

# ATV

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“I guess I was on the ground, having seizures for 45 minutes,” Best said. “I don’t remember any of that.” Erickson didn’t have his cell phone and Best’s flew off the four wheeler into the water.

“Dale didn’t want to leave me because I was having seizures and he was afraid I would roll into the river,” Best said.

Eventually, Erickson was able to get Best to his feet, help him to the pickup truck and bring him to Rainy Lake Medical Center’s hospital campus.

During the 15-mile trip to town, Joe Best called his wife, Suzie Best, to alert her he’d been in an accident.

“I could tell by his voice that it was really bad,” Suzie said.

At the hospital, Joe said he thought his collar bone was broken and he didn’t think he was severely injured. In fact, he was planning his recovery of a day off work, a Netflix movie and a Border Bar pizza.

“I honestly didn’t think I was hurt that bad,” he said. His body had a different idea.

Suzie guesses it was a state of shock that had her husband questioning his condition, because the way he was screaming and writhing in pain “was awful,” she said.

Eventually, doctors made the determination Joe needed more care than they could provide and air lifted him to Altru Health System in Grand Forks, N.D. Once there, Joe was told he had six broken ribs and was expected to go home within 24-48 hours.

Again, his body had other plans.

“At about 2 a.m. the morning before his release, he was uncomfortable,” Suzie recalled. “He couldn’t catch his breath...Within two minutes, there were nine medical people in the room. They told me he needed emergency surgery because his lung had collapsed...They were able to drain the fluid and save him, but they said they only had a matter of minutes.”

During the next week, Joe’s lung collapsed again and he went into cardiac arrest. Doctors repeatedly told the Bests they couldn’t believe Joe wasn’t a paraplegic, let alone alive.

“I was in bad shape,” Joe said.

When he finally returned to International Falls, Joe said a full physical recovery took about a month. The emotional recovery, however, was a different story.

“I didn’t get on my four wheeler until I had to plow

in the winter,” he said. “Even in cars, it felt like everyone was going to hit us. I was just scared.”

Both Joe and Suzie realize luck was on Joe’s side during the entire experience.

“I wasn’t drinking or anything,” Joe said of the accident. “I wasn’t doing anything stupid...It just really can happen to anybody. I got lucky. You hear stories about people who aren’t as lucky and I can’t even imagine. I’m really, really lucky.”

**Practice safety**

While Joe Best’s story had a happy ending, others, unfortunately, do not. In 2013, ATVs played a factor in 13 deaths and 260 reported injuries in Minnesota. No fatalities occurred in Koochiching County, yet neighboring counties such as Itasca and St. Louis each had at least one, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website.

Koochiching County Sheriff Brian Jespersen said ATV use is taken seriously and stressed people need to be careful as the peak season for operating the machinery approaches.

“The main issue we have in Kooch County is speed and alcohol,” he said, adding climbing hills, like in Best’s case, also racks up the number of accidents.

But it was the drinking and driving the sheriff stressed ATV users to steer clear of.

“I can’t stress that enough,” he said. “Alcohol is where the accidents normally happen, but it can happen to anyone at any time even if they’re not drinking.”

State grants allow deputies to patrol on ATVs, however, it is a challenge, Jespersen said.

“It’s a big county and we can only be in so many areas,” he said. “You get a nice fall day and the woods are

packed.”

Because many ATV motorists venture to more remote locations, Jespersen said people need to be prepared.

“Carry matches and build a fire in an open area if you get lost or stranded,” he said, adding people should stay in one spot and avoid walking. “And grab a bottle of water and an extra candy bar or something before you head out.”

Local search and rescue units are equipped with necessary tools to reach people in an emergency situation, Jespersen said, but because some areas cannot be accessed by a vehicle, it can take time for medical teams to reach those in trouble.

“Again, just stay put,” he said. “Tell people where you’re going, when you’ll be back and carry a cell phone with you...If you call 911, we’ll be able to track down where you are.”

# ALL SMILES



Rachel Zupke and her brother Josiah stay busy helping hungry customers find fresh produce.

# RANIER

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According to city Administrator Sherril Gautreaux, the city’s land use ordinances haven’t been updated following the 2010 annexation of French, Jamison, Riverside Additions, and Brennan’s Beach, and will provide a cohesive land use plan for the future.

The newer, annexed portions of Ranier fall under Koochiching County’s Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of 1975, Gautreaux said, along with other county ordinances detailing subdivision platting, shoreland, and wetland ordinances. Ranier has three ordinances from 1965, she said, that apply to the “old Ranier” area but are not applicable to the annexed areas.

“In addition, the existing ordinances need to be modernized to comply with applicable Minnesota statutes,” Gautreaux said.

The existing ordinances don’t comply with some of the due process require-

ments, Gautreaux added. One specific Minnesota statute requirement, the 60 day rule, requires a city council to make a decision on a building permit within 60 days, or the permit is automatically granted. The proposed ordinance would comply with this statute, she said.

The proposed land use ordinance also tries to preserve the historic character of Ranier by including a historic town center district which limits building form and height of new construction.

