

# LOCALNEWS

## Know the rules of the ride

Sheriff reminds snowmobilers to stay off private property

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

Nearly 10 inches of snow following a nearly snowless December has revved up outdoor recreationists, including snowmobilers.

The enthusiasm to get out and experience Borderland's snowmobiling opportunities has brought a couple complaints of trespassing to the Koochiching County Sheriff's Office.

The complaints center on snowmobilers trespassing on private property.

Sheriff Perryn Hedlund said what's likely happening is snowmobilers are leaving marked trails and using private property to get to another location.

"The issue starts when one or two do it, and others see the tracks and start utilizing it like a trail and may not even know it's not a trail," Hedlund said.

He encouraged property owners to post their land with no trespassing signs to keep people from knowingly or unknowingly trespassing. Trespassing on posted property is more easily prosecuted in the courts, he said.

"People must be mindful of staying on the marked trails we have in the county and staying off private property, especially property that is posted no trespassing," he said.

While crossing someone's property may not seem like a big deal, Hedlund said the problem often lies beneath the snow: septic systems, rocks, and ponds with questionable ice conditions.

Hedlund said Wednesday one complaint received this week involved snowmobiles traveling over a mound



FILE PHOTO

**Sheriff Perryn Hedlund urges snowmobilers to stick to the trails and avoid trespassing on private property.**

septic system on private property. Packing snow atop a mound system can cause it to fail, he said.

"With the new snowfall, they probably had no clue they were going over a septic system," Hedlund said. "But that can cause serious problems."

Another complaint was from a property owner who feared snowmobiles crossing a small pond on his property could find unstable ice.

"His concern is he knows the ice isn't that good and doesn't want people to fall through," Hedlund said.

Staying on marked snowmobile trails assures drivers the ice conditions have been deemed safe for snowmobiles, Hedlund said.

"The marked trails offer security that there are no hidden obstacles and unsafe ice," he said.

Hedlund said most snowmobilers want to do the right thing and may not

know the rules or be aware of property ownership when following tracks left earlier by other snowmobilers.

Snowmobilers should get familiar with the rules on where to ride, Hedlund said.

In Koochiching County, snowmobilers may operate in the ditch of any state or county road, but cannot operate on a county road, he said.

### International Falls

International Falls Police Capt. Tom Lynch said snowmobiles are allowed to operate within the city and on city streets, but they must travel on the far right side of the road and no faster than 20 miles per hour.

However, he added, those allowances only apply to snowmobilers who have the proper registration, safety certificate and meet other state requirements.

However, he said it is illegal to operate on private property within the city.

### INTERNATIONAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL

## Zamboni just 300 days away

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

The International Falls City Council Monday unanimously approved ordering an electric Zamboni contingent on approval of a grant toward the effort.

The council tabled action to approve additional money toward the effort, after Councilor Harley Droba noted it had not been included in the agenda printed in The Journal.

The council was to consider contributing \$31,733 toward the \$110,233 Zamboni.

The existing gas-powered Zamboni used at the city's Kerry Park Arena generates carbon monoxide in the arena posing a safety concern for those inside.

Because it involves an expenditure of public money without the public's notice and Councilor Brian Briggs was absent, Droba asked that it be removed from the agenda.

The council removed the item from the agenda, but later city Administrator Ken Anderson told the council the Zamboni takes 300 days to construct. Waiting to order it after the council considers the change in contribution could

jeopardize a grant and the ability to use the Zamboni next season.

Nearly one year ago, the council agreed to revise a resolution approved earlier to contribute \$52,000 toward an effort to raise money to purchase a electric Zamboni for use at the city's Kerry Park Arena.

As a result of contributions from other groups, and the potential for a Mighty Ducks grant through the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission, the city's share was revised to \$27,218.

Other groups contributing include the International Falls Recreation Commission, International Falls Recreation Hockey Association, the Falls Men's Tournament Committee and the Koochiching County Development Authority.

"I am all about transparency, but we've already approved a higher amount," Councilor Pete Kalar said. He said the public has been informed of the city's contribution of an even higher



Pete Kalar

amount — \$52,000. "I don't want to lose the grant money because we wait two weeks," he continued.

Anderson said by placing the order for the Zamboni, a place would be reserved in the production line for the Falls.

In other city business that day, the council met to reorganize for 2015, approving appointments to boards and committees.

No one was appointed to serve as the city's health officer. City Attorney Steve Shermoen suggested malpractice insurance was an issue. He said the city's health officer may need to be someone covered by the insurance of another entity at which they work full time.

Councilor Cynthia Jaksa wondered whether the position is needed.

Mayor Bob Anderson said the city charter calls for the position, which assists in health issues that may be involved in blight or other concerns in the city.

Jaksa wondered if the city's charter must be followed.

Shermoen said the city's Charter Commission would be the appropriate place to consider changes to the city's charter.

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