Legislators encourage residents to be ‘engaged’

BY BEN KARKELA
HERALD REVIEW

Three of northern Minnesota’s local lawmakers attended the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce’s Lunch with Legislators event at the Timberlake Hotel on Wednesday, Dec. 8.

The event featured Rep. Matt Bliss, Sen. Justin Eichorn, and Rep. Spencer Igo. The three legislators gave brief introductions before fielding questions from attendees. Sen. Eichorn said that Gov. Tim Walz has brought Washington D.C. politics to Minnesota and he expects 2022 to be a politically driven year. He mentioned that neither of the three legislators present have been able to meet with Gov. Walz yet.

Sen. Eichorn then talked about his proposal to return the state’s $7.7 billion surplus to its citizens. In a statement released earlier this month, Eichorn said Minnesota should give Minnesotans the money back. “This budget surplus shows that our government is taking too much money from the pockets of Minnesotans,” Sen. Eichorn wrote. “We need to give taxpayers their money back. With rising costs and inflation, let’s give Minnesotans the relief they’ve earned. This includes prioritizing my bill to eliminate the unfair Social Security tax and looking at ways to create a tax climate that better supports Minnesota job creation.”

Tamarie Lowrey of the Itasca Economic Development Corporation stated that the accessibility of local legislators has been a tremendous help and asset to the county and northern Minnesota.

Discussion then shifted to energy mandates throughout the state and the announced plans for Huber Engineered Woods to open a new production facility in Cohasset. Rep. Igo is a member of the Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee. He mentioned that during virtual meetings, bills ensuring energy mandates move quickly with little discussion.

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THE CHRISTMAS HORSE PARADE SPREADS HOLIDAY CHEER

BY BEN KARKELA
HERALD REVIEW

A group of horse riders gathered together to wish residents at Majestic Pines Senior Living a merry Christmas on Saturday.

The “Christmas Horse Parade” is turning into an annual tradition for a group of friends who enjoy riding horses and spreading Christmas cheer. Angie Forconi helped organize the event last year.

“Last year, it was a huge hit,” Forconi said. “It was just a group of friends that came up with the idea and it was one of the best Christmas gifts I’ve ever given.”

Forconi, her friends, and their horses dressed up in Christmas attire and paraded around the senior living facility and greeted residents.

It was a way to spread cheer to seniors living in assisted living facilities, many of whom did not have the chance to meet with family and friends last year.

“Last year, the big thing was people couldn’t get together and see their relatives,” Houg said. “People would come up with this and people just loved it.”

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‘It’s all about the kids’

BY BEN KARKELA
HERALD REVIEW

VPW Post 1720 held a quick and easy way for children to say “hello” to Santa Claus this year by hosting its second-annual Santa Drive Thru on Saturday from 1-4 p.m.

Members of the VPW and its auxiliary unit directed traffic into the parking lot and around the building where visitors were greeted by a host of elves and Santa. Nick himself.

Kids in the care were given gift bags and had the chance to tell Santa Claus about their Christmas wish list.

Ellen Barnes was dressed up as one of Santa’s elves and helped distribute the gift bags. She said they had about 50 cars, averaging about two children each, drive through by 1:30 p.m. They were prepared to deliver gift bags to 300 kids.

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PHOTO BY YUKAKO KARKELA

PHOTO BY YUKAKO KARKELA
SANTA AND HIS ELF HELPERS GAVE AWAY GIFTS AT THE VPW POST 1720 IN GRAND RAPIDS ON SATURDAY PROVIDING GIFTS AND GOODIES FOR CHILDREN.

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