

Always  
reminiscing

Little River Band  
coming to Riverfest

A3



Feeling cold  
and chili

FHS students hold  
chili cook-off

B7



# The Journal



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## Board won't reduce staff next school year

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

Falls teachers are likely feeling relief this week following a decision by the Falls School Board. During a special meeting Tuesday, the board agreed it would not reduce any elementary or secondary staff for the 2014-2015 school year to help offset about \$500,000 the district is losing in state funding due to declining enrollment. Staff reductions were among other cost-saving measures on a list generated in November by Superintendent Nurdy Nelson for the board to consider in order to save the district money without dipping into its fund balance, or savings account. "It gets to be somewhat of a

mindset," Nelson told The Journal of spending from the fund balance. "Once you start the practice, the next time it gets worse, and the next time it gets even worse. Pretty soon, your fund balance disappears." Nelson said a large chunk of money – about \$430,000 – was saved by the board approving early retirement last month to five staff members. "That makes a big difference," Nelson said. The items and values of areas the board dropped from consideration for the upcoming school year include: ■ Two athletic teams – \$24,000 ■ English as a second language class – \$8,600 ■ Paraprofessional staff –

\$125,000 ■ Elementary/secondary staff – \$370,000 ■ Curriculum cycle – \$75,000 ■ Additions to the levy referendum – \$300,000 In addition to avoiding reductions in staff, the board also may consider hiring an elementary teacher to meet the number of class sections for next year. "Right now, we would be short at least one elementary teacher," Nelson said. "We'd have to look at hiring someone...We are not looking at replacing the retirements." Based on an estimate of next year's student numbers, the board agreed to set four sections for kindergarten; four sections for first grade; three sections for second grade; three sections for

### Next meeting:

The Falls School Board will meet at 5 p.m. Monday for its regular meeting in the Falls High School cafeteria.

### STILL ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

Cost reduction items the board will continue to consider – and finalize – when it meets in a special session April 28, include: ■ Eliminating the hall monitor position – \$21,000 ■ Alternating physics/chemistry each year – \$8,600 ■ Contracting out the yearbook – \$8,600 ■ Relocating the Community Education office and reworking Community Education secretary – \$35,000 ■ Dropping remedial seventh and eighth grade classes – \$42,000 "Have we really thought about keeping the (Community Education) office where it is right

