



Randy Lasky, right, leads a session of one of the economic response teams last year. At left is Pete Schultz.

FUTURE

► continued from A1

“We have a framework already, and we want to engage the community as we talk about the vision of the future and what we value,” Lasky said. “What can we do to make things better from an economic and quality of life standpoint and become a better place to live and work?”

Lasky said stewards will assist with a variety of activities, such as conducting interviews and surveys and meeting with groups. Those activities will be determined after stewards volunteer, he said.

Bartkowski said Bemidji Leads grew from an effort to set Bemidji apart from other communities and make it a destination for employers. Hermantown’s effort was similar, he said.

“There are a lot of people willing to serve, and they’re just not sure how to do that,” he said. “We’re asking those who feel they can make a difference to step forward.”

Wellcome said the Bemidji and Hermantown efforts used a process that involved considering issues that could be agreed

upon and moving forward with activities to make those things happen. For example, he said, the Hermantown process launched a campaign to build a new school and took steps toward that outcome.

“That’s just one of many, many other things that are possible... when you lay out a plan and work together to accomplish it,” he said.

He said the reaction by the community to this summer’s flooding is another example of what can be accomplished when people come together for a common cause.

“It was a groundswell of support, it was stunning, amazing, to see neighbors standing shoulder-to-shoulder, it was a sight to behold,” he said.

Bartkowski said team members hope to get a good turnout Thursday.

“We are hoping get people that want to make difference,” he said.

Wellcome, too, encouraged people to attend.

“We’re not asking for money,” he said. “We just want people listen, ask questions and if they think it’s right for the community to step forward and help carry the torch forward.”

BIKER

► continued from A1

Cal was inspired when two women from his town completed a ride across the United States for Iowa’s 150th anniversary. He said it was an idea that stayed in his mind until he retired.

In 2011, he and Rachel traveled to the very northwest corner of Washington, dipped the rear wheel of his bike in the Pacific Ocean, rod across the U.S. to Delaware and dipped the front wheel in the Atlantic Ocean.

Last year, the couple set out on the adventure they finished in International Falls this week. Cal rode his bike 1,000 miles, with Rachel providing support while traveling in their vehicle, unit they were east of St. Louis.

“And time ran out on us,” said Cal. “The time that we had available ran out. So this summer we want back to where we stopped and today we reached the Canadian border.”

Cal said Rachel is

crucial to their journey “carrying all our junk” as well as making sure Cal has no problems. “I wouldn’t have tried it by myself,” he said.

Rachel said she drives miles ahead and stops to wait for Cal to pass by. She said she’s passed the time by reading. But also to photograph wildlife that she may not otherwise been able to capture.

Completing the south-to-north ride was important to him, he said.

“It’s partly to say I’ve done it,” he said. “But I have had people sponsor mileage. Rotary is trying to eradicate polio and we’re doing what we can to raise money for it.”

Cal, who raised \$2,000 for the cause, served as Rotary International District 6000 district governor from 2009-2011.

Meanwhile, the Litwillers said this part of their trip brought no concerns such as flat tires or mechanical issues, and no “close calls” with vehicles, of which he’s experienced on previous trips.

“I intentionally

bought tires that we’re supposed to be resistant,” he said. And while he had high praise for U.S. Highway 53’s wide shoulders, Rachel said glass and metal can still be easily picked by a bicycle. Cal also noted that even with the wide shoulders, many truck drivers have moved over to give him extra room, and even given a honk of support as they passed by.

“It went well, but the last three days I’ve had head winds,” he said. “For a bicyclists, headwinds are a real downer, but we’re here.”

And the unseasonably cool temperatures were unexpected and caused him to “bundle up,” on the trip that took two and a half almost three days from Virginia.

And the cool weather in Borderland was a huge contrast to the 92-degree temperatures they experienced on their first day of the trip, Sept. 4. “We were so hot, and then it changed, it got down to 32 degrees the other morning,” she said.

