Anglers Claim Big Prizes At Brainerd Extravaganza

Brainerd, MN --Thousands of anglers from as far away as Germany were on Gull Lake this past Saturday (17th) for the 14th Annual Brainerd Jaycees \$150,000 Ice Fishing Extravaganza.

Temperatures were in the mid 20's with a 10 to 15 mile per hour wind during most of the day as 11986 anglers of all ages gathered on Hole in the Day Bay of Gull Lake in hopes of catching a fish and winning one of the many grand prizes.

Volunteer chairman, Brian Lindberg says, "We're really pleased with how the event turned out. Our 450 volunteers worked hard to make this a great year for the Extravaganza. The anglers showed up in near record numbers and we raised a lot of money for charities."

While it will take the Jaycees a couple of weeks to finish financials, Lindberg anticipates a record year for charitable donations. Last year's event raised \$206,000 for several MN charities. Confidence Learning Center, an outdoor education facility serving persons with developmental disabilities, will receive seventy percent of this year's funds.

A total of 930 fish were registered during the three-hour contest. The largest fish brought to the weigh in stand came within the first half-hour of fishing. Dean Olson of Cross Lake, MN may have caught one of the smallest fish ever to win an Extravaganza but his 4.46 pound walleye was good enough to claim the first place Ford F-150 4X4 pickup. On the opposite end of the scale was Andra Popp from Royalton, MN . Her .59 pound rockbass claimed 100th place and \$10,000 cash. Jeremy Voge of St. Cloud, MN didn't think his .39 pound walleye would stand a chance of making the top 150 places but due to the time he registered it, it won the tie breaker and claimed him a Polaris 330 ATP for placing 150th.

Lindberg estimates a record amount of youth on the ice this year and by looking at the line to take part in the On Ice Olympics, one would have to agree. Kids of all ages enjoyed the opportunity to compete against each other while navigating their way through a 50-yard ice fishing obstacle course. Champions of various age divisions shred more than \$5,000 in prizes.

Professional angler Chip Leer of Fishing the WildSide summed up the Olympic style event by saying, "It's wonderful to see how excited the kids get about the event. I particularly enjoyed how proud the young people were of their personal performances and the fun they have with each other."

A complete listing of Extravaganza winners along with photos from this year's event can be found at www.icefishing.org. Prizes not claimed on the ice will be mailed to winners in the next week.

Next year's Extravaganza, the 15th Annual is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, January 22, 2005. Already, the Jaycees are making plans to host another fun winter event.