

# LOCALNEWS



STAFF PHOTOS BY LAUREL BEAGER

**Volunteers Mike Bjorkquist and Betty Ericson work together on a computer in Room 209 of Backus Community Center as they wait for clients for the free AARP Tax Aide program.**

## NEW SITE

Volunteers with the AARP Tax Aide program have moved operations to Backus Community Center, where they will offer free tax preparation for taxpayers with low to moderate income. Volunteers will meet with clients at Backus Community Center, rooms 208 and 209. People should first call 283-5236 to schedule an appointment.



**In-take volunteers with the AARP Tax Aide program discuss their duties as tax season kicks into high gear. The program is now offered at Backus Community Center Rooms 208 and 209. From the left, Carol Belanger, Bea Brown, Joan Pearson, Bernice Brown and Alyce Mannausau.**

## Four-legged residents get new home

### Holding facility is complete

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

After three years, a few Borderland animals are getting a new home. Construction on the Borderland Humane Society holding facility is complete and volunteers gathered together Sunday to introduce the animals to their new pad. “We’re feeling really good about,” BHS President Nikki Turenne said of the new facility. “We’re really excited.”

The new facility is located just west of Menards in a partnership involving International Falls and the Borderland Humane Society, with financial assistance from Koochiching County and local contributors and donors.

The city-owned holding facility was previously located in a construction zone as workers rehabilitate the North Koochiching Area Sanitary District treatment plant. The location made it difficult for volunteers with Borderland Humane Society, which manages the facility, to safely access the building, and noise and vibrations from the construction placed stress on the animals held there, Turenne said.

“We were getting a little



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Lost or abandoned cats now have their own room, and BHS volunteer Kallie Kantos-Fritz reports once everything and everyone settles in and gets into a routine, the cats will be able to play on the Kuranda tower and hang out in the windows. “It will be great for them,” she said.**

worried that it was winter and we were still located in the old place,” Turenne said, noting the previous building was constructed as a garage in the 1960s.

The new building has features that will enable BHS volunteers to better take care of lost or abandoned dogs and cats. Turenne said dogs and cats will be in different rooms unlike at the old place, and cleaning amenities including a pet wash tub, a washer, dryer and grooming room will help improve the care the animals receive.

“It’ll take us awhile to get used to all the new features,” she said. “We will have to get into a routine of caring for the animals in a different way...But it is just 100 times better than what we had. This is definitely going to benefit the animals.”

An open house is not yet scheduled, but is expected in the near future, Turenne noted. “Once we get everything put away and get adjusted to our new place, we can’t wait to invite the community to come see our new spot,” she

said. “We hope to offer this in a month or so.”

For now, Turenne is hoping the new, updated facility will attract more people to offer their time and become a BHS volunteer.

“I think the old place scared some people off a bit,” she said. “Hopefully now, people will feel comfortable here and want to help out.”

Anyone interested in volunteering can call the BHS at 283-9276. Turenne instructed callers to leave a message and Kallie Kantos-Fritz will return their call.

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