

RAIL

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The measure would also give those in Ranier on the east side or the west side an alternative route when long lines of rail cars are blocking the normal crossing. An earlier railway safety improvement proposal from Dayton left Ranier off, Wagner said. That disappointed him, so he reached out to Dill, Nolan and Bakk, and was able to connect with the governor to lobby for local improvements. “I found out why we were left off, and since then, everyone involved has stepped up to the plate to help us,” Wagner said. Bakk’s measure follows a recent visit by Nolan to the Borderland, where he held a rail and essential air service forum that featured input from a variety of local transportation officials. During that session, local officials cited serious transportation safety and infrastructure problems at

the international crossing, which handles 18 percent of all goods that enter the U.S. by rail – the busiest single rail crossing on any U.S. border. The boom in the oil and gas industry has led to trains nearly 2 miles long, contributing to long delays that can last up to two hours at city intersections. Since the city of Ranier has began monitoring rail traffic on Spruce Street, trains have been blocking the crossing for an average of eight hours per day, Wagner said. “It’s imperative that we get this relief, because the trains are just going to get longer and the problem is only going to increase,” Wagner said. The city of Ranier is also working in conjunction with Koochiching County



Dennis Wagner



U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan



Sen. Tom Bakk



Gov. Mark Dayton



Rep. David Dill

and the city of International Falls, Wagner said. “The projects proposed in this bill will go a long way toward alleviating serious and persistent delays and safety problems at the Ranier crossing,” Nolan said in a release. “The shipments and commerce coming across the border at Ranier is important – but so is the safety and quality of life of the people who live in the region. These improvements will benefit everyone, and we hope for speedy inclusion and passage.” “The high volume of rail traffic coming across this corridor every day is a constant disruption to the lives and businesses of the entire region,” Dayton said in a release. “I am glad to join with Congressman Nolan, Sen. Bakk and Rep. Dill in pushing this session for needed improvements at the Ranier crossing. And I will continue to press hard this session to ensure the rail companies who are causing these disruptions help pay for their solutions.” “The International Falls and Ranier rail crossing has been problematic for many years,” Bakk said in a release. “With no other crossing options available to our constituents, the safety of both communities is compromised by the chronically blocked intersections and congestion.”

“CN Rail and the need for the Port of Ranier is important to the community socially and economically,” Dill said in a release. “The projects proposed to be funded by bonding dollars go directly to the safety, health and wellbeing of the city of Ranier and the greater International Falls area, while encouraging the maintaining of the important Ranier International Port of Entry from Canada.” The fight for relief from

blocked rail crossings is more of a struggle to coexist, Wagner said. Small border towns like Ranier and large railroad companies have to strike a balance where both sides are happy. “The whole country needs the railroad. But at some point, can small cities coexist with the increased business and rail traffic? The railroads create a lot of jobs, but they create a lot of headaches too.”

Dennis Wagner
Ranier Mayor

COUNCIL

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The city contracted with the Arrowhead Regional Development Council to guide the planning process and to ensure compliance with Minnesota law. In other business, Koochiching County Sheriff Perryn Hedlund introduced himself to the council, and offered cooperation on any issues the city may run into in the future. Mayor Dennis Wagner asked for help on future issues that might arise from blight ordinance compliance and other ordinances. The council approved transferring \$28,488 from the liquor fund to the water fund in order to balance the 2012 capital improvement project fund. The deficit in the 2012 capital improvement project fund was the result of the final payment on the 3-Points North project, which resulted in a negative fund balance. The final payment due of \$44,531 was paid in 2014, and left the fund with a negative balance of \$28,468. A discussion on community work days proposed by Councilor Tony Cole resulted in time being set aside in May for community improvements. Cole said various citizens had volunteered to help with different community projects, like landscaping the flower beds at the Ranier Community Building. Councilor Todd Coloumbe suggested temporary repairs for the deck at the building until the entire deck can be replaced. The council approved a motion setting May 4-8 as

the dates for recruiting volunteers to work on the deck. Most of the work will entail replacing deteriorated deck and railing boards. The council also approved a motion setting May 16 for a community clean-up day, when residents can place household items on the curb and city volunteers will pickup the items and take them to the dump. No household garbage will be accepted as part of the day. The council also Tuesday: ■ Approved attendance for city Administrator Sherri Gautreaux and Deputy Clerk Tara Mai at the June 24-26 League of Minnesota Cities 2015 Clerk’s Orientation Conference in Duluth. ■ Approved purchasing new accounting software from the Minnesota Office of State Auditor for a cost of \$300. ■ Approved a waiver of the Ranier Community Building rental fee for Joyce Christianson’s 100th birthday celebration. ■ Approved the March 2015 municipal liquor store operating statement. The store posted an unaudited net income of \$2,031 for the month. ■ Approved a building permit for Kate and Pat Miller at 3394 Pine St. for a garage renovation. ■ Approved a building permit extension for Fred Woods for 2110 Spruce St. for a home reconstruction. ■ Approved expending the balance of Marshall Knudson grant funds for landscaping at the Ranier Community Building. ■ Approved a three-year extension of a water billing software package from Softline Data, Inc.

YOUNG SOLOISTS



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Gavia Yount, left, and KayLynn Cronin, take center stage as they sing “Where Go the Boats” Wednesday.

POWER LINE

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Grand Rapids and Bigfork on the environmental impact statement allowed the public

to provide input. The public meetings will be in an open house format with no formal presentations. Project team members will be there to give small group tours and answer questions.

Bee Informed.
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The Littlefork Big-Falls Junior class would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for their generous donations to our post-prom party....it was a great success and we couldn’t have done it without you!

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We would also like to thank all of the chaperones, custodians, parents and countless community members that helped make our prom a success. You are truly appreciated!

Beyond the horizon,
A better world is waiting.
Love surrounds her
wherever she is.
In lieu of personal thank yous,
the family of Doris Ginter
wish to thank you for the
thoughtful cards and gifts that
were given. Your thoughtfulness
will not be forgotten.
May God bless you.
The
Gerald Ginter
Family

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