

BUSINESS

9 TO 5
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Call the Journal at 285-7411

Good cause prompts thrift store opening

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

If you find your house swelling with extra holiday decorations or clothes this season, you can donate the excess to a new thrift store business in town.

The Frostbite Finds Thrift Store, a project of KOOTASCA Community Action, is open 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. The store is located in Shannon's Square, 309 Third St., and can be reached by calling 285-2965.

Isaac Meyer, community engagement manager with KOOTASCA, said the store has only been open for two weeks, but business has been "fantastic" so far.

"I've really been blown away; the first day we were open was incredible," Meyer said. "I thought it might be slower, but we've been beating our projections."

The store is stocked consistently with clothes, housewares, tools, and holiday items and decorations, Meyer said. All the invento-

ry is donated, which he said is a big draw for people interested in shopping there.

"It matters to people that it's an opportunity to donate their items," Meyer said. "They know it's going to a good cause, and all of the profits stay here in the Falls."

Donations can be dropped off at KOOTASCA 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Meyer said they're also always looking for volunteers to work at the thrift store, which is staffed by one store manager and volunteer associates.

"It's more fun than you might think," Meyer said.

The thrift store came about as part of an effort to bring a Boys & Girls Club to International Falls, Meyer said. KOOTASCA, in partner with Boys & Girls Club of America, conducted a feasibility study, and found a need for youth programs and things for kids to do. To bring a club to the area, he said, they'd need to raise funds.

"This thrift store idea came to the forefront during fundraising discussions,"



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shoppers at the Frostbite Finds Thrift Store can find a wide variety of clothes, housewares, tools, and more.

Meyer said. "There's similar secondhand clothes closets in the area, but none on this scale."

While early returns on the new business are booming, Meyer said it's hard to say how long it would be before a Boys & Girls Club would be able to open in the area. They're still in the initial stages of finding a site, he said, which is a big hurdle to overcome.

"It's definitely possible, but we need a nest egg to start the process," Meyer said. "Having the store gives us a consistent form of revenue for that."

New shop to serve area quilters

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

If you're looking to stay warm this winter, a new quilt could do the trick.

Thanks to a new quilt shop, you can find all the supplies you need to make your own quilt and put a personal touch on it.

The grand opening of the Up North Quilt Shop is Friday and Saturday. Owner Missy Ruelle said the store's hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

The store is located a mile west of Menards, at 4062 Highway 11. Ruelle said the idea to open the

store came as a result of the May closing of Quilter's Corner, where she used to work part-time.

"I had a bunch of people from there asking me when I was going to open a shop," Ruelle said. "I had always wanted to do it, and I found the building and decided to do it."

At this weekend's grand opening, Ruelle said there will be door prizes for people to win, as well as homemade goodies and hot beverages. The event will give quilters a chance to peruse the store's selection of quilting supplies, fabric, batting, patterns, and more.

Ruelle started quilting in 2001 after tak-

ing a class at the Quilter's Corner in Ray, and has been quilting ever since.

"My favorite part of quilting is probably picking out the fabrics for the quilt, and coordinating the colors," Ruelle said.

Hopefully as the business starts to take off and grow, Ruelle said she'll be able to offer classes like the one that taught her how to quilt 13 years ago.

"We'll have classes where people can come and learn how to sew," Ruelle said. "People can also take a more challenging course if they're a beginning quilter."

To reach the store, call 285-7704.

Craft store supplies uncommon items

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Growing up in a yarn and craft store owned by her mother has led one local woman to open a craft store of her own.

Lucy Wilkins grew up in Germany in a yarn and craft store her mother owned for 28 years, and has recently been testing the need for high-quality yarns, buttons, zippers, trimming and stitching cloth by displaying her wares at local craft shows.

The response was positive and customers wanted more, so Wilkins decided to open Lucy's Craft Boutique, at 326 Third Street. According to a release, she wanted to open a local craft store with the goal of supplying quality, uncommon yarns and accessories.

Wilkins said in the nine years she's lived in the area, she's noticed the lack



Lucy Wilkins

of high-quality yarns and craft accessories, and local crafters and knitters have to travel two to three hours to find what they need.

So far, Wilkins said the response from customers has been positive, and they've been really happy to see a store carrying the

items she does.

"A lot of people have said we need something like this around here," Wilkins said.

Her experience assisting her mother in her craft store growing up taught her the trade, Wilkins said, and helped her to decide which new yarns to sell. She said she's most looking forward to helping customers with their projects, and helping people gain the confidence to finish their projects and start something new.

"I want people to come back after all this time with computers and electronics to making something essential," Wilkins said. "Crafting is about being able to repair things, and making something for yourself."

The store is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. It's also open on the first Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



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