“The big thing people worry about is things that are already in existence that aren’t in compliance,” Gautreaux said. “But those things are fine, they’re grandfathered in.”

In order to develop the proposed land use ordinance, Gautreaux said the city contracted with the Arrowhead Regional Development Council to guide the planning process in order to ensure compliance with Minnesota law. Now, she said, they need to hear what citizens think of the

proposed plan.

“We want to stress citizen input and involvement is critical, and we would like written comments to be submitted to our office to assist in completing the ordinance,” she said. “In order to complete the process, we want to encourage active citizen input and involvement.”

City Councilor Ron Wilcox served on the land use committee for three years, and said the new ordinance requires citizen input so they can make it their own.

“We’re just trying to get citizens involved now so it fits Ranier and becomes our ordinance,” he said. “We need to make sure it has things pertaining to us and our city.”

The new ordinance does a good job of addressing issues of the old ordinance, Wilcox added, and there will be more enforcement with the new ordinance.

“Things have been built with no zoning at all, it’s kind of haphazard,” he said. “We just want to bring it all together so we’re one big happy city.”

# COUNCIL

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agreed to add another step to the procedures that will seek unanimous approval of the agenda, as well as proposed additions and deletions of items on the agenda.

Mayor Bob Anderson and Councilor Paul Eklund voted against the proposal. Eklund said more discussion on the topic is needed.

The issue was brought to the table by Councilor Gail Rognerud, who said she had concerns about how an item was withdrawn from the consideration by the council at the Aug. 18 meeting. Anderson removed an item from the agenda, because he said he hadn’t had enough time to develop a response to an issue — working conditions and environment at the city — raised by Rognerud at the Aug. 4 meeting.

Rognerud said Tuesday she needed clarification about who and how items can be placed on and taken off the agenda. She said she assumed the councilor, or member of the public, whom placed the item on the agenda was the only person who could take it off, without a vote of the council. She said she asked for the item to be placed on the Aug. 18, but Anderson asked it be removed.

The ordinance only references matters inappropriate for consideration at a meeting: the item shall not be considered except with the unanimous consent of the council.

Councilor Cynthia Jaksa suggested a need for adding to or clarifying the city’s ordinance on the meeting procedure. She said the

ordinance reference to matters inappropriate for consideration doesn’t address the question raised by Rognerud about the procedure.

City Attorney Steve Shermoen said the council could, as other cities have, adopt formal rules about the addition and deletion process for the agenda. Now, he said the process used has been developed by common practice over the years.

Anderson said other governing bodies approve a proposed agenda, with deletions and additions suggested before the vote.

Anderson said the existing ordinance guides the procedure now. He said any member may propose the removal of an item they believe inappropriate for consideration by making a motion seeking unanimous consent to remove it from the agenda.

Shermoen said the ordinance provides no guidance to the city administrator about who may place items and what items to include on the agenda. Anderson said the council in the past has been open to allowing things to be placed on the agenda by the public and council members.

Anderson said he asked for the removal of the item at the Aug. 19 meeting until he had an opportunity to the concerns raised by Rognerud Aug. 4. He said there was no call from any councilor for a vote on the removal.

Shermoen suggested clarification of adding and deleting from the agenda be discussed in committee, as it requires an amendment to the city’s ordinances.

Anderson said the ordinance and existing process has stood the test of time,

and the issue hasn’t been raised previously.

The process has now been raised and it should be sent to committee to consider making a recommendation on the issue to the full council, Eklund said.

Jaksa said the “inappropriate” ordinance reference was still cloudy, but Councilor Pete Kalar said, “If everybody else thinks it’s appropriate, and there is not an unanimous vote to take it off, it stays on the agenda.”

Rognerud moved to withdraw the next item on the agenda — discussion on the working conditions and environment — from the agenda, telling the council she had asked for it to be placed on the agenda. The vote to remove it from the consideration was approved unanimously.

“We’re still having discussions,” she said, and instructed city Administrator Ken Anderson to place the topic on the Sept. 15 meeting agenda.

Administrator Anderson reported water at City Beach tested for bacteria by the Koochiching County Health Department since flooding has shown in recent weeks to be within the standards for swimming, which he called good news.

The council voted to refer to the city’s Legislation and Land Use Committee a request for a taxicab license for “A Taxi-Van Limo Service” by Jean Clement.

The council also approved a lease to the Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club for use of Kerry Park Sept. 14 for the club’s annual senior fish fry and approved appointment of Lisa L. Wicklund as city administration support specialist.

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Bid Forms are available at the Koochiching County Courthouse Environmental Services and the County Transfer Station.

Notice: Bid forms must be received no later than 4:00 PM Friday September 12<sup>th</sup> 2014

Sealed bids should be mailed or dropped off at: Koochiching County Courthouse Auditors Office 715 4<sup>th</sup> St. International Falls, MN 56649

Notice: Make sure the envelope is clearly marked (Dozer Bid)

Winning bidder will be notified after the September 16<sup>th</sup> county board meeting

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