

Business Tuesday

Range Sports expands to Virginia in time for winter activities

By CHARLES RAMSAY
Regional Editor

VIRGINIA — Sports are big on the Range, and Range Sports has expanded to the Quad Cities from Hibbing to meet the demand.

Their new store opened in early November on Chestnut Street, in time for winter recreational activities.

A former pawn shop was housed at the location previously, but the store has new carpeting, wall board and a different look.

"It took some work, but it's shaping up," owner Tim Zubich agreed. He said family members helped in the work.

He owns the original Range Sports at 2730 First Ave. in Hibbing, which used to be Modich Sports. He worked at the Hibbing store for 10 years, learning the business. A Range native, Zubich coaches VFW summer baseball, high school spring baseball and bantams hockey.

One reason for Range Sports' expansion has been seeing a need on the east end of the Range. "A lot of people were concerned where to get hockey equipment and where to get their skates sharpened," he explained.

The new store has lots of inventory, especially for the winter season in hockey, figure skating and curling. Especially hockey. "Pretty much everything you need, equipment-wise," Zubich said.

A big item the store offers is skate rentals, by the day, several days, or the season, which can help save money. Repairs, both on rentals from the store or for privately owned pairs, are handled.



Photo by Charles Ramsay

Owner Tim Zubich, left, and employee Trey Carlson are shown at Range Sports in Virginia on Monday.

If a child using their skates outgrows a pair during a season, staffers will get a new pair to rent.

Gear for other sports that is in stock includes for curling, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, football, in-line skating, disc golf and swim goggles.

Some of the major brand names of suppliers carried include Bauer, Reebok-CCM and Easton for hockey;

Mizuno for volleyball; Rawlings, Easton, Louisville and Worth for

baseball; and Asham and Goldline for curling.

A promotion offered is for skate sharpening, where a discount is given after a number of sharpenings are done. Gift certificates are available as well.

Special orders are no problem either. "If we don't have it, we'll try to get it," Zubich said.

Equipment bags, practice jerseys and apparel in different sports are avail-

able; the store also handles team sales. Staffers are knowledgeable about using the gear, as all have either played the sport or have trained how to use it. There are three other staffers at the Virginia store, and four at the Hibbing location.

Other hockey items include indoor hockey sets, team logo pucks and hockey sticks and replacement blades. Hockey goal nets are available, for a player's own use.

Possibilities for business on the east end of the Range are looking good, Zubich said, for the store's fourth week in business.

"We're trying to establish ourselves," he said. "We're pretty optimistic about it."

Range Sports

WHERE
206 Chestnut St.,
Virginia

HOURS
10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday

CONTACT
Tim Zubich at 741-2939

LAMPPA MANUFACTURING OF TOWER

Kuuma wood stoves get high efficiency rating

By JESSE WHITE
Staff Writer

TOWER — Heading into a special testing session this summer Daryl Lamppa knew the Kuuma wood stoves he and his father Herb created in the 1980's, and have been perfecting ever since, were efficient — he just didn't realize how efficient they really were.

Now, thanks to that series of tests by one of the most reputable furnace testing labs in the world — Intertek in Madison, Wis. — Daryl and Herb can claim their furnaces may be the cleanest burning stoves of their type on the market.

"I know in order to burn wood that clean and get (the kind of efficiency rating we have) you need to have one heckuva furnace," said Daryl Lamppa, the co-owner of Lamppa Manufacturing in Tower.

And he should know, having been in the business for 30 years.

So how efficient are Lamppa Manufacturing's two wood furnaces, the VaporFire 100 and the VaporFire 200?

According to the test results from Intertek (the tests were done in July and August), the furnaces burn with essentially no smoke and have an efficiency rating of 86. According to Daryl Lamppa, the furnace, which is used to heat a home inside the home, only needs a 75 to pass the emissions test.



The furnace also scored an "unheard of" 99.4 in combustion efficiency, Daryl Lamppa said.

Perhaps most impressive is the fact that according to Environmental Protection Agency rules, seven grams per hour of particulates (essentially fine particles or soot) is considered acceptable and is the number many wood burning stove manufacturers aim for.

Test results showed the Kuuma furnaces produced between 0.45 to 1 grams per hour.

"It's almost totally smokeless," said Daryl Lamppa. "It's almost like you have a fire but you don't have a fire."

