

# LOCALNEWS

## EDLs are not available locally

What to know before you go

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

While Minnesota’s new enhanced driver’s license will allow residents to reenter the United States from Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean by land and sea, they’re not available in Borderland.

In addition to serving as a driver’s license or identification card, the enhanced driver’s license, or EDL, and the enhanced identification card, or EID, are among the federally-approved border-crossing documents required under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security authorized the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services Division to accept applications for EDLs and EIDs. Minnesota is the fifth state to accept the enhanced cards; the others are Michigan, New York, Vermont and Washington.

Locally, Becky Roeder of the Falls License Bureau said the new cards aren’t available here. She said that the new cards are available at Bemidji and Virginia, but wants to make sure people who travel there to get them bring along the right information to obtain a card.

In order to process an EDL or EID application, federal requirements for security clearance must be met. The 14 DVS state exam stations were authorized to accept the applications, according to Stephanie Kaufenberg,

public information officer, Office of Communications, Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

International Falls does not have a DVS exam station, said Kaufenberg. The closest exam stations are located at: Virginia Exam Station, 101 Hoover Rd., Virginia and Bemidji Exam Station, 111 Second St., Bemidji.

Roeder said the new EDLs require lots of forms of identification.

“There are so many people that don’t know you can’t get them here,” said Roeder. “And there is tons of information they have to bring with them to get them.”

Roeder encouraged people to make sure they have the information needed to get the cards before they leave home. She said the Falls License Bureau serves as an information hub for the state and staff there are happy to answer questions about what is needed. People may call the bureau at 283-2843 or the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services Division at 651-297-3298 or email DVS.driverslicense@state.mn.us.

“We don’t mind giving people information,” she said. “But it’s tough, because people don’t realize all they need to get the cards until the drive there. I wish they could get them here, but they can’t.”

Border Patrol Agents at land and sea entry ports verify cardholder identity and citizenship through the radio frequency identification, or RFID, technology in an EDL or EID, said a release from the state. RFIDs do not store personal information, rather they point to the information



A comparison between the standard and enhanced driver’s license.

of the cardholder housed in a secure DHS database. The RFID will only work within a certain distance of an RFID scanning device at land and sea entry ports. No additional proof of identity is required.

The cost of an EDL or EID is \$15 in addition to the fee charged for a regular driver’s license or ID card.

EDL or EID applicants must be a U.S. citizen, Minnesota resident and at least 16 years old. They also must have a driving record that does not prevent them from legally operating a motor vehicle, unless applying for an EID. Proper documentation, including a Social Security number and proof of residency, must also be provided.

EDL or EID applications will take two to four weeks to process. The first cards will be in use after Monday, said a department news release.

The state considers the EDL/EID cards an optional customer convenience.

How to Apply for an EDL or EID

You can apply for an EDL or EID at any time:

- At the time your cur-

rent driver’s license or ID is due for renewal.

■ First time application for your driver’s license (and learner’s permit) or non-driver photo ID card.

■ Replace your current driver’s license prior to the date you are due for renewal, with no change in the expiration date of your license.

■ Age: Applicants must be 16 years of age or older.

■ Identification: Only an applicant who can provide proof of identity, full legal name, Social Security number, photographic identity, Minnesota residency and U.S. citizenship is eligible for a Minnesota EDL or EID.

■ At time of application: Complete an interview questionnaire (allow extra time when applying).

Roeder outlined the other options for U.S. residents reentering the U.S. She said a Nexus card costs \$50 and is valid for five years, but is only used on the border with Canada; passport card costs about \$60, is valid for 10 years and allows entry by land and sea from Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean; passport book is valid for 10 years and costs vary, up to \$140.

## Public meeting seeks public input

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Minnesota Power Great Northern Transmission Line will be the subject of a public input meeting Thursday.

The meeting set to begin at 6 p.m. at the Americinn, calls for public comment on the transmission line set to run from Manitoba-Minnesota border to a Minnesota Power substation in Itasca County. Public Utilities Commission, Department of Commerce, and Minnesota Power staff will be on hand to answer questions about the project and the process.

The topics open for public comment are:

■ Is the proposed project needed and in the public interest?

■ What human and environmental impacts should be studied in the environmental report?

■ Are there other ways to meet the stated needs for the proposed project, instead of the proposed transmission line?

At a November Koochiching County Board meeting, project manager Jim Atkinson said the new transmission line will benefit Minnesota Power customers by providing a more stable energy system. The project would cut the company’s reliance on burning coal as a source of electricity to one-third, with one-third coming from renewable sources and the final third coming from natural gas.

The line would allow Minnesota Power to trade with Maintoba Hydro, an excellent energy source, Atkinson said. Relying more on

stable hydroelectric power would mean Minnesota Power customers wouldn’t be exposed to price increases caused by carbon taxes on coal, he said.

About 60 miles of the proposed line would run through Koochiching County, Atkinson said. Minnesota Power would pay \$40,000-\$60,000 per mile in property tax on the line, he said, which would generate a significant amount of revenue for the county annually.

Construction on the project will hopefully begin in 2016, Atkinson said, with the purchase agreement stipulating a completion date of June 1, 2020. The Thursday meeting is the first in a process of applying for various permits needed to construct the line.

At a December Public Utilities Commission meeting, the commission found Minnesota Power’s certificate of need application complete, which means the commission can now start the review process, which takes 12-15 months. Minnesota Power has not yet submitted a route application for the project.

The Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis staff will also compile an environmental report for the project. The report will detail the human and environmental impacts of this project and its alternatives, and ways to address these impacts. After the report is issued, there will be another round of public hearings.



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