

▶ BIZ BUZZ OUTDOOR EXPO SET FOR MARCH

WOODSTOCK - More than 75 exhibitors will have their products on display March 5-6 at the Great Outdoor Expo at Woodstock North High School. The expo will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days, and admission is \$5 for adults. Children 12 and younger are admitted free. There will be a number of new demonstrations, including an in-pool dog water rescue, a dog sled team show and a malamute pull sled. There also will be a hands-on casting contest hosted by Darrell Baker and Spence Petros, and prizes for various age groups that have been donated by Cabela's. Exhibitors will display hunting and fishing gear, camping supplies, boat and outdoor equipment. The expo is sponsored by the Woodstock Morning Rotary Club and net proceeds will benefit Rotary charities.

For more, visit www.greatoutdoorexpo.net or visit the expo's Facebook page.

- Northwest Herald



Blanket Statements owner Leslie Armstrong McLeod poses for a picture last week as she drops off blankets to Turning Point in McHenry. Blanket Statements donates one blanket to charity for every blanket it sells to a customer.

New blanket business aims to provide comfort

By COLIN SELBO
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FOX LAKE - Going through a divorce was not easy for Leslie Armstrong McLeod.

But one thing that made the difficult experience a little easier was having a nice, warm blanket nearby, she said.

The Fox Lake entrepreneur recently undertook her first business venture as a way to provide comfort to women staying in shelters or coping with divorce.

McLeod began Blanket Statements in November. Her business is based on the concept that for every blanket a customer purchases, another blanket is donated to a local woman's shelter.

Additionally, each donated blanket comes with a motivational or comforting quotation or message, McLeod said.

It's the type of donation that McLeod knows first-hand can be appreciated by recipients.

"I just thought there has got to be other people that feel like this and just need some encouragement or words of wisdom," she said. "In that time of need when you're escaping out of a situation, to have something like that to hold on to is important. It was important to me."

Blanket Statements offers customers a variety of blankets to purchase including fleeces, afghans and quilts. McLeod stressed that people can know that the blanket they donate is identical to the one they purchased for themselves.

"We're not donating cheaper blankets," she said.

McLeod is currently working with A Safe Place Lake County Crisis Center and Turning Point in McHenry



Photo provided

Blanket Statements are available for \$25 to \$100. Customers can choose to add a special message for the blanket that is donated to charity when they purchase one for themselves.

Blanket Statements

Where: P.O. Box 495, Spring Grove.
Web: www.blanketstatements.org
E-mail: info@blanketstatements.org

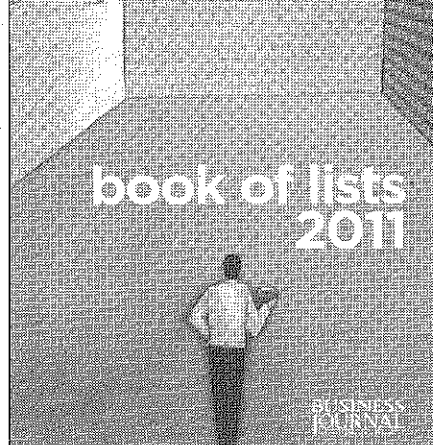
County. She said she did a Web search for shelters one night and found the sites, and Joe Kvidera at Turning Point was the first to respond to her donation request.

Last Friday, she made her first delivery of blankets to Turning Point.

"It was really great meeting Joe last week, and visiting the shelter was a humbling experience," McLeod said. "Joe was very warm and welcoming and thankful to receive the goodies. I told him I would see him again soon with more blankets."

"I am hoping as the business takes off to add even more shelters to our list."

After buying a blanket, customers



Book of Lists now available online

The 2011 McHenry County Book of Lists is available for download in Excel form.

The book contains lists of county companies in 36 categories and can be bought in whole or in part by visiting Biz-Journal.com and clicking on the Book of Lists banner at the top of the page.

can select a message from a list of quotations, or they can write their own note that will accompany the donated blanket.

For those who don't have a need for a new blanket, there also is an option to donate two blankets instead of one, she said.

