

Hats off to the grads

Indus kindergartners earn diplomas

B6



Red pine divine

Students take trip to VNP

A10



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Saturday,
May 31, 2014

International Falls, Minnesota

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Kindergarten teacher Mary Kay Hardwig presents graduates with their diplomas Thursday.

1st GRADE BOUND

Another set of graduates received their diplomas Thursday at Falls High School. Falls Elementary kindergarten students performed three songs for family, friends and community members before being officially declared first-grade students. Donning purple caps and dressed in their best, it appeared the class of 2026 went through a successful year of kindergarten.



Douglas Salo gets into his performance for family, friends and community members.



Morgan Morin Demars smiles during Thursday's graduation ceremony.



From left, Niklas Anderson, Destiny Blumer and Pablo Christianson are ready to graduate.

STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

EDA hears criticism of process

Accepts two of three candidates for board positions

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The handling of the selection of candidates Tuesday for two open positions on the International Falls Economic Development Advisory Board could result in adding a 13th seat.



Bob Anderson

The EDA on a 3-1 vote Tuesday accepted a recommendation from the board to designate Hugh Haller, president and chief executive officer of the Camping and Education Foundation, and Dale Johnson, president and CEO of TruStar Federal Credit Union, to the advisory board. Pete Kalar voted no; Bob Anderson left the meeting just prior to the vote.

The EDA is made up of the five International Falls city councilors and the EDA Advisory Board is made up of 12 community members appointed by the EDA.

Just prior to accepting the recommendation, a motion by Anderson to table the action until the June meeting failed on a 3-2 vote, with Anderson and Kalar voting in favor.

Anderson's motion followed a lengthy discussion of the process used in making the recommendation to the board prompted by George Hnatiuk, a third candidate for the two positions on the board.

Hnatiuk Tuesday questioned how the two members were selected and indicated the advisory board appeared to have already decided which of the three candidates would be seated prior to board discussion.

Anderson suggested the EDA amend its bylaws to allow up to 13 members, and add Hnatiuk to the advisory board. His motion was called out of order by Paul Eklund, who said action on the issue was not included on the agenda as a motion item, as Anderson had earlier cited in ruling other motions out of order.

Anderson told the EDA it would "rather put someone down who wants to serve." Anderson reminded the EDA that Hnatiuk

EDA to A7 ➤

Lawmaker calls session 'most bipartisan' in tenure

Dill says session brings positive changes

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

A local state lawmaker said northern Minnesota gained in a variety of ways with actions taken by the Legislature in the session that adjourned last week.

The Journal discussed how actions in St. Paul will impact Borderland with Rep. David Dill. Sen.

Tom Bakk could not be reached for his thoughts in time for this publication.

Dill called this session "an exciting time — one of the most bipartisan times I've experienced in the 12 years I've been there... So many things happened."

He pointed to several banner



Rep. David Dill

measures of the session: Action to repay school districts money borrowed in previous years to make up a state budget deficit; Tax cuts for businesses creating money that can be used to reinvest; money for schools to cut class sizes and boost achievement; establishment of free all-day every day kindergarten; and increase in pay to care givers, among others.

After each session, Dill said he considers how his district fared. "This was an incredible ses-

sion — to be in the majority, hold the rudder, steer the ship and work with Republicans to make provisions for rural Minnesota as noncontroversial as possible," he said. He credited rural and metro lawmakers on both sides of aisle for approving legislation good for the entire state.

While he said the economy is doing well in Minnesota, there's more work to be done.

"New businesses are opening and expanding, unemployment is at a six-year low, and we've re-

covered all the jobs we lost in the 2007 to 2009 recession," he said this week. "But that doesn't mean there's not a lot left to do and that we couldn't do better, yet."

Money from a budget surplus not used to assist Minnesotans has been placed in the "Rainy Day" budget reserve, he said. "Not only did we refill the account sucked dry by previous deficits, but added \$150 million and that puts us at \$600 million."

Dill to A7 ➤

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VOLUME 5
NUMBER 44