

Getting back to work

Sen. Franken addresses skills gap in manufacturing

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Unique projects

Sixth-grade students show off artwork

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STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2948 Honor Guard members shake hands with Falls Elementary students Monday during a program in honor of Veterans Day.

Honoring veterans

Veterans Day was recognized nationwide Monday with parades, wreath-laying ceremonies, monument dedications and other events to honor all Americans who have worn the nation's military uniform.

Locally, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2948 Honor Guard members visited elementary students to educate them about the importance of Veterans Day.

During a ceremony, words of remembrance were shared, a flag was folded, and 94-year-old Margarete Kostiuk played a medley of war tunes on her harmonica.

Students also shook hands and thanked Borderland's veterans for their service.



Wayne Sampson shows students how a U.S. flag looks when folded properly.

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Tug meeting has wider focus

Jaksa, Fort Frances councilor to meet with Canada's consul general

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

In a joint Canadian-American effort to narrow the gap between the two nations, two local community leaders will meet with Canada's consul general in the Twin Cities later this month.

International Falls Councilor Cynthia Jaksa and Fort Frances Councilor Rick Wiedenhoef are scheduled to meet Nov. 22 with Consul General Jamshed Merchant.

Their mission is twofold: To ask Merchant to return to Borderland to take part in, and provide funding for, the July Pulling for Peace: International Tug of War and to discuss how to break down barriers that keep residents of the two communities from sharing resources.

Merchant took part in the good-natured tug-of-war across the Rainy River between the two communities last year. He also met with local, state and federal leaders to discuss how the two nations and communities can work

toward sharing needed resources.

President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper signed in 2011 the Beyond the Border: A shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness pact. The pact is intended to maintain a secure border while at the same time more effectively reducing bureaucracy to improve trade and movement between the two nations.

Jaksa said the Beyond the Borders pact opened the door for change. "It's a policy dedicated to increasing trade, education, medical, whatever," she said. "Fort Frances and International Falls serves to gain from this policy and we need to push it to make it work for us."



Consul General Jamshed Merchant

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Home for the holidays

Falls gears up for annual parade, Small Business Saturday

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Snow is on the ground, Black Friday ads are out and Hometown Holiday Weekend in International Falls is right around the corner.

The festive weekend of Nov. 29 and 30 will include the annual 'Twas the Lights Before Christmas Parade, a pet contest, old-fashioned wagon rides and retail specials that promote holiday shopping at home.

According to Faye Whitbeck, president of the International Falls Chamber of Commerce, festivities kick off on Third Street Friday for a community get-together in Centennial Park next to Border Boxes. Before the parade, Whitbeck encourages community members to gather in Centennial Park for mini bon fires, hot chocolate and other treats.

"The fires add quaintness and

warmth to the festivities," she said.

In the same area, the lineup for the annual Cutest Holiday Pet Contest will begin at 4 p.m. "Showing off pets is a chance for kids and adults to enjoy them dressed in fun costumes," Whitbeck said, adding dressed up pets can also participate in the parade later in the evening.

Caroling and the Mann family's old-fashioned wagon rides will be from 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. down Main Street before the 'Twas the Lights Before Christmas parade begins at 7 p.m.

Whitbeck said the parade route introduced two years ago integrates three blocks of Fourth Street with a section of Third Street and has been well-received by the community.

"The rectangle course will again start on Fourth Street near Falls Lumber," she said. "The promenade will head west on Fourth Street, and turn north up Sixth Avenue to Third Street where it will travel east and

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City to seek grant for rental unit rehabilitation

Portion of grants to owners of rental units could be forgiven

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

International Falls will seek nearly \$600,000 from a program within the Department of Employment and Economic Development to provide forgivable loans to owners of rental housing in the city.

The International Falls City

Council in a special meeting Tuesday agreed to apply to DEED's Small Cities Development Program for a grant of \$590,000 that would be provided in increments of up to \$21,500 for rehabilitation of single-family rental units. The deadline for the city to apply for the grant is Thursday.

The city, as in previous housing grants, would partner with KOOTASCA Community Action on the application. KOOTASCA would handle awards and bookkeeping on the grant.

The owner of the rental units

could be eligible for up to \$21,500 to make improvements to homes that include energy-efficient appliances, egress windows, siding, roofing and other items. The landlord is required to contribute 30 percent of the total project costs. The remaining 70 percent is provided to the landlord in the form of a five-year loan. No payments or interest would be charged during those five years and the loan is forgiven after that time provided the unit is not sold and remains a rental.

Councilors said the program

would improve the rental stock in the community.

"I am delighted," said Councilor Cynthia Jaksa. "I think the landlords will be happy."

When city officials considered seeking a rental housing rehabilitation grant last year, several landlords told The Journal they would take advantage of the program.

Jeff Wickstrom, who has owned rental properties in the community for about 20 years, said last year he welcomes a rental component of the grant.

"I think that it would be awe-

some," he said. "I would be the first to sign up. I feel that as I have been fixing properties in town, I've been helping increase my property value, but also increasing the neighborhood property value and reducing a blight factor by having a better looking house."

Dave Hausmann also owns rental units in the community and said last year that he would be interested in the program, provided the details are not difficult.

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