

# Issue is access to information

*International Falls Daily Journal*

Public notices are meant to be noticed.

Governments are required to pay for this information to be printed in newspapers in order to inform people about an action, or the consideration of an action, that could impact a constituency. Notices labeled "Public" or "Legal" that are published in this paper are descriptions of public meetings, foreclosure sales, tax delinquencies and other matters.

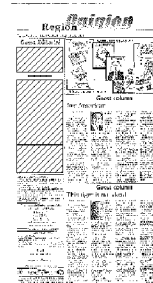
But now there's a move to end the requirement that this information be printed in newspapers. Some people believe, that for the sake of cutting costs, these notices should be posted on government Web sites.

We don't think it's a good idea for several reasons. Clearly, we have a financial stake in this issue, but we believe that the greater issue is about access to government information.

Not all people in this community have regular and dependable access to a computer and the Internet. And we're not sure handing over sole responsibility and control for disseminating this information should be left to government.

The government — county, city, state and federal — makes decisions on zoning, taxes, new businesses and a variety of other issues that impact your life and the way you live it. Governments have relied on newspapers to publish public notices since this nation began. It's a system that's worked well and doesn't need to be changed.

Public notices are a community's window into government. Without this requirement, how would you know



**about government actions? Would you seek these notices out by going online and would you rely on government-run Web sites to provide this information? Without public notices, would we as a newspaper, know about these issues in order to write stories and cover those issues that are important to the people who live here? There are simply too many questions about how people would access information about government — without public notices.**

**Newspapers serve an important role in providing information about government. And Minnesotans deserve easy access via the newspaper to that information.**