

NEWS RELEASE

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For Information: Angie Nelson, marketing@icefishing.org or 218.330.6692

FIRST TIMERS WIN BIG AT EXTRAVAGANZA

Brainerd, MN - In spite of a postponement and a fickle winter an estimated 8,000 people attended the Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza on Gull Lake Saturday. The crowd was evidence enough that everyone was ready for the fishing to go on. Participants from as far away as California were on Gull Lake trying to 'catch the big one' in hopes of winning over \$230,000 in prizes.

At 12:02 p.m. the first angler entered the weigh-in tent amongst a crowd of excited onlookers. Luke Botzek, a first timer from Foley, MN, landed the winning fish - a walleye weighing 6.37 lbs - in 60 feet of water using a live minnow. When asked about his prize, Botzek said, "I'll have to check them both out before I decide." He will go home with a new Ford or GMC pick-up truck. Winning a new Crestliner boat for the biggest perch caught was Bradley Cox of Monticello, MN. He was a first time participant as well and said, "I'll be dancing all the way home!" His perch weighed in at .75 lbs. In 100th place, taking home an Ice Castle Fish house, was Denise Yeager of St. Cloud, MN. She caught a .51 lb perch on a tip-up. When asked what she was going to do with the Ice Castle, she said, "This is exactly what I wanted to get my husband Thom for his birthday yesterday." There were 764 fish registered in the three-hour contest.

Hailed as the world's largest charitable ice fishing contest, there are two notable characteristics about this event, it is completely volunteer run and 100% of the proceeds are donated to charities throughout the Brainerd Lakes Area. The Brainerd Jaycees invest more than 20,000 hours in the planning of the contest. Amongst the 400 volunteers was Troy Imgrund, the chairman of the tournament this year. He said, "We are thrilled with the turn out this year and appreciate that our contestants turned out this weekend even with the postponement. We will still make a huge impact on our community."

The largest beneficiary is Confidence Learning Center, an outdoor recreational facility for people with developmental disabilities, but an estimated 50 charities will benefit from the proceeds of the event. The Brainerd Jaycees have donated \$2.7 million to charities since the first Extravaganza was held in 1991.

All official event information can be found online at www.icefishing.org including a complete winner's list.

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