

OPINION

OUR VIEW

People must keep up park

Local dog lovers owe a high paw to International Falls officials and those involved in creating an off-leash friendly dog park. We love the idea of using the Eighth Street hockey rink for a dog park in the summer. The boards lining the rink make a perfect containment system allowing dogs to play and run off-leash. All dogs deserve the opportunity to feel that kind of freedom for a while each day. But we urge everyone who uses the dog park to do their part to pick up after their beloved pooch, should it do its business inside or outside the rink. No one, not even dog lovers, ought to run the risk of stepping in poop on city property. Kudos to the people who are supplying waste bags at the rink. They are taking this opportunity seriously and we encourage others to do the same. Many dog parks have an etiquette that should be followed. In an effort to keep everyone welcome at the park, we have listed a few ideas from other parks to educate people about how they should handle themselves and their dogs. ■ Keep dogs on leashes except in designated “off-leash” areas. Dogs who are leashed may feel threatened by free-roaming dogs. ■ “Off-leash” dogs must be under voice control by their owners. If voice control is not possible, do not enter “off-leash” areas. Voice control enables owners to stop dogs from misbehaving. ■ Dog owners must have the leash in hand at all times. In the event of problems, dog owners

should be able to quickly leash and remove their dogs from the premises. ■ Dog owners must remain in the park and keep their dog in view at all times. No dog may be unattended. Unattended dogs are more likely to get into trouble and stay in trouble than dogs who are being watched. ■ All dogs must have up-to-date vaccinations prior to entering the dog park. Keep a copy of current shot records on hand for police or animal control officials. ■ Dogs must have current rabies and applicable license tags clipped to their collars at all times. Rabies tags are a proof of vaccination, while license tags show compliance with local laws. ■ Puppies under four months of age should not enter the park. Puppies under four months of age have not received all of their vaccinations. They should be kept away from the dog park for their own protection and that of other dogs. ■ No infants or small children should permitted in the dog park. Small children, especially running children, may be regarded as prey animals by strange dogs. Dogs may also feel the urge to protect children they know. This tends to cause aggressive behavior. ■ Owners are responsible for the behavior of their animals. This eliminates some of the responsibility of the dog park for damages caused by visiting dogs. The city has every right to withdraw this opportunity provided for our dogs. It’s now up to the humans to make sure this experience is a good one for everyone involved.



PAID ELECTION LETTER

Pretentious politician’s plush palace

To the editor,
Times are hard for all of us northern Minnesotans. High fuel and energy costs, higher costs of food and other necessities have reduced our spendable income. Out of control cost of college tuition, a stagnant economy, and unaffordable health care have combined to make things worse. The small town America we love is disappearing. We need elected officials to directly address these problems. Instead, our state legislators just spent \$77 million on an unnecessary, extravagant, office building to house the 67 state senators that occupy St. Paul for a few months out of the year. For the last 109 years our senators have been doing the

people’s business in our majestic historic capital. Temporary housing was needed during renovation of the capitol building. That should not have been a problem with St. Paul full of empty state and private office space. But our state senators decided they wanted an all new shiny permanent office building. Needs and wants are two different things. Unfortunately for us, our career politicians seem to not understand the difference. Now we will have a permanent building to maintain; and other empty state buildings still empty. House members balked at the frivolous expenditure in (for them) an election year, but finally cut a deal with the Senate to support the new palace

in exchange for support of indexing the minimum wage. This is an inexcusable use of our hard-earned money that they took from us in the form of higher taxes. In 2013, our legislators raised taxes \$2.1 billion. In 2014, an election year, they gave us back 25 cents of every dollar they took. That works out to be an increase of \$750 for every single household in MN since 2012. The current cost of the new palace is \$77 million; that is over \$1 million per senator. For comparison, \$77 million could buy every family in our legislative district health insurance policy for a year. \$77 million could pay \$1,000 per month rent for over 6,000 people. \$77 million could

buy \$300 of food per week for a year for nearly 5,000 families. \$77 million could buy 641,000,000 diapers. \$77 million could pay for over 5,000 students’ college tuition for a year. We need to send the career politicians a message this November; we are not going to tolerate our needs as citizens being put aside for the wants of the political elite. It is not healthy for our economy, it is not morally sound, and it is not Minnesotan. Vote Smart and vote for me, Eric Johnson for MN House 3A in November and we will bring northern Minnesota to St. Paul and have less St. Paul in northern MN.
Eric Johnson
International Falls, MN