“And Duluth has some hills,” Cal said laugh-

ing. He estimated it took about two hours to climb out of the city. Cal estimates he averaged 60 miles each day traveling 10-11 miles per hour on his bike. His bike has two wheels in the front and one in the back, and is more comfortable for him.

The couple has stayed with friends and in motels along the route, and served as ambassadors for Rotary, they said. And they said region’s plethora of easily visible wildlife was a highlight of their trip.

“The thing that’s neat about it is you learn so much about the regions,” he said. “We had no concept of all the iron ore up here.”

The couple said they very much enjoyed this adventure, but said future journey’s would not involve a bicycle. They’re discussing a trip to Africa next year to see Rotary projects.

But on Wednesday, with legs burning from the ride, Cal said they were heading home on four wheels.

“We’re driving home,” said Cal. “I’m done.”

KEDA

► continued from A1

County, and the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board make up \$96,000, or 34 percent, of the proposed income.

Nevanen said he expects a somewhat shorter cold weather testing season for 2014-2015, with the potential for extended testing into the spring. Right now, the facility is booked from November to March, he said. If cold weather persists, testing could continue past March and further into spring.

“This is a little trickier than the KEDA budget, because of snow plowing, you just don’t know, and the time constraints,” Nevanen said. “We’ve been at this long enough, I think our budget’s been pretty consistent, we’ve been pretty good

at keeping costs down.”

In his director’s report, Nevanen explained he’s been working on the rail spur project introduced at an Aug. 29 special meeting. He’s begun working with the appropriate people on legal agreements and descriptions for the project, and is also working on a resolution for the city of International Falls and Koochiching County to formally garner their support.

“We will continue to make progress,” Nevanen said. “It’s been a little slow out of the chute here, but I’ve heard very positive feedback from the folks I’ve talked to in the community about this project.”

Work on reopening the Northome Care Center continues, Nevanen said, and the potential owner and manager are working with contractor Jim Lucachick

to establish construction costs.

“It’s going to be challenging, but I think we’ve got the right people around this,” Nevanen said. “I think it’s scaled properly that we can make this work, but we still have some work to do.”

Nevanen said he’s encountered issues with the Border to Border Broadband grant, a state program aimed at bringing high-speed Internet access to underserved areas. The grant application process begins Oct. 15, and requires the partnership of a county, city, or township and a service provider.

“I thought it would be really well received by the providers, and I’m a little frustrated in that I’ve reached out to a number of providers and wanted them to provide an opportunity for areas of the county,” Nevanen said. “They’ve pledged to follow

up, but Frontier, we were supposed to have the meeting in July or August, and we still have not been able to get them to the table, as with some of the other providers.”

There’s strong support for the program in areas east of International Falls along Rainy Lake, and in Birchdale, Nevanen said. The resorts along Rainy Lake have a great desire for high-speed Internet, he said, as it would help them attract more visitors.

In order to jumpstart the application process, the board approved a motion to begin filing an application with Koochiching County, even though a provider cannot be lined up.

“Maybe that’ll bring some attention to the problem of not getting providers involved,” KEDA member Pete Kalar said.

keep in touch online ...

www.ifallsjournal.com

GREAT DEALS ON

ARIENS SNOWBLOWERS!

Now Until October 31

Buy Now And Get A 5 Year Warranty!

IN STOCK ONLY!

All Season Equipment Inc.

TRAILERS • TIRES • FULL SERVICE GARAGE

2200 2nd Ave., International Falls, MN • M-F 8-5, Sat 8-12

(218) 373-0373 • www.AllSeasonEquipmentInc.com

CHILDBIRTH CLASSES

Preparing for labor to postpartum care

Expectant mothers in or past their sixth month of pregnancy are welcome to attend FREE classes.

THURSDAYS,  
OCTOBER  
2, 9, & 16  
6:30 - 8:30 PM

RAINY LAKE MEDICAL CENTER

1400 Highway 71

Call 218-283-5524  
to register

www.rainylakemedical.com

Visit The Journal on

facebook

INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MINNESOTA

The Journal