

DAMAGE

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“We are so grateful of everyone who came out to help,” Belanger said. “It really is remarkable.”

Toward the end of the weekend, the family was left with few options and Belanger said she and her two children made the difficult decision to leave their home Sunday.

Through tears, Cherrie Belanger said Jesse Belanger stayed at the house to monitor the pumps.

“He hasn’t slept and he isn’t eating,” Cherrie said. “I’m scared because I know what kinds of illnesses can come from this and he needs to take care of himself.”

By Tuesday, the only access to the Belanger’s house and several of their neighbors was by canoe, kayak, ATV or another piece of heavy equipment.

“There’s absolutely no way to get a vehicle in there,” Cherrie said.

Looking into the future, Cherrie knows when it comes time to clean up, there is a lot of work to be done and money to be spent to replace anything ruined. In the meantime, she most looks forward to having her family back together.

“We’re all split up right now,” she said, “but we’re all OK. There has been no loss of life. Even though we’re dealing with this, I know there are others who have more damage to their home than we do. My heart goes out to everybody.”

Panic on Rainy

As rivers were rising west of town, homeowners along Rainy Lake began taking action to protect their homes, but weren’t finding themselves in situations quite as severe as Belanger and Belanger’s neighbors.

However, that mood changed as quickly as water rose.

News late Wednesday afternoon from the Lake of the Woods Control Board that the lake’s water levels

could rise an additional 15 or more inches over the next week turned nervous caution into sheer panic among home and resort owners.

“I’m numb to the situation,” said Kathleen Kolu, as she watched crews fight wind and waves while trying to protect her Rainy Lake home with sandbags. “At this point, I don’t even know what to do.”

Kolu, along with her husband, Rob Trompeter, live near City Beach and the couple Wednesday worked alongside volunteers to build up an additional wall of sandbags as Rainy’s waters crept toward the front steps. By early afternoon, the wind had picked up, adding to the challenge of keeping the water at bay.

Further down the road, just three weeks ago, the home of Tom and Lisa West was bustling with family and friends celebrating the high school graduation of their daughter Katie. This week, Lisa waded through what once was the couple’s



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

A home near Pelland Junction sits surrounded by Rainy River Wednesday. According to a neighbor, the homeowner was forced to abandon the residence earlier this week.

well-landscaped front yard in rubber boots measuring the water’s rising levels.

“It inches closer every day,” Lisa said gazing at the fortress of sandbags surrounding her home.

The worst part for Lisa and her family, she said, is not knowing how far — and fast — the water will come.

“All we can do is wait and see,” she said Wednesday, noting more rain and a flood warning in this weekend’s forecast. “It’s terrifying. I have moments of panic. We have no idea how high it’ll get.”

In West’s case, if predictions hold true, Rainy Lake will easily overtake the sandbag dikes, seep into the ground and inevitably find a way into the house.

Getting assistance

While the Wests have flood insurance that will cover any structural damage, the Belangers — and many affected homeowners — do not.

“Flood insurance, honestly, isn’t very equitable for people living in our area,” Cherrie Belanger said.

Now what? Gov. Mark Dayton and other local and state leaders toured impacted areas earlier this week and said a state emergency assistance program could help pay for recovery, but, of course, the tally of the damage is still ongoing.

“I don’t know what the scope of the situation is here,” Dayton said Tuesday.

The area must contribute to meet a damage threshold of \$700,000 statewide to qualify for the program, but International Falls

Mayor Bob Anderson said that is usually limited to infrastructure damage. Anderson worried that the flooding around International Falls mostly affected private property. County officials said Thursday damage in Borderland could be combined with the flood damage that occurred in Rock County, in the southwest corner of the state, during the same time period.

“When we had the home surveyed, it was determined we were out of the flood zone,” Belanger said. “We were looking at a high premium and an even higher deductible. At this point, we’re not sure what we’re going to do.”



A canoe is the only way to access a home on Rainy River.

WATER UPDATE

➤ continued from A1

margin. Rainy Lake is a different situation, he said. It is expected to rise another 14-17 inches.

Moy said he’s in the area to gather information. “I want to compare this flood to the 2001-2002, 1950 and 1974 floods and figure out what we have learned,” he said.

He said he wants to find out if very specific recommendations made in 2001-02 were implemented.

