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# The Daily Journal

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Tuesday

July 16, 2013  
Vol. 140, No. 166  
Fergus Falls, Minn.

## Enrollment increase prompts teacher hirings

By Rian Bosse  
Daily Journal

With kindergarten enrollment continuing to grow, the Fergus Falls School District has had to make up for the increase in numbers.

The Fergus Falls School Board approved the hiring of three additional kindergarten and first-grade teaching positions for the 2013-2014 school year Monday morning.

The board hired one

full-time first-grade teacher for Adams School and another full time kindergarten teacher at McKinley School. It also hired an additional part time shared kindergarten teacher.

Eight sections have moved on from last year's kindergarten class to first grade, which amounts to more than 180 students. That class was made up of 193 students in kindergarten last year, so, with the addition of students through the summer, it

could match last year's numbers by the start of the year.

There are 160 kindergarten students already enrolled for this year's class. Superintendent Jerry Ness said he estimates there will be around 180 students to fill the class after summer registrations are through, but the district won't know for sure until the year starts.

A higher census count in the city's population contributed to the higher

enrollment, Ness said.

The pre-school and new free kindergarten option have helped cultivate numbers.

"We also just feel we have a great preschool program that is leading kids right into our schools," Ness said.

Ness attributes higher enrollment in part to the savings of \$195 a month for families with students in the free kindergarten option.



Ness

## RTC will be transferred to developer

### Letter of intent approved by council

By Heather Rule  
Daily Journal

The city of Fergus Falls and Historic Kirkbride, LLC officially entered the letter of intent phase Monday for a Regional Treatment Center redevelopment project. The city council authorized the city administrator and mayor to sign the letter of intent from Ray Willey and Bill Brown of Historic Kirkbride.

It is the intent that the city will transfer ownership of the RTC to Historic Kirkbride so the company can complete a \$41.4 million plan including an upscale hotel of approximately 120 rooms with associated amenities, about five restaurants and about 60 market-rate apartments.

The letter is non-binding, but it grants Historic Kirkbride exclusivity for acquisition of the RTC through Sept. 30, according to RTC adviser Kent Mattson.

That means the city cannot discuss, solicit, entertain or consider any other offers from another party regarding the RTC until after this exclusivity period or if the letter of intent is terminated.

The city will restrict RTC access to a "need to access" only basis during the exclusivity period,

### Schlossman requests extension

By Heather Rule  
Daily Journal

An emotional Jeff Schlossman asked the Fergus Falls City Council Monday for an amendment to the development agreement for parcels A and B — known as the nurse's cottage — on the Regional Treatment Center property. He sought an extension to the original agreement due to personal problems.

Campus Development Group, where Schlossman is a partner, closed on parcels A and B of the RTC in March 2011. That took the nurses' cottage and some assorted brick buildings off the city's hands.

See Request — Page 3

according to the letter. At the longest, the letter of intent would last until Oct. 30.

Both parties will work toward drafting a development agreement and a purchase agreement. The final deal for the RTC will be subject to these agreements, but the letter of intent provides a road map, Mattson said. The agreements will

See RTC — Page 3

## CARE drug smuggler sentenced to more than 4 years in prison

By Heather Rule  
Daily Journal

A Minneapolis woman was sentenced July 8 to 58 months in prison for her role in heroin smuggling at the Fergus Falls Community Addiction Recovery Enterprise unit in 2011.

Billie Jo Lumbar, 45, was sentenced in Otter Tail County District Court for felony second-degree conspiracy to commit drug sales. She pleaded guilty March 22. As part of a durational departure, five other felony charges were dismissed including great bodily harm caused by distribution, conspiracy to commit great bodily harm caused by distribution, two counts of second-degree drug sales and second-degree conspiracy to commit drug sales.

