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**PRESS RELEASE  
For Immediate Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***SNOWMOBILERS ARE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL***

Snowmobilers of the 26<sup>TH</sup> Annual Northland 300 not only had pristine riding conditions, exceeded the \$4Million mark in raising funds for Special Olympics Minnesota, but also inspired the induction of a new torch to light the “Flame of Hope” commemorating Billy Meister, son of Pooker Meister and past Northland 300 participant.



Photo courtesy of Lisa Hagens

Riders departed Superior Shores in Two Harbors Thursday morning, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, after Opening Ceremonies to begin their 300+ mile journey, destined for Grand Ely Lodge, Ely, MN. Thanks to Mother Nature for snow conditions and to groomers from the Voyageurs Snowmobile Club and the Ely Igloo for grooming the trails to perfection. Despite the cold weather, trail conditions were exceptional and Northland 300 riders had a great time!

Kathy Karkula, Volunteer Event Director, kicked off Opening Ceremonies at 8am on Thursday and participants were wished well by Mayor Randy Bolen and President of Two Harbors Chamber of Commerce, Gordy Anderson. The National Anthem was sung by special guest Louis Nosan, Special Olympics Minnesota Athlete and present were the Two Harbors American Legion Color Guard.

Friday evening a 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, Deacon Greg Hutar of St. Anthony Catholic Church and Ely’s own Jay Mackie, who sang the National Anthem.



Photo courtesy of Randy Mehner

Saturday evening at Superior Shores in Two Harbors, participants enjoyed a 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration banquet and awards ceremony. Riders raised \$167,139 (\$105,486 Cash + \$61,652 In-Kind) bringing their

all-time fundraising efforts to exceed \$4Million to benefit the athletes of Special Olympics Minnesota. The Baker's Dozen (top 13 fundraisers) totaled \$55,596 and were: Mike Richards (\$9,419); Kathy Karkula (\$6,058); Jim Reger (\$5,824); Steven Eull (\$5,620); Deb Auer (\$5,026); Lainie Berntsen (\$4,884); Janel Vorel (\$4,841); Pooker Meister\* (\$3,271); Mike Dolney (\$2,350); Rob Dombrowsky\* (\$2,175); Marc Williams (\$2,151); Mike Kaczrowsky (\$2,026); and Mike Townsend\* (\$1,951). \*In memory of Billy Meister.

Special Award recipients were: Chuck Munson - "John Marschall Tough Luck Award" (for tough luck, but not stupidity); Bob Parker - "Tom Patterson Northlander of the Year Award" (for going up and beyond the call of duty); Jason Reinsch - "Steve Jaeger Spirit Award" (for believing in the team spirit); Dave Clausen - "CJ Ramstad Unsung Hero Award" (for the participant who quietly does good for the ride); Rob Dombrowsky – New Award: "Billy Meister Newbie Award" (for the participant who demonstrates outstanding contributions in their first or second year) and Janel Vorel "Old Into Gold Award" (for turning in the most used cell phones).

Winners of the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Northland 300 Raffle Ticket were: 1<sup>st</sup> Prize: 2014 Ski-Doo MXZ Sport 600 Snowmobile – Britney Peterson, Gilbert, MN; 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: \$1000 Cash – Richard Tysk, Taylors Falls, MN; 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Champagne Weekend for Two at Superior Shores Resort – Marc Williams, Farmington, MN; 4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Grand Fishing Package at Grand Ely Lodge – Pete Sullivan, Mound, MN; 5<sup>th</sup> Prize: Summer Vacation Package at Creek Ridge Lodge – Jeff McGuire, Stillwater, MN; 6<sup>th</sup> Prize: 50" Emerson LCD TV – Todd Sieben, Hastings, MN; 7<sup>th</sup> Prize: Nikon White 1S1 Digital Compact Camera – Theresa Nelson, East Bethel, MN; 8<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$500 Target Gift Card – Ryan Lundervold, St. Paul, MN; 9<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$500 Target Gift Card – Tarry Trout, Buffalo, MN; and 10<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$400 Discount Tire Gift Certificate – John Horner, Woodbury, MN.

To learn more about the Northland 300 and Special Olympics Minnesota, visit our websites at [www.northland300.org](http://www.northland300.org) and FaceBook – Northland 300 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.