

The Bay's annual holiday party providing some charity in lean times

Fleece blankets, backpacks among practical gifts to community children

TOWER, MINN. – The annual kids' Christmas party at Fortune Bay has always been well received, but this year's seems especially important. In a year marked by economic woes – massive layoffs, historic stock drops and shaky consumer confidence – the Dec. 7 gathering in Woodlands Ballroom will provide a much-needed burst of warm hearted mirth.

The annual event has developed a reputation for generous and practical gifts. This year's lineup includes a fleece blanket and backpack for each child, along with some seasonal treats, including a shatterproof ornament.

“We understand how the economy is challenging families in the community, and we're happy to provide some practical gifts that kids can enjoy and put to good use,” said General Manager Gary Gotchnik. “This is about lifting spirits, and I can't think of a better way than to round up a big group of kids two weeks before Christmas and invite Santa to visit.”

Indeed, Fortune Bay's party offers a sure-fire way to get in the spirit, providing reporters with some Kodak moments, along with a valuable chance to chat with local parents as their children play games. The party will be held on Sun. Nov. 7 from noon to 3 p.m.

“Fortune Bay makes a point to not only be a good employer, but also a good neighbor,” Gotchnik said, “and in some cases we're being both at once.” Providing employees with quality health care and competitive wages, for example, is a priority, Gotchnik said. So is the provision of educational opportunities.

Supporting charitable causes is also important to Fortune Bay, which has a solid history of philanthropy. For instance, just last week, the Wilderness at Fortune Bay presented a check for over \$14,000 for scholarships raised through from the annual Indian Summer Classic golf tournament. The resort casino is once again the major sponsor of the February 27-28 Winter Blast, the regional United Way's largest annual fundraiser.

Fortune Bay is also a generous advocate of the Boys & Girls Club of Vermilion.