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Meeting spurs pleas for rule curve change

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Emotions took over for some home and business owners who Tuesday, relived flooding events that took place earlier this summer.

During a public meeting held by the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board at Rainy River Community College, comments were heard, questions were answered and



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facts were given regarding water levels regulation as well as actions taken to manage the rising water levels in the lakes and rivers in the watershed.

The International Joint Com-

mission formed the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board to assist with binational coordination of water quality efforts for the entire boundary watershed and to coordinate the management of the water levels and flows on Rainy and Namakan lakes and the Rainy River.

Col. Daniel C. Koprowski, U.S. co-chair of the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board, said he understood

the more than 50 people in the audience lived through the situation and were all well aware of what happened.

"In one way or another, you, your families, your neighbors were directly affected by what happened," he said. "I know I don't need to tell you what happened...What we're here to do is provide the science behind it and take your feedback on it."

Board members, Koprowski said, saw a potential problem

brewing as early as last November. As 2013 wrapped up, large amounts of snow began to blanket the Borderland region. Into March, the snow and cold kept coming, making for a high snow pack and a late thaw. Koprowski said both factors laid the groundwork for possible flooding conditions. The large quantity of water in the snow pack increased the risk of high

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STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Austin and Wyatt Randal said the water was a little cold, but that didn't seem to stop them from enjoying City Beach Wednesday afternoon.

BEACH BLISS



A little sand is no match for Patrick Degroot who spent Wednesday afternoon crawling in, rolling on and toddling along the shore of Rainy Lake at City Beach.

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Laughter, splashing and sand castles returned to City Beach this week after being closed for almost two months following the flood in June.

City officials closed the beach after water tested positive for high levels of bacteria. In addition, debris washed in by high waters posed a safety concern.

But after multiple weekly tests showed bacteria levels returned to normal, the popular summer spot reopened last weekend with lifeguards on duty.

Routine weekly testing will continue to be conducted by the Koochiching County Public Health staff through the summer and into September. The test samples will be taken at both City Beach and Ranier Beach to ensure the water is safe for swimming. If future water tests indicate bacteria levels that exceed the level safe for swimming, City Beach will be closed at that time.

FOR MORE BEACH PHOTOS,
TURN TO PAGE B8.

Primary elections feature low voter turnout

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Just over 1,000 people turned out to the polls in Koochiching County Tuesday for Minnesota's primary election.

While there are 6,914 registered voters in the county, according to an unofficial election results report from the county auditor/treasurer's office, only 1,098 ballots were filled out Tuesday, for an unofficial voter turnout rate of 15.88 percent.

County auditor/treasurer Bob Peterson said the last primary election featured local races on the ballot, so the turnout was a bit higher. However, the county turnout did outpace the statewide turnout, which was unofficially 9.8 percent, according to the secretary of state's office.

Voters usually don't turn out for primary elections because of a lack of concern, Peterson said. There's more interest in November elections, though, and he said he expects voter turnout in the county in November to be around 70 percent.

"We traditionally have a strong voter turnout in Koochiching County, and that's because of the mail-in ballots, which usually have a high return," Peterson said.

Of the 1,098 ballots filled out in Koochiching County, none were from the west precinct in Koochiching County. There was a good reason for the zero voter turnout, however, as no voters live there, Peterson said.

"Until they give rabbits the right to vote, we're not going to get any votes from there," Peterson said.

According to an unofficial election results report from the county auditor/treasurer's office, 633 of 1,098 ballots cast were for Democratic-Farmer-Labor candidates, 400 were for Republicans, and 32 were for independents. Thirty ballots crossed over between parties, and three ballots were blank.

Statewide, DFL incumbents Sen. Al Franken and Gov. Mark Dayton easily fended off challengers from their own parties to win their respective primaries.

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