



Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair moves to Aitkin High School this year with presentations and prizes that should appeal to everyone of every age

All's FAIR on Rivers and Lakes



STAFF FILE PHOTO

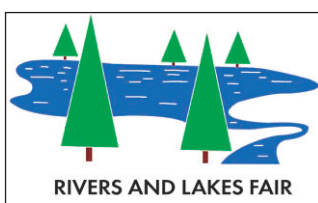
Bird house building, a feature of last year's Rivers and Lakes Fair, will return this year.

BY KATHLEEN PAKARINEN
kcpakarinen@aitkinage.com

Everything from wolves, loons, salamanders, snakes, owls, porcupines, bluebirds and bats to invasive species and lake bottom dwellers will be covered at this year's Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair that will also include safe target practice with laser shot, a lead-free tackle exchange and free water testing for nitrates.

The event moves to Aitkin High School this year on June 15 and runs from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Organizers say there is something for everyone of any age, adding, "Join us to learn more about the rivers and lakes that surround us and the many ways they influence our everyday lives."

Admission is free and attendees can register for prizes. Grand prizes include a 10-foot fully equipped kayak (for adults) and three tackle boxes and three fishing rod/reel combos (youth). Refreshments for sale include hot dog or brat with chips and drink for \$1.50 and turnover and drink for \$1.



More than 25 exhibitors are expected. The Minnesota DNR hosts laser shots safe target practice for ages 9-plus and an invasive species exhibit. Camp Ripley Environmental Supervisor Jay Brezinka will present "Wolves: Living with a Northern Wilderness Dweller" at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Free water testing for nitrates and free lead tackle exchange, hosted by Rice Lake National

Wildlife Refuge, run from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Northwoods Niche, featuring salamanders, snakes, owls and porcupines, is hosted by the Audubon Center of the Northwoods at 10 a.m. and noon. Tom Jones of the DNR presents Zebra Mussels and Mille Lacs, current and potential impacts, at 11 a.m. and Carol Henderson, DNR nongame wildlife specialist, will share current loon research at 10 a.m. and noon. Free bluebird and bat house building run from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information, call Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District at 218-927-6565 or visit www.aitkin-countyswcd.org.



STAFF FILE PHOTO

The Audubon Center of the Northwoods will return this year with information on snakes and other animals.



KATHLEEN PAKARINEN PHOTO

Dale Sanders and Richard Sojourner camped for two nights at the Mississippi River campground in Aitkin before continuing their canoe trip to the gulf. Sanders' canoe is named for his grandniece who is the inspiration for "Cruising for a Cure" for juvenile diabetes.

Crusin' for a Cure and a record

When 80-year-old canoe paddler makes it from the source of the Mississippi to the salt water in the gulf, it will be one for the record books

BY KATHLEEN PAKARINEN
kcpakarinen@aitkinage.com

Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow, strong winds nor big waves shall keep this 80-year-old adventurer and his 70-year-old sidekick from making it to the Gulf of Mexico in 80 days. Dale Sanders, the 80-year-old known as the "Grey-bearded adventurer," and Richard Sojourner, his 70-year-old navigator, said they encountered all of those challenges during the first 300 miles of their canoe trip the length of the Mississippi River.

Each paddling solo, they started the journey May 15 at the headwaters at Lake Itasca. They reached Aitkin May 28 and planned to lay over a day before heading out again May 30. A solo third canoeist, Tom Graves, is also along

the ride. The trip is getting lots of press due to their joint goals of record-setting and fund-raising and due to the film crew following in their wake. Brad Talent and Austin Graham of Adventureituts Productions are following in their own tandem canoe, filming as they go for a movie they plan to produce.

When he makes it to the gulf, Sanders will be the oldest canoeist to complete the trip. As far as the men could determine, the previous holder of the source to salt water record was 68. So, the plan is to allow Sojourner to hit the gulf first, giving him the record but just until 80-year-old Sanders follows close behind. Sanders is hoping to get his achievement listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* but his primary goal is to raise at

least \$20,000 for juvenile diabetes.

"We need to find a cure for that dreaded disease. One hundred percent of the money we raise will go to that cause," Sanders said, explaining that his grandniece, Anna, has been fighting the disease for most of her 11 years. The canoe he paddles is named for her.

Sanders and Sojourner are both experienced outdoorsmen and canoe guides from the Memphis area. Sanders said 700 miles was his longest previous canoe paddle, less than a third the length of the 2,400 mile trip the men have undertaken on the Mississippi.

"Eight to 80 at 80 in 80 days," they call it. It refers to an 80-year-old vowing to make the trip from source to salt water in 80 days, seeking donations that range from \$8 to \$80. Go to greybeardadventurer.com to donate, read stories and track the progress of "cruising for a cure [from] source to sea in 2015."



TOUCH A TRUCK
Aitkin County Fairgrounds - June 13, 2015

Kids will have a blast sitting in the driver's seat of all different kinds of vehicles at the Touch A Truck event

Touch A Truck is a fundraiser for Service Unit 17 Girl Scouts which has troops in Aitkin, McGregor, and Cromwell. The event is being held Saturday, June 13 at the Aitkin County Fairgrounds from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The cost of admission is \$5 per person with maximum of \$20 per family.

What child doesn't dream about getting behind the wheel of a dump truck, tractor, backhoe, or tow truck? Touch A Truck makes their wildest dreams come true! This family friendly event provides a unique opportunity for kids of all ages to explore and learn about all types of vehicles - emergency, construction, transportation, utility, delivery, and many more, all in one area.

Children will be allowed to touch, climb, sit in the driver's seat, pose for photos, and ask questions about their favorite trucks in a safe, supervised environment. Accompanying personnel will teach the children about the equipment and vehicles displayed and how these machines help us and our local community.

The following businesses and community leaders have currently agreed to share their cool trucks with us: ASAP Towing, Garrison Disposal, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative, City of Aitkin, Cromwell Fire and Rescue, and Owens Trucking. We are hard at work securing more

vehicles and would love to have anyone who has a cool truck contact us. The email address is gstouchatruck@mail.com or you can call Jenni Cline at 218-839-6487 for more information.

Included in the price of admission is our Touch A Truck Fun Zone. We will have face painting, a giant construction sandbox, monster truck bounce, and a special truck for everyone to personalize with paint.

Concessions will be available for those wishing to have lunch on site. We will also have a bake sale featuring lots of sweet treats to take home or enjoy there.

All the funds raised by this event will be used to support programs for our area Girl Scouts. It is the mission of Girl Scouts to be sure that every girl has the opportunity to participate and makes funds available for those in need. Some of the yearly events include a Cupcake Competition, Cookie Lock-In, World Thinking Day, Girl Scout Birthday Bowling, and a summer Service Unit week-end camp. We will have information on site for any girl interested in joining Girl Scouts next fall.

To keep up-to-date on the latest information regarding the event, please like the Facebook page at GS Touch A Truck. Announcements will be made regarding any new trucks joining in as well as event updates on that site.