

NEWS RELEASE

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WARM WEATHER BROUGHT THOUSANDS TO THE 2015 EXTRAVAGANZA

Brainerd, MN – Unseasonably warm winter weather brought more than 11,000 people to the Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza on Gull Lake Saturday. After the past couple years of wind and cold, this is exactly what was needed. The crowd was evidence enough that everyone was ready for the fishing to go on. Participants from as far away as Poland were on Gull Lake trying to 'catch the big one' in hopes of winning \$200,000 in prizes.

At 12:02 p.m. the first angler entered the weigh-in tent carrying a perch. The winning fish didn't arrive until approximately 2:45, but Steven Baumgartner from Owatonna, MN, landed it- a northern pike weighing 6.73 lbs - caught with a shiner in just 15 feet of water. When asked about his strategy, Steven said, "I wasn't having luck at 26 feet, so I thought I'd give it a try in shallow water, and that sure worked." Baumgartner chose the new GMC pick-up truck from Mills Automotive Group. Winning the Catch of the Day Extravaganza Give-Away ice fishing package valued at nearly \$9,000 was Rome Anding of Lake City, MN. His perch weighed in at .65 lbs so he also took home a StrikeMaster Ice Auger for 141st place on the leader board. Anding has been attending the contest for 10 years and was more than happy to hook up a new Ice Castle to his truck for the ride back home. There were a record 1,240 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 Sarah Stenerson, the chairperson of the tournament this year. She said, "This was a great day for us, for our contestants, and for the entire community. The 25th anniversary of the Extravaganza was a phenomenal success!"

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 nearly \$3 -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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