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Saturday, July 19, 2014

International Falls, Minnesota

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## A golden opportunity north of the border

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

Officials from the New Gold Corporation met with community members Thursday to discuss a potential mining project that could benefit the area.

Kyle Stanfield, vice president of environmental stewardship, addressed the crowd during an hour-long presentation, where he detailed the Rainy River mining project's history, and its projected environmental and financial impact to the area.

Citing estimates, Stanfield said the project would require 400 jobs during the construction phase, which is hopefully going to begin in the first or second quarter of 2015. During the mine's operation phase, he said, it would require 600 jobs, with an indirect or induced impact of another 575 to 600 jobs. Overall, the regional impact

would be 2,000 jobs per year.

"This is a huge impact, for the district, for the region, for nothern Minnesota as well," Stanfield said.

While economic assessments haven't detailed specific benefits to the U.S., Stanfield said he believes there will be many benefits to the area.

"I would expect that we are going to see responses from tenders from this side of the border, that are going to be competitive and going to bring good value to us," Stanfield said.

The newly elected provincial government in Ontario has recognized the importance of the Rainy River project, Stanfield said, and wants to help move it forward. The government is about six months from approving the project at which point the company will begin the permitting process for the project, he said. The construction process will take about

two years, he said, with the first full year of production beginning in 2017.

"We're very excited about where we are, and where we're going, and we're going to continue working on that," Stanfield said.

The mine site, located about 15 miles, or 25 kilometers, north of the Canadian border, is "outstanding," Stanfield said. Existing infrastructure, like roads and electricity, is in place to service the site, he said, as well as a work force.

"We're not 400 kilometers from an existing town, from power, from roadways," Stanfield said. "We have a power system, we have a road system, we have a ready work force."

The mine would feature an open pit production at the beginning, Stanfield said, with an underground component starting



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC MATHEWS

Kyle Stanfield, of New Gold Corporation, addresses community members during an International Falls Chamber of Commerce luncheon at Lenard's Thursday.

Gold to A7 >

## Plan of study to follow basin report

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The second edition of the Rainy-Lake of the Woods State of the Basin Report released by the Lake Woods Water Sustainability Foundation and the International Joint Commission will be used as the basis to develop a water quality plan of study for the basin.

The recently-released report is a comprehensive synthesis of what is known about the aquatic ecology in the binational Rainy-Lake of the Woods basin. It provides details on a wide range of topics, including drainage basin characteristics, water chemistry, nutrients and harmful algal blooms, biotic communities, aquatic invasive species, emerging threats and an overview of the information gaps and monitoring needs.

"The State of the Basin Report provides a wealth of information that residents can use to help shape the future, including the development of a water quality plan of study for the Lake of the Woods Basin that the commission has undertaken," said United States IJC Commissioner Rich Moy.

Acting Canadian Chair Gordon Walker commended the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation for the report and encouraged people interested in the future of water quality in the Lake of the Woods Basin to review the report and comment on the commission's draft plan of study when it is released later this month.

Todd Sellers, foundation executive director, said the report includes an impressive amount of research and monitoring conducted since the first edition in 2009.

"This updated report focuses on the new science and provides a wealth of information for the next steps toward long-term sustainability of the waters of the basin," said Sellers.

Development of the Rainy-Lake of the Woods State of



FILE PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

United States IJC Commissioner Rich Moy

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**Rich Moy**  
United States IJC Commissioner

the Basin Report was a collaborative effort, funded by the International Watershed Initiative of the IJC. Funding support was also provided by the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation,

with in-kind editorial and data support from universities and the state, provincial and federal agencies in the watershed.

Report to A7 >

## High time for high-speed Internet

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

The Koochiching Economic Development Authority Board Wednesday heard a report from the group's director, detailing potential opportunities to improve the business climate in Koochiching County.

In his director's report, KEDA Director Paul Nevanen said he attended a meeting earlier this month to learn more about ways to improve broadband Internet access in the county.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is committing \$20 million toward a Border to Border Broadband Infrastructure grant program, in order to improve Internet access in unserved or underserved areas of Minnesota. Officials encouraged counties and municipalities to identify potentially eligible areas in advance of the application process, which DEED officials say they hope to open in late September.

"I'm a firm believer that broadband, like water, sewer, and road infrastructure, will be critical, especially to rural areas," Nevanen said.

The program involves one round of competitive grant application, Nevanen said, as well as a \$5 million per grant limit, and a required one to one matching funds pledge. Businesses and Internet providers are eligible to apply, he said, and thus could contribute to the required local match.

Identifying Birchdale as an underserved area, Nevanen said applicants must keep in mind they need local support for this grant, as the affected people might not want faster Internet speeds.

"Even though you're underserved, you have to have local support," Nevanen said. "It's a generational thing. They've got farm areas where they say, 'we're not interested.'"

The board approved a motion to let KEDA take the lead in compiling an application for the grant program, and reporting to the Koochiching County Board on the progress of the application.

Along with Birchdale, Island View is another area of the county lacking Internet speed, Nevanen



Paul Nevanen



Wade Pavleck

said. An upcoming project to extend sewer service to Island View could provide an opportune time to also improve broadband access for the area.

"You already have the hole in the ground," KEDA member Pete Kalar said.

Nevanen said he's already contacted Frontier Communications, which has indicated interested in holding a public meeting to discuss potential costs and benefits of a broadband Internet expansion project. KEDA member Brian McBride brought up Big Falls as a potential site as well, especially if the Renewable Energy Clean Air Project decides to site there.

KEDA member Soren Olesen, who lives in the Birchdale area, also brought up the issue of potential Internet speeds versus actual Internet speeds. He said Internet in his home has download speeds of up to 1.5 megabytes per second, but when he actually tests it, the actual speed is usually 0.5 megabytes per second. A current project runs fiberoptic cable to Loman, he said, but won't extend past Loman.

"The people who live right past Loman, the only high-speed Internet access they have right now is on their cell phone," Olesen said.

Businesses and resorts east of International Falls on Rainy Lake need high-speed Internet in order to compete, and to retain customers, Olesen said.

"People demand communications now, or they're not going to come up here," KEDA member Wade Pavleck said.

**Cold weather testing**

Nevanen also reported on the status of the cold weather testing facility, which wrapped up its testing season on Friday. A long-time

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