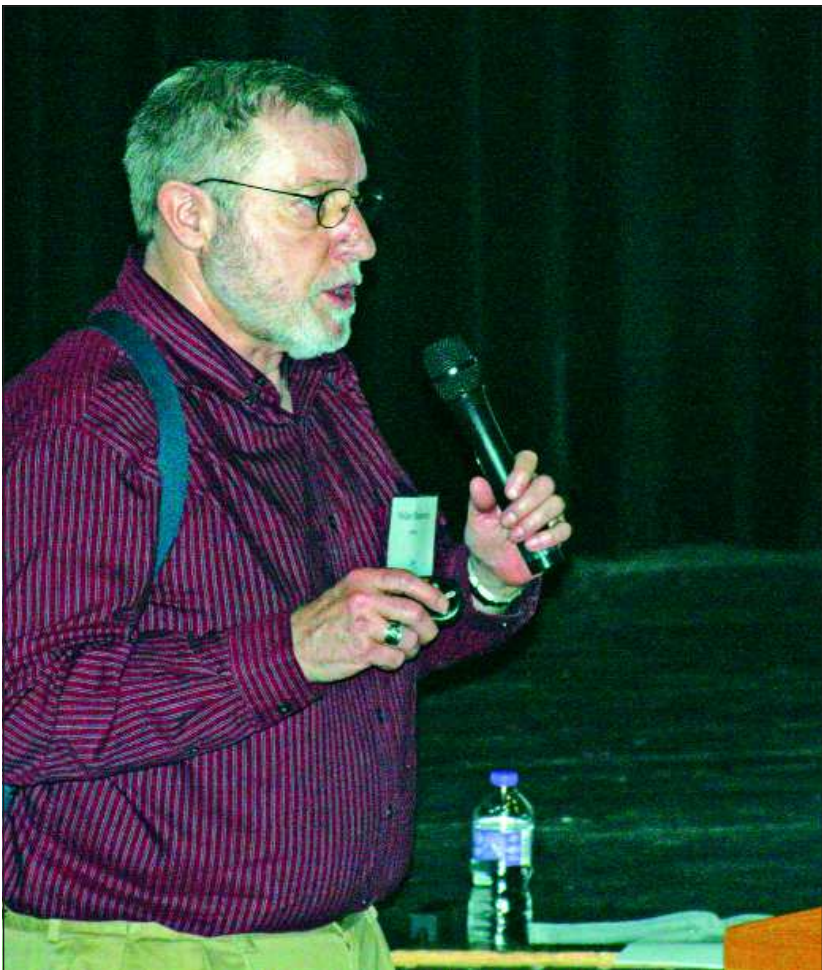
Board to A7 ➤

## Forum, relationships unique to watershed

Model to be used elsewhere on U.S.-Canada border

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

With lights turned low, more than 120 heads turned toward Nolan Baratono standing near the stage at Rainy River Community College's theater. Baratono, of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, was displaying images on a screen on the stage as he spoke about resource monitoring being conducted through the International Multi-agency Agreement, for which Baratono serves on a technical advisory committee. The agreement is signed by seven government agencies on both sides of the international border, the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians.



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Nolan Baratono of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency presents an update on resource monitoring Wednesday at the two-day International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Forum.

Baratono's discussion was one of about 30 presentations Wednesday and Thursday at the International Rainy-Lake

of Woods Watershed Forum, which represents interests from

Forum to A7 ➤

## Anderson brings public service history to job

New city admin sees professional, personal challenges, opportunities

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

With a little more than a week serving as International Falls administrator, Ken Anderson said he's learning about the community and sees personal and professional opportunities and challenges. His No. 1 priority in the job will be helping the International Falls City Council carry out its goals and strategic action plan and making sure its priorities are met, he said. Anderson comes to the Falls after working for 10 1/2 years as Crosslake community development director, responsible for planning and zoning functions and economic development. The city, he said, encompasses about 37 square miles and 41 lakes.

He described the city, a couple hours from the Twin Cities suburbs, as a bit of anomaly. "The gem of the city is the Whitefish chain of lakes," he said. He called growth in the city in the 1990s phenomenal with 65 percent of the residential property classified as seasonal recreational serving as second homes or cabins. Land for a minimum 100-foot wide residential lot cost from \$700,000 to \$800,000 market value, which decreased a little since then.

With planning and zoning responsibilities, Anderson said challenges were created by attempting to meet state shoreland rules, while allowing for development that retains "the up north character." Wealthy people who retired there offered huge numbers of community service hours and very large monetary contributions for projects which benefited the community immensely, he said. He said the city experiences a sort of "tale of two cities" with the year-round population at about 2,150, and swelling in the summer upon the return of "snowbirds" and cabin dwellers on weekends to about 10,000 to 15,000 people, forcing retailers to "make hay while the sun shines."

A campground in the city annually draws about 140,000 people



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Ken Anderson began as International Falls city administrator a little more than one week ago.

who can access lakes, bike trails and the business area easily, he said.

With a restructuring of the city's departments, Anderson's position was terminated and the city contracted for the planning and zoning services from the county.

### OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES

He said International Falls has offered him personal and professional opportunities and a challenges. He said he loves fishing, boating, and being in the outdoors.

"This is very similar to what we experienced in Crosslake," he said. "And I have been encouraged and refreshed in just the week I have been working here in this capacity."

He said he met with several organizations and groups. "Everybody has been very friendly, opening and welcoming and very appreciative of having me here," he said.

Challenges and opportunities from a professional standpoint include assisting the community to recover from the recent termination of jobs at the local paper mill and elsewhere. Keeping a positive outlook is one of the challenges, he said, and offering a skilled workforce to other businesses seeking to expand or locate here is an opportunity.

"We have a pool of skilled laborers and now we can use that

Anderson to A7 ➤

## SIGN OF THE SEASON?



STAFF PHOTO

City crews blocked off streets Wednesday and Thursday to clear snow from corners of intersections and around hydrants. Many who saw the effort likely hope it's the last time the snow must be handled before Borderland experiences spring.