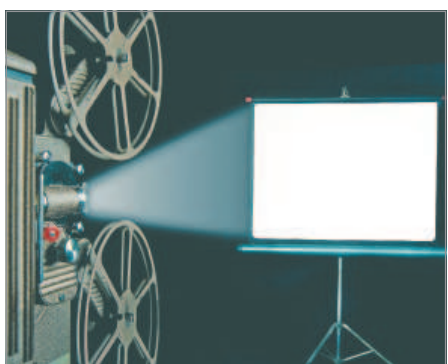


Film festival set
Thursday's event features local filmmakers

A10



Bringing business to Borderland
Locals at DEED conference discuss Borderland business climate

A9



The Journal



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STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE

Brazilian Carla Goulart (24) pulls her sled midday Monday as she approaches the Highway 53 crossing south of Ericsburg while running in the Arrowhead 135 ultramarathon.

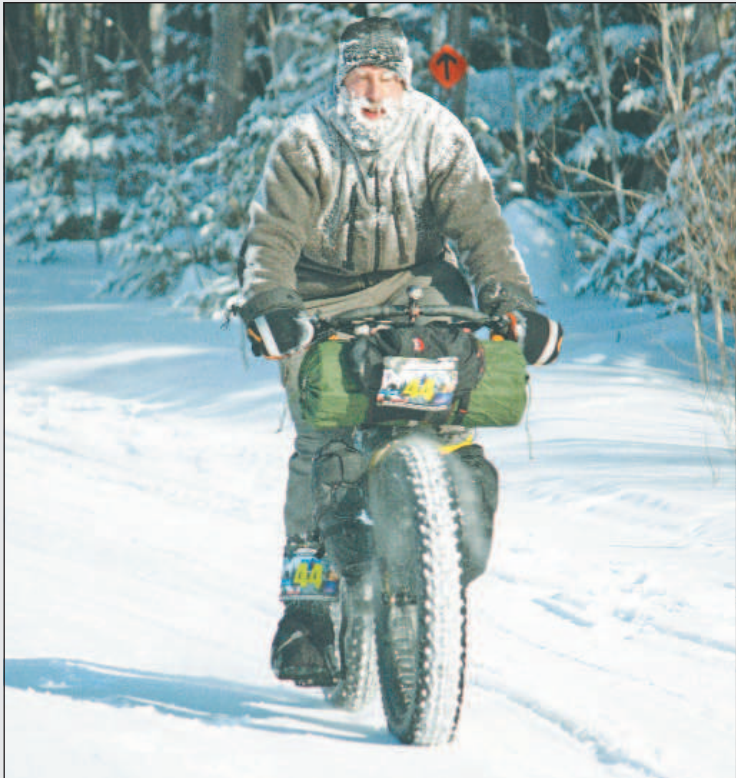
Arrowhead 135 begins in sub-zero weather

Tenth annual ultramarathon runs through 7 p.m. today

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The 10th annual Arrowhead 135 ultramarathon began at around 7 a.m. Monday in International Falls with 141 runners, bikers and skiers from throughout the United States, Canada and other countries leaving Kerry Park with the air temperature -24 degrees Fahrenheit to reach the Fortune Bay Casino near Tower by 7 p.m. today.

FOR THE COMPLETE STORY, SEE PAGE **B1**.
FOR ADDITIONAL PHOTOS, SEE PAGES **B3** AND **B10**.



Minnesotan David Gray (44) approaches the Gateway General Store checkpoint in Kabetogama on Monday morning as he rides a bicycle in the Arrowhead 135 ultramarathon.



In front from left, Arrowhead 135 ultramarathon runners Robert Marshall (134) of Maryland and Michael Holland (111) of Indiana pull their sleds loaded with survival gear across a railroad track midday Monday after crossing Highway 53 south of Ericsburg.

A sign of the times

St. Thomas School to eliminate four grades

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

The time some St. Thomas School students have left at the school was cut last week from years to months.

In an effort to ensure future stability of the school that is suffering from a declining enrollment, school officials announced they will eliminate grades 5-8 beginning during the 2014-15 school year. The change will impact nine students.

"We're being very proactive so we will not have to close our doors, but it's still very heartbreaking," principal Dawn Flesland said Monday of the decision.

Flesland, who just one year ago was hopeful to increase the school's enrollment, said when Boise Inc. announced last May it would permanently eliminate 265

jobs at the local paper mill, rumors quickly spread that the school would have to close its doors.

"At that point, we thought we'd be OK," the principal said.

Then summer vacation hit.

During that three-month period, Flesland said the school's enrollment shrunk from 39 to 26 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The school collects about \$2,750 in tuition per student and the loss amounted to around \$35,750.

"A large chunk of what our school operates on comes from tuition," Flesland said. "Another chunk is fundraising and we also receive parish subsidy, but giving is down at the church, too, so we are losing more money there."

To overcome the rapid decrease in enrollment, the parish finance council and the school's advisory committee made the decision to eliminate the school's four upper grades and focus on its preschool program.

St. Thomas to A7 >

EDA to study aquaponic concept

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The International Falls Economic Development Authority will seek money to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing and operating an aquaponic farm.

The EDA Commission Monday unanimously voted to authorize its director to seek grants to conduct a feasibility study to construct and operate one or more facilities to house an aquaponic farm that would grow fish and produce for sale and distribution.

Monday's action followed a tour of an aquaponic farm in Silver Bay earlier this month by some members of the EDA Commission, Koochiching County Board and Rainy River Community College Dean of Students Elena Favela.

Bruce Carman, project manager for the Silver Bay eco-industrial park where the farm is located, discussed the Silver Bay project with the EDA Commission Monday. He said the partnership between Silver Bay and the University of Minnesota Duluth was intended to demonstrate how food can be grown year-round with renewable resources in a closed-loop environment.

Now, he said, the concept could be put in place anywhere, growing a variety of species of fish and produce. International Falls, with its rail spur, access to wood to heat and power the facilities, and location near Rainy River Community College, may be an ideal place to consider expanding the Silver Bay concept.

EDA to A7 >

Groups urge board to avoid certain cuts

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Several Falls district employees Monday urged members of the Falls School Board to bypass their respective areas of education when making budget cuts this spring.

The special work session, which included no discussion or action, was another in a series of meetings the board is hosting to consider cost adjustments to offset the roughly \$500,000 the district is losing in state funding with the loss of about 70 students since last spring.

According to Superintendent Nurdy Nelson, the district's fund balances can no longer sustain all of its offerings and activities. In November, he provided board members with a list of options to consider which could save the district about \$717,800.

Nelson stressed items on the list, including staff reductions and eliminating two non-revenue

athletic teams, were only options and didn't need to happen all at once. Still, the cuts would enable the district to avoid dipping into its about \$3.8 million in reserve funds.

Falls High School principal Tim Everson Monday emphasized the need for clear short- and long-term goals to influence the district's future in a positive way.

"In order to consider the proposed reductions, we must know where we want to be by the end of next year and where we would like to be five years from now," he said. "Once we have our goals, we need to look at how we can move toward these goals and consider what changes will be needed."

Everson said while it is important to be fiscally responsible and avoid spending more than can be afforded, it is likely a few extra dollars will need to be spent now to improve the fiscal position of the district in the future.

Budget to A7 >

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