



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

The Gizzard Girls took home the first-place prize for their float in this year’s parade.

PARADE

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the third-place winner. The float by Rainy River Veterinary Hospital was credited with honorable mention.

“The weather wasn’t warm but it wasn’t the worst either. If you dressed for it, it was enjoyable outdoors,” Whitbeck said. “I walked the rectangular route as the parade commenced and I really enjoyed the energy on both Fourth Street and Third Street. Families were happy and joyful, and I’m just so grateful to every volunteer who contributed to that spirit,

and to the float builders who delivered.”

The rest of the weekend also played a part in kicking off Borderland’s holiday season, Whitbeck said. She gave a nod to the Voyage Forward initiative, which encourages shoppers to buy locally.

“Early retailer evaluations are mostly good,” she said. “Some early reports say sales could have been better, but the majority did well.”

Overall, the weekend was success, said Whitbeck.

“Every year the chamber really scrutinizes the outcomes, writes a debrief and aims to improve,” she said.

COUNCIL

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The motion will ask the county board to approve the agreement at its Dec. 23 meeting. Voting against the motion were Councilors Paul Eklund and Pete Kalar.

Kalar said it feels like the county is holding the city hostage and delaying progress. Eklund said he didn’t see the county board’s concern as an attempt to scuttle annexation, but another challenge to development. Both Eklund and Kalar said the city would be good neighbors in deciding what businesses would be sited in the district.

City Attorney Steve Shermoen suggested the addition of the sentence based on the county board’s table of action on the agreement and related discussion. He said some commissioners are also concerned prior to annexation an agreement is not in place between the city and Boise Paper, owned by Packaging Corporation of America, to protect Second Creek.

Shermoen said he was authorized by the city earlier to work with stakeholders on an agreement to protect Second Creek, but believes it is an issue separate from annexation.

Councilors Gail Rognrud and Cynthia Jaksa said the county board is in control of waste within Koochiching County, and Second Creek is not an issue for the council.

Anderson said the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency must permit all waste facilities and the city would not give up any control with the sentence. He also noted the city would be a party to the Second Creek protection because it is within the city limits.

Shermoen said the city could move forward with annexation in a different fashion should the joint resolution and agreement not be approved by the county board.

Jaksa suggested the council in January think about that other method of annexation should the county board not approve the agreement in December.

But Anderson said it’s not time to “thrown down the gauntlet.” Instead, he said the county board concern is just another hurdle that can be overcome.

Out of order

In other business, Anderson ruled out of order a motion by Rognrud to modify an operating agreement between the city’s cable commission, KCCTV, and the city.

Jaksa said the change

would call for KCCTV to be responsible for maintenance and repair of equipment to operate the city’s public education government channel with the city retaining ownership of the equipment. In addition, the change would call for insurance coverage, at no cost to the city, of the equipment through the city’s insurance policy.

Eklund said he’d like to see quotes on the cost of insurance, as well as a draft of the language and a recommendation from the attorney.

Anderson said he, too, would like to consider costs of insurance and said the change opens the city to liability because the city would take ownership of equipment not located in the Falls Municipal Building. KCCTV is located in Backus Community Center.

The change sets a new standard for the city and relationships with nonprofit organizations, Anderson added.

But Jaksa asked why the relationship is different than the one the city has with the airport’s fixed base operator, Einarson Services, while the city is co-owner of the airport with the county.

Meanwhile, the council approved for Perryn Hedlund a leave of absence from

the International Falls Police Department in lieu of its earlier approved resignation.

Hedlund was elected Koochiching County sheriff in November and begins his term in January.

The council noted under state law, a leave of absence can be granted for up to 10 years when an election causes someone to leave their position. Hedlund will have the right to return to his position if he desires within 10 years, he noted.

Anderson explained Hedlund would have 30 days after his term ends to seek his position with the department. Should he miss that deadline, the protection for his job ceases, Shermoen added.

Kalar, who said he believes Hedlund will make a fine sheriff, cautioned the council with approval of the leave, another officer hired to replace Hedlund may find themselves out of a job if Hedlund returns.

Kalar also pointed out Hedlund was unaware of the law when he offered his resignation.

Falls Police Chief Mike Musich said Hedlund was made aware of the provision in state law by the head of the Minnesota Sheriff’s Association, and he encouraged Hedlund to take the leave.

FLOOD

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strategies for Rainy and Namakan lakes set in 2000 by order of the International Joint Commission.

Tom Dougherty, Rainy Lake Property Owners Association Board, said the association asked the watershed board to extend the deadline for the survey because of the timing of the former deadline. He said “snowbirds” were returning to their winter residences away from Borderland and the Minnesota deer season, “when everybody was consumed with that,” was underway.

“This is giving people more of an opportunity to do the survey and complete it,” he said Tuesday. “The association feels it’s extremely important they do that so we can see a true reflection of damages.”

