

'One Dog' returns
Local author brings back favorites

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The show must go on
Public TV station seeks funding

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Fill it out: form aims to track conflict, bullying

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Forms that allow students and parents to report bullying are expected to help officials in schools within the Falls district deal with a problem that's been in the national spotlight.

Beth Shermoen, West End Elementary sixth grade teacher and superintendent intern, last week presented and explained components of a bullying referral form

to the Falls School Board.

"(I) feel it would be very effective for our school," she told the board at the Oct. 21 meeting.

The form, Shermoen said, was assembled by a local anti-bullying committee and school administrators and will be available to all district students, parents and guardians to report a potential bullying situation.

Based on the information on the form, "The office will determine if (the incident) is bullying

or conflict," Shermoen said, adding language surrounding the issue of bullying, harassment and conflict is often difficult to determine.

"That is probably one of the biggest components we are struggling with as a district," Shermoen said of the definitions.

"Currently, Minnesota state law doesn't lay out what is harassment, what is conflict and what is bullying."

Shermoen said while she is

currently interning with Falls Superintendent Nurdy Nelson for her superintendent's license, it was during her internships with elementary principal Melissa Tate and secondary principal Tim Everson she was able to extensively research the district's bullying policy.

"I reviewed our district's policy in-depth and compared it to other district's policies across Minnesota," she said of her research. "I also compared it to other districts

in states across the U.S. with stricter bullying laws."

Shermoen told board members Minnesota has one of the weakest bullying laws in the nation. The law requires school districts to have a policy against bullying, but it doesn't specify what the policy should say or who should be protected. It doesn't require training for educators or learning activities for students on

Form to A7 ►



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Jack-o-lanterns line the sidewalk in front of the Birchdale Community Building Saturday for the Oktoberfest pumpkin carving contest in Birchdale. According to organizers, the contest becomes more and more competitive every year.



Christian Nelson concentrates as he prepares his pumpkin for the Oktoberfest pumpkin carving contest.

Successful fest

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

BIRCHDALE — A haunted hay ride, a pumpkin carving contest and more than enough chili to go around helped make this year's Oktoberfest in Birchdale one of the best yet, say organizers

Saturday's turnout topped previous years and for the first time, there weren't enough pumpkins for everyone to carve.

"We ran out of pumpkins," organizer Soren Olesen said Saturday. "That never happens."

Oktoberfest to A7 ►



Jesse Lutgen takes a different approach to pumpkin carving. Rather than emptying out the gourd's insides, Lutgen shaves a face out of the front of the pumpkin.

Shutdown impacts EDA refinancing

Sale of bonds are put on hold by EDA Commission

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Repercussions of a 16-day partial federal government shutdown that ended more than two weeks ago are being felt locally.

The International Falls Economic Development Commission took the advice of its bond counsel and took no action Monday to refinance bonds sold to pay for construction of the Voyageurs National Park headquarters.

Refinancing the bonds could save more than \$400,000. The bonds secured in 2010 for the construction of the Voyageurs National Park headquarters building have 18 years left to mature at a current interest rate of 6.17 percent.

A May motion to move forward with refinancing the bonds, should an analysis show savings, was contingent upon Northland Securities and Briggs and Morgan providing the EDA with letters stating they will share in the risk of this action and will not bill the EDA for expenses incurred if the market condition proves to be unfavorable for refinancing.

Just hours before the EDA Commission meeting was set to begin, Steven J. Mattson, executive vice president and co-founder of Northland Securities, said in an email that its bond salesmen contacted dozens of buyers of these types of bonds and have been told that "at the moment they will not look to purchase these refunding bonds due to the credit of the federal government. The country just went through a shutdown and the scars have not healed as of yet."

Mattson said the concern of the market caught Northland Securities by surprise. "We had indications of interest for most of the bonds as of last week, but when the calls were made to the banks this morning they said they had little interest in the International Falls bonds," he wrote Monday.

Mattson said the delay may be a blessing. He reminded the commission that the existing bonds are not callable until October 2014. "If we refunded in early 2014, we will not spend as

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