

PARADE

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Economic Development Authority’s float; and a tie for third place was split between floats built by the Chamber’s Gizzard Girls and the Moose Lodge 1259.

The late Vickie Trask, who organized the first ‘Twas the Lights Before Christmas Parade more than two decades ago, spearheaded an event that Whitbeck says is on track to become better and better each year.

“I think we’re on our way to building the parade back to the caliber of the earlier years,” she said. “The chamber is so appreciative of the amount of work and investment that went into this year’s floats. There’s only so many top winners,

but making a float is also making a memory.”

This was the third year the parade has taken on a new route from its starting point at Falls Lumber on Fourth Street to the chamber on Third Street.

“We will continue the new route next year,” Whitbeck said. “People like it and it includes more of the business district.”

Delays in this year’s parade were sparked by a float that had two of its sections break down early on Fourth Street, causing it to pull over creating a gap that slowed its movement.

“The Girl Scout float couldn’t really fill in because all those little legs of many little girls can only move so fast,” Whitbeck said. The gaps prompted some spectators to succumb to the cold – which was in

the mid 20s – and head home early.

In addition to the parade, Friday also marked the second annual cutest pet contest.

This year’s winner was “Sassy,” a Yorkshire Terrier owned by Dixie Kalstad of the Falls.

“People are telling us they love this new feature of the Hometown Holiday Weekend,” Whitebeck said of the contest. “It really is so adorable. There were more contestants this year and there were more folks in the audience. The costumes on pets are so charming.”

Next year, Whitbeck said cutest pet entrants and their owners will be included in the parade.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

Weekend festivities con-

tinued on Small Business Saturday, a day set aside since 2010 between Black Friday and Cyber Monday to encourage shoppers to spend their holiday money at local mom-and-pop stores. In International Falls, Whitbeck said early retail reports were strong.

“Most retailers with whom we’ve visited say both Friday and Saturday saw higher traffic and great bottom lines,” she said. “Our geography and size remain a challenge. But it seems as though more people are owning our identity and are taking to heart the value of investing in our future.”

Nancy Imhof, of Masons on Main, said the weekend’s totals increased from last year at the same time.

“I think that it is something that is gradually building upon recognition

and those that make the effort to shop locally are starting to associate with Small Business Saturday,” she said. “I think that social media is helping with awareness and I also think that it should be something that us, as small merchants, can and should expand on in our promotions and advertising.”

Whitbeck said the chamber continues to promote the area with reminders on what spending local means.

“Shop local so easily becomes cliché,” she said. “It takes a conscious effort to consider the effects of how your locally-earned dollars, when kept local, turn over and over in the community... About \$68 of every \$100 spent in a community, goes back into supporting the community.”

Robin Bjorkquist, event

coordinator at Backus Community Center, said Saturday’s Holiday Arts and Crafts Festival attracted about 300-400 shoppers.

“We had a good selection of vendors who were happy with their sales,” she said. “Backus is pleased to be able to open our doors...to both showcase local crafters and artisans, as well as give residents another shop local opportunity.”

Overall, Whitbeck said the weekend proves holiday spirit is alive in the community.

“I was so very proud of our people over the weekend,” she said. “The bonds are so apparent as folks and their visiting family members moved about, sharing joy in the community. We want to be together – just look around on Hometown Holiday Weekend. You can see it and you can feel it.”

PLAY STREETS

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Wiedenhoef met with Merchant to discuss how the two border communities can share more resources. She said the Pulling for Peace: International Tug of War July 2 can be used as a vehicle to bring dignitaries and officials from both sides of the border together to further discuss how barriers can be removed to allow residents of both sides to access needed services.

She said Merchant suggested a tug between members of the National Guard and the Canadian Forces Reserves.

“I think it would be tremendous to have the two militaries pull,” Jaksa said, adding that 2014 marks the 200-year anniversary of a treaty between the United States and Canada. Jaksa said the celebrity tug, which has been conducted along with two other tugs, may be replaced with the military tug.

During the July festivities, Jaksa said meetings

with federal, state and provincial, and local officials ought to be scheduled to emphasize the need to share resources across the boarder.

The first focus, she said, should be medical resources, such as allowing Americans to use dialysis services available in Fort Frances, which would help Fort Frances to add a shift and make it’s services more viable. At the same time it would keep Americans from traveling more than 100 miles to get dialysis.

Councilor Paul Eklund said that many Canadians used alcohol and drug treatment services in Littlefork community prior to 9/11 and the subsequent tightening of border restrictions. Now, he said many people in Fort Frances needing those services travel as far as Toronto to get them.

