

Learning is fun

Fifth-grade critics test games

A3



Frigid feet

Runners participate in holiday dash

B10



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Discussion on director position ends meeting

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The final meeting of the year of the International Falls Economic Development Authority Commission ended abruptly Monday.

After several no votes by Commissioner Bob Anderson on matters of the 2014 budget and financial transfers to fund the EDA's operations, questions about how radio programs are being funded led to a comment about the value of the EDA's director position.

In her director's report, EDA Director Shawn Mason acknowledged that Anderson's recollection voiced at the Nov. 25 meeting that Mason said radio programs would be paid by sponsors was accurate.

She told the commission the EDA Advisory Board agreed that it would find sponsors to pay for the programs should the EDA Commission desire.

Anderson said Monday that half the radio shows are about issues more relevant to discussion by the city council and not the EDA Commission.

He also said some in the community have said the director's position is not necessary and read aloud an email he received saying that Mason pats herself on the back during the radio shows.

That prompted a reaction from other commissioners.

Cynthia Jaksa told Anderson the meeting is not a venue for a personal attacks and instructed Mason to leave the room while the commission continued the meeting. "We need to talk about this, mayor," said Jaksa to Anderson.

While she said she respects Anderson's knowledge and ability, Jaksa said she regrets that he has not embraced the team of people working toward the same goal. "Shawn is every bit a part of that team and an important



Bob Anderson



Shawn Mason

part," she said.

Jaksa said Anderson's attack of a democratically-made decision by a previous council to create the director position is unfair, adding that it's clear the position is needed.

Commissioner Gail Rognerud asked who sent the email to Anderson, and when he refused to name the mailer, she said he shouldn't repeat it if he's unwilling to tell who sent it.

Rognerud said some in the community have voiced support for the director position.

Meanwhile, Jaksa told Anderson that he's created a hostile work environment for one of the commission's employees, which she called unacceptable. Rognerud added that Anderson's sentiment about the position had prompted the commission to urge Mason to join a union for some level of protection.

The discussion about the radio programs followed motions that called for paying expenses involved in a meeting Jan. 8 with Katie Clark Sieben, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, in St. Paul. Anderson, who voted no, wondered if the goals of the meeting couldn't be accomplished without a trip to St. Paul.

In addition, Anderson voted against approval of a 2014 budget. He questioned a 19-percent increase over the amount budgeted this year. The 2014 budget

Council to A7 ►

Ward says parks can help local industry

FLAG can help industry with permitting processes

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The distance an industry or business is to a national park is less important to permitting and approval than what's coming out of its smoke stack.

That's the message Mike Ward, Voyageurs National Park superintendent, brought to the International Falls Economic Development Authority Commission Monday.

"We are not here to stop industry because we are Class I

Area," he told the commission. "We want to make sure we sit down and talk about what needs to be done and how it can be successful for everyone."

Ward, who also serves as a member of the EDA Advisory Board, said he wanted to clear up some confusion about industry and it's proximity to national parks.

A Class I Area is defined in the Clean Air Act as national parks over 6,000 acres, national wilderness areas and national memorial parks over 5,000 acres, and international parks. In these areas, emissions of particulate matter and sulfur dioxide are to be restricted. The restrictions are most severe in Class I Areas.

Park to A7 ►



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

LeRoy Winkel, who along with his family, has volunteered at the Community Christmas Day Dinner at the Roadhouse for about four years, continues the tradition of serving food at the event yesterday. Winkel said he and his family choose to spend time on Christmas helping others because it is a way to give back to the community and "it is just fun."

Serving with joy

Community Christmas Day Dinner feeds about 700

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Jessica Bright spent her Christmas afternoon in the kitchen surrounded by family and friends.

But not her own kitchen. Instead, the 2011 Falls High School graduate packed up ham, hot stuffing and mashed potatoes from the Community Christmas Day Dinner at the Roadhouse nightclub, helping to feed about 700 people and provide them with companionship on a day centered around family and giving.

"I delivered food to one man who told me today was hard for him," she said Wednesday. "I was glad I was able to help make his day better."

Bright, along with several other volunteers, including her family members, helped make the eighth annual dinner the success that it was, said organizer Lee Grim.

"It makes for the best Christmas you could ever have," he said of the event. "That is what



Patty Ross, left, and her mother, Dorothy Ross, enjoy a meal at Wednesday's community dinner at the Roadhouse.



Area musicians provide background music at the Christmas dinner.

Christmas is all about—a community of people wanting to do something for other people."

Wearing a festive holiday sweater, Bright said this was her first year volunteering, but it is something she's always wanted to do.

"As we get older, it gets harder and harder to find the magic that used to come with Christmas," she said. "But when you are helping other people find it, that's where the

Dinner to A7 ►