

## Jail suicide lawsuit settled at \$2 million

Attorney: Family  
optimistic with  
election of new sheriff

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

A lawsuit seeking more than \$40 million in damages in the suicide death of Kathryn Schneider from Koochiching County Sheriff Brian Jespersen, jail staff and the county has been settled for \$2 million.

The lawsuit filed in October claimed Schneider's death March 25 in the Koochiching County Jail resulted from the "deliberate indifference" and improper handling of a jail inmate by the county, six jail staff, and Jespersen, who supervises jail staff. Schneider, 28, was found hanging from a door in the jail.

The lawsuit claimed the Koochiching County Sheriff's Department failed to take appropriate precautions and safeguards to prevent Schneider's death.

Jespersen and attorney Jason M. Hiveley could not be reached for comment. Hiveley, of the law firm Iverson Reuvers Condon, represented Koochiching County.

Jeffrey Montpetit of Sieben Carey Ltd., Minneapolis, represented members of Schneider's family who brought the lawsuit.

Montpetit told The Journal Monday the lawsuit and its settlement wasn't complicated.

"There were several phone calls and discussions and we were able to get the case settled before getting too far into discovery," he said.

When cases are settled, "everyone goes away mildly satisfied," he said. "We are able to control the outcome as much as we could and the defense is able to control the outcome at the same time."

And while the outcome was mildly satisfying, the system can only produce money, he said.

"Moving forward, there is a new sheriff in town," he said of Perryn Hedlund, who becomes sheriff Thursday as a result of a successful election bid against Jespersen. "That, I think, is something that is overall satisfactory to the plaintiffs in the case — knowing there will be a new head for that body, the sheriff's office, and those changes taking place from the election. The family (of Schneider) is very optimistic and agree Perryn Hedlund will be a great sheriff."

The settlement concludes the case, said Montpetit, noting there are no other claims pending.

"Now, the best thing here is for the family of Kathryn to be able to move forward and heal some very

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## AND TO ALL A GOOD DINNER

JoAnn Kellner, left, makes her way through the dinner line and stops to exchange pleasantries with Duayne Johnson who volunteered to serve food during the ninth annual Christmas Day dinner at the Roadhouse Thursday.

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

Christmas spirit and the smell of dinner was in the air Thursday during the ninth annual Christmas Day dinner at the Roadhouse.

According to Lee Grim, one of the event's organizers, this year's meal was served to about 400 people at the Roadhouse and more than 300 meals were delivered to members of the community from the Elks Lodge in the morning and the Roadhouse in the afternoon.

"Overall, the number of meals served was up a little from last year," Grim said.

The organizer said he was excited to report the free-will offering bin at the Roadhouse collected \$1,778 to be donated to the Falls Hunger Coalition.

"We're very pleased with that," he said. "And we had more donations sent right to the food shelf."

As in the past, the dinner brings together all walks of community life. This year, Grim said, he saw faces he hasn't seen at the dinner before.

Grim said feedback he received from people was the food was good and everyone felt welcomed.

"The people who ate were happy to be here and the people who volunteered were happy to serve people of the community," he said.

Mayors of both International Falls and Ranier rolled up their sleeves to help make the meal a success. Grim said Bob Anderson, mayor of International Falls, and his family helped at the Elks Lodge Thursday morning and Dennis Wagner, mayor of Ranier, got his hands wet in the kitchen of the Roadhouse washing



Linda Vance dons her festive gear to volunteer Thursday at the Roadhouse. Vance was one of many volunteers who made the annual event possible, according to organizer Lee Grim.



Berta Hagen and Ron Wilcox are all smiles as they volunteer Thursday.

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dishes.

"That says something right there," Grim said. "Both community leaders helping out really pulls this all together."

In fact, Grim said when talking to Anderson, the mayor spoke of the pride he had in his community and the volunteers' willingness to help out and come together.

Echoing the mayor's comments, Grim said there were

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## Falls EDA approves multimodal project

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

The International Falls Economic Development Authority ended 2014 with a bang by moving forward Monday on a project in the multimodal district.

The project, a closed loop food production facility, would produce tilapia, lettuce, and other produce which could be sold to local grocery stores and restaurants, as well as shipped out of town.

A public hearing on the project held before Monday's regular meeting featured Bruce Carman of Mariner Farms, LLC, the project's developer, and Carol Helland, Rainy River Community College provost, discussing the local benefits of the project.

In a unanimous vote during the regular EDA meeting, the board approved a motion to sell the 1.5 acres of land for \$1 to Mariner Farms, LLC, and to approve the draft development agreement for the project.

The project would represent a minimum \$1.5 million investment in the community, EDA President Gail Rognerud said, and would create five to six jobs, as well as paid internships for RRCC students. The only incentive Mariner Farms is seeking is a \$1 sale price for the land, she said, which is below cost.

### Background

The International Falls facility is based on an existing facility in Silver Bay, which has been operational for two and a half years, Carman said. That facility is a public-public partnership between the city of Silver Bay and the University of Minnesota-Duluth, he said, and is known as Victus Farms.

The proposed International Falls facility is around 10,000 square feet, Carman said, and is a unique, patent-pending facility. The fish are grown in tanks, with the nutrient-rich waste the fish produce flowing into troughs, where produce is grown on a floating raft system, he said. The water is oxygenated by the produce, and flows back into the fish tanks.

The closed-loop system means there's no waste produced and no pollution, Carman said. Any output produced by the system is either sold for revenue or reintroduced to the system as a fertilizer.

"We want to be able to grow enough food to be able to take care of the needs of the local community, International Falls and the surrounding area," Carman said. "And then be able to produce more produce or fish so that it can be distributed."

The facility will be powered by renewable energy, Carman said. It's an environmentally responsible system, he added, and also allows for control of energy costs, and therefore production costs.

"If we know what our costs are

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