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# The Journal

Saturday, September 27, 2014

International Falls, Minnesota

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## TruStar plans for growth and expansion

### Significant investment planned for International Falls office

#### JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Buoyed by success in a decade-long plan of growth and development which included outreach into several neighboring marketplaces, TruStar Federal Credit Union has outlined a comprehensive expansion plan for the next several years which is centered on its community of origin – International Falls.

Plans released by TruStar Thursday call for major renovation and expansion of its existing downtown office, a move which credit union senior management said is designed to accommodate the addition of at least 12 new full-time positions in the Falls location. The almost 8,000-square-foot addition will extend over all three floors of the existing building.

"It is gratifying and rewarding to be able to enhance our facility and create jobs in TruStar's home community," TruStar chief executive officer and president Dale L. Johnson said in a news release.

"The new enlarged facility will give us ample room to offer the just-on-the-horizon products and the service that our members need and deserve. In addition, it will allow us to add the staff necessary to support a growing and successful financial institution well into the future."

Bids will be let for the new addition on the east side of the building and related building improvements by the end of May 2015 with occupation of the remodeled structure expected in March 2016. Lucachick Architecture of International Falls and Bemidji is designing the enlarged and enhanced structure.

Hiring for the new positions, including anticipated opportunities for those trained and experienced in information technology, operations, marketing, lending and human resources, will begin



CONTRIBUTED ILLUSTRATION

TruStar provided this drawing of its plans to expand its building in International Falls.

in the next several months and continue through 2015.

The plan also takes into account approval recently granted by the National Credit Union Administration for expansion of TruStar's community charter to include Lake Kabetogama, Crane

Lake and adjacent areas in northwest St. Louis County, as well as Becker County. With recent endorsement by TruStar's board of directors, the credit union will begin serving new members from those locations almost immediately from its existing locations.

It is expected that the opening of a temporary office in Detroit Lakes in Becker County in the next 18 months will be among the first moves as a result of the charter expansion.

TruStar to A7 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

## LOCAL OFFICIALS WANT GRAND MOUND REOPENED

### Highway 11 site has been closed since 2003

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

More than seven years after the Minnesota Historical Society closed the Grand Mound Historic Site and Interpretive Center, a chained gate keeps the public away from one of the largest and most significant historic burial mounds in the Midwest.

Local officials have renewed an effort to open and protect the site containing what is believed to be a culturally, spiritually and historically significant site.

Koochiching County commissioners and International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson recently sent letters to D. Stephen Elliott, director and CEO

of the Minnesota Historical Society asking him to visit with local officials to discuss the society's plans for the site's future.

A representative of the Minnesota Historical Society told The Journal MHS is exploring options to again open the site in some way to the public.

"We want to work with the community, and while not everybody agrees, having interpretation, a place for people to reflect and learn things is a good idea," said Ben Leonard, manager of community outreach and partnerships for the Minnesota Historical Society.

The site was closed in 2003 by MHS, which cited in its closure of the site a lack of money generated by attendance.

Grand Mound lies just

across the Rainy River from the Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Center, which focuses on huge burial mounds created about 5,000 years ago by the same people, called the Laurel Indians.

Commissioner Wade Pavleck said the site should serve to educate the public about the culture and history of the people who used the mounds and the area at the confluence of the Bigfork and Rainy rivers.

"History belongs to all of us," he said, adding there are differing opinions locally about whether the site should be completely open to the public.

Pavleck said some tribal representatives believe

Grand Mound to A7 ►

## County proposes no levy increase

#### JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Koochiching County property owners could see no increase in the county portion of their taxes under a proposal calling for no increase in the 2015 levy to the amount collected this year.

The county board Tuesday approved a proposed 2015 gross tax levy of \$3.95 million — representing no change from the amount collected as the 2014 levy.

The board scheduled the required public hearing for the proposed levy and budget for 6:15 p.m. Dec. 2 in the courthouse boardroom. The proposed levy may be decreased before it is adopted as the final levy, but not increased. After the hearing, the board will adopt the final levy and budget.

County Administrative Director Teresa Briggs has said the county's tax capacity increased by \$169,000, so if the county budget levy is not changed, the

tax rate would be reduced by 1.5 percent.

In other business Tuesday, the board heard from state Rep. David Dill, who visited with commissioners about a plan to introduce legislation in the next session that would address better management of wetlands in the state.

The plan involves a shift from replacing wetlands disturbed or destroyed by development in areas that are abundant with wetlands and replacing them where they have more value. Dill told the board changing mitigation replacement sites from counties like Koochiching County, which has retained a majority of its presettlement wetlands, to places in the state where few wetlands now exist will require addressing the overall framework of wetland management in the state.

County to A7 ►

## Fort Frances mill could have a buyer

#### JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The kraft pulp mill across the Rainy River in Fort Frances could have a buyer, according to a report in the Fort Frances Times.

The mill had previously been closed permanently in May by owner Resolute Forest Products, which followed a January announcement of an extended period of market-related outage on its remaining paper machine. The kraft pulp mill and another paper machine have been idled since November 2012.

Wednesday, the Times reported municipal representatives met with Wisconsin-based Expera Specialty Solutions, which reportedly has signed a letter of intent with Resolute Forest Products.

Fort Frances Mayor Roy Avis told the Times the town will be advocating for a new Power Purchase Agreement for the facility to be established by the provincial government, which would be for the biomass boiler.

Avis could not be reached by Journal staff for comment Thursday prior to deadline.

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