According to information at Lamppa Manufacturing's website, www.lamppakuuma.com, the Kuuma's can heat an average insulated home up to 21,000 cubic feet and both the Vaporfire 100 and 200 models have been approved for the Energy Tax Credit of up to \$1,500 running through the end of 2010.

The tax credit was the main reason the Lamppa's had the furnaces tested this year.

Daryl Lamppa said that he and his father created the Vapor line of furnaces in the early 1980's after a bad experience with wood burning stove they purchased from a company in Michigan.

He said furnaces have been a family tradition dating back to his grandfather Richard Lamppa, who built sauna stoves in the early 1900's.

The company was (and still is) producing wood and electric sauna stoves in 1982 when Daryl and Herb, seeking a cleaner burning wood stove, began to experiment.

Daryl Lamppa said that from almost the beginning the Vapor line furnaces were extremely efficient as the duo used a special air mixing system to produce a clean burn.

Tested back then, the furnace scored high, but the Lamppa's weren't completely satisfied so they continued to try to improve their product.

Eventually they came up with the computerized draft system they have in place now. Daryl said it's a 24 volt computer that monitors the fire at all times.

The trick, he said, is the furnace is "gasifying the wood and then burning the gases completely," Daryl Lamppa said, adding that it utilizes all the wood more efficiently and leads to people needed to use one-third to one-half less wood for the heating season.

Also, the fact that virtually no smoke is created leads to a cleaner burn.

According to information on Lamppa's web site, there is now no smoke 95 to 98 percent of the time and no smoke means no Creosote.

"I haven't had to clean my chimney in twenty some years," he said. "This is great for the environment. It enhances the world we live in plus it's using a renewable resource efficiently. Your wood consumption goes way down and you're wasting very little heat up the chimney."

Lamppa said that since the test results have been released, interest in the Vapor line has increased dramatically and he and his father have sold units across the country.

"This is going to be big in states with (tough) pollution control. It's going to have an impact nationwide," he said. "We've got a great future ahead of us but we have to keep going."

For more information contact the Lamppa's at 1-800-358-2049.

Legacy revenue to energize Minnesota state parks

ELBA, Minn. (AP) — Think of it as thinking outside the park.

To get more people interested in nature and outdoor recreation, state parks are going to accelerate not only what is done inside parks but also outside park boundaries.

As with other outdoor recreation, such as hunting and fishing, interest in parks is waning, according to a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources draft 10-year plan for state parks and trails.

Brent Anderson, the new manager of Whitewater State Park near Elba, says young people seem content to stay inside and play electronic games or be on the Internet. Essentially, outdoor recreation has skipped a generation, and the DNR wants to revive it.

Though the problem has been evident for years, shrinking budgets have limited the outreach done by DNR naturalists.

That changed in November 2008, when Minnesota voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, which increased the state sales tax. Much of that money goes to fish and wildlife and clean water, but a chunk also is headed to parks and trails.

"It's going to help us plan a little bit better for the future," Anderson said. Before, the parks never knew from year to year what kind of money would be available. Now that the parks have a steadier and larger source of revenue, the DNR is thinking big. But to get there, a lot of little things need to be done.

Anderson said he's able to take care of things many people don't see, such as

replacing 91-year-old water lines and putting in new fire rings and picnic tables.

Another is a new kiosk at the entrance to Carley State Park, which is managed by the staff at Whitewater. The new kiosk has information about Carley and for parks statewide and a place for campers to self-register.

"It's an improvement to the park," Anderson said. Other projects have to do with getting people directly into nature.

The park now offers devices for geocaching, which uses GPS to find hidden treasures. People in their early teens love it, Anderson said, and they take their parents with them into the woods.

DNR parks and trails are combining into one division, so naturalists at local parks will now be more active on trails, said Dave Palmquist, a Whitewater naturalist. He's helping to set up naturalist programs for users of the Root River State Trail in Fillmore and Houston counties.

Palmquist said he's able to think bigger because he's getting more summer interns to do programs, including more during the week and on Sundays, something he seldom did before.

Another way to get naturalists out of the park is to take people canoeing or kayaking on Weaver Bottoms, a large Mississippi River backwater.

Palmquist also sees a big demand for DNR naturalists to present programs for schools and youth groups.

"That would be a very healthy direction for us to go," Palmquist said.

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