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**PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release**

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SNOW OR NO SNOW... NORTHLAND 300 PARTICIPANTS CONTINUE THE LEGEND

Snowmobile trails were a little “rocky” for the 22nd Annual Northland 300 but spirits remained high as Northland 300 participants prepared to continue the legend during their adventure January 20-24.

Opening Ceremonies were held Thursday morning at 8am, January 21st at Superior Shores Resort in Two Harbors where Special Olympics Coach Howard Mallory and Lake County Special Olympics Athletes Laurie, Annie, Lonnie and Todd helped carry the torch to the legendary Northland 300 snowmobiler and Special Olympics Athlete Steven Eull (White Bear Lake team “The Flames”) who lit the “Flame of Hope” for the first time in 2010. Kathy Karkula, Volunteer Event Director announced Guest Speakers Mayor Randy Bolen (Two Harbors), Darrin Young, General Manager (Superior Shores Resort), Dave Dorn, President (Special Olympics Minnesota) and Northland 300 supporters Two Harbors American Legion Color Guard. The National Anthem was sung by Matt Cavlin.



Photography by Bruce Mosher

Ninety six Northland 300 snowmobilers and support team members hopped into their vehicles with sleds on trailers and departed in teams to their destination Ely, stopping at designated checkpoints along the way. Northland 300 participants appreciate the support of local businesses and paid homage to these establishments by trailer instead of trails.

Once in Ely, snowmobilers unloaded their sleds and rode the lakes and surrounding trails to continue the legend and put 300 miles on their snowmobiles for the event. History making participants Special Olympics Coach Jason Reinsch and Athlete Steven Eull courageously endured Steven’s fear of riding on lakes. Returning to Grand Ely Lodge that evening after a day of riding Steven Eull was proud to say he *mastered* the lakes. Steven’s comment was, *“The trails were really nice and I Conquered the lakes.”* Eull was geared and ready to put on an additional 150 miles on Friday the “free day.” A true example of the Special Olympics Oath, “Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

Friday, January 22nd, the “free day,” participants rode trails around the Ely area, relaxed, and later that evening attended a “Return to Hollywood Red Carpet” event hosted by Grand Ely Lodge with a DJ, food and prizes. Costumes included Rock Stars, Celebrities and Super Heroes. A fun time was had by all!

Saturday evening, January 23rd, participants and special guests attended the Banquet and Awards Ceremony at Superior Shores Resort where Janel Vorel, Volunteer Financial Director announced that 2010 Northland 300 participants raised \$192,566 (\$154,083 Cash + \$38,483 In-Kind). Northland 300 participants have raised more than \$3.3 Million for Special Olympics Minnesota in 22 years.

Chris Wrobel, Special Olympics Minnesota Board of Directors Member and first time Northland 300 participant spoke of his experience in the event.

The “Baker’s Dozen” (top 13 fundraisers) totaling \$84,959 was announced by special guest Kirk Possehl, Special Olympics Minnesota volunteer and Northland 300 emcee: Kathy Karkula \$14,152; Mike Richards \$10,793; Steven Eull (Special Olympics Athlete) \$9,568; Ken Deminsky \$9,400; Marc Williams \$6,035; Deb Auer \$5,085; Billy & Laura David (tie) \$5,010 each; Chad Zawacki \$4,223; Mike Cook \$3,727; Kris Possehl \$3,628; Jim Reger \$2,788; Steve Mathews \$2,780 and Janel Vorel \$2,760.

Northland 300 Special Awards were presented to Jim Bambenek, “John Marschall Tough Luck Award” for tough luck but not stupidity; Cheryl and Tony Dreawves, “Tom Patterson Northlander of the Year Award” for going above and beyond the call of duty; Steven Eull, “Steve Jaeger Spirit Award” for believing in the Team Spirit; Steve Matthews “CJ Ramstad Unsung Hero Award” for the participant who quietly does good for the ride and Janel Vorel, “Old Into Gold Award” for turning in the most used cell phones. Special acknowledgement was given to Howard Mallory and the athletes of Lake County Special Olympics who have supported the Northland 300 all 22 years. Participants Marc Williams and Kathy Karkula were recognized for being involved with the Northland 300 all 22 years.

Northland 300 Sponsor Awards were presented to Presenting Sponsor: International Brotherhood of Electric Workers (IBEW); Gold Medal Sponsors: Farmington Eagles #4031, Grand Ely Lodge, Hitching Post Motorsports, Jimmy’s Food & Drink, Pro Paint (Metro), Riteway Forms and Mfg, Superior Shores Resort and Walman Optical; Silver Medal Sponsors: Coldwell Banker Burnet, Ken Deminsky and Exposures by Moshers; Bronze Medal Sponsors: Scott Bohnen, The Gallup Organization, Jude Vending, Polaris Foundation, Kevin Gallahue (PSA Charities), SMW Entertainment, U-Haul Trucks, Ultimate Mechanical and Vorel Sod; Contributor: Jason Reinsch and Northland 300 Partners: DeEtte Leckner, Discount Tires (Stillwater), Jerry Kostuch, MN United Snowmobilers, MSPN, Connie Possehl, Tech Toads and Tire Proz.

Special Olympics Minnesota provides year round sports training and competition for people with intellectual disabilities that contribute to life-long physical fitness, personal growth and achievements.

For additional information, visit www.northland300.org or www.specialolympicsminnesota.org or contact Kathy Karkula at 612-604-1272 or karkulak@somn.org.