

BUSINESS

9 TO 5
The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who are starting a business or changing an old one.
Call the Journal at 285-7411

Flooding shuts down local businesses

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Flooding has affected Koochiching County residents differently in the past month and a half. Some have been able to sandbag and keep the waters at bay, while some have had to abandon ship and return when the waters recede to assess the damage.

The same goes for businesses, with some being able to stay open during the high water, while others have had to shut down. Travis Thompson, owner of Rainy Lake Marine Services, is one such business owner who's had to close the doors until the waters recede.

The business, which offers boat storage and dock use, as well as minimal maintenance service like oil changes, has had to shut down due to standing water in the office and shop area, Thompson said, as well as many of the docks being underwater.

"You can walk just fine, but when the water is high, you can't walk on a slimy ramp," Thompson said. "We're taking canoes and boats to reach the business, and for people to reach their boats."

The parking lot and trailer parking area is underwater, Thompson said, and he has to walk a block through water to reach the

office. Some of the docks are smashed and broken, and there's a danger of electrical short or electrocution with standing water in the office and shop area.

Many of his customers come from out of town to launch their boats from his docks, Thompson said, so they're unaware of the severity of the situation until they get there. A customer from Minneapolis was told he had to have everything in his boat before Thompson could back it down the ramp and launch it.

"We have to use a tractor to back people in, because it's higher than a truck, where the exhaust would be underwater," Thompson said. "People from Minneapolis don't get it until they get here and see it."

The business's gas pumps were shut down the week before the Fourth of July, Thompson said, because the water was getting close to over taking the pump. They had to fill the gas tank to keep it weighted down and keep it from floating away, he said, but they can't sell or pump any gas, because they can't risk damaging the pump.

"We can't sell it because we can't short out the pump," Thompson said. "People want gas and we can't sell it because the pump's underwater."

Offseason boat storage provides steady winter

business, Thompson said, so the summer isn't necessarily his peak season. The storage buildings are actually mostly full right now, he said, because many people are pulling their boats out of the water.

"People brought their boats back in the middle of June when docks started going out," Thompson said. "Now they want their boats out, because they want to be out when it's nice out."

Trying to accommodate customers in a flooded business environment has been challenging, Thompson said. Working in standing water makes things more difficult, he said, and can be hard on your feet. They also couldn't sandbag around the business to keep the water back, as they then wouldn't be able to work around the sandbag dikes.

"Once water came into the building, we could've fought it for an inch or two, but once it went higher, we couldn't do anything," Thompson said.

Right now, Thompson said he's waiting for the water to go down to see how bad the damage is. By his estimate, the water level needs to go down another foot to 16 inches before things could be back to normal, which might be a while.

"It's hard to say because it's not over yet," Thomp-

son said. "If the wind picks up, it can take out the rest of the docks. We're only halfway through it."

With water everywhere he sees, Thompson said he's taking a glass half-full approach to the situation.

"It's a pain in the butt," Thompson said. "But it is what it is, and you can't let it stress you out, and you can't have a bad attitude about it."

Chamber of Commerce

Faye Whitbeck, International Falls Chamber of Commerce president, said what chamber members have been saying about the flooding has been in line with other reports. The businesses most affected have been those most dependent on the summer season, she said, where these issues have been most costly.

"While the stresses and strain of keeping ahead of the water has challenged those most affected, these



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

A sandbag dike attempts to hold back the water at Rainy Lake Marine Services Tuesday. Owner Travis Thompson said an opening in the dike had to be made in order to get boats into the water.

businesses have been extraordinary in maintaining their livelihood and serving their customers phenomenally," Whitbeck said.

The chamber has been helping with the flooding issue by keeping communication and networking channels open, Whitbeck said. Chamber leaders are meeting regularly to stay current on the situation,

she said, and are forwarding important messages on to members.

"The chamber is immediately available to all members for input which often results in action," Whitbeck said. "We're proud of our members who have exemplified resilience, and we are also proud of our members who rushed to the aid of others."

Thank You

To the 2014 July 4th Commission Event Chairpersons, Sponsors and Volunteers.

