

Search is on for Miss Teen Koochiching County

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Pageants Unlimited is seeking a candidates to serve as Miss Teen Koochiching County. Applications are being accepted for the title of 2015 Miss Teen Koochiching County. Applicants should be single, never been married, and between the ages of

13 and 18 years of age, states a news release from Allison L. Stavrakis, state director, Minnesota International Pageants. Send a biography form to Miss Teen Minnesota, International Pageant, P.O. Box 240537 Apple Valley, MN. Miss Teen Koochiching County will represent her county at the Miss Teen Minnesota pageant, which

will be held at the Ritsche Auditorium, March 14 in St. Cloud. The teen selected as Miss Teen Koochiching County will become an ambassador from the Koochiching County area and will receive an official title and sash, states Stavrakis. Teens will compete in personal interview, fitness wear, fun fashion

wear and evening gown. There is no talent or swimsuit competition. The teen chosen as Miss Teen Minnesota will receive a prize package and scholarship totaling \$10,000 and the chance to represent Minnesota at the 2015 Miss Teen International pageant in Jacksonville, Fla. The American Heart As-

sociation's Go Red for Women campaign is the official charity of the Miss Teen Minnesota Pageant. The current reigning 2014 Miss Teen Minnesota is Rachel Flynn of Savage. As Miss Teen Minnesota, Flynn speaks on ending America's hunger crisis through Feeding America. Feeding America's mis-

sion is to feed the hungry through a national network of food banks. Flynn said as an 8-year volunteer and trained Speaker's Bureau member, she helps distribute food and educate others on how to solve America's food crisis by one person, one meal, one day at a time. For more information go to www.2Harvest.org.

No more errands; stay home for the holidays

BY RHONDA WHITENACK AND JIM CZECHOWICZ
SSA Public Affairs

Let's face it, the last thing you're going to want to do during this holiday season is another errand. You've hung the lights, plugged them in, and were frustrated when you realized you needed to replace one little bulb to make the entire string work. That's a trip to the store. You opened the cranberry sauce to discover it was mislabeled and you're holding a delicious can of pink salmon. That's another trip. And you

thought this holiday season would be easy. When it comes to taking care of Social Security business, it is easy. You'll find that www.socialsecurity.gov makes it easy to stay home and get that one last thing done. You can check off much of your Social Security business quickly and securely from your home using your computer or tablet (which you might have unwrapped early). At the Social Security website you can —
· Create a my Social Security account, which enables you to:

- obtain an instant, personalized estimate of your future Social Security benefits;
- verify the accuracy of your earnings record — your future benefit amounts are based on your earnings record, so it is important to make sure your earnings are recorded properly;
- change your address and phone number, if you receive monthly Social Security benefits;
- sign up for or change direct deposit of your Social Security benefits; and
- obtain estimates of the Social Security and Medi-

- care taxes you've paid;
 - Apply for retirement, disability, spouses, and Medicare benefits;
 - Check the status of your benefit application;
 - Use our benefit planners to help you better understand your Social Security options as you plan for your financial future;
 - Request a replacement Medicare card; and
 - Apply for Extra Help with your Medicare prescription drug plan costs.
- Looking for more Social Security information? The website has everything you need to know about the

Social Security program. Information is available on subjects ranging from how to get a Social Security number for a newborn to how to apply for veterans' benefits. Keep in mind that during the holiday season, your wait time may be longer if you call or visit a local Social Security office. If you need to reach us by phone, you can call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213. We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Generally, you'll have a shorter wait time if you

call during the week after Tuesday. We can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day, and you can use our automated response system to report a new address or request a replacement Medicare card. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778. Skip your trip to the Social Security office so you have time to pick up that can of cranberry sauce. Stay warm and cozy, and get convenient service by going to www.socialsecurity.gov.

