

Final decision expected

Golf coach position on board agenda

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Supermarket sweep

New program helps seniors

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Diane Adams reads popular children's books for local kids at the library's Stories in the Park program on Wednesday. STAFF PHOTOS BY SPENSER BICKETT

Stories for small ones

Stories in the Park, a program from the library, is a weekly summer program where someone from the library reads children's books for local kids in Smokey Bear Park. This past Wednesday, Diane Adams entertained kids with stories from popular children's book authors like Suzanne Bloom. Wednesday was the last session of the summer for Stories in the Park.



Stories in the Park allows kids to get some fresh air while also fostering a love of reading.



Diane Adams reads "Treasure," by Suzanne Bloom, a book in her popular "Goose and Bear" series of children's books.

KOOCHICHING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

KEDA reviews draft budget

BY EMILY GEDDE Staff Writer

A review of the draft budget for 2014 shows the Koochiching Economic Development Authority expects another successful year. The budget, which was reviewed Wednesday by the KEDA Board, was broken down into two parts – KEDA's operating budget and a cold weather testing budget – and is expected to be discussed and adopted when the board meets in September. "We expect a carry-over starting balance to be about \$113,958," said Paul Nevanen, KEDA director.

The draft included information that the Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board is one of the primary funding sources to the organization. "We are self-funded with the exception of IRRRB funding," Nevanen said. The IRRRB Board seeks to promote and invest in business, community and workforce development for the betterment of northeastern Minnesota. The contribution is based on a formula from taconite production. Significant increases in taconite production has been reflected in the KEDA's allocation of funds, Nevanen explained. This year, Nevanen reports KEDA received \$86,127 from the IRRRB, which is expected to be received in September or October. Next year, a signed formal agreement says the organization's portion will increase to \$93,442. "It's good news," Nevanen said. In further review of next year's budget, the board agreed to opt out of a program and put \$25,000 back into KEDA's operating budget. In 2005, KEDA joined the Minnesota Community Capital Fund program. The nonprofit corporation provides local communities

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DVNP highlights regional tourism opportunities

Celebrating success; planning for growth

BY LAUREL BEAGER Editor

Destination Voyageurs National Park this week celebrated its accomplishments and planted seeds for future growth. DVNP board members joined aboard the Voyageur tour boat for a Rainy Lake cruise that may have been symbolic of the organization itself. DVNP formed in 2007 in an effort to bring together the communities adjacent to Voyageurs National Park to market the area's tourism offerings. "We thought if we all joined to-

gether and worked together as one instead of doing individual media campaigns and marketing campaigns we would all benefit," said Jennifer Gelo, who represents the Kabetogama Lake Association and operates Sandy Point Lodge. Gelo said she wished DVNP would have happened long ago. Collaborative, cooperative thinking wasn't prevalent decades ago before and after Voyageurs National Park was created. In those days, board members said, local communities around the park competed with one another for the tourism dollar. Now, they said, they realize there's more to be gained by working together to attract visitors who often visit more than one

community around the park and may return to stay the next year at a different community. It's taken some time to organize and develop a website, said Joe Mershon, who represents Rainy Lake and the local Convention and Visitor Bureau on the board. He said the website, designed to convey to visitors the many opportunities in and around Voyageurs National Park, now offers portholes into each of the communities that serve as a gateway to Minnesota's only national park. "DVNP is a poster child for the gateway communities cooperative effort," Mershon said. "It's a cooperative marketing effort, but a real pleasant outcome is representatives of all communities get

together to market, as opposed to individually marketing and all having their own plan." Mershon said it took a while to figure out what DVNP should be, and Gelo noted that few of such organizations operate around other national parks. Other groups represented on the DVNP Board are the Orr/Pelican Lake Resort Association, city of Ranier, Crane Lake Tourism Board, St. Louis County Economic Development, Voyageurs National Park Association, Minnesota Arrowhead Association, Ash River Trail Tourism Association, Explore Minnesota Tourism, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, and Voyageurs National Park. Representatives

of the last three agencies serve as non-voting advisers. Mershon said it took some time to get people who had in the past been uncomfortable with one another to come together. "Now, nobody is trying to grab a bigger piece of the pie than anyone else," he said. "And that's what we are proud of. There was a lot of turmoil and first people were angry with the park and then they were picking on each other. It's taken time to heal that back up." Now the website is drawing attention to the region from across the nation, DVNP Board will begin to seek support from Min-

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