

NEWS RELEASE

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Tullibee Really was the Catch of the Day

Brainerd, MN – Preliminary estimates indicate that over 11,000 people were in attendance at the world's largest charitable ice fishing tournament Saturday for the 27th annual Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza. As always, contestants came from as far away as Western Europe, and also from across the country, including Hawaii, New York, California, and Texas to name a few.

Tullibee was the name of the game on the leaderboard throughout the day at Hole-in-the-Day Bay on Brainerd's Gull Lake, taking 137 of the 150 spots on the leaderboard.

At 12:03 p.m. the first angler entered the weigh in tent amongst a crowd of excited onlookers. There were 826 fish weighed in this year. Les Laidlaw from Mankato, MN landed the winning fish, a 5.54 lb. Northern Pike in feet of water using a jammin' jig. When asked if he would choose the GMC or Ford, Les said, "I'm a Ford guy," so he will be taking home a new Ford truck after today, courtesy of Mills Automotive Group.

There are two notable characteristics about this event – it is entirely volunteer organized and run, and 100% of the proceeds are donated to charities. The Brainerd Jaycees invest nearly 25,000 volunteer hours in the year-long planning of the contest. Amongst the 350 volunteers was this year's chairperson, Brandon Freihammer. He said "The enormous impact of this event on our community and the charitable organizations we donate back to is the reason we are all here. The commitment and dedication of the volunteers is impressive, and I am humbled to be at the helm of such a large event." The largest beneficiary is Confidence Learning Center, and outdoor education facility for individuals with cognitive and developmental disabilities. The Brainerd Jaycees have donated nearly \$3.5 million to over 50 charities since the first Extravaganza in 1991.

The 2018 Event is scheduled for Saturday, January 27.

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