The IJC has funded a project on behalf of the watershed board to assess the risk of flood damages in the area including the shoreline of Rainy, Namakan, Kabetogama, Sand Point, Little Vermillion, and Crane lakes, collectively known as the the Rainy and Namakan chain of lakes.

Dougherty said the association has notified every registered property owner on the United States side of Rainy Lake with a letter encouraging them to participate in the survey.

The watershed board’s flood risk assessment has included a variety of components, including the completion of more than 130 face-to-face interviews with shoreline property owners in the fall of 2013 to discuss their perspectives on potential risk of flooding damages.

Given the flood conditions observed in June and July 2014 within the study area, additional input from shoreline property owners is required to ensure the flood risk assessment

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adequately captures the types of flooding damages experienced as well as the magnitude of those damages, said a watershed board news release.

The survey is available on the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board website to help shoreline property owners on the Rainy and Namakan chain of lakes report on their damages during the past summer.

The survey also allows for damage reports from property owners on the Rainy River and Lake of the Woods shoreline as the

information will support future water level management activities in those areas.

Participation in the process is voluntary; participants may choose to skip any questions on the survey.

“However, your participation is critical to the success of the project,” said the watershed board release. “Detailed information on the types and extent of observed flooding will help verify whether the flood risk assessment is properly representing property owner concerns.”

Dougherty said participation in the survey is critical. He said an example of the damage from the recent flooding can be seen on a land owner’s Gold Shores, or County Road 138, property, where an estimated \$20,000 of erosion and private road damage occurred.

“How many docks on Rainy Lake were damaged, and on Namakan and Kabetogama, where a lot of damage occurred?” said Dougherty. “We sure hope people fill out the survey.”

Information gathered through the survey will be held in strict confidence and will only be used for consolidated reporting, said the news release.

Property owners are reminded the survey is not an application for assistance. Instead, the survey is intended to gather information on private property damage to support future review of water management strategies in the system.

Dougherty also said the survey is not an attempt to seek compensation for damages.

“It’s just to have data which is for going forward with the rule curve review process,” he said.

Dougherty said the RLPOA’s technical and research committee, or team, is conducting research into the past history of water levels and weather patterns to form it’s own opinion of the 2000 water level orders.

The members of the team have backgrounds that include engineering, dam keeping and long-term lake residency with “knowledge that is priceless,” he said.


The association plans to participate in the 2015 International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Forum held at Rainy River Community College March 11-12, said Dougherty.

“It’s exciting,” he said of the forum. “We will have a voice there.”

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is upon us and we at Renaissance Hearing Centers wish you a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.


Our office schedule will be lighter during the holiday season. Any end of year purchases of hearing aids need to be ordered on or before December 4th for it to be billed during the 2014 year.

This is the season of Hope. We hope that the New Year will bring about good health, an improved economy, better jobs and a more peaceful world.

Our holiday schedule is as follows:

Thursdays, November 20
Thursdays, December 4, 11 Wed. Dec. 17
Thursdays, January 8, 15, 22 & 29

We wish all our customers and friends a very Merry Holiday Season.



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Many thanks to the sponsors of FREE Movies with Santa: Cine 5 and the Falls Rotary Club.

Thank you, Wade Whitbeck, for the stoves, fire-building & tending the fires; Bobby Paul for firewood.

SPECIAL THANKS TO Jodi & Gary Mann, Austin Schaaf, Preston Hoy, Ara Anderson, Tyson Whitbeck, Emily Whitbeck, Hailee Schaaf, Kyle Toratti, Judy Kielczewski (Frost Queen), Jenny Herman, KGHS/KSDM Radio, 93.1 The Border, The Journal & KCC-TV.

A HUGE THANK YOU to ALL parade participants, pet owners, Int’l Falls Law Enforcement & Fire Department, Border Patrol, Dennis Jonson & City Crews, City of Int’l Falls, VFW Color Guard, Santa Claus, John Streiff, Stacy Bannert and THE RETAILERS WHO STAYED OPEN LATE AND AWARDED \$25 GIFT CERTIFICATES!

Congratulations to the Parade Winners:
\$400 First Place: Gizzard Girls
“Holiday Helicopter”
\$250 Second Place: Duty Free America
“Whimsical Wonderland”
\$125 Third Place: St. Thomas Church & School
“The Night Circus”
Honorable Mention: Rainy River Veterinary Hospital
Most Memorable: Marriage Proposal (David Burchell/Jenn McKelvey)

Grand Prize \$300 Chamber Dollars: Carol Eldien
Giant Coca-Cola Bear: Jim Reid

Cutest Holiday Pet Contest Winners:
“Pac Man” by Sophie Fredrickson
“Pippy” by Grace & Aubrie Nguyen

Thank you to the owners who lovingly showed their pets!!

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