

BUSINESS

9 TO 5

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who are starting a business or changing an old one.  
Call the Journal at 285-7411

Local duo develops handmade fishing gear

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

The desire for better quality ice fishing gear has led a local father-son team to develop their own products, which they hope will catch on with other anglers.

Jeff and Chris Raboin started Frigid Fishing Gear in March, and have began selling two products they developed themselves, the Ice Pro Rod Holder and the Minnow Pro Bait Bucket.

Though they just started the company, Jeff said they've been developing the products for about two years. The idea for the rod holder came about two years ago, and after two years of development and field testing, they came up with the final design.

"We saw a need to do things a little bit better than what was currently available, as far as some of the fishing gear," Chris said. "The rod holder was the first thing."

Due to its construction, the rod holder won't freeze to the ice, Jeff said. It's also sturdy enough so that if you get a bite on your line, it won't tip over. It features a rod holder and clamp in one, which he said is rare to find. The clamp swivels and adjusts so it can be clipped onto a shelf, chair, or tackle box lid in an ice house. The rod can also be screwed into the holder for added stability.

The idea for the bait bucket came from personal experiences with subpar styrofoam buckets that freeze to the ice and tip over easily, Chris said. They wanted to make a quality, reusable bait bucket that used natural aeration so anglers wouldn't have to spend money on batteries for an electric aerator.

"Some of the ones are out there are cheaply made out of styrofoam, so they froze to the ice all the time, so when you go to pull them up, the bottom breaks off

and your bait's all over the floor," Jeff said. "Or you get excited when you get a fish on and you stand up, and there's not enough room in your ice house."

The bait bucket can be used in a hole in the ice, or in the five-gallon bucket it comes with, Chris said. It's a metal bucket, with a lid that screws shut, and comes with a net that hangs inside the bucket off of a hook on the inside of the lid. In a cramped ice house, Chris said, having a bait bucket that fits flush with the floor saves valuable floor space.

"This is out of the way, it's flush with the slush, or the floor of the ice house," Chris said. "You can step on it and not break it. All you have to do is drill an extra hole."

The bucket has holes drilled in the side of it, to allow water to flow through it. This means the minnows will be naturally aerated by the lake, Chris said, so there's no need for a separate aeration device. It can also be used during the summer, he said, by floating it off of a dock.

The idea to create better ice fishing gear came to the Raboins after being frustrated with cheaper, disposable bait buckets, and being unable to find a rod holder that also featured a clamp, Jeff said. They would see older anglers out on the lake with metal bait buckets that had lasted years and years, and wondered why they weren't still made that way, he said.

"We wanted to make something that would last a long time so you wouldn't have to go back to the bait shop every day and buy a new bait bucket," Jeff said. "We wanted to make something that would last and stand the test of time."

At first, they were developing these products for their own use, and hadn't planned on selling them to a larger group, Jeff said. But after seeing the response from people who saw them



Jeff Raboin demonstrates how an ice fishing pole can be secured into the Ice Pro Rod Holder.

**More information**

**Frigid Fishing Gear, LLP**  
**Phone:** 218-417-0388  
**Email:** frigidfishinggearllp@gmail.com  
**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/frigidfishinggear

out on the lake with their products, they knew they were on to something.

"We started basically, with comfort and convenience for ourselves," Chris said. "As people started seeing these things, and seeing us out there with them, the response was pretty encouraging. That kind of told us that, maybe we should share this with others."

To protect their ideas, Jeff said they filed patents for both products, and should hear back on that in the fall. Having patent pending status for their products gives them protection for about a year and a half, he said.

"As far as we know, this bait bucket here is absolutely unique," Chris said. "There is no other in-hole bait bucket out there that we know of."

Neither of them has started their own company before, Jeff said, so they got a lot of help from Jenny

Herman, business consultant at the Small Business Development Center. Herman helped point them in the right direction, he said, and get their business paperwork in order.

Both products are handmade by Jeff and Chris, which means they have a higher quality than a mass-produced product, Jeff said. The plastic they use on their rod holders is put together by hand, he said, and not made from a mold, like a mass-produced product would be.

"It really is a handmade, high-quality piece, it's not something that just gets kicked out of an injection mold press," Jeff said.

Anglers interested in purchasing their products can get in touch with them directly, Jeff said, or reach out to them on the business's Facebook page. They will also be going around to local bait shops and supply stores to see if the retailers will carry their products, he said. So far, Rainy Lake One Stop has agreed to carry the products locally.

"They were excited to display some of this for us, display both of these products for us," Jeff said.

Jeff said he'd like to expand their product line in the future, and even have



Chris Raboin shows how the Minnow Pro Bait Bucket can fit in a standard five-gallon bucket if another hole in the ice isn't available.

their products in major outdoor retailers like Cabela's. In fact, he said, he's already looked into the process needed to get their products on Cabela's shelves. Cabela's reviews new products for the different outdoors seasons at certain times of the year. He's already planning on submitting their products for the winter outdoors line when the time comes, he said.

