



Cass County news

By MONICA LUNDQUIST
Cass County Correspondent

Cass County Engineer David Enblom obtained board approval July 1 to seek bids or quotes to make improvements on short stretches of a few roads.

A half-mile of the south end of CSAH 46 from Highway 84 will be paved with a thin layer of bituminous. That road, which is the southern access toward Deep Portage Conservation Reserve, carries about 150 vehicles per days past residences on two lakes.

Bituminous patches will be laid on portions of CSAH 4 by Remer and of CSAH 58 by Outing. Gravel improvements will be made to Big Leech Road (Pine Point Road) to improve the road surface, ditching and to repair a washout in Turtle Lake Township.

The board authorized Enblom to work with the land department to determine needs and costs for maintaining and improving six recreational trail bridges.

One that crosses McCrackron Creek has been undermined and has a severe erosion due to beaver activity in the creek.

Cass County Economic Development progress

Cass County Economic Development Corporation Director Gail Levenson and CCEDC Board President Terry Freeman provided Cass commissioners with a progress report on the first six months of this year.

Levenson said she counsels an average of 30 businesses each month, with some projects taking two or more years to bring their new business or expansion into operation. She has provided 436 hours of counseling so far this year.

Eight businesses have completed their projects this year. Those include Reque Northern Exposure in Walker; Ridgeline Manufacturing, Hutnin Shack and Reliable Seamless Gutter in Pillager; O'Dell Masonry and Prosocki's All Care at Pine River; and Rochelle's Second Time Around and Major Laundromat in Cass Lake.

CCEDC is administering a small cities grant to Pine River, which allows homeowners to borrow up to \$20,000 and businesses up to \$25,000 to

improve their properties. If a homeowner continues to own the property 10 years or business owner for seven years, their loan will be forgiven. Eleven rehabilitation projects currently are underway, Levenson said.

The EDC also is administering a grant at Cass Lake where 14 houses are being rehabilitated and three new homeowners have received down payment assistance.

Over the last five years, the county has invested \$170,000 in economic development and is one of 108 public and private EDC members. The 44 businesses CCEDC assisted to start or expand in that time will have invested \$53 million when they are fully operational, creating and retaining 399 jobs.

Ambulance service update

North Memorial Ambulance has been able to provide advanced life support continuously since taking over operations of the ambulance services at Longville last year and at Walker this year.

Kevin Lee, Brainerd area service manager, and Dennis Mackendanz, Park Rapids area service manager, brought this report to the Cass County Board Tuesday.

Lee said the number of Longville area calls were 49 the first quarter or three less than their budget projected, with revenues running about 9 percent below budget projections, but the number of calls income the second quarter has offset that. The service now is ahead of budget projections.

The early season shortfall was largely due to insurance and Medicare deductions and bad debt, he reported.

Outstate Operations Director Gary Pearson said North Memorial has had an overall profit on the Longville operation of about 14 percent since assuming that service in January 2007. Projections were for North Memorial to have about a 10 percent profit.

If this trend continues through this year, Pearson said the service district could be looking at a slight refund by 2009.

The ambulance service also offers blood pressure checks for the community and has held an open house for pre-schoolers in Longville.

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