

# OPINION

**FIRST AMENDMENT** “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

OUR VIEW

## More details welcomed

Any proposal for development that would create new jobs and offer opportunity to Borderland is good news on several fronts. Proposals for development indicate confidence in a community that can often spur additional development. However, each and every proposal for development must be scrutinized and vetted to ensure what appears to be a good plan and fit for Borderland truly is that. We like the idea the International Falls Economic Development Authority has the opportunity to consider selling land in its multimodal district. The proposal on the EDA table involves selling land to establish an aquaponic farm that would be built and operated by Mariner Farms, a private company with an track record in the industry. We caution city officials to move carefully on this proposal and all others to ensure any development coming to the multimodal district is sustainable. What International Falls does not need is a hit-it-hard project that brings hope and ideas for growth, but ends up as another

empty building scarring the business landscape. Under the aquaponic farm proposal, a facility would be built to house a closed-loop eco-system which would grow fish below the surface of the water and lettuce above. Clearly, the proposal sounds appealing. It discusses five to six full-time employees, establishing a partnership with Rainy River Community College that would assist students in related fields of study, and offering opportunities for local transportation companies. What catches our breath is the estimated \$1.5 million cost of the project. So far, we’ve not heard any plans for local assistance. We all want International Falls EDA to be successful in establishing new businesses that create new jobs and adds to the tax base of the community. However, we don’t want in our rush to be successful development that instead drags us down emotionally and financially and uses up valuable property. We look forward to the EDA’s discussion about the land sale and hearing more details about this proposal.



### 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  
202-425-6211  
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

### Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal’s Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Interest in Grand Mound site far and wide

**To the editor,**  
An open letter to John Crippen, Minnesota Historical Society Historic Sites and Museums director:  
A story by Laurel Beager in the International Falls Journal (posted online on Nov. 6) discussed current efforts to restore and reopen the Grand Mound History Center. As a member of the Minnesota Historical Society, I strongly support this effort.  
By way of introduction, I am a retired history instructor, having taught at the University of Nebraska Omaha for nearly 40 years. My wife Kay and I are longtime summer residents of Longbow Lake, near Kenora, Ontario, and since 2010 have also been part-time residents of Ranier, Minn.  
Our principal tangible link to the Minnesota-Ontario boundary area is that Kay and I co-authored a book, “We Were Not Worried At Dinner Time: The October 1938 Forest Fires and the Last Frontier in the Rainy River-Lake of the Woods Borderland,” Emo, Ontario: Rainy River District Women’s Institute Museum, 2009.  
It was our pleasure to have visited the Grand Mound History Center on a couple of occasions. I sometimes used photos of the mounds in my world civilizations I classes in discussing the history of pre-Columbian America and was shocked when I learned that this fine

interpretive center had been shut down.  
Of course, I was mindful that the Minnesota Historical Society was burdened with enormous budgetary constraints that produced this action. I do not doubt the monetary challenge in restoring the Grand Mound History Center, but a restoration will reflect the stature of MHS as one of the nation’s premier state historical societies.  
Moreover, the proper cultivation of “historical tourism” should help to broaden the economic base of northern Minnesota.  
I was especially pleased to note the support of Mr. Jim Leonard, chief of Rainy River First Nations, for reactivating the Grand Mound Center.  
Kay and I have also enjoyed visiting Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Centre, and the prospect of a cross-border approach in presenting the heritage of native people and otherwise broadening knowledge of Grace Lee Knute’s “Rainy River Country” is encouraging. The continued development of the museums and other learning resources in the geographic triangle linking Fort Frances-International Falls, Kenora, and Roseau will well serve the people of the area and its visitors and I look forward to the Minnesota Historical Society being a vigorous partner in this process.  
Your help will be much appreciated.  
**Harl A. Dalstrom**  
**Omaha, NE**

## Costs for the PEG channel will keep going up

**To the editor,**  
Typical International Falls democracy from the city council. A handful gets their way and the rest have to pay.  
Seventy-five percent of subscribers said no to this (public education government) channel, but put it through anyway.  
And where was this hidden cost on the first proposal? They knew what it would cost. But don’t tell the taxpayers the truth, until they pass it then — surprise.  
And if you think this is all it’s going to cost, then think again. This will be an expense to the taxpayer each and every year. It will continue to

go up. Then there will be upgrades, breakdowns, calling in high-paid technicians to fix their system. Cable bills are always climbing without this extra channel. For that extra \$6, get eight more real channels by switching to Dish or Direct TV.  
Democracy is hard but it’s right. This is just plain wrong.  
And what happened to Cynthia Jaksa’s campaign speech that she’s all about saving taxpayers money? Boy, that didn’t take long to get thrown out the window.  
**Darren Wallen**  
**International Falls, MN**

WHAT OTHERS SAY

## Online learning on snow days is worth review

Cathedral High School in St. Cloud became the latest Minnesota school to make news when it avoided a traditional snow day last week by requiring students use school-issued computers to do online learning during the storm.  
The effort captured headlines in part because Mother Nature dumped the snow before Cathedral had a chance to conduct its “practice snow day.” Still, reports said the plan went fairly well.  
By coincidence, the same day snow shut the doors of dozens of Minnesota school districts, the legislative Online and Digital Learning Advisory Council met to begin discussions on how public schools could do what Cathedral was trying:

avoid snow days via online learning.  
The council, created by the Legislature and whose members are appointed by Minnesota Department of Education, is charged with advising the department and Legislature about matters related to online and digital learning.  
As expected, the discussion was very preliminary, said Josh Collins, spokesman for the department. The council will delve deeper into the issue in upcoming meetings, with the goal of eventually making some recommendations for legislative consideration.  
From equipment to access, from accountability to equality, it’s a massive challenge. Still, it’s one worth pursuing, especially as technology emerges that can help educators better connect with and teach students, regardless of location \_ and perhaps beyond just during “snow days.”  
Remember, though, the scope of this challenge.  
There are about 840,000 students attending close to 2,000 Minnesota public schools covering grades K-12. Some are in districts of a few hundred students while others are in districts with enrollments in the tens of thousands. To say nothing of the equipment and infrastructure that varies not just by school, but household.  
In fact, it’s the by-household perspective that must not be overlooked. Not only do students need computers they can take home, but they must have access to the Internet when there. There also are issues involving everything from secure networks to making sure students are doing their online lessons and that those lessons are effective.  
Here’s another challenge: Cathedral’s effort involved older students. Is it viable to teach young students effectively through online learning?  
As stated, the idea of using online learning during a snow day is appealing. The reality of actually making it happen for all students at all grades statewide will take some, well, studying. Still, it’s worth researching and reporting back to lawmakers.  
**St. Cloud Times,**  
**Nov. 19**

### The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author’s city address will be published.

Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.