

Dressed  
their best

Pet contest has  
good turnout

B3



Nifty and  
thrifty

Thrift store  
benefits community

A9



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STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

David Burchell made Friday's 'Twas the Lights Before Christmas parade more magical by surprising his girlfriend, Jennifer McKelvey, with a marriage proposal. With the couple's family and friends watching, McKelvey said "yes," which was followed by an enthusiastic applause from the crowd.

## SHE SAID 'YES'

Couple gets engaged during annual Christmas parade

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

David Burchell made sure Friday night was one Jennifer McKelvey would never forget.

When McKelvey was riding down main street on a float during the 'Twas the Lights Before Christmas parade, her ride came to a sudden stop. John Legend's "All of Me" started playing and a sign that read "Will you marry me, Jenny?" came into view.

"At first I didn't know what was happening," said McKelvey, who serves as the International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce executive assistant. "It didn't hit me what was going on until I saw (David) walk through the crowd toward me. And he just looked like such a prince."

With the couple's family and friends behind him, Burchell got down on one knee and asked his girlfriend of almost two years to be his wife. The crowd erupted into cheers and applause when she accepted.

"I can't believe this is happening," McKelvey said staring at the solitaire diamond on her finger. "I don't even want to put my mitten back on."

The bride-to-be said Monday the couple discussed a date for the big day over the weekend, but nothing has been set.

In addition to the excitement brought on by the new-



Gary Mann, left, gives Santa Claus a ride on his horse-drawn sleigh Friday. Mann also gave rides to parade goers before the event began.

FOR MORE PHOTOS, TURN  
TO PAGE A10.

ly-engaged couple, chamber President Faye Whitbeck said overall, the annual parade had one of the best turnouts to date.

"The chamber has been interactive with the community in several ways, and we started promoting the parade in early October and increased the prize amounts," she said. "It seems the overall effort and investment in the size and quality of the floats was of a higher degree. I do hope that all (entries) feel like winners

— because the judges said scoring was challenging. Every one of the floats contributed to the success of the parade."

The Gizzard Girls earned the first-place award, Duty Free America came in second place and St. Thomas Church and school was named

Parade to A7 >

## Deadline for flood damage survey extended

Watershed board  
seeks information  
until Dec. 22

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

Property owners who experienced flood damage in the Rainy and Namakan chain of lakes in June and July have until Dec. 22 to respond to an online survey.

The deadline to respond to the flood damages survey has been extended until Dec. 22. Visit the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board website at [http://ijc.org/en/\\_/RLWWB](http://ijc.org/en/_/RLWWB) to participate in the survey.

The survey is a part of the review and evaluation of the performance of water level management

Flood to A7 >

CITY COUNCIL

## Council reacts to board concern

County board  
expected to consider  
revised annexation  
plan Dec. 23

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

The International Falls City Council approved a revised agreement with Koochiching County for annexation of the multimodal district into the city.

Reacting to concerns voiced by some Koochiching County commissioners last week about the need to prohibit all industrial waste businesses in the district, the council on a 3-2 vote approved the addition of a sentence stating no such business will be sited in the district without the approval of protections by the county.

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