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Emissions plan raises many questions

First of all, it’s a testament to the work of Minnesota’s policy makers and energy providers the past few decades that there isn’t a statewide uproar about President Barack Obama’s proposal to cut the state’s carbon dioxide emissions by 41 percent by 2030. While Obama’s plan certainly presents some challenges, it’s clear Minnesota’s adoption seven years ago of the Next Generation Energy Act put power providers and Minnesotans on this track well ahead of Washington. That state act requires at least 25 percent of all electricity generated or purchased in Minnesota to come from renewable energy by 2025. In 2013, the Legislature expanded required additional 1.5 percent of retail electricity come from solar energy by 2020.

Clearly, such legislation is one reason Xcel Energy Inc., the largest power company serving the state, already generates half its energy from carbon-free sources. (Think nuclear, wind, solar and other renewables.) Furthermore, Xcel plans to raise its wind energy 42 percent by 2016. Despite progress in Minnesota, there are several issues that deserve thorough public discussions — and clear answers — before the president’s plan is formally adopted. At the national level, the overriding issue is whether Obama’s plan puts the nation at an economic disadvantage all for the unproven perception that America can lead by example in protecting the environment. Indeed, in the announcement of the EPA plan Monday, the administration

highlighted its belief it was doing the right thing morally and believes other major carbon-emitting countries will follow suit. For starters, existing morals (and markets) seem to be doing a pretty good job of shifting away from carbon-heavy sources of energy. Nationwide, coal has gone from providing 52 percent of U.S. energy needs in 2000 to just 37 percent in 2013. Even this plan only drops that to 30 percent in 15 more years. As for leading by example, the elephant on the planet is China, putting out about 30 percent of all CO2 emissions. And until last year, its output was growing about 10 percent annually. Such trends, coupled with increased emission from nations such as India and Japan, cast doubt on the lead-the-world-by-example claim.

At a local level, this proposal adds another dimension to the ongoing debate about the Xcel’s Sherco plant in Becker. The coal-burning plant, built in the 1970s, provides about 20 percent of the power used by 1.2 million Xcel customers in Minnesota. It also is the state’s largest emitter of carbon dioxide. A multifaceted, multiyear review of the plant’s future is well underway, and this proposal is bound to add to that discussion. As it proceeds, the most important questions to answer about its future — or what replaces it — must not just involve emissions. They also must include everything from reliability to costs and benefits to consumers, power providers and the state’s entire economy.
St. Cloud Times,
June 7

How to contact your lawmakers

FEDERAL OFFICES

President Barack Obama
Democrat
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500
202-456-1111
Website:
www.whitehouse.gov
E-mail:
president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
202-225-6211
Website: www.nolan.house.gov
Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan
Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Duluth Office of
Congressman Rick Nolan
11 East Superior Street
Suite 125
Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: 218-464-5095
Fax: 218-464-5098

Brainerd Office of
Congressman Rick Nolan
Brainerd City Hall
501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-454-4078

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Democrat
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-3244

Minnesota Office:
1200 Washington Avenue

South, Suite 250
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612-727-5220
Website:
www.klobuchar.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Al Franken
Democrat
Senate Hart Building 320
Washington DC 20510
202-224-5641
Website:
www.alfranken.com
E-Mail:
info@franken.senate.gov

STATE OFFICES

Gov. Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN, 55155
800-657-3717
E-mail:
Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us

Rep. David Dill
571 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2190
800-339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn

Assistant: Joan Harrison
Sen. Tom Bakk
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
Capitol Office phone:
(651) 296-8881
Email:
www.senate.mn/
senatorbakkemail

Candidate letter policy

The beginning of 2014 brought a new policy to The Journal. A charge of \$30 will be required to publish letters to the editor from candidates or about candidates. The letters must be 500 words or less and the fee must be paid prior to the letter being published. The name and city of the author will be published with the letter. Letters may be emailed to laurel@ifallsjournal.com. The Journal will publish a deadline for publication of paid election letters prior to the Aug. 12 primary and Nov. 4 general elections.