

# LOCALNEWS

## Multimodal district to get rail spur

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

A rail spur is to be constructed by Minnesota Dakota and Western Railway at the International Falls multimodal district under an agreement approved Monday by the Falls City Council.

The agreement calls for the city to reimburse MD&W \$159,600, the cost of construction of the spur, from a portion of the \$657,000 state grant gained in 2013. The grant is to be used to install utilities and other infrastructure to the district, located along Koochiching County Highway 155, east of the city.

City Attorney Steve Shermoen negotiated the agreement and told the council the spur will be owned by the city.

"We anticipate a developer will want access to the railroad for transportation of goods, products and materials," he said.

A developer would negotiate the terms of use with MD&W, he said. The spur would be maintained by

MD&W, but it would be the responsibility of the city, as owner, for rebuilding or replacing it.

Darwin Joslyn, MD&W general manager, attended Monday's meeting and said the spur is expected to last 20 years or more before it would need to be refurbished.

International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson agreed a spur in the district makes sense, and asked whether a potential developer has indicated interest in locating in the district.

Shermoen said discussions and negotiations have taken place with several potential developers, but no contract with a developer exists at this time.

In a report to the council, city Administrator Ken Anderson said completion of the spur will, in part, allow the site to be designated as "shovel ready" by



Steve Shermoen

the state and allow state efforts to market the site to prospective companies.

In other business Monday, the council approved the minutes of the July 21 meeting on a 4-1 vote, with Anderson voting no.

Anderson was absent from that meeting during which action was taken to pay a \$15,000 brokerage fee to MGD Enterprises for the Donahue property. Anderson said Monday he signed the check under protest.

Anderson said members of the public did not have an opportunity for input, but thanked Shermoen for attempting to renegotiate the agreement, which includes about \$90,000 in brokerage fees to Matt Donahue's MGD Enterprises. The final \$15,000 payment is due July 2015.

"I think he knew he had the votes and did not need to negotiate," said Anderson of Donahue.

The council tabled action on a request for a second-hand goods dealer license by KOOTASCA Community Action Inc. The council discussed whether the

public-private nonprofit group that receives state and federal money, and grants from other nonprofit groups would unfairly compete against private business.

Councilors said they supported KOOTASCA's work, but said they needed more information about KOOTASCA's intent before acting on the request. The issue is expected to be revisited at the Aug. 18 council meeting.

The council also approved co-sponsoring with the Koochiching Labor Assembly the annual Labor Day Picnic and approved use of Smokey Bear Park for the Sept. 1 event.

Mike Holden and Joe Schwartz, representing the assembly, said music, kids' rides and food would be offered during the free event that begins at 2 p.m.

Schwartz later noted free-will donations of a nonperishable food item would be collected for the Falls Hunger Coalition Food Shelf.

Last year, 2,300 people were fed at the picnic, they said.

## TESTING THE WATERS



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Deb Polkinghorne, Koochiching County public health nurse, collects a water sample from Ranier Beach Tuesday. Polkinghorne, who also collected three containers of water from City Beach, transports the samples to the laboratory at North Koochiching Area Sanitary District where the water is tested for contaminants. The water has been tested on a weekly basis at both beaches which are still closed due to contamination from flooding.



North Koochiching Area Sanitary District Superintendent Bob Rapaway shows water samples from City Beach and Ranier Beach collected today by the Koochiching County Public Health Department. The samples, which are being incubated at 44.5 degrees centigrade for 24 hours, will show if contaminants are found in the water.


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All Daytime Events are FREE!

Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>

6:00 pm Elk's Spaghetti Dinner

Thursday, August 21<sup>st</sup>

2:00 pm Concessions Open  
2:00 pm Flea Market  
2:00 pm Craft Show  
3:00 pm Teen Idol Contest  
4:00 pm Beer Gardens Open  
4:00 pm Flood Volunteer Appreciation  
6:00 pm Boat Parade  
6:00 pm Flood Volunteer  
Appreciation Program  
7:30 pm Casting Call  
10:00 pm Jam Session by Local Artists

Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>

10:00 am Arts & Crafts Festival Flea Market  
11:00 am Concessions Open  
11:00 am Rad Zoo  
11:00 am Fun Zone Opens  
12:00 pm Fun Zone Blow-Up  
12:00 pm Tractor Rides  
12:00 pm Beer Gardens open  
12:00 pm Kids Games, Old Fashion  
Races & Fun Zone  
1:30 pm Rad Zoo  
4:00 pm Weigh-Ins  
6:00 pm Lawn Mower Drag Racing

6:00 pm Steak Dinner  
8:00 pm Don Tersigni-Comedian  
9:30 pm Johnny Bird Show

Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>

8:00 am Kids Fishing Tournament  
8:00 am Classic Car/Motorcycle  
Show Registration  
9:00 am 5 K Race  
9:00 am Fastpitch Tournament  
10:00 am Arts & Crafts Festival Flea Market  
10:00 am Classic Car/Motorcycle Show  
10:00 am Disc Golf  
11:00 am Concessions Open  
11:00 am Family Fun Zone opens  
12:00 pm Beer Gardens open  
12:00 pm Tractor Rides  
12:00 pm Go Cart Races  
12:00 pm Jam Session by Local Artists  
12:30 pm Kids Games, Old Fashion  
Races & Fun Zone  
3:30 pm Car/Motorcycle Show Awards  
- drive thru  
4:00 pm Weigh-ins  
7:00 pm Hypnotist  
9:00 pm Brat Pack Radio  
10:00 pm Raffle Drawing

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