

**Bring in
spring**
Annual powwow
is Saturday

A3



**Stretch
and laugh**
Class teaches
laughter's benefits

A10



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INTERNATIONAL FALLS

Lawsuit claims councilors violated charter

Civil suit surrounds EDA director position

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

A lawsuit filed by an International Falls resident claims violations of the city's charter and seeks dismissal of some city officials from their positions, criminal action and a monetary

judgment.

The civil lawsuit by Dick Koeneman claims the city and individuals who served on the city council violated the city charter when it created and filled the Economic Development Authority director position in 2012.

The civil suit dated April 6 by Koeneman against Shawn Mason, Tim "Chopper" McBride, Gail Rognerud, Paul Eklund, Cynthia Jaksa, the city's EDA and the city requires a reply within 20 days to attorney Donald C. Erickson with the law firm of Fryberger, Buchan-

an, Smith and Frederick, Duluth.

City Attorney Steve Shermoen said the lawsuit has been forwarded to the city's insurance provider, League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust, which insures the city.

"This suit is baseless," Shermoen said Monday, declining further comment.

International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson also declined comment, saying the city council had not yet discussed it, he hadn't had an opportunity to discuss it with Shermoen, and he hadn't yet read

the summons in its entirety.

Koeneman also had little comment Tuesday.

"It is what it is," he said. "People have to read it."

Koeneman later clarified the lawsuit is "not trying to do away with the EDA." Instead, he said the suit involves action by the city council contrary to the charter.

The lawsuit had not been filed as of Tuesday at the Koochiching County Court Administrator's Office in International Falls, court staff said.

The lawsuit claims several pro-

visions of the city's charter were violated when Mason, as mayor, participated in the creation of the position for which she was hired.

Because of those alleged violations, the suit calls for the city to: declare Mason's contract as void; stop paying Mason as EDA director; disqualify Mason, McBride, Rognerud, Eklund and Jaksa from holding any office in the city now or in the future, and to repay the city money paid to Mason jointly and severally.

Lawsuit to A7 >



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

Gracie Bahr, center, who is currently undergoing treatment for Hodgkins Lymphoma, walks with members of her family and other cancer survivors during Relay for Life Saturday at Falls High School.

Relay for Life runs past fundraising goal

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

What appeared to be lunchbags lined the halls of Falls High School Saturday, but the bags weren't for hungry students, and school wasn't in session.

The bags were decorated

with the names of loved ones who lost a battle with cancer, or are currently fighting cancer. They're called luminaries, and just one part of the Relay for Life, an annual event that raises money for the American Cancer Society.

During Saturday's opening ceremony, the event's local chairperson Teresa Rom said

she was "fighting back tears to see you all here."

While the attendees walking throughout the school would no doubt be tired after the 12-hour long event, Rom said they should remember those going through cancer treatment when they leave.

Relay to A7 >

KOOCHICHING COUNTY BOARD



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

From left, Koochiching County Commissioner Rob Ecklund, Shane Feltus, and county Environmental Services Director Dale Olson discuss approving a conditional use permit during a Koochiching County Board meeting Tuesday.

Law interpretation creates Rainy Lake blockade

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Koochiching County Board Tuesday discussed an international issue that's keeping U.S. workers from plying their trade across Rainy Lake.

County Commissioner Rob

Ecklund said he's been contacted by various U.S.-based fishing guides, who are being turned away when they go to Canada for temporary work permits.

The guides have had no problem getting their annual guide

Blockade to A7 >

DISTRICT COURT

Milette pleads guilty to misdemeanor theft

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

A former Koochiching County jailer charged with felony theft and accused of taking money from a jail cash fund pleaded guilty to a lesser charge.

Tim W. Milette, 38, pleaded guilty April 6 to misdemeanor theft — indifferent to owner rights. Two counts of felony theft of public funds were dismissed.

Court documents said an investigation by the Itasca County Sheriff's Office allege a cash draw maintained by the county

jail administrator was more than \$270 short of its \$300 required balance when audited Jan. 13 by county staff.

Milette was sentenced April 6 on the misdemeanor theft charge to 90 days jail and \$1,000 fine.

Koochiching County Attorney Jeff Naglosky said the sentence is the standard on most misdemeanors, calling for the most jail time and largest fine that can be imposed for a misdemeanor charge.

Milette to A7 >



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Members of Boy Scout Troop 150 prepare "Larry the Cable Guy's" ginger ale beer bread during the International Falls Outdoor Expo Saturday. From the left are troop leader Mike Hedtke, and scouts Gavin and Hunter Wilson.

Expo comes alive

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Evangelical Covenant Church was alive with motion and sound Saturday during the International Falls Outdoor Expo.

With Bill Hesselgrave on

Expo to A7 >

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