry for them.

“It’s starting to tip, we may end up with six or seven boats sunk in the lake if it does if it does come apart,” Mary said. “It hasn’t yet, but it’s a continued worry.”

When the waters started rising, Mary said they had to move the



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

The three cabins at Birch Point Camp have sandbag dikes built around them to keep the rising waters at bay.

Business to A7 ►

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VOLUME 5
NUMBER 52