

LOCALNEWS

Federal EDA offers \$200,000 grant to assist community

Grant a little less than had been requested

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

A federal grant of \$200,000 to assist the community in recovering from the loss of 265 paper mill jobs has been offered by the United States Economic Development Administration. The Koochiching Development Authority Board, made up of county commissioners, adopted a resolution that commits \$138,000 toward a match and accepts the grant. The International Falls City Council is scheduled to meet in special session 9 a.m. Wednesday to consider a similar resolution. Should the city agree to provide its match, \$477,500 would be available to assist the community in efforts that have been outlined by three economic response teams. KDA Board Chairman Rob Ecklund told the board Tuesday the community had sought \$277,000 as a federal grant, that would be combined with the city and county match, but was awarded \$200,000 by the federal EDA. City and county officials had earlier agreed to each provide a local match of half the anticipated grant, at \$138,750 each, and believe the additional matching money will be useful to the three economic response teams developing plans to assist the community in moving forward with stabilizing the economy.

Ecklund said as a result of the smaller grant, some plans may be tweaked a bit.

“We figure the federal EDA is running out of money,” he said.

Falls Mayor Bob Anderson told The Journal the federal EDA is working under continuing resolutions from Congress and may not be sure how much money it has to grant.

Anderson and Ecklund are members of a lead economic response group, along with Falls Councilor Pete Kalar and Commissioner Wade Pavleck.

Anderson said a Dec. 13 deadline for acceptance of the grant brought the issue to the forefront this week.

The teams have momentum now, said Ecklund, which may lessen should the community reapply in January.

KDA Board member Brian McBride said while he supports the county match, he acknowledged it’s a big sum of money.

“At the end of the day, we’re supporting the response teams,” said Pavleck Tuesday. “They’ve got momentum now and can’t move forward without funding. They won’t be able to carry forward their ideas and the solutions they are working on. We either go or we don’t.”

Anderson agreed it’s important to accept the grant and put up the local money



Bob Anderson

pledged by the city and county earlier.

“This will support the teams, and they will still be able to do a number of good pieces of analysis of the community and good work with businesses,” said Anderson, adding he’s pleased the EDA offered the grant.

Anderson said the lead team considered the plans with the reduced amount of money.

“We had to change the scope of pieces,” he said, “and the most significant cut is going to be in the work force skills profile and tracking system.”

He said a study of work force skills and development of a data base is being conducted for the Arrowhead Region by other agencies.

“We will be able to use that base information and by spending about \$15,000 be able to take and focus on those folks that are leaving here, getting information on those people, and tracking those who are here.”

Anderson said the area of business assistance and support will be reduced because of the smaller grant. Jenny Herman of the Small Business Development Center will work with business in the community.

“We were making a guess of how many businesses would be affected (by the job loss) and thought about a dozen might need help. Now, we have money for 10 instead of 12,” said Anderson.

Anderson said a website will be created to explain the projects and plans that have been created and will be carried out by the three teams over the next 18 to 24 months.

‘One of those things’

Community spirit shines during Christmas Day dinner

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

A Borderland tradition that is entering its eighth year continues this year at the Roadhouse on Christmas Day.

The annual Christmas dinner that welcomes anyone and everyone in the community is set to run from 2-6 p.m. Dec. 25 at the newly-remodeled Highway 11 East nightclub managed by Nancy McHarg.

“(The dinner) is a good way to share the Christmas spirit of love and peace,” said Lee Grim, who has been involved with organizing the event since its beginning.

Grim said the dinner has gained a reputation of being a popular gathering place on the holiday.

“Last year, we served about 700 people,” he said. “We ran out of food.”

The organizer said when the first community Christmas dinner was served in 2006, a committee was established to nurture the success of the event. Now, however, Grim said people involved in the event no longer meet as a committee.

“We don’t have to,” he said. “Those people just continue to stay involved and make sure we are able to serve this meal to the community...It really says something about the com-

munity we live in.”

The commitment of those involved behind the scenes is only a fraction of what makes the event the go-to gathering spot on Christmas, Grim said.

“It isn’t just one person who makes this dinner what it is,” he said. “It’s everyone – the volunteers, the supporters, and those who come and eat. Everyone.”

Grim stressed circumstances do not designate who is eligible to attend the dinner. For those who celebrate Christmas only by attending the community meal, the event is as much about fellowship and togetherness as it is about the food.

Because the event is free, many donations are made and Grim said any money collected is donated to the Falls Hunger Coalition.

For people who would like to attend the meal, but have no means of transportation to the Roadhouse, Grim said rides will be provided to the dinner free of charge.

