

Drop a line

DNR predicts cold but strong fishing opener

A3



Slow spring start

Low temps dampen the start of spring

A4



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FALLS SCHOOL BOARD

Grover hired as superintendent

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

The wait is over. The Falls School Board Wednesday selected Kevin Grover as the district's new superintendent.

After a 4-2 vote by board members, Grover will replace Nordy Nelson, whose contract expires June 30. Members Dena Wenberg and Willi Kostiuk voted against the motion.

"I look forward to working with the school board, staff and community to continue the great educational opportunities offered at ISD 361," Grover told The Journal Thursday. "I am confident we can build on the programs and activities that we have and make progressive

changes to meet the needs of our students and community."

With 16 years of experience in education, Grover is the current dean of students and athletic director at Falls High School.

The board's selection brings an end to an ongoing process that started after Nelson announced he would not renew his contract after spending two years in the district. Last month, the board narrowed its search to three candidates – Grover and Beth Shermoen, who work in the district, and Gwen Carman from Grand Marais. Interviews were repeatedly pushed back while the board waited until it had a full six-member attendance. Interviews were held Monday.

Board chairman Gordy Dault

Tuesday told The Journal all three candidates did well on the interviews and the board was faced with a difficult decision.

Wednesday's decision didn't come easily.

A motion by member Darrell "Boxer" Wagner to hire Grover failed after a 3-3 vote tie. Wenberg, Kostiuk and Dault were opposed.

Wagner noted the "good job" Grover did during the year he served as interim superintendent for the district.

"He'll probably do a real good job as superintendent," he said.

Michelle Hebner said if board members hired Grover, it would be an advantage to the district.

Grover to A7 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Falls School Board member Mike Holden, center, congratulates newly-hired Falls Superintendent Kevin Grover with a handshake Wednesday at Falls High School. Grover will replace Nordy Nelson, whose contract expires June 30.

New CEO welcomes new challenge

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

If you build it, they will come. Dan Odegaard, the new Rainy Lake Medical Center chief executive officer, took over on April 1 after serving as Bigfork Valley's CEO for 11 years. He helped build a world-class facility and team there over those 11 years, he said, and it helped draw patients from all over.

"It's really about experience," Odegaard said. "It's really about how they feel when they walk out the door. We're going to do everything in our organization to give the people of International Falls and Koochiching County the best possible experience they can get."

In a world where anyone can go on the Internet and write a review based on their experience, and anyone else can easily find that review, providing the best possible patient care becomes the primary goal, Odegaard said.

"That's a high and lofty goal of every hospital and clinic in the country, but patient satisfaction is a big deal in health care nowadays," Odegaard said. "It's a very big deal to me, because I want whoever walks in our doors for care or service to get the best, the highest-quality and level of service or care."

Building a world-class health care facility in a rural area is a big challenge, but Odegaard said he's up for it, and he relishes the opportunity.

"I'm kind of a glutton for a challenge, it energizes me and it stimulates me," Odegaard said. "I really like working in this environment, it fits my personality, my desire to be ever-challenged."

A specific challenge facing rural health care facilities is

RLMC to A7 ►



COLLEGE CLASSROOM TO GET FACELIFT

Larry Pogemiller and Sue Collins tour the nursing classroom at Rainy River Community College Thursday.

STAFF PHOTOS BY SPENSER BICKETT

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

State officials visited Rainy River Community College Thursday to see what the designation from Governor Mark Dayton's bonding recommendations are going toward.

In Dayton's recent bonding recommendations, \$3.4 million was designated toward the Northeast Higher Education District, with \$311,000 of that total going to RRCC to renovate the current clinical nursing lab at the college.

Thursday, Larry Pogemiller, Minnesota Office of Higher Education commissioner; Katie Clark Sieben, Minnesota

RRCC to A7 ►



Katie Clark Sieben, Larry Pogemiller, and Elena Favela tour the telepresence room at RRCC Thursday.

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