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**PRESS RELEASE  
For Immediate Release**

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**25 YEARS OF HITTING THE TRAILS WITH CARE**

In concern for the trails and availability of snow, Northland 300 Board Members Marc Williams, Meaghan Dahl and Janel Vorel headed north Saturday (Jan. 19) before the ride to ensure that 82 snowmobilers would be able to ride the trails 300 plus miles from Two Harbors to Ely and back. The report was good. At the last ditch meeting in Two Harbors on Wednesday evening (Jan. 23), riders were told that additional snow had fallen and they would be able to ride the entire route. Snowmobilers hit the trails celebrating 25 years of fundraising for Special Olympics Minnesota on Thursday, January 24, 2013.



Photo courtesy of Bruce Mosher

Snowmobilers departed Superior Shores Lodge in Two Harbors, Thursday morning, after the opening ceremony where Special Olympics MN Athletes Louis Nosan, carried the torch, passing it to Tyler Bengston (first time participant who rode on the back of his Dad, Steve Bengston's sled). Tyler then passed the torch to Laurie Mallory, Two Harbors Special Olympics MN athlete, who has supported the Northland 300 since its first endeavor in 1989. The final carrying and holding of the torch while the National Anthem was sung by special guest, Louis Nosan (athlete), was done by Steven Eull, Special Olympics MN Athlete and 5 year Northland 300 participant who rode on the back of his coach, Jason Reinsch's sled.

Special guests Mayor Randy Bolen, presented the "Key to the City of Two Harbors" to Kathy Karkula, Volunteer Event Director, and declared it "Northland 300 Day" to the participants of the ride. Darrin Young (Superior Shores Resort), Gordy Anderson (President of Two Harbors Chamber of Commerce) and the Two Harbors American Legion Color Guard were present wishing participants well.

Temperatures were below zero and snowmobilers were happy to begin their first leg of the 300 plus mile trek with snow on the trails to ride to their destination, Grand Ely Lodge, Ely, MN.



Photo courtesy of Lainie Berntsen

Thursday and Friday, Ski-Doo (Northland 300 Gold Medal Sponsor) representative, Joe Cameron, hosted a Demo-Trailer at Grand Ely Lodge where the public and Northland 300 participants were able to

test drive a variety of Ski-Doo model snowmobiles. More than 40 snowmobilers tested the 15 machines available.

Friday evening, a “First Ever,” night time Opening Ceremony was held at Grand Ely Lodge. Special guests and speakers were Denise Jordan, Manager of Grand Ely Lodge; Ross Petersen, Mayor of Ely; the VFW/American Legion Color Guard and Ely’s own Jay Mackie, who sang the National Anthem. Steven Eull and Tyler Bengston, Special Olympics Athletes and Northland 300 participants, carried in the torch followed by Northland 300 snowmobilers riding in on their sleds.



Photo courtesy of Bruce Mosher

Saturday evening, back at Superior Shores in Two Harbors, riders partook in a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration banquet and awards ceremony. Riders raised \$174,267 (\$112,410 Cash + \$61,857 In-Kind) bringing the all-time accumulative total to more than \$3.8 Million to benefit the athletes of Special Olympics Minnesota. The Baker’s Dozen (top 13 fundraisers) totaled \$58,373 and were: *Kathy Karkula (\$13,194); Mike Richards (\$10,931); Bill Meister (\$4,575); Deb Auer (\$4,484); Janel Vorel (\$4,247); Meaghan Dahl (\$4,072); Lisa Hagens (\$3,823); Jim Reger (\$2,638); Mike Dolney (\$2,435); Marc Williams (\$2,332); Char Lattery (\$1,512); a tie – Steven Eull (\$1,465) and Mike Kaczrowski (\$1,465); and Harlan Cool (\$1,200).*

Special Awards were given to participants: *Dana Drinkman - “John Marschall Tough Luck Award” (for tough luck, but not stupidity); Meaghan Dahl - “Tom Patterson Northlander of the Year Award” (for going up and beyond the call of duty); Jim & Diane Reger - “Steve Jaeger Spirit Award” (for believing in the team spirit); Mike Townsend - “CJ Ramstad Unsung Hero Award” (for the participant who quietly does good for the ride) and Dan Patrin “Old Into Gold Award” (for turning in the most used cell phones award).*

Winners of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Northland 300 Raffle Ticket were: *1<sup>st</sup> Prize: 2013 Ski-Doo MXZ Sport 600 Snowmobile – Todd Forrest, Tomah, WI; 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: \$1000 Cash – Mike Read, Moundsview, MN; 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: \$1000 Cash – Shawn Snyder, Apple Valley, MN; 4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Champagne Weekend for Two at Superior Shores Resort – Bob Bloom, Balsam Lake, WI; 5<sup>th</sup> Prize: Grand Fishing Package at Grand Ely Lodge – Lee Christensen, New Richmond, WI; 6<sup>th</sup> Prize: Summer Vacation Package at Creek Ridge Lodge – Shanna Konesky, Great Falls, MT; 7<sup>th</sup> Prize: Thumper Pond Resort Package – Karen Schuster, Minnesota Lake, MN; 8<sup>th</sup> Prize: Sony Alpha NEX-3K 14.2MP DSLR Camera – Deb Campbell, Ely, MN; 9<sup>th</sup> Prize: 42” RCA LCD HDTV – Jessie Young, St. Paul, MN; 10<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$350 Store Gift Certificate to Discount Tire Blaine – Larry Stier, Prior Lake, MN; and 11<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$200 Gift Certificate Toward Purchase of 4 Tires or Wheels at Tire Proz – Dan Proch, Hugo, MN.*

To learn more about the Northland 300 and Special Olympics Minnesota, visit our websites at [www.northland300.org](http://www.northland300.org) and [www.specialolympicsminnesota.org](http://www.specialolympicsminnesota.org) or contact Kathy Karkula at 612-789-2081 or [karkulak@hotmail.com](mailto:karkulak@hotmail.com).

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.