Those wishing to reserve a ride should call the Roadhouse at 286-5550 and provide a phone number, address and pick-up time.

“We don’t want people to miss out if they are unable to get themselves to the meal,” Grim said. “We’ll make sure they get there.”

And for the community members who are home bound, but would like a meal, Grim said take-out

dinners will once again be organized by the Elks Lodge 1599.

“The Elks provides meals to Meals on Wheels customers and people who are unable to travel to the dinner,” Grim said. “Elks volunteers will have home deliveries organized so efficiently that they can get 180 meals out the door in an hour. It’s really incredible.”

The Christmas Day dinner is based entirely on volunteers, and Grim said people are still needed to help make it a success. Volunteers are needed to serve food, bus tables, greet people at the door, wash dishes, etc. Anyone interested can call the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church at 283-8606 or email the church at holytrinityif@midconetwork.com.

In addition, Grim said anyone who would like to make desserts for the meal can do so and bring them to the Roadhouse on the afternoon of Dec. 24 or in the morning Dec. 25. Grim said pies, cookies, bars and anything to fulfill a sweet tooth is welcome and appreciated.

“Nobody should think this dinner isn’t for them,” Grim said. “Our community is so important. When the community works together and pulls together, good things happen. This (dinner) is one of those things.”



Lee Grim

**Bigfork Valley**
Hospital • Clinics • Communities
Where skill meets compassion.

Orthopaedic Clinic
at the
Littlefork Medical Center
912 Main Street
and
Bigfork Valley Specialty Clinic
Dr. Daniel Baker
No referral needed, call
1-866-776-0262
for an appointment.

**Big Things
Come In Small
Packages**

Create A Holiday To
Remember!

218-283-4701
324 3rd Street • Int'l Falls

**BORDERLAND
Jewelry**

AGENDA

Special City Council Meeting
Wednesday, December 11, 2013
9:00 a.m.
Council Chamber

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

NEW BUSINESS
1. Resolution # -13 accepting the United States Economic Administration grant offer of \$200,000 in federal funding in support of the County of Koochiching and the City of International Falls Economic Adjustment Strategy and Community Engagement studies and analysis

ADJOURNMENT

**COULD YOU TELL THEM
SANTA ISN'T COMING?**



**Help homeless and in-need area pets have
a Merry Christmas this year.**

**Donations can be dropped off beneath
the Christmas tree at THE JOURNAL,
Monday-Friday ~ 8-5**

**Items will be delivered to the Falls Food
Shelf for pets of families in need.**

**Donations accepted until Dec. 31st**
**Help BHS give pets in need a
MERRY CHRISTMAS.**

Borderland Humane Society 324-2313

Accepting gifts of pet food and supplies.
The animals in the photos are currently up for adoption.

*Without you, these Community
programs would not exist.*
*We appreciate your
continued donations.*

**American Cancer Society,
Relay For Life of Koochiching County**
1125 Whiting Rd. NW
Bemidji, MN 56601
Denae Alamo 218-368-2533
denae.alamo@cancer.org
www.cancer.org

Koochiching Aging Options
1000 5th Street
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
Douglas Skrief 218-283-7084
Douglas.Skrief@co.koochiching.mn.us

Backus Community Center
900 5th Street
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
Ward Merrill 218-285-7225
wardmerrill@backusab.org
www.backusab.org

**Rainy River Community
College Foundation**
1501 Highway 71
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
Barb Fisher 218-285-7722
barb.fisher@rainyriver.edu
www.rainyriver.edu

Falls Hunger Coalition, Inc
1000 5th Street
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
Brittany Rognerud
218-283-8020
fallshungercoalition@gmail.com

**U of MN Extension
Youth Development,
Koochiching 4-H**
715 4th Street
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
Stacy Hall 218-285-0962
smhall@umn.edu

Friends Against Abuse
407 4th Street
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
LeeAnn Meer 218-285-7220
leeann@friendsagainstabuse.com

**United Way of Northeastern MN,
Serving Koochiching County**
Julie Ehrman, 1303 16th Street
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
Elizabeth Johnson 218-254-3329
elizabeth@unitedwaynemn.org
www.unitedwaynemn.org

Good Samaritan Society
2201 Keenan Drive
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
Jennifer McKelvey 218-283-8313
jmcKelvey@good-sam.com
www.good-sam.com/falls

Thank You



Littlefork Muni's

Ugly Sweater Contest
December 14th!

First Place Prize - Jacuzzi Suite!

Tom & Jerry Specials
From 2 p.m. – Close
Free Appetizers!!

**Live Entertainment-
DJ Trykke**

To Rock The House!



Littlefork Muni
208 Main Street
Littlefork, MN 56649
218-278-6672

