

# International Falls Journal

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Kim O'Loughlin (270) and Jeri Ann Graves (232) cross the finish line of Saturday's 5-kilometer Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard Run in just over 31 minutes. Icebox Days temperatures at the starting line dipped to -31 degrees below that morning.

STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE



A frosty-faced Uriah Kerry of East Grand Forks, crosses the finish line of the 5-k race. Kerry was one of the bolder runners who finished both the 5-k and 10-k Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard runs.

## Frigid temps invigorate runners

Air temperature sets FYGBR record

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

Kyle Smith's teeth were still chattering nearly 25 minutes after crossing the finish line of the 10-kilometer Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard Run Saturday morning at Backus Community Center.

The 32-year-old runner from Duluth finished the 39th annual event in 37 minutes, 16 seconds. He said he's run cold races before, but the -26 degrees at the starting line may be the coldest.

"I did a hypothermic half mara-

thon... I think this might have it beat," he said. "This is my fourth time running this race... I like the run... This is my slowest time on this course, though."

The temperature at the 9 a.m. starting line of the 5-kilometer race was -31 degrees and attracted nearly 100 runners who felt bold enough to run in the cold. The actual air temp broke a record for the race, shattering the previous record of -25 degrees set in 2005.

"We have run in colder temperatures when accounting for wind chill, but as far as air temp goes, this set a record," said Tricia Heibel, Interna-

tional Falls Area Chamber of Commerce president. "We were all blessed that the wind was not a factor this weekend, and a big sunny sky also kept everyone's spirits up."

Falls High School senior Hunter Wilson won the 5-k race for the second year in a row with a time of 18 minutes, 56 seconds.

"It definitely helped push me this year knowing I wanted to win it again," Wilson told The Journal.

Last year's race and Saturday's event may have featured the same route, but temperatures were a little different. In 2018, Wilson and other runners quickly shed layers as tem-

peratures climbed to 28 degrees. The 59-degree difference between then and Saturday took its toll.

"It was really cold," Wilson said. "My time wasn't one of my fastest and I think the cold contributed to that."

John Cowman said nothing beats northern Minnesota weather.

"It's always fun coming out here and running in this race," the 2018 Falls High graduate said. "This is the second coldest (FYGBR) I've ever done. The coldest was -35 or -40 below."

Icebox to A8 ➤



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Big Falls Mayor Marta Lindemanis shows Rep. Rob Ecklund, center, and Sen. Tom Bakk a map of the expansion and improvements at the Big Falls campground. Bakk asked Lindemanis to send him a report on the project.

## Meeting of the minds

Local officials talk session with state lawmakers

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

Projects, policies and issues were brought by elected officials in Koochiching County to Borderland's state lawmakers Friday.

Rep. Rob Ecklund and Sen. Tom Bakk met in committee with the county board, which invited city officials from within the county to join for discus-

sion about legislative priorities and actions that could benefit local communities.

Bakk and Ecklund also commented on a number of issues they see of importance expected to be addressed this session. Bakk said Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz made clear in a private meeting that his No. 1 priority is restoring the amount of local government aid, or LGA, cities receive to 2002 levels, before drastic cuts

were made. He said along with LGA goes county program aid.

Bakk also said Walz being a rural governor, from Mankato, will serve Minnesota well.

Meanwhile, commissioners listed 15 items about which they want Ecklund and Bakk to know their thoughts, and the thoughts of some of the county's department supervisors, several of whom also

Meeting to A8 ➤



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# Icebox days



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE  
Kyle Smith of Duluth crosses the finish line of the 10-k Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard run first with a time of 37 minutes, 16 seconds.



Friends Emily Amerud, left, and RaeAnn Lundy, share a laugh after finishing Saturday's 5-k race.



Erin Tolley, 9, readies herself to bowl a frozen turkey Saturday afternoon at Backus Community Center.



Spectators offer encouragement to Paul Hilfer of Mankato as he nears the finish line of the 10-k FYGBR. Hilfer completed the race in 46 minutes, 52 seconds.



Hunter Wilson, who won Saturday's 5-k FYGBR, takes a break after receiving his finisher medal. Wilson, who won last year's 5-k race, ran the 2019 event in 18 minutes, 56 seconds.



Milt Layman of the Falls, finishes the 5-k race in 26 minutes flat. Layman also ran the 10-k race and finished with a time of 51 minutes, 35 seconds.



Gina Smith of Billings, Mont., celebrates after getting a strike while turkey bowling Saturday. Smith said this was her first Icebox Days event, but came to the area because she is a member of the Millard family.



John Pozniak, a 2004 Falls High School graduate, completes the 5-k Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard Run by leaping over the finish line. Pozniak finished with a time of 33 minutes, 21 seconds.

*Below* — Smoosh racers nearly lose their balance as they participate in the annual Icebox Days event Saturday.



Suzanne Milette of Iliamna, Alaska, celebrates as she crosses the finish line of the 5-k FYGBR after running for 40 minutes, 41 seconds.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team "Fire and Ice" won best sled in the Frostbite Falls Open Saturday on Rainy Lake near Thunderbird Lodge. Team members are Desiree Arnold, Kurt Kennedy, Michelle Bergstrom, and Bill Bergstrom.