

# NORTH SHORE JOURNAL

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Christine Mallory, Editor

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## Superintendent Enjoys Managing Two NorthShore Districts

By Kitty Mayo

Working two jobs may seem like a lot to handle, but for Superintendent Bill Crandall it's just more of what he likes to do.

As the superintendent for both Lake Superior School District #381 and Cook County School District #166, Crandall's commute is a long one. However, with shortages of qualified candidates for jobs like superintendent, Cook County School District sought out a novel solution.

Now in his school year since adding Cook County on to his resume, Crandall says things are working out well.

"It keeps me busy, but I really enjoy what I do and it seemed like a good fit for me," said Crandall.

CCSD reached out to LSSD about sharing a superintendent in 2016 after a search to replace their superintendent turned up little results. Crandall saw the opportunity as a personal and professional challenge, and eventually received permission

from the LSSD board to take it on.

In his full time position with LSSD, Crandall works four days out of the week either at Silver Bay or Two Harbors where there are 1,350 students. One day a week he heads up to Grand Marais' district of 450 students.

Maintaining separate contracts with both districts, Crandall says it's the overlap in duties that makes the whole thing manageable. Given many of the meetings and events that he attends as superintendent, he is able to represent both districts for many functions.

For all the other day-to-day operations, Crandall relies heavily on the technology to be effective.

"There's no delay in communicating with video conferencing, I can sit in my office in Two Harbors or Cook County and talk to any of the schools face-to-face," Crandall said.

## Historic Production of 'Fences' Heading North

By Kitty Mayo

The Lake Superior Community Theatre is opening a historic production of the play "*Fences*" at the end of this month into early April.

Featuring a black American family, the famous August Wilson story will be told by an all African-American cast for the first time on the northshore. It is also the first time '*Fences*' has been performed in the state anywhere north of the Twin Cities.

The story of '*Fences*' takes place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1957. Focusing on the life of a working class family, with the lead character Troy Maxson, and runs the gamut of loyalty, love and infidelity.

A beautiful script, filled with poetical rhythm in its dialogue was what first grabbed Deaner and made him want to produce the play. Added together with the importance of black voices and history, and Deaner said he was "all in".

Community theatre executive director Paul Deaner says at the heart of it this production is all about inspiration.

"We have always approached our productions by if someone is inspired to produce or direct a play, and inspiration came to me when I saw the stunning movie '*Fences*,'" Deaner said.

Connecting with the movie in so many ways, Deaner says the universal themes of disenfranchisement and responsibility come clearly through the script.

Deaner makes the point that sometimes a sense of apathy can set in at a societal level, an attitude that can result in institutional racism.

"We (LSCT and residents of the northshore) remain part of the general white power structure and must make extra efforts to include and "diversify" our approach & leadership to inclusion. We share in this

## Housing Rehab Loans Available for Finland

By Kitty Mayo

The Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) is working hard to get the word out about funds available to homeowners for housing rehabilitation in Finland.

Beth Davies, AEOA lending and construction program lead, says that so far the agency has had very little response and is struggling to get applicants for the program.

For the grant program that provides "forgivable loans" to homeowners for needed repairs to their homes, income eligibility requirements seem to be the main obstacle. Davies explains that up to \$24,750 dollars is the maximum loan amount for one grant program that can be coupled with another program on one project, for another \$27,000 loan max.

For the loan that provides funds through the Small Cities Development program, only 78 percent of a given project can be out of that source, and for a family of one the income cap is \$36,000. In order to cover the remaining costs of a project, a homeowner could use forgivable loan funds from a Minnesota Housing loan, however, income eligibility there is capped at \$19,000. Otherwise, a homeowner would have to find another loan source or come up with the remaining 22 percent of costs on their own.

Despite sending out mailings to all homesteaded properties in the area with little response, Davies says that AEOA is still hoping to find seven more homeowners that want to take advantage of the forgivable loans to make improvements to their property. Currently only five Finland area homes are participating.

Qualified projects go through a housing inspection, lead assessment (for homes built prior

to 1978), and radon testing. After then going through a bid process, Davies says the whole process can take several months before completion. All work in this particular grant cycle must be completed by the end of September 2019.

Homes in the program must first use loan money to bring safety issues up to code if necessary, including mitigating exposed lead paint, and the addition of fire and carbon monoxide detectors.

In order to participate, houses must be owned and occupied by the homeowner, and property taxes and mortgage payments must be current. While the loans in this program are deferred, zero-interest loans with no payments for the duration (10 to 15 years), they do create a mortgage lien on the property until the debt is forgiven.

Many types of work qualify for these deferred loans, including roofs, plumbing, electrical service upgrades or new service, and furnaces. Adding air conditioning would not qualify, and no outbuildings or detached garages would fall under a qualifying project.

Davies says that finding participants to accept the forgivable loans in order to complete necessary repairs and updates has been an ongoing problem. Currently AEOA is having the same issue in the Lutsen area, and in a now completed project, struggled to find enough participants in the Knife River area.

If you are interested in finding out about your eligibility you can contact Connie Olson of AEOA at: (218)735-6827, or [connie.olson@aeoa.org](mailto:connie.olson@aeoa.org). Applications are available online at: <http://www.aeoa.org/housing/single-family-rehabilitation>.

pervasive societal paradigm of exclusion of color - a structural dynamic of racism," said Deaner, "Performances of *Fences* can help jog us into a renewed awareness/sense of inclusion, diversity and possibility."

Opening in Duluth is also a first for LSCT, with its 16 year history of homebase in Silver Bay and branching out to Two Harbors.

After receiving approval from

LSCT's board of directors, Deaner set out on the ambitious task to recruit actors in the Duluth area. "As a practical matter I couldn't pursue casting on the shore because demographics here include very few people of color," said Deaner. While Deaner admits that reaching out to the Duluth area community is a break from tradition, he sees it as a positive by expanding the definition of community where the Big Lake touches all the bases.

Continued on Page 7