As far as more product ideas go, Jeff said he has a notebook of about 26 ideas they can try out to see if they'll work, however, they want to develop a solid base for their two current products before expanding. When they're developing

these ideas, he said, they talk through what they want the product to be, and sketch out what they want it to look like. Then, they'll discuss the fabrication process, or how they'd go about making the product.

Right now, the Raboins have two products born from necessity they're hoping will catch on. Based on feedback they've gotten so far, Jeff said he's hopeful they will.

"I've called a sales and marketing director for a company, and they basically told me, 'I can't believe no one else has ever thought of that, that's brilliant,'" Jeff said. "And I kind of thought, 'hmm, I like that.'"

**Public AUCTION**  
**Saturday May 31, 2014 9:30 AM**

**Location: Yellow House Storage, 3205 2nd Avenue East, the Airport Road in International Falls, MN**

**Bob and Kathy Neuenschwander**

Auction Notes: Bob and Kathy are doing some major downsizing of their own personal property and their store, Border Bob's will also be including a great selection of store goods and merchandise as well. We will use the back building at the Yellow House Storage as the auction location. There will be Furniture, Home Décor, Antiques, Collectables, Sporting Goods, Firearms, Furs, Taxidermy, Tools and even a giant No. 7 Bear Trap. Make plans now to attend and we'll see you there.

<b>Furniture</b> Tan Leather Chair w/ Ottoman Couch w/ Ottoman Sofa w/ Floral Pattern Coffee and matching End Table w/ Glass Insets Wagon Wheel Floor Lamp and other Lamps Select Comfort King Size Sleep Number Bed Entertainment Center Roll Top Desk	<b>Taxidermy / Furs / Fish</b> Many Mounts of Wolverine, Pine Martin, Beaver, Fox, Weasels, Mink, Raccoon and more. Black Bear Rug w/ Head and Paws Tanned Bear Hides Shoulder Mount Black Bear Stringer Fish Mounts Replicas of Brown Trout, Arctic Char and Grayling
<b>Coins / Stamps</b> U.S. Proof and Mint Sets 4 Mint Canadian Stamp Sets Norman Rockwell and Foreign Stamp Collections	<b>Wildlife Art</b> Many Framed Wildlife Art of Cardinals, Blue Heron, Whitetail Deer, Muskie, Wolf and more.
<b>Antiques / Collectables</b> Treadle Stone Grinding Wheel Collectable Glassware Pressed Tin and other Toys Gate Table Dresser w/ Mirror Coca Cola Trays, Mirror and more Oil Lamps Treadle Sewing Machine "The Free" 1900's Historic Photo's of Int'l Falls Newspaper "Extra" of JFK	<b>Sporting Goods / Outdoors</b> Fishing and Hunting Equipment Snowshoes Deer Antlers 1996 Yamaha 15 hp. Electric Start, Long Shaft, Outboard (Low Hrs.) 1975 Peterborough 16 ft. Fiberglass Canoe Receiver Hitch Storage Box Pull Type Lawn Dethatcher Lawn Mower
<b>Firearms</b> Winchester Mod. 12, 12 ga. Pump Shotgun w/ Vent Rib Remington Mod. 870 TC Pump Shotgun w/ Vent Rib Ithaca Mod. 37 12 ga. Pump Shotgun Mossberg Mod. 510 12 ga. Pump Shotgun w/ 18 in. Barrel Shotgun and Rifle Ammo	<b>Shop / Tools</b> Rockwell Sander / Grinder Makita Drills Ryobi Sawzall Skill Bench Grinder Coleman 1850 Portable Generator Dingo Portable Generator Many Small Hand Tools Draw Knife

**Bear Trap**  
Junction Trader No. 7,  
Valley Forge

**Moose Antlers** w/ 44  
in. Spread

**Many More Items Than Listed**

Go to [midwestauctions.com](http://midwestauctions.com) for photo's

**Border Country AUCTIONS**  
Auctioneer: Dean Tveit • MN Lic.# 3613-02  
3256 County Rd. 24, International Falls, MN 56649  
218-283-5778 • [www.bordercountryauction.com](http://www.bordercountryauction.com)

Terms: Cash, good check; US funds only. All sales final, all items sold as is. Statements made auction day take precedence over all advertising. All guarantees are between buyer and seller. Settlement is same day as sale. Visa and Mastercard accepted.

*catch up online.....*  
**www.ifallsjournal.com**

**Footwear for the whole family!**

**Wed., May 21 - Sat., May 24**

**20% OFF**

**Men's, Women's & Kid's Footwear**

**NIKE Asics Reebok Clarks**

**asics have arrived! Stop in and check out the selection!**

**danisko MERRELL SKECHERS**

**& more!**

**RONNING'S**  
218-283-8877  
Open Mon.-Sat. 8-7 Sunday 9-4  
International Falls

\*Sale valid on regular priced merchandise only. Excludes Mucks, Bogs, Under Armour & FXR. Some exclusions apply.

**FIND DEALS**  
in The Journal Classifieds