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FACE FEDERAL CHARGES
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Reel fun on the ice as anglers compete for fish and prizes



go down at noon sharp—not a minute earlier. Fish must be alive at weigh-in to qualify, and northern pike must fall outside the protected slot limit, meaning any 24 to 36-inch northerns must be released immediately.

Fishing is allowed on both East and West Rabbit Lake, and the weigh-in station will be located at the Rabbit Lake Landing off County Road 31 north of Cuyuna. All participants must have a valid fishing license.

Winners will be announced back at the Woodtick Inn around 4 p.m., where bragging rights will be on full display.



Pre-party Feb. 20

The fun starts early with a Fishing Contest Pre-party on Friday, Feb. 20, at the

Woodtick Inn, located at 24916 Minnesota Avenue in Cuyuna.

A mega meat raffle gets underway at 6:30 p.m., with all proceeds benefiting the Cuyuna Fire Department (License #02163). Live music will follow the raffle, making it the perfect warm-up before hitting the ice.

Spots for the fishing contest are limited, so anglers are encouraged to sign up early at the Woodtick Inn before it fills up. For more information, call the Woodtick (or "the Tick") at 218-772-0252.

Whether you're chasing trophies, cash prizes, or just a great weekend on Rabbit Lake, this is one winter tradition you won't want to miss.

Jaycees Extravaganza

Over on Gull Lake, where the ice was plenty thick this year, Thomas Johnson, a Brainerd fellow, is the 2026 winner of the Jaycees Ice

Fishing Extravaganza. A 30-year event attendee, he rose to the top of the leaderboard with a 5.63 lb. walleye. He intended to keep the Grand Prize Ford pickup truck. Conditions were ideal for fishing this year with all the recent cold weather in the area.

Fishing in 48 feet of water, Johnson's fish was lured in with a buck-shot rattle lure and a fathead minnow. The proceeds from the tourney are donated to numerous area non-profits by the Brainerd Jaycees.

Justin Morneau Classic

The Justin Morneau United Heros League Ice Fishing Classic went on to the east on Mille Lacs Lake. This sporting event may be a little lesser known than the Jaycees Extravaganza but also boasts loads of great prizes.

Morneau, a Canadian, played 11 seasons with the Minnesota Twins as a first baseman. The

tournament, which has limited species of fish, was held at Nitti's Hunter's Point Resort. Winner of the Ice Castle fish house was Austin Creher, while David Claypool won the Polaris 4-wheeler.

Winning anglers were Cohen Chep, with a first place 6.29 lb. walleye, who won an Otter XT Hide Out. Tara Bierer had the winning 7.38 lb. Northern and won an Otter Vortex Resort package. In the perch category, Locue Her and a whopping 1.99-pounder got a \$150 Scheels Gift Card and in the "Other" division, Trysten Guimont took home a Buddy Heater 9000 BTU.

The tournament beneficiary is The United Heroes. They provide sports equipment, offer sports camps, subsidize association fees, and distribute sporting event tickets and award special experiences to military children.



2 26
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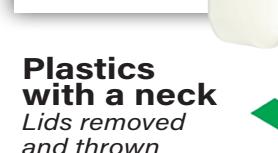
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Plastics with a neck

Lids removed and thrown

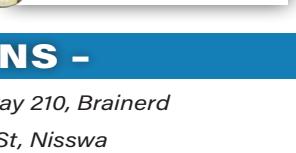
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Plastics with a neck

Lids removed and thrown

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Nisswa Community Center - 25636 Main St, Nisswa

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C-I Rangerettes and Brainerd Warriors headed to state dance tourney



Crosby-Ironton Rangerettes are statebound in 4A Kick and Jazz. Pictured above are (back row, left to right): Coach Madison Berczyk, Coach Rachel Norwood, Student Manager Zoey Williams, Aza Olander, Lilly Hardy, Xavia DeCent, Taya Mohs, Abigail Adams, Jozey Mertens, Svea Johnson, Student Manager Isabella Oren, Coach Rachel Daraftis and Coach Aaliyah Young. (front row, left to right): Piper Abear, Brianna Ridings, Patti Ward, Mya Ferrari, Lauren Bendson, Kylie Lueck, Gracie Rosecrans, Isabella Haukos, Alexandra Godfrey, Molly Van Horn, Jayda Neumann, Willow Foote, Rio Burdick and Chloe Perpich. Submitted photo



The Brainerd Warrior Dance Team, The Kixters, punched their ticket to the state tournament by winning the section for AAA in both Jazz and Kick. For Jazz, they will compete with "Welcome to the Jungle," and for Kick, with "A Salute to Bob Fosse." Coaches are Cindy Clough, Julie Davide, and Ali Geraets. JV coaches are Terri Ebinger and Avery Davidge. Captains are Eva Clough, Louie Korhonen and Averie Peterson. Submitted photo

By ANN SCHWARTZ

Both high kick and jazz dance teams from Crosby-Ironton High School will be going to the state dance competition on February 13-14 at Target Center in Minneapolis. The Rangerettes won the Section 4A Championship on January 31 in both high kick and jazz divisions.

Brainerd Kixsters won section championships in both jazz and kick in Section 4AAA, and, along with it, a state tournament berth.

Aitkin High School did not get enough points to qualify for state.

