

Herald-Review



www.grandrapidsmn.com

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

OT in St. Paul: Without a budget agreement between Republicans and Gov. Mark Dayton, special session to begin

By Katy Meeks Legislative Correspondent

ST. PAUL — "We're limping into the finish line," DFL Minority Leader Tom Bakk of Cook said Monday afternoon, just hours before the declaration of a special session, "Which is an incredible disappointment."

The Monday deadline of midnight came and went without an agreement between Republicans and Gov. Mark Dayton to fill a \$5 billion budget hole.

Now a special session is in order, dedicat-

ing the month of June to more negotiations. If nothing happens by June 30, the government will be forced to shut down, similar to what happened in 2005 under former Gov. Tim Pawlenty.

Bakk said Republicans have taken a "my way or the highway" approach and refused to compromise, but the senator said Gov. Dayton has made many compromises along the way.

"They haven't been willing to move an inch," DFL Rep. Carly Melin of Hibbing said.

But Monday afternoon, Rep. Carolyn

McElpatrick, R-Grand Rapids, said she was reluctant to speculate to any real degree on a special session.

"No one wants to go into special session," she said. "We have presented a balanced budget to the governor. We increased the budget from the originally expected \$32 to \$34 billion, midway between our starting point and the governor's proposed budget of \$36 billion. We're ready to wrap up the session and are waiting for the governor."

OT to page 7 >



City council denies text amendment

By Lisa Rosemore Grand Rapids Herald-Review

The Grand Rapids City Council finally voted on a proposed text amendment which had been tabled from previous council meetings.

The motion to deny a text amendment to allow recycling in areas zoned public use/shoreland public use was unanimously approved at Monday's city council meeting.

The text amendment was originally proposed to allow Deer River Hired Hands to use the now-vacant dewatering building at the Grand Rapids Public Utilities wastewater treatment plant as a collection area. The amendment had been tabled to allow city staff to investigate further and assemble "findings of fact" on whether or not the amendment was feasible.

One concern council members had voiced previously was if the text amendment passed, recycling centers would be allowed in all public use zoned areas, not just the treatment plant property.

City to page 7 >

Spring Fling goodness



Heathe Hampton, 3, enjoyed some pink cotton candy during the carnival fundraiser for the Grand Rapids High School Band on Wednesday, May 18 at the high school football field. Besides cotton candy, there was also sno cones, face painting, rock climbing, and inflatable jumpers and slides. The carnival was held in conjunction with the school's Spring Fling week and the band's annual Jazz Fest.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Klatt

Juveniles charged in connection with false abduction report

By Lisa Rosemore Grand Rapids Herald-Review

It was the first time since 2006 that an Amber Alert had been issued in Itasca County, but in the case of Saturday's report of an armed abduction, the reported incident turned out to be false. Two 17-year-old juveniles have been charged with misdemeanor falsely reporting a crime in connection with the case.

It was discovered that two 17-year-old males had fabricated the alleged abduction, said Grand Rapids Police Chief Jim Denny.

"The motive behind this scheme was unclear," Denny said.

Local authorities issued the Amber Alert Saturday afternoon after receiving a report around 1 p.m. that a 17-year-old male had been abducted at gunpoint in Grand Rapids by three males in a black Suburban.

The Amber Alert was issued while officers continued to investigate the inci-

dent, Denny said. While investigating the incident, officers were notified by an off-duty Itasca County deputy that he observed a male matching the description of the victim in a wooded area near where the incident occurred.

Officers responded and attempted to make contact with the male, who fled on foot, Denny said. Officers apprehended the male a short time later and identified him as the alleged abducted juvenile.

Through interviews with both the individual who reported the incident and the alleged victim, authorities learned the incident had been falsely reported.

Even though this report was false, there's still some good which came from Saturday's incident.

"It was a good trial run," said Itasca County Sheriff Vic Williams. "It shows we are ready."

"The system worked the way it's supposed to," said Grand Rapids Assistant Police Chief Steve Schaar.

Abduction to page 7 >

Grand Rapids native promoting AIDS awareness in Thailand

By Nathan Bergstedt Grand Rapids Herald-Review

After graduating from Grand Rapids High School in 1982, Anita Root thought it would be a great idea to volunteer with the Peace Corps. But as elements of life conspired against her, that idea never became a reality of her young life. So life moved on. She ended up moving to the Twin Cities, where she worked for Northwest Airlines in the International Marketing department. But when the airliner merged with Delta a couple years back, she had the option to keep her job, provided she moved to Atlanta. Whereas the opportunity hadn't presented itself in the mid-80s, the option to join the Peace Corps had all of a sudden reemerged in 2009. She decided to skip Atlanta for some more, say, tropical climates.

"I think the reasons were the same, but the timing was better for me."

Root has been in Thailand for about a year now, just over half of her 27 month commitment to the Corps. As a community developer volunteer, Root has been involved with several projects in the village of Piman, located in the Nakhon Phanom Province

near the border of Laos, including a recycling project and an agricultural fair, which are currently in process. An early project involved getting a new sink in the elementary school that was low enough for the children to use. Prior to that, the school only had two sinks, both of which were at adult height, making it difficult to teach the kids proper hygiene.

But most recently, Root organized a three day long HIV/AIDS life skills camp in mid-April. Nearly 40 of the local youths, aged 13 to 20 years-old, participated in this camp where they learned various means of HIV prevention, as well as a litany of facts pertaining to the virus and those which it affects.

World-wide, more than 33 million individuals are infected with HIV/AIDS. Eastern Asia and the Pacific have about 15 percent of all cases of those living with the virus, and about one percent live in Thailand. So when a local official made a recommendation to Root that a learning project about the virus be undertaken, she thought it was a good idea.

AIDS to page 10 >



Submitted photo

Anita Root (second row, left of center, with white hair) and the teenagers who were involved in the three-day HIV/AIDS life skills camp. Root has been living and working with people in the Thailand village of Piman for the past year, and recently focused her attention on AIDS awareness so as to hopefully decrease the spread of the disease in the area.

Grand Rapids Herald-Review

General Manager: Ron Oleheiser Editor: Britta Arendt 218-326-6623 news@grandrapidsheraldreview.net

Flip to it:

Classifieds.....5-7c Entertainment4b Obituaries4 Opinion6 Law Report.....8 Legals4c,9a

Check out:

Roller babes win See Sports



Inside today's newspaper:



Vol. 115 No. 1



Every building needs a good foundation.

Downtown Office 326-9414 | Pokegama Office 326-9687 | grsb.com

11181784grh