

**Sandpoint dunks their way to district championship game with big win over Lakeland**  
See SPORTS, Page A6

**Bonner County students honored for academic excellence**  
See EDUCATION, Page A5

# BONNER COUNTY DAILY BEE

GOOD MORNING!

Today is **Tuesday**



Highs/lows  
40-20/A7

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1 DOLLAR NEWSSTAND

**KUDOS**

Sincere kudos to all of those community minded people who attended the recent Pend Oreille Chorale and Orchestra's free concerts. It was a love-filled, evocative experience and a Blessing to both performers and audience. May all have a joyful and peaceful Christmas.

■ *Have an item for the free "kudos" column? Call 208-263-9534, ext. 259 during regular business hours; fax them to 208-263-9091; or email them to Caroline Lobsinger at clobinger@bonnercounty-dailybee.com.*

**BRIEFLY**

## Terrific Tots contest extended

**SANDPOINT** — If you didn't get a chance to bring in your cute-as-a-button kiddo for the Bonner County Daily Bee's 2026 Terrific Tot contest, you're in luck.

Due to numerous requests, the Daily Bee and photographer Tina Johnson from The Valley Studio are hosting another day of photographs on Saturday, Feb. 28.

Pictures will be taken at the Daily Bee, 310 Church St., from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There is a \$10 entry fee.

Bring your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, dressed in their cutest outfits, to get their portraits taken by Tina Johnson from The Valley Studio. The photos will appear in a special section of the Daily Bee on March 25, 2026.

Prizes will be awarded in three age groups: birth to 12 months, 13 months to 31 months, and 32 months to 60 months.

Walk-ins welcome. Information: Daily Bee, 208-263-9534

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# Council OKs zoning changes

By JACK FREEMAN  
Staff Writer

**SANDPOINT** — A complete overhaul of Sandpoint's downtown zoning got a thumbs up from the City Council on Wednesday.

The updates are put together by Bill Dean, Sandpoint's city planner, and aim to concentrate economic activity downtown

by narrowing the city's commercial zoning code. Dean has done so by introducing the idea of two new zoning districts, the downtown core and downtown outer core, with their own regulations.

"What occurred to me was we have an awful lot of property dedicated to commercial activity, and what happens when you do that as a com-

munity? It's like taking butter and spreading it over too much bread," Dean said. "I love butter and I love bread, but it really tastes a whole lot better when you get a little piece of bread and a lot of butter on it. And that's exactly what I'm proposing."

What is allowed in the new zoning districts is an ongoing debate in the Planning and

Zoning commission, but in the draft language Dean presents two major changes. In the downtown core, which envelops First Avenue from Superior to Cedar, offices would not be allowed on the ground floor.

Dean said the restrictions around offices stem from the idea of generating economic

See ZONING, A3

## DASHING FOR GLORY



**ABOVE:** A young Winter Carnival K-9 Keg Pull participant charges with his pup down one of two racetracks at the fan favorite event. More than 100 dogs — and at least a dozen people — tested their racing skills by pulling an appropriately-sized keg down the snow-covered track.



**RIGHT:** A local pup runs down the green course during Sunday's Winter Carnival K-9 Keg Pull.

Photos by CAROLINE LOBSINGER

## Idaho lawmakers push for kratom regulation

By CAROLYN BOSTICK  
Hagadone News Network

There are about 24 million residents who have used kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) in the United States, according to a new bill Feb. 13 called the Idaho Kratom Consumer Protection and Safety Act.

The bill intends "To preserve adult access to natural kratom while



Sauter

Nichols, R-Middleton, and Rep. Mark Sauter,

preventing the sale of unsafe, adulterated, or synthetic products."

State Senator Tammy Nichols, R-Middleton, and Rep. Mark Sauter, R-Sandpoint, were working on similar bills and have joined forces to get more guidelines in place for regulating kratom products and synthetics.

"It's a good step in the right direction and we haven't really had anybody push back and say it's not warranted. I've checked in with law enforcement and our medical professionals

and they all state that it seems like it should be at least better regulated," Sauter said.

Sauter said there were a number of current concerns with the substance and how it is handled, including labelling issues and organic versus synthetic kratoms. Available concentrations of kratom

See KRATOM, A3

## Justice services approved for juvenile detention position

By CHLOE COCHRAN  
Staff Writer

**SANDPOINT** — The Bonner County Justice Services will be seeking to fill a juvenile detention officer position after being approved by Bonner County commissioners to reinstate one unfunded position.

The additional position will allow the department to reduce overtime costs, improve staff well-being and ensure compliance with

See JUSTICE, A3

## Sherman joins Innovia Foundation

**SANDPOINT** — Tonya Sherman, a former trustee with the Lake Pend Oreille School District, has joined Innovia Foundation as regional engagement manager for Bonner and Boundary counties.

The Equinox Foundation partnered with Innovia to co-fund the position, highlighting a shared commitment to strengthening community connections, building local capacity, and expanding philanthropic impact across North Idaho. Sherman joins the



Sherman

See INNOVIA, A6

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