

No business like snow business

Snow to be joined by below-zero temperatures

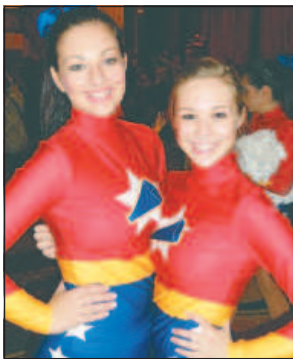
A3



Trip of a lifetime

FHS cheerleaders take on NYC

B6



The Journal

Wednesday, December 4, 2013

International Falls, Minnesota

www.ifallsjournal.com

\$1



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Children dressed as wrapped gifts make their way down Third Street with their “Gingerbread House and Gifts” float during Friday’s ‘Twas the Lights Before Christmas Parade. The float, designed by the local Girl Scouts, Brownies and Daises, took the first-place prize in the event.

KEDA looks to expand FTZ

BY SPENSER BICKETT Staff Writer

The Koochiching Economic Development Authority Board Wednesday passed a motion to proceed with expanding the foreign trade zone within Koochiching County. KEDA Director Paul Nevanen discussed the benefits of expanding the borders of the FTZ through an alternative site framework process. The federal FTZ board has found people were trying to fit businesses to the zone, he said, and not the other way around. To deal with this issue, he said, the FTZ board came up with the ASF process, which allows for expansion of a FTZ to a larger area, which can help FTZ hosts bring in potential businesses.

“You designate a much larger geography as a foreign trade zone,” he said. “That way, you’re not trying to fit the business to the location, the location can host the business, so you have more flexibility in terms of where you can have zone activity.” Once an FTZ user has been found, Nevanen said, the host is required to define the specific area where the activity is taking place. Seventy percent of current FTZs take advantage of the ASF, he said, and have made entire counties into FTZs. The stipulations in the process would allow the FTZ to be expanded to include “99 percent of the county,” he said. KEDA would work with Point Trade Services, a Florida-based company, on the ASF application process, Nevanen said. Duluth worked with the company when it expanded its FTZ to include the entire port, and he said officials were “very satisfied with the process.” The ASF application process takes six to nine months, Nevanen said, and involves the U.S. Department of Commerce, which is why hiring an experienced company helps deal with the federal bureaucracy. Point Trade Services charged Duluth \$15,000 to expand its FTZ, he said, and the current rate is \$3,500, which

KEDA to A7 ➤

Hometown holiday brings cheer

BY EMILY GEDDE Staff Writer

Complete with rosy cheeks and multiple layers of winter garb, children lining Third and Fourth streets Friday resembled the overdressed character Randy Parker from the popular holiday classic, “A Christmas Story.” But the extra clothing didn’t appear to hinder the jumping up and down fueled by the youngsters’ excitement as the ‘Twas the Lights Before Christmas Parade promenade through downtown International Falls. “What’s important is to have fun and include children in the magic,” Faye Whitbeck, president of the International Falls Chamber of Commerce said of the effort. “Kids never forget the experience.” The annual parade, part of Hometown Holiday Weekend in Borderland, officially kicked off the holiday season and Whit-



A child’s eyes widen as Santa Claus passes by during Friday’s parade.

FOR MORE PHOTOS, TURN TO A10



Pahtynn Glennie sits in the cold weather test float built by the Koochiching Economic Development Authority. The entry received second place in Friday’s parade.

beck gave the event two thumbs up. “Overall, it was outstanding,” she said. “There were outstanding new and alumni entries for

the parade.” Of the about one dozen float entries that lit up the downtown streets, first place was awarded to a float designed by

the local Girl Scouts, Brownies and Daises; second place was awarded to Koochiching

Parade to A7 ➤

Play Streets may be added to summer festivities

BY LAUREL BEAGER Editor

International Falls’ Concert in the Park summer events could have a new feature come June. The International Falls City Council Monday resolved its support to include Play Streets, a physical activity initiative that could be funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. Nancy Lee, coordinator of the local Statewide Health Improvement Program, known as SHIP, asked the council for support to include Play Streets in the Wednesday events at Smokey Bear Park on the second Wednesdays in June, July and August.

Lee said she has sought a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield’s Center for Prevention to fund the additional events which will focus around encouraging people to regularly take part in physical activity in the community. She said Play Streets coincides with the SHIP initiative to encourage more people to regularly ride bike and walk in the community. She said the grants will be awarded in January. In the meantime, she asked the city to consider blocking vehicle traffic from three blocks during the Play Street events, scheduled to be offered from 5-8 p.m. on the second Wednesdays during the summer months.

She said the Concert in the Park events, which already include Stories in the Park, see a good fit and organizers Jeff and Diane Adams are enthusiastic about the idea to add to the activities. She said Jeff Adams suggested adding an area for street dancing during Play Streets. “We’re looking at adding on to something already happening instead of creating something new,” she said. Blocking the streets would connect Smokey Bear Park to the Community Market and Community Garden. And in an effort to further connect healthy eating with regular physical activity, she said Backus Community Cen-

ter officials have agreed to offer a free meal during the family meal time at the park pavilion. Koochiching County Public Health, for which Lee also serves as a public health nurse, will serve as the fiscal agent for the grant, should it be approved. Lee told the council that after it is known whether the grant will be available, she would further refine the activities that will be offered. Already, she said, many agencies, organizations and businesses involved in health-related fields have agreed to develop activities. She said activities such as disc golf and tae kwon do will be represented along with the participation of fitness and bicycle

businesses. “There has been an overwhelmingly positive response,” she said. “We want to offer something for kids through adults to do there.” Councilors said they’re pleased by the effort to encourage more people to get fit. “The goal of greater walking and bicycling in the community is very positive,” said Falls Mayor Bob Anderson. In other business, the council heard about a meeting Nov. 22 with Canadian Consul General Jamshed Merchant. Councilor Cynthia Jaksa and Fort Frances Councilor Rick

Play Streets to A7 ➤