

Ring-a-ding-ding

Bell ringers needed for holidays

A3



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I FALLS CITY COUNCIL

City seeks building rehab grant

Grant and other money could pump \$1.1 into project

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

International Falls rental units and commercial buildings could get a boost should the city gain a state rehabilitation grant.

The Falls City Council Wednesday adopted a resolution supporting submission of a preliminary application for a Small Cities Development Program grant of \$628,677.

Combined with other funds, the total project cost is estimated at \$1.1 million.

The outcome of the application is expected to be known around Jan. 1, city officials said.

The council had earlier approved seeking the grant, but it required additional action because city Administrator Ken Anderson found out Monday the city would be required to commit about \$66,877 of city funds to be eligible for the grant.

The council approved a new resolution with the addition of the city money, which Anderson noted is a result of the payback of loans from two previous Small Cities Development Program grants awarded to the city for rehabilitation of housing stock.

Anderson said the money is now in a revolving loan fund and may only be used for eligible activities for low and moderate income residences.

"It's not out of the general fund," Councilor Gail Rognerud said. "It's money that has to be used for (low and moderate income property owners)."

The council met in special session Wednesday to meet an application deadline the following day.

The resolution authorizes KOOTASCA Community Action Inc. to serve as administrator and submit the application for the grant to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, which oversees the SCDP.

The grant would be designated to assist with deferred loans to the owners of 13 single family rental units with \$465,833; four duplex rental units with \$90,210, and four commercial properties with \$466,667 to rehabilitate their buildings.

The owners of the buildings would be required to contribute 40 percent to their individual projects. Should they meet certain criteria, the loans would be forgiven within a period of time.

City councilors said the grant would add value to the city.

Councilor Paul Eklund pointed to a part of the application which describes the need for the grant

Council to A7 ►



STAFF PHOTOS BY SPENSER BICKETT

Couchiching First Nation Chief Sarah Mainville, holding a bullhorn, addresses a crowd Wednesday following a march through downtown Fort Frances. At left is Fort Frances Mayor Roy Avis.

MARCH DRAWS COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

FORT FRANCES - Lunchtime traffic in downtown Fort Frances slowed to a halt Wednesday as residents and officials marched down Scott Street to show support for finding a long-term solution for the local paper mill.

The town is currently working with the mill's current owner, Resolute Forest Products, potential owner Expera Specialty Solutions, and the provincial government to facilitate a sale of the kraft paper mill.

Wednesday's march drew around 200 people and ended near the mill, where Mayor Roy Avis, Couchiching First Nation Chief Sarah Mainville and Kenora-Rainy River Member of Provincial Parliament Sarah Campbell addressed the crowd. The event was arranged by a local young professionals network called ENGAGE.

When Avis addressed the crowd, he said he had spoken that morning with Expera representatives, who informed him the company was purchasing a mill in Maine. Despite the groans of the crowd following this announcement, Avis said Expera representatives assured him the company was still interested in acquiring the Fort Frances



A crowd of demonstrators marching down Scott Street Wednesday chants "Our forest, our future."

mill if a deal could be reached.

Mainville's remarks emphasized the importance of making sure area youth stay in the area, which will help it grow long-term. Reopening the mill would provide jobs for this community, she said, which would keep youth from leaving the area to find work.

Campbell told the crowd she would continue to bring this issue daily to the provincial

March to A7 ►



Around 200 marchers walk down Scott Street Wednesday as part of a demonstration to find a solution for the local paper mill.

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