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Average retail gas prices continue to fall

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Average retail gasoline prices in Minnesota have fallen 9.8 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.95 per gallon Sunday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 2,856 gas outlets in Minnesota. This compares with the national average that has fallen 2.6 cents per gallon in the last week to \$2.94 per gallon, according to gasoline price website GasBuddy.com. Gas prices in International Falls Tuesday ranged

from \$2.79 per gallon to \$2.99 per gallon, according to the website. Including the change in gas prices in Minnesota during the past week, prices Sunday were 14.4 cents per gallon lower than the same day one year ago and are 11.6 cents per gallon lower than a month ago, according to GasBuddy. The national average has decreased 30.6 cents per gallon during the last month and stands 26.9 cents per gallon lower than this day one year ago. "Another week, another

big decline in the national average," said Patrick DeHaan, senior petroleum analyst with GasBuddy. "But we're nearing the point where the decreases are likely to slow unless oil prices continue to tumble from their current levels." DeHaan said the national average now stands at its lowest since Dec. 4, 2010, and likely won't drop more than another dime unless oil prices move notable lower. "Many areas across the country have now seen most of the expected gas price declines with the

exception being areas of the Rockies, which may decline several more weeks at least," DeHaan continued. "While the decreases are likely to wind down, motorists shouldn't expect any big rebounds before the holidays. Nationally, prices are likely to remain under \$3 per gallon for the holidays." GasBuddy operates MinnesotaGasPrices.com and over 250 similar websites that track gasoline prices at over 140,000 gasoline stations in the United States and Canada.

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You are the leaders we have been waiting for

The Blandin Community Leadership Program (BCLP) is offering its nationally recognized leadership training in the International Falls area.

Learn more about how BCLP helps develop your knowledge and skills to address your community's challenges and opportunities, and work together to create positive force for change.

BCLP Informational Session

Date: Monday, November 17, 2014
Time: 5:00pm – 6:00pm (Appetizers and beverages provided)
Place: Room 101/102, Backus Community Center 900 5th Street, International Falls
RSVP: by Thursday, November 13, 2014 to skmorque@blandinfoundation.org, 218.327.8732 or 877.882.2257 toll-free

Applications for BCLP are due Monday, December 1, 2014. To apply, visit www.blandinfoundation.org

Blandin Foundation covers the cost of training, materials, tuition, room and board for participants.

For more information, contact BCLP alumni: Diana Adams at 218.283.8051 or David Cronin at 218.283.2000 or you may contact Becky Adams, BCLP Recruitment Coordinator at 877.882.2257 or rmadams@blandinfoundation.org

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BACKUS COMMUNITY CENTER
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit us – www.backusab.org – or FaceBook – Backus AB

November 17.....Blandin Community Leadership Program, Information meeting. 5:00 – 6:00 pm
November 20.....History Cafe/Schools, 5:30 – 7:30 pm
November 27.....Backus Building Closed for Thanksgiving
November 28.....Backus Office Closed
November 29.....Holiday Shopping & Craft Festival 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Lunch served – 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
December 5.....Logging Camp Christmas – 5:30 pm
Koochiching Aging Options Fundraiser
December 9.....New to Medicare – 10:00 am – Noon
Presented by Senior LinkAge Line
December 16.....St. Thomas School Christmas Program – 6:30 pm

Open Gym.....Saturdays 3:00 – 5:00 pm November 1, 8, 15 & 22
Community Cafe.....Tuesdays and Thursdays Free Meals 5:30 6:00 pm
Walk-ercise.....Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 10:00 – 11:00 am

HOLIDAY SHOPPING AND CRAFT FESTIVAL
Arts – Crafts – Edibles – Collectibles – Christmas Gifts
Saturday, November 29 – 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Lunch Served by Servants of Shelter – \$8.00 – 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

BOREALIS BARDS
CHILDREN'S DRAMA CLUB – MONDAYS – 4:30 – 6:00 PM
ADULT SCRIPT READINGS - THURSDAYS – 6:30 – 8:00 PM

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