“It’s a complicated area,” Jaksa said of sharing medical resources. “We need the help of professionals and health care people on both sides,” she said.

The council also heard from Anderson that Can-

ada’s Ambassador to the United States Gary Doer is scheduled to meet with the Fort Frances and Falls councils on June 26.

Falls Fire and Ambulance Chief Jerry Jensen announced that on Thursday, the ambulance service topped 1,000 runs this year. That compares to 778 for the same period in 2008.

He said the service last year made 300 over-the-road transfers to other facilities for higher level care.

Jensen grew emotional as he discussed the retirement March 7 of Firefighter Engineer Jim Hultman after 30 years of service. Hultman in a letter called the department the best in all of Minnesota and credited Jensen with support and friendship over the years.

Several councilors said Hultman’s service to the community will be missed. The council accepted Anderson’s appointment of Clayton Bahr, in accordance with the Firefighters Civil Service Commission process, to the position.

STAR OF THE SHOW



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Santa Claus waves to a crowd full of children cheering for the star of Friday’s parade.

VOLUNTEER HELPERS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Local scouts helped with the Community Thanksgiving Dinner at the Elks Lodge. More than 500 meals were served to community members. Scouts who assisted in the effort were, Girl Scout Cassie Salo Troop 1154, Boy Scout Cooper Hedtke Troop 150 and Boy Scout Nick Hedtke Troop 150.

KEDA

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is a “significant decrease.”

KEDA Board member Pete Kalar said the benefits of the expanded FTZ outweigh the minimal cost of the application process.

“For the cost, it’s very reasonable,” he said.

The application fee isn’t in the KEDA budget, KEDA Board member Bob Anderson said.

A strong season at the cold weather testing center, where the meeting took place, meant there “are additional revenues that



Paul Nevanen



Pete Kalar

could be applied to this,” Nevanen said.

International Fall’s multimodal district is very close to the current borders of the FTZ, Kalar said, and expanding the FTZ would make it easier for the city to find a tenant for the dis-


trict. Kalar represents the Falls City Council on the KEDA Board.

“If that gets going, we’re already so close already, so it’s a good transition with the rail and everything right there,” he said.

Designating the entire county as a FTZ also helps Koochiching County compete with its eastern neighbor, St. Louis County, KEDA Board member Wade Pavleck said. Pavleck is a county commissioner.

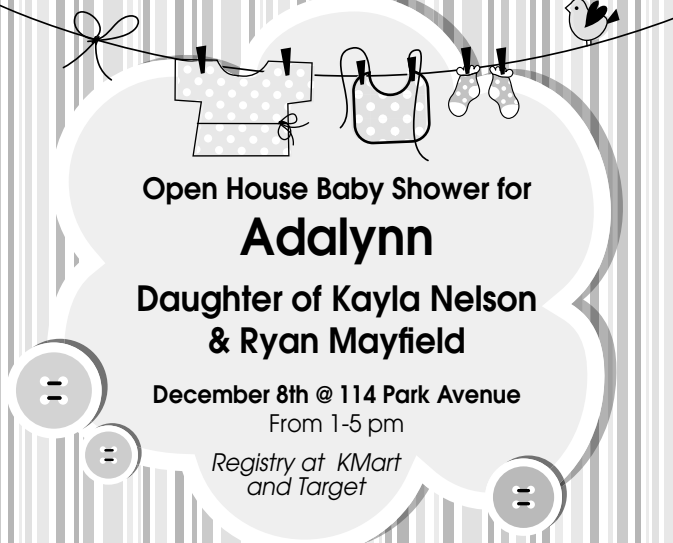
“It gives us a little bit of a leg up,” he said. “It certainly makes it more flexible for us.”

MISSING PERSON




Lonnie DeLack

The public is asked to contact the Koochiching County Law Enforcement Center at 283-4416 if they know the whereabouts of Lonnie DeLack, 42, Littlefork, who was last seen in Littlefork Nov. 9th. He is described as 6 feet tall, 170 pounds, with blue eyes and a long blonde ponytail.




Open House Baby Shower for
Adalynn
Daughter of Kayla Nelson
& Ryan Mayfield
December 8th @ 114 Park Avenue
From 1-5 pm
Registry at KMart
and Target



A Big Thank You!

The family of Ted St. Germain wishes to acknowledge all of those who remembered us at the time of our loss. Those who sent flowers, cards, gifts and food. A special thanks to all who participated in the funeral service, Father Kris, Deacon Fran Zaren, Pat Bjorum, May Ann Kalar, Anita Ringhoffer, Knights of Columbus, Beth Nelson, Pall Bearers, and Green Larsen funeral home. Thank you to the EMT's who responded to our call.



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