

Press Release – January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## Economic Impact Not Being Felt By Organizers of the World's Largest Ice Fishing Contest

Brainerd, MN -- The 19th Annual Brainerd Jaycees \$150,000 Ice Fishing Extravaganza will be held this Saturday, January 24, on Gull Lake's Hole in the Day Bay. All of the conditions -- ice, ticket sales, prizes and sponsors -- are looking the best they've been in years. Event Chairman Jeff Hegg said, "We are very excited about the Extravaganza this year. We've got good site conditions and ticket sales are ahead of previous years. Many of our sponsors really stepped up their participation this year because we're one of the longest-running successful ice fishing contests in Minnesota."

The economic conditions have affected a number of charitable fundraisers and organizations but the Extravaganza continues to maintain its strong position as a flagship winter event for the Brainerd-lakes area. This event generates over \$1.5-million dollars in revenue over the course of the weekend and many local businesses are anxious for the anglers to come to town.

Crow Wing County Sheriff Todd Dahl will issue the official event permit on Monday. He checked the ice conditions of Hole in the Day Bay for the second time last Thursday. 14-18" of ice were found throughout the contest site and with the projected sub-zero overnight temperatures the Sheriff and the Extravaganza Committee expect to find a few more inches of ice come the 24th. "We are confident in the conditions and the Jaycees efforts to run a safe contest," said Dahl.

Since there have been near-record snowfalls so far this winter, the Jaycees are paying special attention to contest site conditions. Over 20 volunteers from the Brainerd Jaycees and area Snowmobile Clubs groomed the two-square mile contest site to tamp the snow and smooth the walking surfaces last week. "We want to remind people this is a family-event and we're doing all we can to make the contest site level and safe," said Hegg.

This world-renown contest is considered the largest of its kind with a unique 150-item prize list worth nearly two-hundred thousand dollars. Typically well over 10,000 contestants, spectators, and sponsors flock to this three-hour (from 12-3pm) event with record attendance at 13,200 in 2004. Even more fascinating is that it is strictly volunteer-run and -organized and all proceeds are donated to area charities. The largest beneficiary is Confidence Learning Center -- an outdoor recreation facility for people with developmental disabilities. The Brainerd Jaycees have donated well over \$2-million to Brainerd-area charities in the event's history.

The Brainerd Jaycees are a leadership development organization for men and women ages 18-40. All of the latest news and information about the Brainerd Jaycees \$150,000 Ice Fishing Extravaganza can be found at [www.icefishing.org](http://www.icefishing.org).