

Minnesota Snapshot

Hospitality veterans buy rustic lodge in Orr

Editor's note: Minnesota Snapshot reports interesting sales and development projects happening throughout Minnesota. The transactions are based on the certificates of real estate value filed with the state Department of Revenue, copies of which are available with the story at finance-commerce.com. Other items may come from government agendas and news releases.

BY ANNE BRETTIS

Special to Finance & Commerce

4442 Birch Forest Road, Orr

Utah native Adam Van Tassel first came to northern Minnesota as a teen, working summers as a dock boy. He continued working summers with outfitters and resorts while he finished a degree in hotel and restaurant management and met his wife, Kasey.

They traveled and built careers in the industry, so when it came time to invest in a business of their own, they had a lot of options.

They chose the 11 rustic cabins at Birch Forest Lodge at 4442 Birch Forest Road in Orr, Minnesota. Van Tassel Enterprises LLC bought the family resort July 6 for \$1 million from Marc and Lisa Thiery, who now live in Cottage Grove. The Thierys had bought it for \$925,000 in 2007.

"It was very, very much a lifestyle choice," Adam Van Tassel said. "We wanted to do this for the rest of our lives."

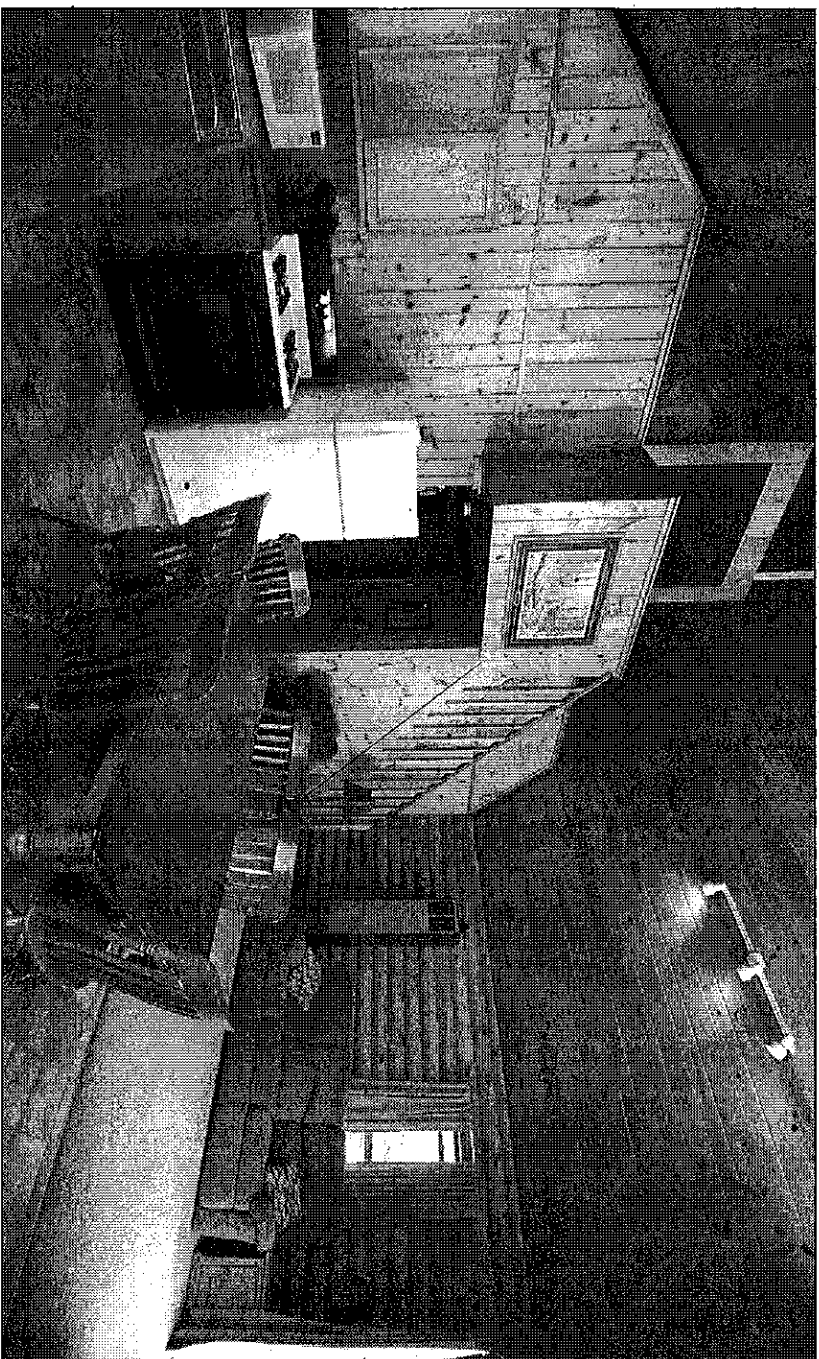
They also wanted to keep their kids, ages 8 and 5, from being overwhelmed by technology.

