

LOCALNEWS

‘Med-NAFTA’ effort to first focus on dialysis

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

A binational effort to share medical resources will first focus on American access to the dialysis services offered in Fort Frances. Dubbed “medical NAFTA,” Councilor Cynthia Jaksa Monday reported to the International Falls City Council on the July 3 gathering in Fort Frances of about 30 medical professional and government officials from both sides of the border to discuss the barriers to allowing Americans to use dialysis services in Fort Frances and Ontario residents to use scanning equipment in International Falls. NAFTA refers to the

1994 North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Jaksa said she was told by Jamshed Merchant, Canada’s consul general for Minnesota, the idea of sharing medical resources between the two communities separated only by an international boundary and a river is admirable, but complex for the first attempt. She said consensus at the meeting was to first focus on just one aspect — use of Fort



Cynthia Jaksa

France dialysis services and proceed. She said a meeting is scheduled for Aug. 18 with members of the Ontario Provincial Parliament and Ontario Ministry of Health. “I believe the political muscle is here, on the U.S. side, to get this done,” she said. City Administrator Ken Anderson, who also attended the meeting, said he believed the sharing of resources across the border is a complex issue, and the group has taken the correct focus on dialysis for the first effort. Jaksa said this is the second year the binational group has met on July 3 to discuss common concerns and suggested it be made an

annual event. Other business In other business Monday, the council heard from city Attorney Steve Shermoen that he has met several times with Koochiching County Attorney Jeff Naglosky to work on an agreement for annexing the multimodal district into the Falls city limits. “It’s very important, we are working on it, are making progress, but it is slow,” he told the council. While no final agreement has yet been drafted, it said it would be soon. Shermoen said once an agreement has been drafted, it would be reviewed by the city council and county. Input would be sought once

the draft is approved by the two bodies. While he said the input of the city of Ranier is appropriate, it is not a party to the agreement because no Ranier property is affected by the agreement. Whether public hearings are required by law is now unclear and typically hearings are conducted when that issue exists, Shermoen said. The council agreed to act at a future meeting on a proposed policy on appointing members to city advisory commissions or committees. Options involving whether the whole council would be involved in selecting appointees, or the mayor would make appointments, with the council approving them — as it stands now, need

further consideration, councilors agreed. During the audience portion of the meeting, the council heard a proposal by George Hnatiuk, Analog Design Consultants, International Falls, for a audiovisual system for the council chambers. He provided a proposal for \$24,384 and compared it to the NLFX proposal of \$46,248. He said his proposed system would “be every bit as good” as the NLFX system. Jaksa said the success of a grant sought to help pay for a system will be known later this month. In the meantime, she said no proposal has been accepted and she would study his proposal.

Riding for a cause

After more than three months on the road, Joseph Boutilier made his way through International Falls this week on a unicycle. In an effort to promote government action to address climate change, a 3,000-mile ride started in Victoria, BC Canada and will end in Ottawa during the Sept. 21 U.N. Climate Summit in New York City. Boutilier reports although the ride is centered around the Canadian government’s inaction on climate change, he’s using this U.S. portion of the ride through Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan as a chance to connect and demonstrate solidarity with American environmentalists pushing for climate action.



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Joseph Boutilier heads south on U.S. Highway 53 Thursday morning during a 3,000-mile unicycle ride through Canada and the U.S. to promote government action to address climate change. International Falls marked the first U.S. stop of Boutilier’s six-month journey.

Falls fire and police chief reports

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

International Falls fire and police chiefs Monday provided to the International Falls City Council reports of June activities. Police Police Chief Mike Musich reported the department was involved in a variety of activities in June. Among them were increased efforts to prevent vandalism in target areas, traffic control for sandbagging at Kerry Park, attendance at Viking Bar street dance, planning for Fourth of July celebration, attendance by an officer at search warrant training, and attendance at the Falls High School graduation ceremony.

He said calls for service listed under shift log activity showed: 380 general calls; 80 traffic stops; 30 ambulance assists; 19 agency assists; four projects, with 98 activities reported in incident complaint reports or ICRs. He said 601 activities were handled by the department. Fire/Rescue/EMS Chief Adam Mannausau reported the June department activities, that included five fire call outs: four city responses and one rural response. The department conducted a fire meeting and training June 19 and took part in sandbagging and water pumping. In June, the ambulance received 74 calls through 911 and took part in 49

transfers, compared to June 2013 when 66 calls through 911 were received and 32 transfers were handled. He reported year-to-date totals for 2014 of 361 calls through 911 and 286 transfers. A monthly ambulance meeting and training was conducted June 11. Housing issues handled in June under the city’s blight ordinances included one citation issued each for blight junk and blight structure; three blight auto and 16 grass violations. Letters about the need to comply with the blight ordinance included two for hazardous house, two for grass, and one for grass and blight. He reported eight letters sent for the need to clean properties.

riverfest

INTERNATIONAL FALLS MINNESOTA

Backus & Rotary Club of International Falls would like to  
THANK EVERYONE who volunteered, worked and contributed to the

**2014 RIVERFEST CELEBRATION**

**Sponsors:**

93.1 The Border

Ballan Furniture

Boise Paper

Bremer Bank

Burkehaven on Holiday Island

Charter Cable Media

City of International Falls

Coca-Cola Bottling Company

Convention & Visitors Bureau

County Market

Days Inn

Falls Country Club

Iron Range Association of Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractors

J2M Apparel

Kantor Electric

KGHS/KSDM Radio

Lucachick Architecture

Maggie and Brian McBride

Midcontinent Communications

Network Center, Inc.

North Country Business Products

Rainy Lake Medical Center

Shannon’s Inc.

Shermoen, Jaksa, PLLP

Stewart’s Super One Foods

The Journal/North Star Publishing

TruStar Federal Credit Union

Up North Builders, Inc.

Wagner Construction

Wherley Motors

Widseth Smith Nolting

BACKUS  
Community Center

CharterMedia

Rainy Lake Medical Center

Foundation Golf Classic

Thursday, July 24

Registration at 2 p.m., Golf begins at 3 p.m.

**To become a sponsor  
and register your team,  
call 218-283-5524**

**Sponsorship Opportunities:**

- Corporate = \$1,500 (golf & dinner for 8)
- Hole = \$500 (golf & dinner for 4)
- Partner = \$300 (golf & dinner for 4)
- Golf & Dinner = \$75/person
- Dinner only = \$25

Funds raised from this event will be used to purchase a SaeboroJoyce machine for the RLMC Therapy & Wellness Center. This will be used with patients that have neurological or orthopedic diagnoses, like stroke or hand injuries.