EVENT	CHAIRPERSON(S)	ORGANIZATION
Booths in the Park	Carol Grim, Nancy Rognerud, & Becky Roeder	Rotary Club
Shamrock's	Dennis Martin	KGHS/KSDM Radio
Beer Garden	Dave Cronin	Rotary Club
Kiddie Parade	Nancy Rognerud	Rotary Club
Children's Karaoke	John Streiff	King of the Road Entertainment
Main Parade	Kevin Adee	Parade Team
Color Guard	Derek Briggs	VFW
Kiddie Races	Eric Norstad	Falls Fire Department
Chip Pile	Warren Bahr	VFW
Branco 5k Run/Walk	Jennifer Erickson	FHS Track Boosters
Watermelon Feed	Chuck Corrin	Elks Lodge 1599
City Park	Comm. Dennis Jonson	Falls Street Dept
Go-Kart Races	John Froemke	Go-Kart Club
Fireworks	Chief Adam Mannausan	Falls Fire Department

Special thanks for your generous financial contributions

- **Boise Paper**
 - **Bremer Bank**
 - **Convention and Visitors Bureau**
 - **City of International Falls**
 - **Rotary Club (Beer Garden) (Booths)**
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars**
 - **Border State Bank**
 - **Elk's Lodge**
 - **KGHS-KSDM Radio**
 - **Moose Lodge**
 - **TruStar Federal Credit Union**

and many thanks to:

- The Veterans of Foreign Wars and Canadian Legion Color Guard.
- Police Chief Mike Musich, police, sheriff officers. Customs; Border Protection, Border Patrol
- Fire Chief Adam Mannausan and members of the Fire and Ambulance Departments.
- School District #361 for use of school property for the fireworks.
- Comm. Dennis Jonson, Ted Brokaw and the employees of the Streets and Parks. Department.
- Mike Holden, City Electrician.
- Betty Bergstrom, Treasurer.
- John Faith and the community band.
- The Rainy Lake Highlanders.
- Pipes and Drums of Manitoba.
- Arason Body Shop for contributing money to the children's chip pile.
- Rainy River Community College, Hardee's, NorthStar Publishing, Kmart, Border State Bank, and Rainy Lake Medical Center for allowing parking and turning off your lights for the fireworks.
- To all organizations and individuals (children and adults) who had booths in the park, floats and marching units in the parade.

And to the many volunteers who continue to make the International Falls July Fourth celebration the community's largest and longest running summer event.

Bob Anderson
Mayor and General Chairman

Oxi FRESH
CARPET CLEANING®
218-283-2481
SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT ONLINE AT WWW.OXIFRESH.COM
✓ Safe For Children & Pets
✓ Pet Odor & Stain Removal Experts
✓ Fast One-Hour Dry Time
✓ Residential & Commercial
✓ Cabins, Condos, Boats & RV's

THE WORLD'S GREENEST CARPET CLEANER

2 ROOMS CLEANED
\$68
No Hidden Fees.
A \$12 service charge will apply.

WHOLE HOUSE CARPET CLEANING
\$146
Includes 5 Rooms
No Hidden Fees.
A \$12 service charge will apply.

UPHOLSTERY SPECIAL
\$158
Includes Sofa, Loveseat, Chair
No Hidden Fees.
A \$12 service charge will apply.

FREE
BOTTLE OF OXI FRESH SPOT REMOVER
GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

GARAGE DOOR INSTALLATION AND REPAIR
Quality workmanship at affordable prices.

- Wide variety of quality doors and accessories including remote controls and keypads!
- Residential and commercial installation
- Fully licensed, bonded and insured for your protection
- Call us today to schedule an appointment!

Affordable, Reliable, Knowledgeable
Gaslin Garage Door
of Bemidji
Over 20 Years Experience

Jerry Gaslin
Owner
218.586.2645
218.556.1517
Service, Repair
Installations & Sales
www.gaslingaragedoorofbemidji.com
e-mail: gaslingaragedoor@hotmail.com

Over 20 years of experience!

A BIG LAWN IS A BIG JOB.
MAKE IT EASY WITH A HUSTLER MOWER FROM FORESTLAND.

Forestland
Sales & Service • 283-3400
Open Mon. - Fri., 6 a.m. - 10 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Service Hours Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

HUSTLER
www.hustlerturf.com

BOSS
SNOWBLOW
SPUR
Tire One
www.tireone.com