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# OUTDOORS

## New trail route bypasses businesses

### Owners: Loon's Nest, Roadhouse business will lose money

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

The rerouting of a portion of a snowmobile trail that leads into Ranier has two area business owners, and a business advocacy organization, concerned.

The International Voyageur Snowmobile Club changed the trail into Ranier based on safety concerns, said its president, Jim Bigler.

The new route bypasses The Loon's Nest and the Roadhouse, both located on Highway 11 east, and owners Steve Lindberg and Carl Brown say they're concerned the change will result in less spending at their businesses.

Lindberg brought his concerns to the IVSC Board, but said he was unable to convince it that the route should remain on the same path it has been on for years.

Lindberg and Brown stress they are huge supporters of the snowmobile club and its members. And Lindberg said he recognizes "the good work they do clearing and maintaining trails. I just am not happy with this decision."

Lindberg and Brown are getting support in their request for reconsideration of the reroute from the International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, which is expected to send a letter to the snowmobile club, Ranier City Council,

Koochiching County Board and the International Falls City Council.

"After reviewing the situation and visiting with Steve, the chamber in the interest of economic development and in the interest of fortifying the business community and in the spirit of Voyage Forward, believes a decision like that should have been more inclusive," said Faye Whitbeck, chamber president. "Anything that negatively impacts the business community will affect everything in our community."

Whitbeck, too, said the chamber has great respect and support for the snowmobile club and it's endeavors. "We just hope that we can be more mindful of economics and maybe reconsider this decision. The decision happened too quickly without enough impact and not enough consideration of impacts."

Lindberg said he was informed of the decision to reroute the trail Dec. 1 and wishes he'd had a chance to discuss the plan before it was put in place.

Bigler told The Journal that the officers and board of directors of the club met Dec. 5 after the concerns about the reroute were brought to their attention.

"After much discussion, we have decided to carry on with the reroute," he said in an email. "We have total backing from all govern-

ment agencies in which our club works with as well as permits from the state. The new route will be a lot safer for all, not only snowmobilers."

Bigler also said the reroute of the trail into Ranier establishes a path for the future, when club members hope a trail will be routed over a new overpass planned for Highway 11 over the railroad tracks.

The Koochiching County Board approved in November allowing the trail to use county roads for the reroute.

Previous to the reroute, the trail followed County Road 144, reverted off onto tax-forfeited property crossing County Road 92 and proceeding on tax-forfeited property to The Loon's Nest, according to the county board's information.

The club asked the county to approve the route to eliminate property owners' concerns with the existing trail route to The Loon's Nest and crossing Highway 11 there, the board reported.

The club has rerouted the trail by continuing on County Road 144 to County Road 113 to Highway 11 crossing at Ranier.

Lindberg has sent a letter to the county board asking it to reconsider its approval of the use of county roads.

"The club bases the change on the fact that

crossing at The Loon's Nest/Roadhouse/Sjoblom Nursery intersection is dangerous and that the new trail will be much safer," Lindberg said in the letter. "I question that as the new route utilizes the edge of a county road for over a mile, which brings the snowmobiler out at the base of the overpass. How many snowmobilers will be tempted to get out and open it up on the county road or use the overpass to cross? I believe the law actually still allows snowmobilers to use the overpass."

Lindberg has noted the new trail requires snowmobilers to travel County Road 113 past seven or eight homes to a paved road to access The Loon's Nest.

"That effectively eliminates my snowmobile traffic there," he told The Journal.

Lindberg said businesses are struggling in the community and the reroute will impact his ability to operate the store. The trail was built and paid for by Brown and Vic Davis when together they owned the Roadhouse, he said.

"The Loon's Nest struggles financially anyway. If I had it all over to do again I would never have purchased it or made the investment," he said. "I did so believing that area needed a nice little store to serve the people that live there and knowing it has some things going for it like being located on a major snowmobile trail."

## ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

**Koochiching County**  
SAP 036-332-001, Aggregate Base, Bit. Surface, Storm Sewer and Conc. Curb & Gutter  
**BIDS CLOSE: Wednesday January 21, 2015 at 2:00 pm, local time**

**NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS:** Sealed proposals will be received by the Board of County Commissioners of Koochiching County, Int'l. Falls, Minnesota until **Wednesday January 21, 2015 at 2:00 pm, local time** at the office of the County Auditor/Treasurer in the Koochiching County Courthouse 715 4th Street Int'l. Falls, Minnesota 56649 at which time they will be opened and read publicly for the following:

**Project Designation:** SAP 036-332-001, Aggregate Base, Bit. Surface, Storm Sewer and Conc. Curb & Gutter

**Project Location:** CSAH 332 - between TH 11/T.H. 71 Going East appx. 3 Miles to T.H. 53

**Major Project Quantities include:**

- appx. 78,086 CU YD Common Excavation
- appx. 25,879 CU YD Aggregate Base Class 5
- appx. 109,641 CU YD Select Granular Borrow
- appx. 28,328 TONS Bituminous
- appx. 8,387 LIN. FT. Storm Sewer
- appx. 27,347 Concrete Curb & Gutter

**Project Completion Date:** All work required under this Contract, including turf establishment, shall be completed **prior to September 1, 2015**, unless modified by the Engineer with a written Contract Extension.

**Proposals, Plans and Specifications are available at:**  
Koochiching County Highway Department  
715 4th Street; Int'l. Falls, MN 56449  
Phone 218 283 1184

**Cost for Plans:** Cost of 1 set of plans and proposals is \$75 (Minnesota State Sales Tax Included). There is no cost for electronic plans/proposals; electronic plans/proposals are available at <https://egram.co.koochiching.mn.us> or (218) 283-1184 or email to [joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us](mailto:joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us).

**Bidder's Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by a certified check or bidder's bond made payable to the Treasurer of Koochiching County in an amount not less than 5% of the total bid.

Bid shall be plainly marked on the exterior of the containing envelope: **"CSAH 332 Grading 2015, Letting Date, 2:00 pm on Wednesday January 21, 2015"**.

The County Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the contract in the best interests of Koochiching County.

Dated at International Falls, Minnesota.....  
**December 10, 2014.**

Joe Sutherland, Koochiching County Highway Engineer  
Phone: 218-283-1186  
Email: [joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us](mailto:joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us)

### JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Pam Tomevi has been recognized as the 2014 Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District Employee of the Year by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Tomevi, who serves as district administrator for the Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District, was recognized at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' convention, held Dec. 7, 8, and 9 in the Twin Cities.

"Pam is an outstanding representative of and advocate for local conservation," BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said in a news release. "Her enthusiasm for the work that SWCDs do is contagious, and her commitment to the mission benefits not only Koochiching County, but the entire state."

As district administrator, Tomevi wears a number of hats, said the release. Reporting directly to the KSWCD board of supervisors, she is responsible for district operations. This includes supervising staff, managing programs, writing grant applications, and

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**KSWCD Supervisor Ralph Lewis, from the left, KSWCD District Administrator Pam Tomevi, and KSWCD Program Coordinator Jolen Simon joined Tomevi to share her recognition as 2014 Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District Employee of the Year.**

reaching out to a variety of individuals and agencies.

The year 2014 brought a number of activities for Tomevi, said the release. She coordinated the Rat Root River Restoration Project for the Rainy Lake Sport fishing Club, producing a book to tell the story of the project's success. She was

a major participant in both BWSR's White Cedar Project and the Forest Resource Council's Non Industrial Private Forestland project; worked across national boundaries to harmonize the sharing of technical data between the United States and Canada, and coordinated flood damage

efforts after this summer's heavy rain events.

She has developed successful partnerships with BWSR and other state agencies and nonprofits that have resulted in almost \$900,000 in grants this past year, supporting a tremendous amount of conservation work in Koochiching County and the Lake of the Woods Basin.

In addition to her duties at Koochiching, Tomevi stepped in at BWSR's request to provide interim district administrative services to the transitioning North St. Louis SWCD. She developed a recovery plan for the district that addressed financial instability and improved relations between the district, elected officials, and the public.

The award illustrates the recognition of Tomevi's peers as an expert in district administration. She's led training sessions for other local government staff and made presentations across the state about the work being done in the districts. She's also presented at the BWSR Academy, the agency's statewide training opportunity for conservation staff.

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