LEGAL NOTICE

(Published in NewsHopper Saturday, Jan. 31, Feb. 7 & 14, 2026)

LIBBY TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING

The Libby Township Board will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at the Palisade Community Center. Township supervisor Tom Anderson may attend remotely via phone or Zoom. The purpose of this meeting shall be to discuss and decide matters that may come before the board.

Dated this 22nd day of January, 2026
Jane Grimsbo Jewett, clerk
Libby Township
2.91

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NEWSHOPPER
hopper@crosbyironton.net

Two finalists selected for superintendent position

The Brainerd School Board has unanimously selected three finalists to return for

a second interview for the school district's superintendent position. The finalists

are:

Chip Rankin, Superintendent, Minnewaska Area Schools, MN

Dr. Mike Neubeck, Interim Superintendent, Jackson County Central Public Schools, MN

The third finalist, Dr. James Wagner, declined the board's invitation for a second interview.

The finalists were selected from a pool of applicants based on criteria established

by the school board and input provided through the public survey. Five applicants were interviewed on Monday, February 2, and Tuesday, February 3, 2026.

The school board has scheduled interviews for the finalists beginning at 2 PM on Tuesday, February 10, 2026.

All interviews will be held at the Washington Educational Services Building (804 Oak Street) and are open to the public.

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- Demolition materials may be disposed in the demolition landfill for a fee
- Large appliances, electronics, tires with or without rims, and scrap metals can be disposed at the site for a nominal fee for recycling.

The landfill is open only to residents of Crow Wing County for recycling and disposal needs.

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FISHING CONTEST PRE-PARTY
Friday, Feb. 20 MEGA MEAT RAFFLE 6:30PM • LIVE MUSIC TO FOLLOW

RABBIT LAKE ICE FISHING CONTEST CASH PRIZES!
Saturday, Feb. 21 noon - 3 p.m. Fishing is allowed on East or West Rabbit Lake.
Entry fee \$10. Four species of fish will be weighed: walleye, northern, panfish and bass.
The weigh-in station is at the Rabbit Lake Landing off County Road 31 north of Cuyuna. All entrants must have a valid fishing license and all DNR rules and regulations apply. Fish must be live to be registered in the contest. Northern must be within the allowed slot limit (24-to-36-inch northern must be thrown back).

Sign-up today at the Woodtick before all the spaces are full!
For more information call the Woodtick at 218-772-0252.

ICE FISHING CONTEST AWARDS/AFTER-PARTY
Saturday, Feb. 21 4 p.m.
Winners will be announced at the Woodtick following the contest at approximately 4 p.m.

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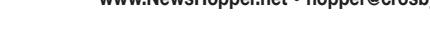
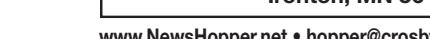
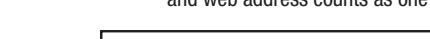
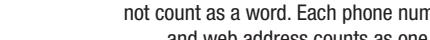
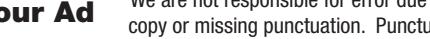
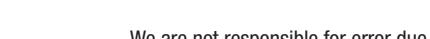
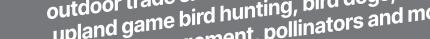
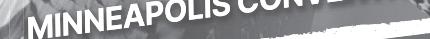
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Two arrested by DHS at Brainerd restaurant, face federal charges



Immigration and Customs Enforcement protest in Crosby.

Submitted photo

Two men were arrested Jan. 26 by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at El Potro Mexican Restaurant in downtown Brainerd and have since been indicted in federal court.

According to federal court documents, Francisco Javier Montoya-Barboza, 35, and Jose Barajas-Farias, 52, were taken into custody during the arrest at the restaurant.

The Lakes Area has not escaped the unrest over immigration and enforcement by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement police (ICE). There was a rally against ICE on the streets of Crosby on February 1, where dozens of bicyclists road by as a tribute to those killed by ICE.



Seventy five bikers road in Crosby protest. Bicyclists from all over Minnesota participated in anti-ICE protests.

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\$18.5 for 2

Menu includes:
One complimentary glass of champagne per person.

1st Course (Shared) Grilled Lamb & Shrimp
Garlic-herb marinade and house-made blueberry habanero reduction.

2nd Course (Select Two) Winter Berry & Burrata Salad
Mixed greens, arugula, seasonal berries, toasted almonds, burrata cheese, mint vinaigrette and balsamic glaze.

-OR- Short Rib French Onion Soup

3rd Course (Shared) Dark honey molasses bread served with honey cinnamon butter.

4th Course (Select Two or One Surf n' Turf) Firecracker Shrimp
Roasted red pepper risotto, wilted spinach, aged Parmesan and micro greens.

-OR- Coffee-Chili Rubbed Ribeye

16 oz. Braveheart Black Angus coffee-chili rubbed ribeye grilled to your liking, topped with garlic herb compound butter, grilled asparagus and au gratin potatoes

-OR- Surf n' Turf (Shared)
20 oz. Braveheart Black Angus coffee-chili rubbed ribeye grilled to your liking, topped with garlic herb compound butter. Two 4oz broiled lobster tails with citrus herb butter, au gratin potatoes and asparagus for two.

5th Course (Shared) Pistachio Honey Baklava Cake
Served with vanilla bean ice cream.

25039 Tame Fish Lake Rd., Deerwood
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