



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Colin Kostiuk, left, and Patrick Shinnars shovel snow at Smokey Bear Park.



Koochiching County Commissioner Rob Ecklund volunteers his time to help St. Thomas students create a peace sign out of a snow bank.

RENEZVOUS

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as a whole, as far as winter sports and snowmobiling, we are greater together,” Johnson said. “The more the merrier.”

While IVSC is the host club, all snowmobile clubs from Crane Lake, Orr, Kabetogama, Ash River, Northome and Baudette are working together on the event, Johnson said.

The IVSC last hosted the event in the 1990s, he said. The IVSC Board wanted to host the event this year to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Voyageurs National Park.

“We thought this would be a great year to host the Rendezvous now, with the wonderful relationship between the snowmobiling community and the National Park Service,” he said. “In the past it was a little rockier.”

Heibel said many riders may find unique experiences in the trail rides planned for the event.

“A lot of areas don’t have the multiple types of rides like we do,” Heibel said. “We have lake rid-

ing, groomed land trails, off-trail riding — there are endless opportunities there. There are many logging roads and some rivers we know are pretty safe to ride.”

Volunteers are needed to help with the many guided tours planned for across the region, the co-chairs said.

“And the guides will be able to tell people about all the experiences we have here,” Heibel said.

At least three people, and four would be better, are needed for each of the guided tours on the the six or seven different routes that will be offered, Heibel said. Guides who can offer an entire day to lead sleds on the Big Falls-Birchdale loop are needed as well.

Heibel said he hoped to have volunteers at the many shelters along trails manning bonfires throughout the Rendezvous.

Other opportunities to volunteer that don’t require a sled involve helping at the AmericInn.

Registration for the event is though IVSC and is separate from lodging reservations. Lodging options can be found on the registration form and at

www.rainylake.org.

Johnson also encouraged local businesses to provide items for gift bags that will be presented to all who register and to offer door prizes.

“It’s a great way to advertise the services and what we have to offer in the region,” Johnson said.

The itinerary for the weekend is still being finalized, but Thursday is expected to include registration and a casual reception.

Friday will offer a VIP ride and lunch at the Kabetogama Community Center and is intended for invited dignitaries and officials. Friday night will be a dinner and reception at Leonard’s.

Saturday will feature many guided tours and a ride for state legislators with an evening banquet and awards ceremony. Speakers are expected to include VNP Superintendent Mike Ward and Craig Halla, Minnesota property manager for Molpus Timberlands Management, who is expected to discuss the importance of Sustainable Forest Incentive Act program in keeping property own to public use, Johnson said.

RUN

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considering whether to run in the event. “That said, the 2015 registrations already total the sum participation last year, so it seems a long-range forecast of really mild weather is undoubtedly important.”

Whitbeck said whenever weather is a topic, what is happening on the northern Minnesota border is likely relevant — even if it’s warmer-than-usual during the winter months. Still, it’s almost certain the race can expect some kind of national attention.

“An event labeled the Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard Run was hardly meant to go unnoticed,” Whitbeck said of the kick start to the race’s fame. In 1955, the March edition of Collier’s magazine ran a story entitled “The Coldest Town in America,” which got translated as the “Icebox of the Nation” in successive

FYGBR annual temperatures

Year	Temp.	Windchill	Year	Temp.	Windchill
1981	30	—	1998	22	—
1982	-27	-72	1999	29	—
1983	33	—	2000	20	—
1984	9	-25	2001	0	—
1985	21	—	2002	16	—
1986	21	—	2003	-4	-24
1987	-28	—	2004	4	—
1988	-8	—	2005	-24	-43
1989	20	—	2006	3	—
1990	20	—	2007	4	—
1991	-3	-35	2008	-24	-42
1992	2	—	2009	0	—
1993	—	—	2010	31	22
1994	—	—	2011	5	—
1995	—	—	2012	-13	—
1996	-12	-24	2013	12.2	—
1997	-17	-45	2014	-11	—

national weather reports.

“The marriage of those two monikers is irresistible to media,” Whitbeck said. “I’ll be doing a live interview

Saturday morning with The Weather Channel... Like it, or not, that’s why we’re on the map and the label sparks human interest.”

PROJECT

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the agreed upon date.

“If it’s not done, every day \$2,000 a day is applied to the penalty and sometimes it goes over one year, and when that happens it’s not the fault of the district, the staff, the city or county,” he said. “The district, as an autonomous unit of government, is responsible for proceeding and attempting to come to agreement with the contractor.”

McBride said the treatment facility is operating and “working well, past expectations for phosphorus and mercury removal.

“But we do have issues lingering. The plant isn’t completely finished and we are in discussions and conversations and the board may at some time elect to go hopefully with mediation that will rectify the situation.”

Greg Theisen, owner of Gridor Construction Inc., confirmed “we have ongoing negotiations,” but declined further comment. Gridor is based in Buffalo.

McBride said the issue is a “matter of disagreements. To get into what the contractor says and our counter claims is for mediation. The contractor definitely has excuses and we feel those

excuses are not warranted, but we still want to come up with some agreement with them.”

What’s left to finish is a lot of aesthetics, McBride said.

“We hope to be finished this summer, and hope to come up with mediated solutions with liquidated damages and have a the project finished,” he said.

McBride said a couple high school classes toured the renovated facility this week.

“It’s beautiful in there,” he said. “When we’re done, and summer comes, and mowing begins, come take pictures because it’s quite amazing.”

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