“Talking to Boise, they showed where a number of recommendations had been implemented,” he said. “The questions are ‘what do we do now, where do we go from here?’”

The Boise paper mill facility was constructed in 1905.

“It would probably be designed a lot differently now than it was then,” he said. “The key thing is we will put all the data together, generate some recommendations and work with both the International Falls and Fort Frances communities and folks down the river and on the lake and figure out.... what do we do in the future to ensure we can mitigate these impacts.”

Moy said climate change

may be playing a role in more frequent extreme conditions.

“We’re starting to see along the entire border 500-year floods and so we’re looking at a management strategy of how to address the extremes of highs and lows,” he said.

Moy said he learned a lot from Wednesday morning to evening about the operations of the system and how it changes.

“And what I thought yesterday morning versus what I learned by the end of the day is that things change,” he said.

Earlier this week, the International Falls City Council authorized city Administrator Ken Anderson to direct staff and equipment as needed to handle city needs caused by flooding and to assist Koochiching County efforts.

“What ever we can do, we will be there with equipment and personnel if we’re capable,” Councilor Pete Kalar said.

Councilor Cynthia Jaksa urged Anderson to track the staff hours and equipment used during the flooding.

Ecklund noted Thursday brought 386 volunteers to the city’s Kerry Park to fill sandbags.

“That operation is going

amazingly and we really appreciate everyone’s effort,” he said.

Asked if he had any more information, he replied, “Stay tuned.”

State park, trails close

On Thursday, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reacted to flooding concerns by closing Franz Jevne State Park and some off-highway trails and forest roads.

The park, off Highway 11, is closed temporarily due to flooding along the Rainy River, the Department of Natural Resources said.

For updates and more information, visit www.mndnr.gov/jevne or contact the DNR Information Center at info.dnr@state.mn.us, 651-296-6157, or 888-646-6367 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

In addition, heavy rains in portions of northern Minnesota prompted the DNR’s closure of some OHV trails and state forest roads.

Some forest roads and OHV trails are flooded and unstable due to soil saturation or have washed out in sections, so several have been temporarily closed to the public and signed at entry points.

Kabetogema, Koochiching, Land O’Lakes and St. Croix state forests are some

of the impacted areas.

State forest road and trail users should check “Current Conditions” on the DNR website at www.mndnr.gov/trailconditions/index.html before traveling. Road and trail closure information will be updated as conditions change.

“By checking the conditions online, trails users should be able to find alternative locations where they can still get out to enjoy the trails,” Joe Alberio, a district supervisor for the DNR’s Parks and Trails Division, said. “The road and trail closures will be lifted as soon as conditions allow and repairs are made, and we ask everyone to ride responsibly wherever they are.”

State forest road and trail condition information is also available by contacting the DNR Information Center at info.dnr@state.mn.us, 651-296-6157, or 888-646-6367 Monday through Friday.

County officials earlier in the week cautioned drivers as deer and other wildlife are coming out of flooded forests toward high ground. Grim earlier this week said loon nests are being flooded and abandoned around the area, but many may build new nests and lay eggs later in the summer.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Koochiching County
SP 036-707-001 (CSAH 107), Minn. Proj. No. HPPH H141(001), Aggregate Base, Bit’*m*. Surface, Curb & Gutter, Storm Sewer
BIDS CLOSE **Wednesday July 9, 2014 at 2:00 pm, local time**

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS: Sealed proposals will be received by the Board of County Commissioners of Koochiching County, Int’l. Falls, Minnesota until 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday July 9, 2014 at the office of the County Auditor/Treasurer in the Koochiching County Courthouse 715 4th Street Int’l. Falls, Minnesota 56649 at which time they will be opened and read publicly for the following:

Project Designation: SP 036-707-001 (CSAH 107), Minn. Proj. No. HPPH H141(001), Aggregate Base, Bit’*m*. Surface, Curb & Gutter, Storm Sewer

Project Location: On CSAH 107 between T.H. 71 and CSAH 2 in Int’l. Falls, Total Length – 1.05 Miles

Major Project Quantities include:
-- 25,038 CY of Common Excavation (P)
-- 5,189 Linear Feet of Storm Sewer
-- 6,600 Tons of Bituminous
-- 24,778 SY of Geotextile Fabric
-- 18,464 Tons of Aggregate Base Class 5 (MOD.)

