

# BUSINESS

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## Falls native brings local ties to AFL-CIO

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Minnesota American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations has hired International Falls native Katie Gjertson as its field and member development director.

Gjertson brings her 10 years of labor movement experience to the position, as she recently served as a Midwest regional campaign coordinator for the national AFL-CIO, and was responsible for coordinating national AFL-CIO political and legislative programs.

Her interest in working with labor unions comes from growing up in a working-class town like International Falls, Gjertson said, specifically the labor struggles at the local paper mill and her parents' activism in the teacher's strikes.

"These struggles I saw firsthand instilled an understanding of power and justice," Gjertson said. "When workers stand together, they can do better."

Gjertson attended the University of Minnesota knowing she wanted to make a difference for families that would allow them to have a better life, she said.

"I believe that through unions, workers have the opportunity to speak up for themselves on the job, and have respect and dignity at work," she said.

As Minnesota AFL-CIO field and member development director, Gjertson will work with Minnesota AFL-CIO-affiliated unions, area labor councils, and regional labor federations to increase union member activism and direct field programs supporting Minnesota AFL-CIO-endorsed candidates and legislative priorities.

Gjertson said she's most looking forward to encouraging union activism to improve Minnesotans' lives through political and legislative campaigns.

"I love briefing union members about the issues that matter to working people – like income inequality and the importance of raising the minimum wage, and the increasing influence of corporations in our political process – and discussing how the political process works, that everyone is impacted by politics, but through getting involved, you can make a difference," Gjertson said.

Gjertson has served as



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

International Falls native Katie Gjertson said her interest in working with labor unions comes from growing up in a working-class town.

senior field representative for the AFL-CIO in Northern California, where she developed volunteer and mobilization plans, and created goal-setting and tracking systems with unions, central labor councils, and the California Labor Federation for two electoral cycles. She also worked as the field di-

rector for AFL-CIO's Health Care Reform Campaign from 2007-2009, directed the Labor 2008 political program in northeast Wisconsin, and worked as the assistant to the AFL-CIO's Midwest regional director and as an organizer for the Service Employees International Union Local 113.

## RLMC hires new CEO

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Rainy Lake Medical Center has a new chief executive officer.

Dan Odegaard, who started the job Tuesday, replaces interim CEO Bob Haley.

"I am very excited to join the Rainy Lake Medical Center team," Odegaard said in a news release.

Odegaard worked for the past 11 years as CEO of Bigfork Valley. Under his management, the critical access hospital made national headlines for high-quality, patient-centered care, said the release.

In 2012, Bigfork Valley was a top performer in iVantage's Patient Perspective Index, which ranks hospital performance based on two hospital consumer assessment of health care providers and systems measures: overall rating and percentage of patients who would highly recommend the hospital.

Odegaard was recently named to the Becker's Hospital Review "50 Rural Hospital CEOs to Know." Becker's Hospital Review is a national publication featuring up-to-date business, legal news, and analysis relating to hospitals and health systems, said the release. This list features 50 presidents and CEOs who have shown commitment to providing high-quality, accessible care to their patients and have approached the challenge of rural health care with composure.

Bonnie Erickson, RLMC Board member, said in the release, the board of trustees has great confidence and welcomes Odegaard to lead the medical center into the future.

"Our having a perma-

nent CEO will add to the sustainability of our operations," she said.

Odegaard has a mix of practical experience and education to rely upon during his career as a hospital administrator. After high school, he enlisted in the United States Navy to learn about the medical field. As a hospital corpsman for two years in the Navy and two years in the U.S. Marines, he experienced a wide array of skills from record keeping to field medical care, said the release.

After his military career, he attended the University of North Dakota where he earned his bachelor's degree in business administration with a major in accounting. He has also earned board certification in health care management as a Fellow of the American College of Health Care Executives. This signifies his expertise, experience, and commitment to continuing education and professional development, said the release.

Odegaard serves on the Minnesota Hospital Association Board of Directors, which establishes policies to advance the delivery of health care and health care policy in Minnesota and on the national level. He also serves on the board as vice chairman of Sisu Solutions, a health care technology company focusing on delivering the information technology solutions and services community health care facilities need to survive.

"Dan will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to Rainy Lake Medical Center," RLMC Board member Dr. Jon Talsness said in the release. "We are pleased to have him as our new CEO."

## BlackBerry wins court battle against startup

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Troubled smartphone maker BlackBerry has won an early round in its legal battle against an iPhone keyboard made by a startup co-founded by "American Idol" host Ryan Seacrest.

A court order bans Seacrest's company, Typo Products LLC, from selling its iPhone keyboard in the U.S. while BlackBerry Ltd. proceeds with a patent infringement case against the product. BlackBerry contends Typo Products ripped off the design from the physical keyboards used for typing on BlackBerry's phones.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick in San Francisco ruled BlackBerry is likely to prove its infringement claims against Typo Products and would be dam-

aged if the sales of the \$99 iPhone keyboard were allowed to continue.

The ban could be lifted later in the case if Typo Products prevails in its claims its iPhone keyboard isn't based on any of BlackBerry's patented designs or technology.

"This ruling will help prevent further injury to BlackBerry from Typo's blatant theft of our patented keyboard technology," BlackBerry said in a statement.

Typo Products said it plans to appeal Orrick's ruling.

"Typo will continue to make and sell innovative products that busy people can't live without," the Los Angeles company said in a statement.

In court papers, Typo

Products warned it might go out of business if it was not allowed to keep selling its iPhone keyboard.

Seacrest started Typo Products with entrepreneur Laurence Hallier last year. The iPhone keyboard went on sale in January as an alternative to typing on a touch screen.

The physical keyboards on BlackBerry's phones helped reshape the way people used mobile devices.

But those phones have been waning in popularity since Apple Inc. released the first iPhone in 2007, threatening BlackBerry's survival. As its losses have mounted, BlackBerry's mar-

ket value has plummeted from more than \$80 billion in 2008 to less than \$5 billion today.

The Canadian company is trying to bounce back by focusing more on its software than its smartphones under CEO John Chen, who took charge last year. BlackBerry lost \$5.9 billion in its last fiscal year ending March 1.

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