

LOCALNEWS

GEARING UP FOR SUMMER



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC MATHEWS

Smokey Bear got dressed in his summer gear Friday morning as Loni Bright, of Top That! By Loni, placed a fishing vest on the 26-foot tall statute that has an International Falls downtown park named after him. City Electrician Mike Holden and Bright work closely, as he operates the lift truck to get Bright to the right places to rig Smokey, constructed in 1954, with the vest. She uses a hook pole to help place the garment onto Smokey. Bright has been outfitting Smokey with season attire since 2004 when she crafted the vest for the International Falls Bass Championship. Bright notes that this year, resident Bill Hardwig fixed Smokey’s hat.

Funding for all-day kindergarten received

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Littlefork-Big Falls School will receive state funding for everyday kindergarten to take effect with the 2013-2014 school year. L-BF Superintendent Fred Seybert said he reported to the L-BF School Board June 26 that although the school has already offered everyday kindergarten, the new legislation will

bring added funding to the district. “Because we already offered everyday kindergarten, we don’t have to adjust our staffing,” Seybert reported to The Journal last week. “It is good news for the district.” The funding is part of a \$15.7 billion education package passed by the Minnesota Legislature in May. Also during the board

meeting, Seybert reported that a silent auction of equipment no longer used by the district generated \$6,455. The board also last week, awarded bids for the upcoming school year. The district will purchase bread from J&D Foods; milk from Land O Lakes; diesel fuel from Co-Op Services, Inc.; and propane from Northern Stare Cooperative.

Owners of fitness studio seek to encourage a healthier community

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Ashley Wade and Erin Shikowsky became friends in December. Seven months later, they’re business partners. The two women recently opened Evolve U Fitness & Wellness, a group exercise and personal training studio located at 1201 Third Street next to Meyer’s Glass. “It has been a whirlwind,” Wade said of the four weeks the fitness studio has been open. Wade moved to International Falls from California in October and became a club manager, group exercise instructor and personal trainer at Stride Fitness & Health.

With experience in health clubs that had more than 4,000 members, Wade began offering a variety of classes to the community. “I began taking her classes at Stride,” Shikowsky said of how she and Wade met. A friendship quickly developed and Wade knew her dream of opening her own fitness studio could be possible with Shikowsky’s help. Shikowsky said she’s been a stay-at-home mom for seven years and becoming a personal trainer and exercise instructor, she said, was something she wanted to do. “I needed someone I could trust,” Wade said of approaching Shikowsky with the business opportunity. “It’s crazy how everything worked out.” New flooring and six coats of paint later, Evolve U Fitness & Wellness is flourishing. A weight loss challenge is already underway, participation in a variety of morning, lunchtime and evening



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Ashley Wade, left, and Erin Shikowsky pose in their new fitness studio, Evolve U Fitness & Wellness, located at 1201 Third Street. The women are aiming to encourage a healthier community.

classes is filling up and the women have even watched the sun rise by offering yoga on the beach. “This whole process has moved very, very fast,” Shikowsky said. “Sometimes we just stop and stare at each other and say, ‘Look where we are right now.’” The goal of Evolve U Fitness & Wellness, its owners say, is to encourage a healthier lifestyle for everyone of any shape and size. The women agreed that if people only take one class, but apply skills to their own home exercise routine, then they’re making a difference. “It isn’t about us,” Wade said. “It’s about the community and what they want and making them healthier.” Currently, the studio is offering hip hop, yoga, pilates, strength training, an abs class and more. “There is something for everyone,” Wade said. “I think anyone could find something on our schedule that appeals to them.” Shikowsky agreed.

She said classes cater to everyone and the women welcome all fitness levels to the studio. “Group exercise is fun and it’s a social thing,” she said. “Mostly, it is something different. Our classes are always changing.” Other programs, including personal trainer certification and a senior program, are expected to be offered in August, the women said. “We want this to be a safe haven for people,” Wade said. “I want everyone who takes our classes to feel comfortable and feel good about themselves.” Evolve U Fitness & Wellness offers a one-year membership for \$35 per month; six months costs \$42 per month; and 1-3 months is \$48 per month. Membership includes unlimited classes. Individual classes can be attended without a membership for \$7 per class. The studio can be reached at 373-3303 or found online at www.facebook.com/evolveu-fitness.

Rainy Lake Medical Center

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