

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Kudos to RRCC

A report that confirms what many of us may have known already is good news for the community.

The Minnesota Higher Education Compact's report shows that Rainy River Community College is one of the most effective two-year public colleges compared to expected and actual graduation rates.

It's good news because those kinds of facts are often tied to decisions about funding as well as other factors important to the college and this community.

RRCC scored in the middle of the pack when it came to efficiency, which was measured by comparing education and related expenses per student and those same costs when adjusting for interstate cost of living differences.

Elena Favela, RRCC interim dean of students, said the report recognizes the impact of the individual attention students get from college staff at RRCC.

And Sue Collins, president of the Northeast Higher Education District, of which RRCC is a member, said the compact's report considers measures beyond graduation rates. She said it shows that the top ranking colleges are focused on student success.

The MHEC report is a new way to measure the ability of higher learning institutions to bring students to graduation. Evaluating colleges and universities only on graduation rates may not provide the whole story.

From it's beginning in the early 1970s to today, RRCC has been known for its one-on-one attention to students which creates a positive environment for learning.

RRCC has played an important role in this community. And with the coming changes resulting from a downsizing of the work force at Boise Inc.'s paper mill in International Falls, that role will become even more critical to this community and the larger region. Already college faculty have stepped up to assist the community in its economic recovery by considering how it can offer programs and training that will be useful in moving forward.

With tighter budgets and increased competition for funding, highlighting this college's success makes sense and confirms that good work is being done at Rainy River Community College.

Kudos to RRCC faculty and staff and onward and upward to even more success.



GUEST COLUMN

You have a right to know where your health care is headed

BY BILLY DOUGHERTY

Seven people have decided we will not advance quality health care by turning down a new hospital, which would be a major long-term investment in our community, it would have added more health services, job protection for current Rainy Lake Medical Center employees along with drastically lowered employee health insurance and a very real chance of new jobs in International Falls among other benefits.

Was this offer received before or after Boise's layoff announcement? Anybody who cares about health care and our basic needs has to challenge the people making these decisions. The RLHC Board of Directors is made up of seven members appointed by Essentia and seven members from the Falls Memorial Hospital board. The Essentia members have no vote on a new hospital or any transfer of assets.

The Good Samaritan Society is close to completing its new care facility. What a great investment in our community. What an economic impact the construction of the facility created. Just think the additional economic

impact a new hospital would make. Our health care in International Falls would be complete, modern, and make International Falls a better choice to locate jobs to replace the jobs that will be lost at Boise.

Do seven individuals have the right to decide what kind of health care you receive? Does the citizenry not have a right to know what is being offered to the International Falls Hospital Board members; after all it is our health care not just the seven FMH board members. I am mortified with their decisions, Essentia has been caring for patients for 20 plus years, I believe they have a total commitment to care for the patients they treat now and in the future.

At a recent Koochiching Economic Development Authority meeting, Bob Anderson passed out the news release from the FMH board members concerning the end of negotiations. I was informed that he told the board that the FMH board members were going to investigate Fairview and Sanford health systems. Seems very strange, if the issue is local control why are you talking to somebody

else? If they choose either it will mean you would travel to Minneapolis, Fargo, N.D., or Sioux Falls S.D., for any serious illness, surgeries or accidents. Duluth is far enough away although less travel will occur with Essentia owning the Virginia Hospital, much less travel if a new hospital was built in the Falls with a surgical center, chemotherapy and many other proposed medical services.

Citizens from our community have committed thousands of dollars to the FMH Foundation to build a new hospital. The FMH board has no intention of building a new hospital, they have failed twice at building a new hospital recently. Wouldn't refunding the money to the people who donated to a fund that can only be used to build a new hospital be the proper thing to do?

It's your health care, speak up, and call your city councilor, or your county commissioner. The current governance of the board does not allow you to know what the options are or provide any specifics on the future of healthcare in International Falls.

Dougherty is a member of the RLHC Board.

How to contact your lawmakers

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Celebrating 100 years of Bronco football

To the editor,
An open letter to the community:
Let me join in congratulating the International Falls Broncos football program on its 100th season.
Your rich history of championships, outstanding players and coaches, and community pride is a great credit to our game. Football

brings communities together in an extraordinary way and for 100 years the International Falls Broncos have been a tremendous example of that.
From Pro Football Hall of Famer Bronko Nagurski to the thousands of other players, coaches, and families that have been part of the Broncos' program, your community has given football

a very special role in your community that we honor and salute in this historic 100th year.
We appreciate what you have contributed to the game of football and wish you great success in this special season.
Roger Goodell
National Football League commissioner
New York, NY

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.

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