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# The Journal

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## Connecting campuses with collaborative courses

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

Rainy River Community College professor Joe Chlebeczek never thought he'd be able to be in two places at once. But thanks to new technology at the campus, he's able to connect with students in Grand Rapids in real-time, all without leaving International Falls.

The telepresence room at RRCC features high-definition interactive video technology from Cisco, which allows Chlebeczek to broadcast his class to Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, and to teach two classrooms at once. All five campuses in the Northeast Higher Education District

have telepresence rooms, he said, which allows them to teach more efficiently and improve their students' experience.

"It's totally different than an online class," Chlebeczek said. "It's live, it's 100 percent real-time. You have a fully qualified instructor on both campuses at the same time."

The telepresence rooms on the different campuses are all set up exactly the same, Chlebeczek said, so everyone appears like they're all in the same room. In each room, rows of tables face a set of three television screens with outward-facing cameras, so students in each room can see each other on the screens they're facing. Large computer screens

on each side of the three television screens allow the professor to lead class, and share outlines, study guides, and more with students.

The feed between the two classrooms is in real-time, and there's no delay, Chlebeczek said, and the student engagement is just as good as in his other classes. A way to promote that is by asking direct questions to individual students, he said, so he has students make a name placard for his classes.

"I feel comfortable asking direct questions, and I ask for direct feedback," Chlebeczek said. "I've stepped on some people's toes on occasion, but I prepare them for that."



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

Rainy River Community College professor Joe Chlebeczek addresses his American history class in the telepresence room Thursday.

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Members of the VFW Post 2948 salute the flag as it is raised.

## POWs, MIAs recognized

Members and auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2948 dedicated and raised a flag Friday in honor of National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

The annual event honors prisoners of war and the nation's veterans listed as missing in action and their families, and highlights the government's commitment to account for them.

The National League of Families' POW/MIA flag symbolizes the United States' resolve to never forget POWs or those who served their country in conflicts and are still missing.

A large group of VFW and Auxiliary members gathered Friday morning around the flag pole in front of the Voyageurs Cafe, Highway 53, owned by Jerry and Sandy Netland. A POW/MIA flag donated by the VFW Auxiliary was dedicated and raised. Margarete Kostiuik sang the National Anthem and Irene Anderson, POW/MIC Committee chair for the Auxiliary, read a poem. Jerry

Netland is a veteran.

VFW Posts across the nation recognized the day with a variety of activities. The VFW website said the day is meant to recognize the sacrifices of the 83,193 Americans who are still missing or unaccounted for. "We remember their families — those whose pain and suffering does not subside with the passage of time," said the website.

POW/MIA Recognition Day serves to remind us that the true cost of war extends far beyond the last shots being fired."



STAFF PHOTOS BY LAUREL BEAGER

Above: Members of the VFW Post 2948, its auxiliary and color guard dedicate and raise a POW/MIA flag Friday.

Left: Irene Anderson, center, read a poem and, later, Margarete Kostiuik, at left, sang the National Anthem.

## Falls EDA reviews projects, programs

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

The highlight of Monday's International Falls Economic Development Authority meeting was a report by Director Shawn Mason, as the board reviewed no new business items.

Mason's report touched on the various projects she works on as EDA director, including the multimodal district. Mason said the rail spur is installed at the site, and the only remaining utility to be installed is natural gas.

The site's shovel-ready certification through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is nearly complete, Mason said, and only requires a little more paperwork. According to the DEED website, shovel-ready sites assure developers the most time-consuming technical and regulatory aspects of development are already done.

Mason said she continues to be heavily involved in the community's Economic Response Teams, primarily with the business development and long-term vision and strategy teams. Mason and fellow ERT member Mike Wellcome met with the new Rainy River Community College Provost Carol Helland, and Mason said she thinks Helland will be a valuable asset to the community.

"Fantastic person, a lot of talent and vision and how to grow the college and the community," Mason said. "Strong background in trades and vocational curriculum."

Mason has been following up on two leads the EDA received



Shawn Mason



Gail Rognerud

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