



STAFF PHOTOS BY SPENSER BICKETT

Beat the heat at the beach

The humming sound coming from air conditioning units returned to Borderland this week as a late-summer heat wave swept through the area. According to the National Weather Service in Duluth, the combination of warm temperatures and a humid air mass resulted in heat index values of 95-105 degrees across the area.

Mother Nature appears to be undecided what kind of weather to throw at Minnesotans this summer with just three weeks between the July 30 frost advisory and Tuesday’s heat advisory. More than 50 people beat the heat by spending the day at City Beach in Ranier. The latest calendar day International Falls to record a 90-degree temperature is Sept. 27. The warmest temperature observed in the area during the month of August was 96 degrees on Aug. 9, 1920.



GRANT

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tion application process.

Meanwhile, Anderson apologized to the council when it considered action to approve the minutes of the Aug. 5 council meeting. Anderson said he made a mistake when he accepted a motion to contract with Springsted Incorporated, a public sector adviser, for up to \$14,000 to search for a new city administrator.

Anderson said the recommendation came during committee reports, and he said council consideration of actions that may expend funds should be listed on the agenda to provide notice to city residents.

Anderson said he would be more diligent in adhering to the established protocol and later in the meeting asked whether the council would reconsider the motion to contract with Springsted. Anderson and Councilor Pete Kalar voted against the Aug. 5 motion to do so.

But the council Monday did not reconsider the motion. Instead, Councilor Paul Eklund, who chairs the city’s Human Resource Committee, said he believes the newly launched effort to fill the position with Springsted taking the lead is working well.

Rognerud said getting qualified candidates in the pool of applicants for the job is most important to her and she said Springsted appears best able to accomplish that.

Kalar reiterated that the cost of Springsted’s involvement can be curtailed at less than \$14,000, as was noted in Springsted’s proposal.

The administrator position was left vacant in March with the resignation of Rod Otterness, who left to take a city manager job at Union Gap, Wash. Annual pay for the Falls administrator position ranges from \$61,000 to \$85,000. Deputy Administrator Betty Bergstrom has been serving as interim administrator with a related pay increase while she serves in the position.

Meanwhile, the council asked a representative of the Northland Art Society to meet with city Public Works Director Gary Skallman to discuss placement on city

property of a sculpture to be created by a local artist in memory of active society member Kathy Johnson. The design for the sculpture was created by the winners of a youth art contest.

The council also heard from Randy Thoms, B93 Radio in Fort Frances, that the community was chosen to serve as a host of the 2013 Kraft Celebration Tour. Selection for the host community was by email voting and Fort Frances won with 518,082 votes over second place Dryden’s 272,292 votes.

As a result of the win, Thoms said the Fort Frances Curling Club will be presented \$25,000 by Kraft to use toward paying for its geothermal heating project. In addition, Thoms thanked members of the Falls community for voting their support and said a special live edition of Sportscenter on TSN, which he said is the Canadian equivalent of ESPN, will take place at 5 p.m. Sunday at the Sorting Gap Marina. He invited local curling club users and supporters from the community to attend the event or watch from the shore of the Rainy River on the American side at the Pat Roche Memorial Access off Highway 11 East.

Special EDA meeting

Prior to the regular Falls council meeting, members met in special session as the EDA Commission and approved attendance by Shawn Mason, Falls economic and community development director, at the Community Venture Network meeting Friday in St. Paul.

The network was formed for rural communities and expanding companies in 1991 in an effort to bring high growth businesses together with economic development professionals seeking to attract business expansion and relocation to their community, said a brief provided to the EDA Commission Monday.

Mason told the commission that she has been invited to attend one or two meetings before the EDA Commission is asked to consider joining the network at a cost of \$3,500 per year.

“We have promised this community that we would leave no stone unturned as we look for jobs,” said Rognerud, as EDA president. “This is another avenue to try.”

MASON

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coach,” Holden said. “You need to have two coaches. I hate to say this, but all the other schools have two people doing this.”

Board member Gordy Dault supported considering the two-coach idea.

In related business, before accepting Mason’s resignation, the board heard from Mason’s sister, Nancy Imhof, during the open forum section of the meeting.

“I would like the board and the public to know this has weighed heavily on Bill these past couple of months,” she said. “Believe

me when I say, no one has suffered more than he has over this issue.”

Imhof acknowledged her brother never denied he made a mistake, adding she felt others involved in the situation had made mistakes, too.

“It could be considered a mistake that the school has no specific rules in place for coaches who must drive to events,” she said. “In my opinion, it is hard to claim a rule has been broken when in fact, there is no such rule...Presenting a policy to each driver would help clarify what is and what isn’t allowed.”

Imhof said there was also false information reported

about the incident and clarified Mason picked up “an elderly gentleman in an A&W (restaurant), not a hitchhiker.”

She added the passenger was only taken five or six miles to the junction of Highway 6 – not the White Oak Casino.

Imhof said she was recently made aware of a driving violation by another coach, which she did not name. She said the coach was texting while driving, but did not mention if the coach was transporting students at the time.

Holden, who serves on the Falls Recreation Commission of which Mason is the director, said the commis-

sion adopted a policy for rec drivers that listed a number of policies including not picking up hitchhikers and not texting or drinking while driving.

Nelson said a committee will meet to discuss coaching policies and develop a plan to handle future situations.

In other business Monday, the board agreed to offer a half-time teaching position to Tom Vollom for three hours per day out of the district’s Title VII Indian Education Grant, which is valued at about \$27,000.

The motion came after the board denied hiring Vollom as coordinator for the 2013-2014 Indian Education

program.

Vollom, who Monday said he needed time to consider the offer, was instructed by the board to let Nelson know his decision in a timely manner so the superintendent can finalize the decision.

Should Vollom accept the offer, he would teach Ojibwe II, Ojibwe III and American Indian Studies.

“It’ll give students who took Ojibwe I the opportunity to get two years of the same language in high school,” Nelson said.

Vollom has been employed as the Ojibwe language/culture teacher at FHS since 2003, and was placed on unrequested leave after the district was

notified June 7 it wouldn’t be a recipient of the Minnesota Department of Education’s Success for the Future Grant, a grant the school has received in the past.

The half-time teaching position, should Vollom accept it, would make him eligible for benefits according to the current teaching contract, Nelson said.

Vollom Monday told board members he is in the process of applying for a grant that would generate up to \$50,000 for Ojibwe language classes.

He said applying for the grant coincides with his effort to do “anything to keep this going for the kids.”

KOOCHICHING COUNTY

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At the Recycling/Transfer Facility

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