The resort, open only four months a year, is on Pelican Lake in Orr, a town so small it makes Ely feel like a big city. There's no water park or arcade. The list of amenities includes a sandy beach, volleyball net, playground, canoes, kayaks and sunsets.

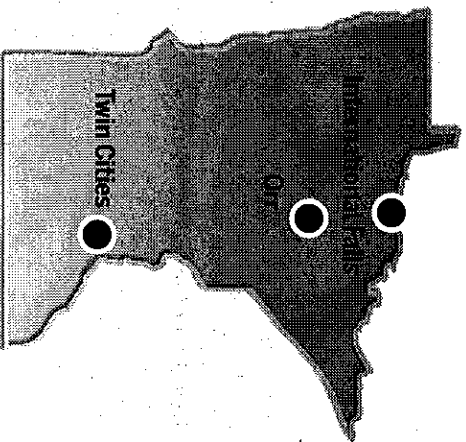
The kids can see their parents work and learn how to help, he said.

"There's a pleasure and a joy in teaching my kids, 'Here's how you fix this,'" he said.

The Van Tassells are living their dream, but know they can't make a living at it. That's why he still works as a consultant for LeisurLink, a Utah company that works with large hotels in revenue management and specifically to help maximize their presence online. "I help them get their rooms on Ex-



SUBMITTED IMAGE
The Birch Forest Lodge, open four months a year, is on Pelican Lake in Orr, Minnesota. The lodge offers 11 cabins.



peda," he said. He can work with clients remotely from the resort, but also travels. He declined to share revenues for the lodge or his consulting work, but put the situation in perspective.

"I can make more money when I'm not at the lodge," he said candidly.

For now, the plan is to use his own expertise to grow the resort's business, grow the consulting business by finding new clients in northern Minnesota and still find time to enjoy life on the lake. "You have to have balance," he said.

1641 20th Ave., International Falls

During the past decade, real estate veteran Gary Collett has built California Commercial Investment Group Inc. into a company specializing in the acquisition, ownership and management of affordable senior apartment properties, creating a portfolio of about 6,000 units in 60 properties throughout 30 states.

In his company's latest acquisition, West Falls Apartments LLC has paid Mesa, Arizona-based Roberts Properties \$3.55 million for the 80-unit West Falls Apartments. The nine-building complex, which includes townhomes, is at 1641 20th Ave. in International Falls. The Westlake Village, California, buyer closed June 25 on the deal, which included an \$388,000 down payment and a new mortgage.

The price works out to \$44,375 per unit, a bargain compared to prices in bigger markets. The average sales price per unit for apartments in the Twin Cities metro area is \$99,282, according to the Finance & Commerce Apartment Sales Tracker at finance-commerce.com. The tracker has recorded the sale of 23,565 apartment units since Aug. 31, 2011.

pauses, will let the Fed assess the effects of slightly higher borrowing costs.

The Fed has kept its key short-term rate at a record low near zero since 2008. Once it raises it, other rates — for mortgages, auto loans and corporate borrowing — could rise, too.

During Yellen's testimony to Congress this month, some Democrats urged her to consider delaying a rate hike given that inflation remains below the Fed's 2 percent target. The Fed has typically raised rates when it perceives a need to prevent inflation from getting out of control.

"In my mind, the Fed is very comfortable with a slow, deliberate pace," said Brian Bethune, an economics professor at Tufts University in Boston. "The Fed doesn't want to upset the apple cart with any type of market shock that could cause further problems in the global economy whether that is in China or in Europe."

Fed holds steady on rates, seeks further growth

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve appears on track to raise interest rates later this year but signaled Wednesday that it wants to see further economic gains and higher inflation before doing so.

A statement from the Fed after its latest policy meeting provided no timetable. Many analysts foresee the first hike in September, though Fed Chair Janet Yellen has stressed that any increase will be driven by the latest economic data.

The statement noted that the job market, housing and consumer spending have all improved. The Fed still expects inflation to rise gradually toward its 2 percent target.

Wednesday's statement made only slight changes in the wording of the previous statement in June. But the few modifications suggested a healthier economy.

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Kathleen Geherin
222 South Ninth St. Ste 3060
Minneapolis, MN, 55402
geherink@ctt.com
612-799-8200
www.mn.ctic.com