**INSIDE:** For more news from the crime beat, see Page 2.

According to the criminal complaint, Lumbar and relative Joseph Richard Lumbar, 29, of Minneapolis, were responsible for mailing several packages with drugs hidden inside to the CARE Unit, where they were received and distributed by Rachel Campbell, Trista Cloud, Nicole Rindahl and Tina Bebeau.

Campbell, the operation's organizer, reportedly received drugs in packages sent from her relative, Billie. Security footage at Minneapolis post offices helped identify both Lumbar as having sent some of the packages. They reportedly hid the heroin in a shampoo bottle or clothing before sending it to the unit.

Billie Jo Lumbar's criminal history indicates numerous felony convictions, including a fifth-degree controlled substance conviction Oct. 12, 2008.



MPR Photo/Nathaniel Minor

Kevin Kenow, a research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, nets a loon on South Turtle Lake in Otter Tail County, Minn. on Wednesday, July 10, 2013

## Minnesota biologists attempt to unravel loon death mystery

### Scientists catch migratory birds on Underwood lake

By Dan Gunderson  
MPR News — 91.5 FM

How do you sneak up on a loon? That's the question this night as wildlife scientists slide a boat into South Turtle Lake, a few miles east of Fergus Falls.

The biologists want to know why so many of the iconic birds die of botulism poisoning on the Great Lakes every fall. They want to learn more about environmental toxins loons face on their long annual migration.

But first they have to catch them.

On the lake, they seek a pair wearing special tags that track

where they travel and how deep they dive. A recorded loon call gets the attention of the territorial birds. After a bit more coaxing with calls, the spotlights find an adult loon, in brilliant black and white, swimming alongside a dingy brown chick.

Scooping the adult into a fishing net, U.S. Geological Survey wildlife biologist Kevin Kenow sees it's the male of this loon family, wearing the leg band researchers put on a year ago. He snags the small, brown-colored chick but can't find the female.

He decides to head back to shore and get data from the male and chick so they can be released.

South Turtle Lake is one stop on a three-week tour of lakes across Minnesota and Wisconsin. The states boast the greatest concentration of nesting loons in the United States.

Adult loons leave here in the fall to winter on the Gulf of Mexico after raising their chicks. But before going south, they head east for a month on the Great Lakes, eating fish and preparing for the long migration.

What they eat there sometimes kills them. Botulism on the Great Lakes has killed 50,000 birds in a decade — half of them loons, Kenow said. Tracking the loons' migration and behavior, he added, is helping unravel the mystery.

Back on shore, the male loon protests as he's examined. Everyone tries to stay clear of the spear-like black bill.

"Every summer they draw blood at some point," Kenow said. "They can stab or when they grab your finger it's like having a vise grip on it. If you pull away it will just rip

See Loons — Page 8

## City will let bids for Vernon street project

### Contractor could be approved as early as Aug. 5 meeting

By Heather Rule  
Daily Journal

The roadway along a stretch of Vernon Avenue is one step closer to a smooth surface.

The Fergus Falls City Council Monday approved

the plans and specifications and authorized advertising for bids for a Vernon Avenue street and utility project. The preliminary review of the plans by Minnesota Department of Transportation is complete,



Edwards

according to City Engineer Dan Edwards.

The project will replace the pavement from Court Street through the Cascade Street intersection on Vernon.

Edwards authorized submitting the advertisement for bids July 8, so that the publication deadline can be met and they city can take advantage of a quicker project schedule.

There's a required 21-day advertising period for the project.

This way, the city would be able to open the project for bids at the Aug. 5 council meeting and potentially approve a contractor, rather than wait until Aug. 19.

This schedule would potentially advance the proposed project construction by two weeks.

MAILING LABEL

**TOMORROW:**

HIGH: 90 LOW: 71

SUNRISE TOMORROW: 5:50 a.m.  
SUNSET TOMORROW: 9:11 p.m.

**YESTERDAY:**

HIGH: 82 LOW: 70  
PRECIPITATION: 0.04

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Enjoying the SummerFest parade.

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