

OPINION

OUR VIEW

A shot in the city’s arm

The quality of some International Falls rental units and commercial buildings could be improved under a state grant the city is seeking.

We urge officials with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development’s Small Cities Development Program to approve the city’s application seeking \$628,677.

Combined with other funds, the total project cost is estimated at \$1.1 million.

A preliminary application was approved and Monday the city entered the final application stage with completion of a public hearing.

The owners of the buildings provided the loans would be required to contribute 40 percent to their individual projects. Should they meet certain criteria, the loans would be forgiven within a period of time.

Clearly, there is a need for these improvements.

A windshield survey of the city showed a total of 58 commercial buildings in the project area with 38 in substandard condition and one in dilapidated conditions, said a letter from Falls Mayor Bob Anderson to DEED officials.

That means 65 percent of the commercial buildings in the designated area are considered substandard; the grant program requires just 25 percent of the buildings in the target area be substandard to apply for the money.

A report included with the preliminary application shows a rehab program serving 13 rental units would alleviate substandard housing conditions for 11.3 percent of low to moderate income rents and increase availability of adequate rental housing by 10.7 percent.

This money could play a critical role in providing incentives to revitalize the commercial sector and improve the rental stock of the community.

It would also help to perpetuate the enthusiasm for improving our economic climate as part of the ongoing Voyage Forward economic adjustment strategies effort, Anderson said in the letter.

Approval of Minnesota’s Small Cities Development Program grant to International Falls would truly serve as a shot in this community’s arm to improve this city’s health.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

KCC-TV offers valuable information

To the editor,

I would like to introduce the community to KCC-TV, Koochiching County Community Television, and the people who volunteer to operate it.

Jean Evens, Michael Wellcome, Mona Johnson, Hoa Sobczynski, Carolyn Jaksa and myself, Robin Bjorkquist, make up the KCC-TV Board of Directors. As a group, we have been working to build on the foundation that others have laid before us, starting with Scott Crow, way back when.

Our chair, Jean, brings valuable grant-writing skills to the table. Vice chair, Mike, adds direction and guidance. Secretary Mona lends her office experience and community spirit to the group. Treasurer Hoa keeps all the money accounted for. Carolyn, the newest board member, is our liaison to the school district. I update the calendar

of events on a regular basis and schedule programs.

Not only has our board put in many hours, but so have local volunteers who have assisted with programming, recording local events, technology and special projects. The volunteers, board of directors and members consider it a privilege to support the International Falls community and surrounding areas through the development of a quality PEG (public, education, government) channel.

Check out local TV stations when you travel, most communities have one. They air government meetings, local sporting events, calendar of events, everything that is going on in that community, and that is what we strive to be – your local television station.

We need more Bob Bahr’s that are recording

interesting events that we can put on TV and online. Whatever your interest, there is probably someone else out there who would enjoy watching art, cooking, hunting, fishing, gardening and more.

Did you know that KCC-TV has already aired a variety of programming including high school pep fests, parades, Bronco girls hockey games, an early episode of The Beverly Hillbillies and a fishing show from Jean-Paul Tessier of Lake of the Woods Outdoorsman? This is just a sampling of what we intend to air as the station grows.

Not only can you watch on Midco Cable Channel 7, you can also watch live online and view archived videos via YouTube on our website at www.kcc-tv.org. We encourage everyone to learn more about the station.

The channel strives to

improve the communication of the Voyage Forward initiative of progress and revitalization of our area. We hope that in the future KCC-TV will be a learning platform for high school and college students looking to enter the television industry. We also intend for KCC-TV to eventually grow into a new employer with several positions that will make KCC-TV all that it can be.

Everything costs money to operate, and a local non-profit TV station is no different. The board of directors is working hard to provide a good, quality product to be valued by all community members.

To submit information, please contact us via email at info@kcc-tv.org, call 285-7225 or stop by Backus where the station is located.

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How to contact your lawmakers

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Tom
PURCELL

Women have long been annoyed that they do more housework than men, as demonstrated by many studies, but now they are really steamed.

Last December, The New York Times reported on a regrettable trend. The number of men between the ages of 25 and 54 who are unemployed is at all-time high: 16 of every 100 men in that age range have not been able to find jobs — compared to the 1960s, when only about five of every 100 men were without work.

Why the increasing number of unemployed men in this age range? More are still in school. Some have retired early, not necessarily by choice. Others are on disability. And, discouraged by our still-struggling economy, others have dropped out of the workforce.

Rather than trying to understand and correct this growing trend, some are more interested in another finding about unemployed males: that even when men are out of work, they STILL do less housework than women!

As it goes, a fellow named Josh Katz reviewed data from the American Time Use Survey and compared how much housework and

caregiving “nonemployed” Americans do. “The survey compared 147 women with 147 men,” says Salon. “Out of that group, 81 women spent most of their time on housework or caring for others, compared with 34 of the men.” So, what do unemployed men do with their time? Many watch TV. The survey found 46 of the unemployed men reported sitting around and watching the tube, compared with only 19 of the unemployed women. Slate says this makes sense because other time-use surveys find that “men spend an average of three more hours a week than women on leisure time, whereas women spend three more hours a week than men on housework.”

The Slate article concludes that the reason wom-

en handle more housework than men — even unemployed men — is “because it’s understood as their duty to get this work done in a way that is not true for men.”

But I think the answer is much simpler than that: Men and women are different.

The fact is, men and women are wired differently — our DNA is different, and the reason why goes back thousands of years. But don’t ask me, ask therapist and social philosopher Michael Gurian.

In his book, “What Could He Be Thinking? How a Man’s Mind Really Works,” he cites decades of neurobiological research and brain scans that show the male and female brains are very different.

Take listening. One brain-imaging study shows that men listen with only one side of the brain, whereas women use both. Women wouldn’t believe how many other things we men use only half a brain to do.

Another brain study shows that the male brain doesn’t pick up as many sensory cues as the female brain. When a man walks into his house, he is less likely to notice dust —

which, apparently, consists of fine, dry particles that settle on furniture.

I like a clean house, but it takes me forever to get it done and I loathe every moment of it. Yet I love cleaning my car and am happy to spend a couple hours making it just right.

That’s not to say men should not understand their shortcomings and manually override their bad habits to pick up their housework game. I’m just saying that our DNA is what it is, and it may take many years before men also are wired to do their fair share of the housework.

So, rather than focus on housework imperfections of unemployed males, wouldn’t we all be better off if we focused on getting these fellows back to work? Work is good for the soul, for happy marriages and households, and we certainly need more tax receipts to cover our country’s bills.

Purcell, author of “Misadventures of a 1970’s Childhood” and “Comical Sense: A Lone Humorist Takes on a World Gone Nutty!” is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc.

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