



DICK RINIKER/LA CROSSE TRIBUNE

Tony Christnovich, right, uses his hunting dog, Libbee, to talk to students Friday at North Woods Elementary School about duck hunting.

THE RIVER INDOORS

Elementary students focus on river fun

By **ANASTASIA MERCER**
La Crosse Tribune

A misting rain caused a change of plans at North Woods Elementary School on Friday.

But instead of canceling the all-school, outdoor program "Mississippi Past and Present," the river stations that were included in the celebration were relocated inside.

American Indian games, turkey calling and chain-saw art were among the more than 30 demonstrations designed for students to explore in the

"We decided to expand the theme of the Grand Excursion."

JANE MORKEN, principal

hallways and corners of the school. The students studied river geography, as well as the environmental, recreational, cultural and educational values of the river prior to the event.

"We decided to expand the theme of the Grand Excursion," said North Woods principal

Jane Morken. "But we were hoping to have it outside."

The La Crosse community is one of many between St. Paul, Minn., and the Quad Cities in Iowa celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1854 steamboat flotilla that traveled up the Mississippi River that summer.

The city's annual Riverfest celebration will feature several Grand Excursion events.

North Woods students weren't the only ones participating in Grand Excursion-

See **RIVER**, B-2

RIVER

From B-1

related events on Friday. Spence Elementary students took part in a "Celebration of Learning" to complete their year long study of the Mississippi River and the Grand Excursion.

Several community members came to the school to share their knowledge and passion for the Mississippi River, said principal Nancy Sikorsky. Students listened to the speakers while in their Champions of Learning groups.

The Champions groups are part of the school's positive behavior program where students in different grades meet

together regularly throughout the school year to have discussions and work on projects.

Sikorsky said her staff has done "an excellent job" of using the Mississippi River as a conduit to help students gain more skills and knowledge across the curriculum this year. Student field trips on La Crosse river boats were a favorite for many students.