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Wood plant firm moves to answer critics

Huber Engineered Woods will work to provide data on Cohasset project questions

LEE BLOOMQUIST
FOR MESABI TRIBUNE

Cohasset Mayor Greg Hagy is having a hard time understanding concerns over construction of a wood products plant in his city. "I just don't understand the push back," Hagy said. "We need the jobs, the loggers need the jobs, the construction union needs the jobs." Huber Engineered Woods of Charlotte, N.C., plans to build a roughly \$440 million,

750,000 square-foot oriented strand board (OSB) manufacturing plant at Minnesota Power's Boswell Energy Center in Cohasset. The project would create 158 new jobs at the plant, 300 to 400 construction jobs and an estimated three to four times that number of jobs in the logging, trucking, hospitality and supply industries. But concerns are now being raised over the project by an OSB competitor, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and

an environmental advocacy group. In a 244-page Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) public comment document, the Leech Lake Band says "The Tribe has significant concerns about the lack of information provided in the EAW, and questions regarding how the project will affect the Reservation and Ceded Territory environment, including the Tribe's ability to exercise treaty rights and maintain cultural, spiritual, and reli-

gious practices." The tribe asks that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be performed on the project. West Fraser, a Vancouver, B.C. wood products company which operates an OSB plant in Solway, Minn., near Bemidji, says the city should withdraw the EAW as legally deficient and consult with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Minne-

sota Environmental Quality Board to conduct a proper analysis. "It appears that the EAW is seeking to avoid reconciling an OSB facility that consumes 400,000 cords of wood per year with a recent and extensive analysis suggesting this new consumption is at odds with the sustainability of Minnesota's state and private forests," West Fraser said in its EAW comments.

SEE PLANT, A8



HOLIDAYS COME EARLY

The holidays came early to Olcott Park in Virginia Thursday evening when the Essentia Health Foundation/Virginia hosted a tree lighting and family night out in the park. In addition to the tree lighting the event featured luminaries, family portraits and food. Proceeds from the event are being used to improve newborn treatment and education options at Essentia Health Virginia.



PHOTOS BY MARK SAUER

At left, luminaries were set up around the Olcott Park Bandstand as part of the Essentia Virginia Health Foundation's Holiday Family Night Out event.

Rittenhouse found not guilty on all 5 counts

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP) — Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted of all charges Friday after pleading self-defense in the deadly Kenosha shootings that became a flashpoint in the debate over guns, vigilantism and racial injustice in the U.S. Rittenhouse, 18, began to choke up, fell forward toward the defense table and then hugged one of his attorneys as he heard a court clerk recite "not

guilty" five times. A sheriff's deputy whisked him out a back door. "He wants to get on with his life," defense attorney Mark Richards said. "He has a huge sense of relief for what the jury did to him today. He wishes none of this ever happened. But as he said when he testified, he did not start this." The verdict in the

SEE TRIAL, A8

Finnish pulla today at Kaleva Hall in Virginia Kiitos (that's Finnish for thanks)!

LINDA TYSSEN
MESABI TRIBUNE

VIRGINIA — Tervetuloa, in Finnish, or in English, welcome, to the Ladies of Kaleva 53rd annual Finnish-American holiday bazaar from 9 to 11 a.m., or until gone, today at the historic Kaleva Hall, 125 Third St. N. Janet Eichholz of the committee said, "This year due to the concerns of COVID-19 we are limiting our bazaar to the bake sale and raffle. The really great news is that the Ladies of Soinnuttar-

en Tupa 32 will still be selling their traditional Finnish pulla. Pulla was brought to the Iron Range by Finnish immigrants over a hundred years ago. Some call it cardamom bread or biscuit. No matter which name it goes by, it is a delicious favorite for the upcoming holidays and enjoyed by most everyone. Other scrumptious goodies will also be available at the bake sale tables. Many of these treats are part of our 'Remem-

SEE KALEVA, A8

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