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## BIRDS OF A FEATHER RAISE MONEY TOGETHER



STAFF PHOTO BY DANA HARTJE

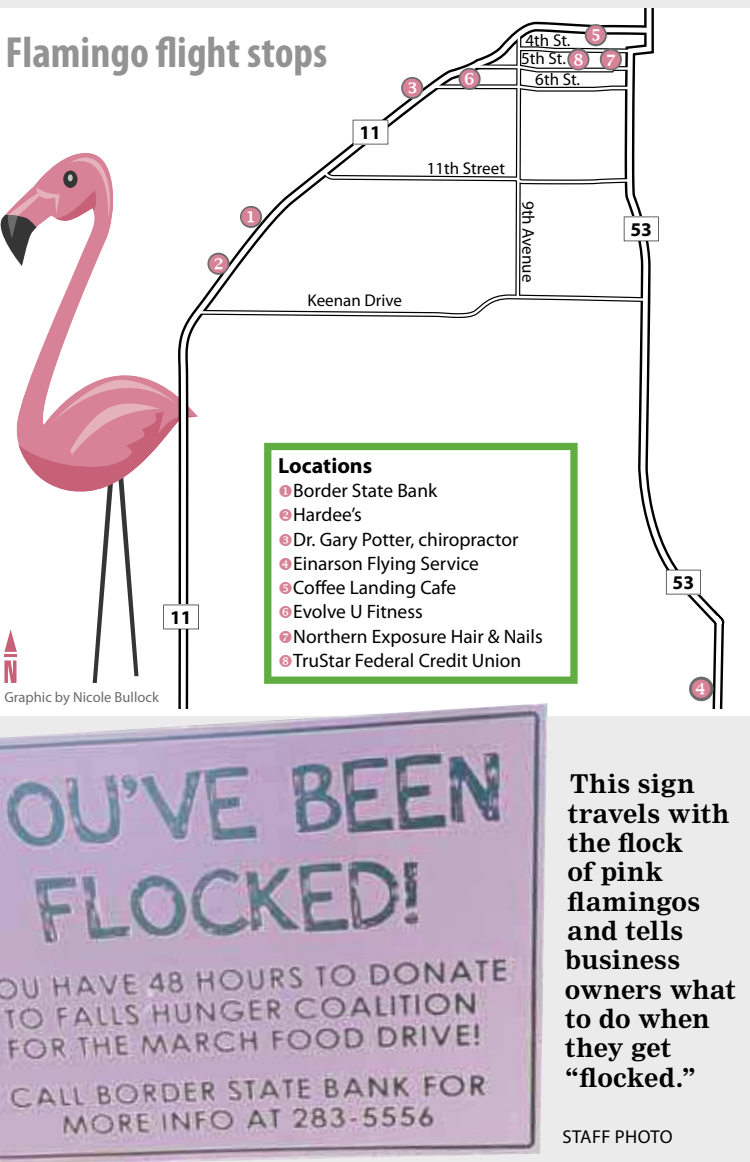
This flock of pink flamingo lawn ornaments makes a stop at Northern Exposure Hair & Nails on Thursday.

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

The spring equinox, or official first day of spring, is Friday. It usually brings with it birds returning home after a winter spent in warmer southern climates. Earlier this month, though, tropical birds started showing up at various Borderland businesses, seemingly unaware they had arrived too early. The birds are actually pink flamingo lawn ornaments, and are part of a marketing campaign from Border State Bank to promote Minnesota FoodShare month, the largest food drive in the state. During the month of March, every donation to food shelves will be matched by Minnesota FoodShare's March Campaign. Libby Johnson, marketing associate at the local Border State Bank, said the idea came from the company's marketing director in Roseau, where the youth hockey program does it annually to raise money. The bank started the campaign on March 1, and the rules state the flock has 48 hours to fly to the next busi-

ness after they've landed, Johnson said. Once a business has been "flocked," it has those 48 hours to make a donation to the Falls Hunger Coalition. Since the beginning of the month, the birds have landed at seven businesses after starting at the bank. Johnson said the public's reaction to the program has been "really positive," and participating businesses have seen it as a way to have a "friendly rivalry" with other business owners they know. The birds went from Border State Bank to Hardee's, then to Dr. Gary Potter's chiropractic office. After getting an adjustment from the doctor, they flew south to Einarson's Flying Service, then stopped into the Coffee Landing Cafe for a quick caffeine fix. The birds then took some fitness classes at Evolve U Fitness, after which they got their toes painted at Northern Exposure Hair & Nails, and then it was on to TruStar Federal Credit Union. As of Monday afternoon, the birds had yet to set off for their next location.

Flamingo to A7 ➤



This sign travels with the flock of pink flamingos and tells business owners what to do when they get "flocked."

STAFF PHOTO

### FALLS SCHOOL BOARD

## Board sets up 2015-16 school year

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer



Kevin Grover

Summer vacation has yet to arrive, but the Falls School Board Monday approved two motions outlining how the 2015-16 school year will look.

The board approved a motion to continue the practice of "early release" Wednesdays for the upcoming school year, which was first initiated for the current school year.

The program allows teachers and support staff to have time to meet each week to go over a wide variety of topics, Superintendent Kevin Grover said. Board member Toni Korpi said the program schedule should stay consistent from year to year.

"We've talked to a lot of people that are benefiting from it," Korpi said. "I don't know if you'll be able to see the benefits educationally for a while."

Grover said even if the district's Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment test scores improved, it would be hard to point to the early release program as the catalyst, because countless variables contribute to test score performance.

Falls Elementary Principal Melissa Tate said her teachers and staff have been able to use the extra time to look at surveys and other data, and to review areas where performance can be improved.

"I agree with continuing with the way they are," Tate said. "I like that it's ongoing, rather than have a day where it's all crammed into a couple hours."

Falls High School Principal Tim Everson said his teachers and staff have used the time to have grade-level and department-level meetings. They've also been able to review Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, or PBIS, discipline data.

"We want to try to isolate what are the areas where we're having difficulties," Everson said. "We want to brainstorm as

School to A7 ➤

### INTERNATIONAL FALLS

## City Council hears about upcoming valuation process

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

The International Falls City Council Monday heard about an "open book" meeting concerning valuation of properties in the city. City Administrator Ken Anderson told the council the notice of the May 6 meeting by the Koochiching County Assessor's Office

has raised an issue that ought to be considered by the city's Charter Commission. Anderson said state law requires two councilors to attend training to serve as a city Board of Equalization. The city has not complied with that law since Koochiching County began handling the city's valuation and serving as the local board, he

said. Anderson asked the council at its next meeting to ask the Charter Commission to remove the provision calling for a city board from the charter and allow the Koochiching County assessor and county board to serve in that capacity in the future. Meanwhile, the open book meeting, scheduled for 9 a.m. to

noon May 6, at the county assessor's office at the courthouse "is an opportunity for taxpayers to discuss their property assessments," the notice said. The meeting allows for informal appeals of valuations of properties in the city and is required to qualify for an appointment with the county Board of Appeal and Equalization, meetings of

which are scheduled to begin June 16. Valuation notices will be mailed to taxpayers within the next six to eight weeks, according to the notice. The Minnesota Department of Revenue states in a handbook for board of appeal and equalization training, "the purpose of the

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