

LOCALNEWS

Those at last week's Ojibwe language and culture camp learned about lacrosse.



Ojibwe immersion camp held at RRCC

BY ERIC MATHEWS
Staff Intern

A camp conducted at Rainy River Community College June 28 and 29 was intended to help to bring about a better understanding of Ojibwe language and culture, according to its organizer.

"It's a great way for people to learn more about the Ojibwe language and culture," said Stephen Briggs, the Indigenous Studies instructor at RRCC.

The camp included activities for all ages, including timed canoe races, lacrosse, Ojibwe bingo, a powwow dance exhibition, kid's games, and a number of arts and crafts, such as bead working, making fry bread, and building hand drums and birch bark bas-

kets, and creating dream catchers. Children were encouraged to read Ojibwe books and use crayons to color pictures.

A flint maker from Hibbing brought his skills to instruct campers about his craft and was a highlight of the event, said Briggs.

"I just can't stress enough that we have activities for all ages, everyone is welcome, and there are no costs," said Briggs of the camp last week.

The camp drew instructors from Canada, White Earth reservation, Cloquet, Fond du Lac, Hibbing, and International Falls areas. Funding for the camp came from a grant that Rainy River Community College received last year, to allow people to attend free of charge.

The language and culture camp offered activities for all ages.



STAFF PHOTOS BY ERIC MATHEWS

Birchdale fire officials happy with changes

BY ERIC MATHEWS
Staff Intern

Changes at the fire hall in Birchdale will bring improvements to the Birchdale Fire Department and the way it is able to respond to fires, says a department official.

The improvements will make a huge difference in what the department will be able to do, said Fire Chief Robyn Hasbargen. One of the larger changes is in the expansion of the interior of the fire hall, he said.

The increased storage area allows the fire department to park its trucks inside of the fire hall, instead of in a garage next to it, he said. The fire department has also purchased another tanker, capable of storing 3,000 gallons of water.

The hall also now has room for volunteer firefighters to conduct weekly training classes provided by the state inside the building, he said.

Land was donated by a local resident for the construction of a well and a septic system for the fire hall. This will guarantee the firefighters access to water in winter, instead of forcing them to drill a hole in the ice of the nearby lake. The well is connected to a 5,000 gallon, above-ground cistern inside the building. The cistern is expected to speed up turnaround time — the time that it takes for a tanker to fill up and head back to the scene, said Hasbargen.

"(Former Koochiching County Commissioner) Mike Hanson really helped with raising funds," said Hasbargen. "I just want to thank all of the county commissioners for their support and Con-Con for funding."

Funding for the construction of the expanded fire hall came from resource sales within the Consolidated Conservation lands, the Con-Con Advisory Committee and the Koochiching County Board.

"We're very pleased," said Hanson. "Any opportunity you have to upgrade your infrastructure, you have to be pleased with that."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A large crowd of visitors came to celebrate an open house at the improved Birchdale Fire Hall Thursday.



Joe Fults from Indus congratulates Chief Robyn Hasbargen on the improvements at the Birchdale Fire Hall.

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