Project Completion: 75 Working Days

Proposals, Plans and Specifications are available at:

Koochiching County Highway Department
715 4th Street
Int’l. Falls, MN 56449

Cost for Plans: Cost of one set of plans and proposals is \$75 (Minnesota State Sales Tax Included). There is no cost for electronic plans and specs, they are at <https://egram.co.koochiching.mn.us> or phone (218) 283-1186 or email to joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us.

Bidder’s Bond: Bids must be accompanied by a certified check or bidder’s bond made payable to the Treasurer of Koochiching County in an amount not less than 5% of the total bid.

Bid shall be plainly marked on the exterior of the containing envelope: **“CSAH 107, Letting Date, July 9th, 2014”**.

Minimum wage rates to be paid by the Contractors have been predetermined and are subject to the Work Hours Act of 1962, P.L. 87-581 and implementing regulations.

READ CAREFULLY THE WAGE SCALES AND DIVISION A OF THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS AS THEY AFFECT THIS/THESE PROJECT/PROJECTS

The Minnesota Department of Transportation hereby notifies all bidders: in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Act), as amended and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A Part 21, Non-discrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the Department of Transportation, it will affirmatively assure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded maximum opportunity to participate and/or to submit bids in response to this invitation, and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, disability, age, religion, sex or national origin in consideration for an award;

in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, and Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 230 Subpart A-Equal Employment Opportunity on Federal and Federal-Aid Construction Contracts (including supportive services), it will affirmatively assure increased participation of minority groups and disadvantaged persons and women in all phases of the highway construction industry, and that on any project constructed pursuant to this advertisement equal employment opportunity will be provided to all persons without regard to their race, color, disability, age, religion, sex or national origin;

in accordance with the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minnesota Statute 363A.08 Unfair discriminatory Practices, it will affirmatively assure that on any project constructed pursuant to this advertisement equal employment opportunity will be offered to all persons without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age;

in accordance with the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minnesota Statute 363A.36 Certificates of Compliance for Public Contracts, and 363A.37 Rules for Certificates of Compliance, it will assure that appropriate parties to any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement possess valid Certificates of Compliance.

If you are not a current holder of a compliance certificate issued by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and intend to bid on any job in this advertisement you must contact the Department of Human Rights immediately for assistance in obtaining a certificate.

The following notice from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights applies to all contractors:

“It is hereby agreed between the parties that Minnesota Statute, section 363A.36 and Minnesota Rules, parts 5000.3400 to 5000.3600 are incorporated into any contract between these parties based on this specification or any modification of it. A copy of Minnesota Statute 363A.36 and Minnesota Rules, parts 5000.3400 to 5000.3600 is available upon request from the contracting agency.”

“It is hereby agreed between the parties that this agency will require affirmative action requirements be met by contractors in relation to Minnesota Statute 363A.36 and Minnesota Rules 5000.3600. Failure by a contractor to implement an affirmative action plan or make a good faith effort shall result in revocation of its certificate or revocation of the contract (Minnesota Statute 363A.36, Subd. 2 and 3).”

A minimum goal of **2.7 % Good Faith Effort** to be subcontracted to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.

The Koochiching County Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the contract in the best interests of Koochiching County.

Dated at International Falls, Minnesota**June 11th, 2014.**

Joe Sutherland, Koochiching County Highway Engineer
Phone: 218-283-1186
Email: joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us

The family of

George Laird Monahan

invites you to join us in celebration of his life on

Saturday, June 21st 4PM

at their Point of Pines cabin.

#3073 County Road 125.

Buffet supper

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Independent School District #361

Koochiching County International Falls, MN

Mission *To prepare all learners for a changing world by developing their potential within a climate of mutual respect and trust.*

AGENDA

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

Falls High School Cafeteria

7:00 a.m.

PRELIMINARIES:

1.0 CALL TO ORDER:

2.0 ROLL CALL

Gordon Dault _____ Darrell Wagner _____

Michelle Hebner _____ Dena Wenberg _____

Michael Holden _____

Willi Kostiuik _____

3.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4.0 PREVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed

NEW BUSINESS:

5.0 Approve a Memorandum of Understanding with Local 331 outlining an agreement for payment of Early Retirement Incentives into the Minnesota State Retirement System. Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed

6.0 Approve revised Policy 426 At Will. Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed

ADJOURNMENT: Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed