

**Get vaccinated**

Flu considered widespread

**A3**



**DNR to the rescue**

Area DNR officer cares for orphaned bobcat

**A4**



# The Journal

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International Falls, Minnesota

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STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Members of the “Falls High Twerk Team” perform a choreographed dance for crowds Wednesday during a Winter Sports Week pep fest at Falls High School. Although students have been out of school for the first two days this week, school spirit was in full swing during the pep fest. For more photos of Wednesday’s pep fest, turn to page B8.

## Falls Superintendent says make-up days are not likely

Student safety is top priority when deciding to close school

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

The hustle and bustle returned to area schools Wednesday after record-breaking cold extended winter break for students and staff.

A regularly scheduled 10-day break was extended by one day Jan. 2 because of the cold. Then, after students settled back into their classrooms Jan. 3, Gov. Mark Dayton cited extremely frigid temperatures and canceled classes state-wide for Monday — a first in 17 years for Minnesota’s governor.

International Falls and other area schools then canceled classes for Tuesday, again

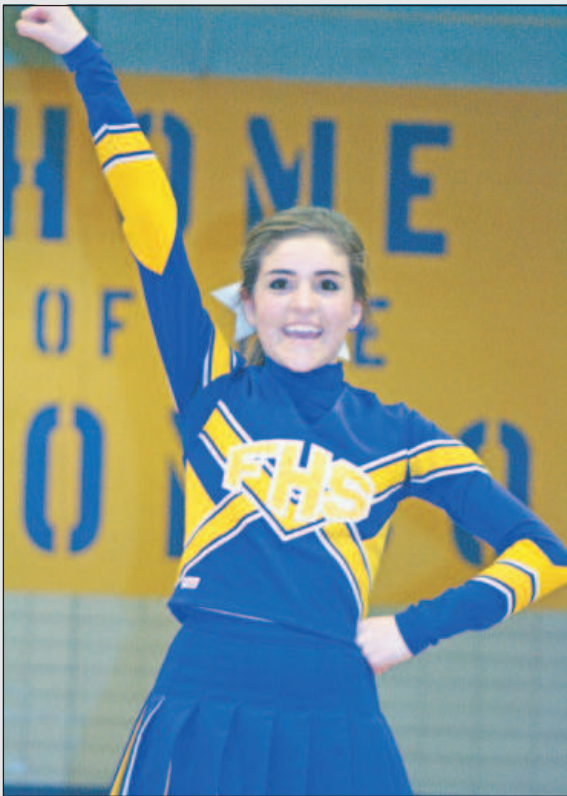
citing well-below-zero temperatures.

“From what I’ve been told... school isn’t closed very much up here,” said Falls Superintendent Nurdy Nelson Wednesday. “I’ve worked all over the state and knowing the region here...it is more extreme.”

Given the area is prone to experiencing more extreme winter conditions, Nelson said safety of children is the district’s top priority when making the call to close school.

“When it comes to children, their safety comes first in decision making,” he said.

While the forecast can be difficult to work with at times,



**Basketball cheerleader Annika Amdahl pumps up the crowd during Wednesday’s pep fest.**

**Closures to A7 ►**

## An ode to the cold

The Icebox of the Nation lives up to its reputation

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

The recent frigid temperatures experienced across the nation brought the community known as the Icebox of the Nation some notoriety as local folks are tapped for their expertise by media outlets across the nation.

Dave Stewart, of Stewart’s Super One, said he got a call at the grocery store from one of the three main network radio stations in New York just before 8 a.m. Saturday morning when the low temperature was 31 below zero.

“They wondered why anybody lived up here and I said it’s because we don’t want to live in New York,” Stewart said Thursday. “I told them we get more complaints about the weather when it’s 80 above than 40 below. And we do.”

Stewart said a planned two-minute interview lasted more like 10 minutes because of the good-natured ribbing exchanged about locales, he said.

“This guy was absolutely flabbergasted that anybody would stay here with this weather,” said Stewart. “I said he should come up this weekend and he didn’t think that would be a good idea.”

Stewart said he gave some indication of how life goes on when the temperatures drop to what even hardy Borderland residents consider cold.

“I gave him the patent ‘how to tell in the morning how to dress’: When you let the dog out, breath out from the nose and if your nostrils stick together it’s at least 20 below; if not, it’s warmer than that.”

Stewart said some members of the media outside Minnesota find it strange that people go about their business without much change even when it’s cold here. He said his friends commented that they would have never made it out of third grade if school was canceled every time it was very cold.

And, he noted, the reporter told him that just about everything was closed in New York, which was experiencing warmer temperatures than the Falls.

**Cold to A7 ►**

## Cold snap doesn’t slow down local Borderland businesses

BY SPENSER BICKETT  
Staff Writer

When Borderland experiences a cold snap like the one it’s seen the past two weeks, some things tend to slow down. But there are a few local businesses that have been working nonstop to keep up with increased business.

Ricky Roche, owner of Roche’s Towing, said the past two weeks have been “extremely busy,” and he’s been jump starting

and towing cars from 6 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m. Roche’s have been averaging 15 to 25 calls per day, he said, while a normal winter would bring two or three calls per day.

“This has been catching everybody by surprise,” Roche said. “We’re finding out who’s got good batteries, and who’s been smart about plugging their car in.”

Most of the increased business has involved towing as opposed to jump starts, Roche said. When it’s

this cold, he said, trying to jump start a car is usually a waste of time. He’s mostly been towing stalled cars to warm inside auto repair shops so the cars can be started.

With stalled vehicles relying on him to come tow them out of trouble, Roche said his vehicles aren’t immune to the cold, and he still needs to make sure all his equipment works in the cold, too.

“It’s making sure you have good fuel and you’re filled up, so

you don’t breakdown yourself,” he said.

Larry Morin, O’Reilly Auto Parts store manager, has seen the effects of Borderland residents making sure their cars are prepared for the cold, as his business has been going “really well” the past two weeks, he said.

“The cold leads to breakdowns and people buying batteries, starters, and alternators,” he said. “Engine heaters have been a hot item, too.”

The store has been busy through the month of December, and is “a lot busier than the past two years with mild winters,” he said. His staff has been able to keep up with the increased demand, he said, and hasn’t seen any challenges because of their knowledge and expertise.

Most batteries last eight to nine years, Morin said, and they offer free testing at the store.

**Businesses to A7 ►**

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