"It's something to hold on to. It's something to wrap around yourself," McLeod said of the blankets. "It's a sign of love ... at a time when you need that the most."

To learn more, visit www.blanketstatements.org.

▶ BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Sluggish home sales drag on growth

WASHINGTON - Sales of new homes plummeted in January and businesses ordered fewer long-lasting goods. But the number of people applying for unemployment benefits has fallen over the past four weeks to the lowest level in two-and-a-half years.

Together, the government reports Thursday sketched a mixed picture. They suggest that the struggling housing industry remains a drag on an economy that's growing slowly but steadily.

The reports showed:
• New-home sales dropped 12.6 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 284,000, the Commerce Department said. That's less than half the pace economists consider healthy.

• Companies' orders for long-lasting manufactured goods, excluding the volatile aircraft and auto categories, dropped 3.6 percent last month.

• Applications for unemployment benefits dropped by 22,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 391,000, the Labor Department said. It was the third decline in four weeks.

House bill would end foreclosure plans

WASHINGTON - The House Financial Services Committee plans to write legislation next week ending the Obama administration's flagship effort for helping struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure and abolishing three other housing assistance programs.

At its meeting next Thursday, the highest-profile target of the Republican-run committee will be the Home Affordable Modification Program. The Treasury Department has acknowledged the program won't meet its original goal of preventing 3 million to 4 million foreclosures and last month a federal inspector general said it has been a failure.

IRS eases liens rules

WASHINGTON - The Internal Revenue Service says it's trying to help people who are struggling to pay delinquent tax bills so it's reducing the number of property liens and easing rules for small businesses to enter into installment agreements.

The steps will double the amount of back taxes a person can owe before facing a possible lien. Previously, taxpayers who owed at least \$5,000 and ignored numerous IRS notices would get an automatic lien placed on their property. Under the new policy, the threshold increased to \$10,000.

- Wire reports

▶ STOCK REPORT

Stock	close	change
Abbott Labs	47.20	+0.73
Allstate	31.08	-0.42
American Air.	6.52	-0.04
Apple	342.88	+0.26
AptarGroup	47.45	-0.35
AT&T	27.92	-0.11
Bank of Montreal	62.77	+1.59
Baxter	51.68	-0.04
CME Group	304.56	+3.16
Coca-Cola	63.88	-0.03
Comcast	24.94	+0.06
Covidien	50.31	-0.07
Dean Foods	10.08	-0.10
Dow Chemical	35.49	-0.53
Exelon	41.20	-0.14
Exxon	85.97	-1.10
Ford	14.70	-0.16
General Motors	33.02	-1.57
Google	608.82	-2.50
IBM	160.77	+0.59
JPMorgan Chase	45.91	-0.05
Kraft	31.78	+0.10
Live Nation	10.46	+0.07
McDonald's	75.21	+0.02
Microsoft	26.77	+0.18
Modine	14.28	-0.31
Moto Mobility	30.42	+0.65
Moto Solutions	37.53	+0.14
Nicor	52.08	+0.06
OfficeMax	13.37	-0.48
Pepsi	63.03	+0.10
Pulte Homes	6.97	-0.13
Safeway	21.62	-0.43
Sara Lee	16.97	-0.03
Sears Holdings	82.40	-4.83
Snap-On	55.49	-1.11
Southwest Air.	11.76	+0.07
Supervalu	8.35	0.00
Target	52.00	+1.74
United Contint.	24.11	+1.33
Wal-Mart	52.09	-0.94
Walgreen	41.32	+0.09
Waste Mgmt.	36.79	-0.47
Wintrust Fincl.	33.08	+0.11

Chamber celebrates Woodstock's achievement

With February coming to a close and the reality of spring being less than a month away, it's a great time to be a member of the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The chamber recently celebrated its 80th anniversary.



CHAMBER NEWS
Shari Gray

around us - and an understanding of its importance in the management of relationships with people. The presentation is designed to provide a deeper understanding of the impact one has on others.

ilchamber.com. You can also download an application on the chamber website at www.woodstockilchamber.com.

There are many benefits to belonging to the Woodstock chamber.