

# LOCALNEWS

## Chiefs provide activity reportsMushers gear up for race season

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls City Council heard reports from the city's chiefs earlier this month.

Fire Chief Adam Mannausau, who also serves as chief of the Falls Ambulance Service and handles blight issues, provided the council with a report about December activities.

Mannausau reported the department responded in December to the Koochiching County Law Enforcement Center where high carbon monoxide levels had occurred.

"We were close to evacuating the jail," he said. The source of the problem was identified and corrected, he added.

The department twice in November provided water to Canadian National Railway locomotives, something that's become a trend, he said. CN is obtaining water from the department to use for cooling. Mannausau said water, which is eventually dumped, is more environmentally friendly than antifreeze.

He suggested the council consider charging CN for its water use.

In December, the ambulance responded to 72 emergency calls, compared to 58 for the same time in 2013. It responded to five fire call outs.

Mannausau also provided a report of 2014 activities including the following highlights:

- Fire**
- Retired, hired fire chief
  - Hired three new fire-fighter engineers
  - Hired six paid on-call firefighters
  - 45 department incidents



Adam Mannausau



Mike Musich

- 12 required training classes

- Unit responses of ambulance, fire trucks, pumper trucks — 1,480

**Ambulance**

- Hired three new paramedics

- Hired nine basic EMTs

- Purchased a new ambulance, new monitors

- 1,357 total ambulance runs, of which 790 were emergency calls and 567 were transfers

**Housing**

- 64 tags issued for blight and grass issues

- 28 properties mowed, cleaned, and/or vehicles towed

- 24 letters sent for blight issues, condemnation

**Police**

Police Chief Mike Musich reported on December activities in his department, including a number of trainings, including defensive tactics and radio use.

Officers conducted five narcotics search warrants, resulting in arrests for methamphetamine. In addition, officers participated in DARE graduation at the elementary school, he said.

Musich provided shift log activity for December, reported as follows: 339 general calls; 58 traffic stops; 27 medical assists; nine agency assists; and 87 incident command reports, for a total of 525 calls for service.

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

Snow and cold may deter some outdoor enthusiasts from enjoying the winter months, but for two local mushers, it's the recipe for success.

Ryan Anderson and Amanda Vogel, both of Ray, are gearing up for the 2015 sled dog racing season. Both have already put several hours and miles on their sleds in preparation for the 31st annual John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon that begins Jan. 25.

The race was almost called off by the event's board of directors, but Sunday the board announced it will start as scheduled, just not in Duluth. It will start at the site of what usually is the first checkpoint, north of Two Harbors, off Highway 2.

"I haven't run the Beargrease the last two years," Anderson said last week, adding he hoped the 374-mile race would run on the date planned. "I'm ready to compete in it again."

Anderson, the 2012 Beargrease champion, is looking to come out on top of the race, but said he knows it will be a challenge. His friend and fellow musher, Nathan Schroeder of Chisholm, has claimed the winning title the last two years.

"I've already got more runs on this year than I've ever had," Anderson said. "I think it'll be a good year."

Meanwhile, Vogel said she hopes to do well at Beargrease, however, she mainly plans to use the race as her last qualifier for the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Alaska.

"Our main goal is Beargrease," she said of her team. "It's not about winning it, although we hope to do well."

Not just anyone can compete in the Iditarod. Entrants



FILE PHOTO

Local mushers will kick off the 2015 sled dog racing season Jan. 25 at the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon.

must have completed certain qualifying races: a previous Iditarod race, a previous Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race or two approved races with an accumulated total of at least 500 miles in which the entrant finished in the top 75 percent of the field or in a time of no more than twice the time of the race winner.

Vogel is hopeful her team has what it takes to make it to the Alaska race next year.

"We're training hard and my fingers are crossed all goes well," she said. "I'd like to take the team I have right now to the Iditarod."

**Pre-season**

Both mushers agreed pre-season training has been had a good start and their teams hold promise for the races ahead.

Anderson said a litter of

yearlings ranks among the best he's had in about 10 years.

"I'm really excited about the group," he said of the pups.

For the most part, the musher who has been involved in the sport for 29 years said his team will average around 3-4 years old. Those ages, he said, are perfect for a racing team.

"I like the team I have," he said. "My goal is to have fun and have a good year."

Anderson's schedule takes him to Churchill, Manitoba, for the Hudson Bay Quest, which he won last year; Marquette, Mich., to the U.P. 200, where he will try to win back the title. Keith Aili, also of Ray, won last year's event. Anderson said he may also compete in the WolfTrack Classic in Ely.

Vogel said once her trails were packed and ready to race on, training has been going well, although some setbacks have occurred.

"Things were going well until we got the snow," she said. "And that sounds backwards...but snow and trail conditions have not been conducive to setting hooks and that's a safety precaution. I've been cautious."

Vogel's season schedule tentatively includes the U.P. 200, traveling to Calumet, Mich., for CopperDog, and Winter Blast in Detroit, where Vogel said her team will "be the main exhibition."

"We'll see where we are," she said. "Financially, this sport is always challenging. This year is the most challenging yet, but I'm so thankful of the continued support by everyone in this sport."

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