

LOCALNEWS



FILE PHOTO

Jim Strandlund, Mora, leads the Live on Skis 2014 trail ride dressed in a Hudson Bay coat and fur hat. This year's event is 10:30 a.m. Saturday on the ice at Kec's Cove, Kabetogama Lake.

Kab is site of Saturday's Live on Skis

Saurdiff: Vintage sled gathering, ride is informal fun

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The snowmobiles of yesteryear will be on display Saturday on the ice of Kabetogama Lake. Saturday's Live on Skis 2015 will draw vintage snowmobiles and the people who love them for a ride that departs around 10:30 a.m. from the ice in front of Kec's Cove. But before the ride, and on Friday evening, vintage sled aficionados will swap stories and handshakes with one another and any local folks who want to come out for a look, said Jim Saurdiff, an event organizer. Because Borderland

features a decent amount of snow, when other places in the state don't, Saurdiff said a lot of people are expected to participate. The ride is expected to take the group about 40 miles to Rainy Lake and back up to Sandy Point Lake, with a hot dog roast somewhere in the middle, Saurdiff said. At least of couple of special and custom sleds are expected at the event, Saurdiff said. "They like to surprise us," he said. "I know a couple are coming that we don't know about, but I can't say what they are cause I won't know until the day they get here." Saurdiff predicted a lot of single-cylinder machines would be at the event, along with other sleds of vintage age. "When we go 40, 50, 60 miles, they take a little better riding machine, but a lot bring up a rough-

riding single cylinder and put 10 miles on it and head back," he said. "But most sleds will be from the late '70s and '80s and some in the '60s." Saurdiff encouraged local riders to bring out their sleds regardless of their age for a ride with the group, or just to come out and look and talk. "There are so many people that would say 'Hey, I had one of those,' and they'd get a smile from ear to ear and (the vintage sled owner) would run over and start it up and say 'Here you go, go for a ride,'" said Saurdiff of the reaction of the vintage sled owners. Saurdiff said he'd take his 1971 Mustang, "just an old rider," to the event from among his "probably 10" sleds. "The darn thing never quits running and it's the one sled I know will run," he said.

Sheriff: Take care on ice

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Borderland is known for its cold temperatures that create thick ice. But despite this winter's off and on frigid temperatures, several recent incidents have prompted a warning from Koochiching County Sheriff Perryn Hedlund to use extreme caution on lakes and rivers. Three recent incidents could have ended in fatalities had something gone wrong, Hedlund said. "Even though it's been cold, there are still areas of thin ice," he said. "Areas like near the lift bridge have water flowing constantly and the ice is just not as thick."

Hedlund urged snowmobilers to stay on marked trails if they are unsure of where they are or are not aware of local ice conditions. If someone feels a need to rescue another person or even a dog, Hedlund urged people first call local law enforcement to make them aware of the incident. The most recent incident involved a snowmobile breaking through the ice Saturday night on Rainy Lake's Sand Bay very near the lift bridge in Ranier — an area known for swift current causing thin ice and open water.

The snowmobile was driven by a Canadian who had been traveling with other snowmobilers from Island View back to Canada when he became separated from the group. Hedlund said the driver became lost, and alcohol was a factor in the incident. The driver got himself out of the water and walked to the Canadian National Railway depot, and staff there called



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ranier resident Wayne Kasich shared this photo he shot Saturday of a snowmobile that had broken through the ice near the Ranier lift bridge, traditionally an unsafe ice area. Note the open water in the background. The driver was heading back to Canada, got separated from his group and was lost when the sled broke through the ice.

the Sheriff's Office, Hedlund said. The sled was removed from the ice Sunday. "Sometime people are unaware of thin spots, so staying to marked trails is the best course of action," he said. In another incident a local woman took a kayak onto the ice to rescue a dog that had fallen through the ice. Deputies who arrived at the scene donned their big yellow survival suits, known as Mustang suits, and rescued the woman and the dog. At the same time, Hedlund said he and Undersheriff Jon Froemke had hooked up an air boat and were heading toward the scene when the rescue was complete. Hedlund said deputies have been trained on how to handle emergencies and take all the safety precautions available, but are still involved in a potentially dangerous rescue.

"The deputies have flotation suits, are tied off and took all the safety precautions," he said. "But the deputies are putting their lives at risk to get someone off the water that didn't really have to be there." Hedlund acknowledged the love of dogs many people have and said he understands the motivation to help, but urged people to contact law enforcement before heading out onto the ice for a rescue. "The best course of action is to call law enforcement," he said. An earlier incident involved a child being rescued from the ice. Hedlund stress calling law enforcement before attempting an ice rescue, traveling on marked snowmobile trails if you are unsure of ice conditions and keeping track of kids and dogs, who may wander onto the ice unaware of the dangers it poses.



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