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MEDIA & EVENT CONTACT:
David Kolquist or Sandy Judge
218-302-1331
sandy@neversurrenderinc.org

Record Setting Year for Black Woods Blizzard Tour Even With Lack of Snow; Hits $2 million for the First Time

Duluth, MN – The Black Woods Blizzard Tour celebrated its 25th anniversary Feb 7 – 10th at the Black Bear Casino Resort and raised $2 million to provide support to individuals battling ALS. Even Mother Nature and the lack of snow in the Northland didn't prevent the participants of the 25th anniversary of the Black Woods Blizzard Tour from coming together to fund the fight against ALS. The Black Woods Blizzard Tour has now raised over $19 million in its twenty-five-year history and has seen increases almost every year.

Due to the lack of snow, the three-day snowmobiling ride became instead "The Games of the 25th." This re-envisioning of the three-day event had riders competing in Olympic style games. The Games of the 25th were held at Skyline Social & Games and Curl Mesabi and included duck pin bowling, axe throwing, basketball, bowling, curling and trivia. Former Minnesota Twins alumni Terry Steinbach, Kent Hrbek, and Ron Gardenhire were among the group that participated in the Games of the 25th.

Another new event this year was Never Surrender Inc's ALS Light of Hope Panel with leading ALS Neurologists on Saturday, February 10, 2024. 108 attendees packed the Cobalt room at Black Bear Casino Resort, with 48 more households joining in online, to hear preeminent neurologists Merit Cudkowicz, MD, MSC (Massachusetts General Hospital,) Amber Erickson, MD (Essentia Health,) and David Walk, MD (University of Minnesota) discuss research, treatment and patient care at the global, state and local levels. Kent Hrbek moderated the event. Panelists answered questions from the moderator, the audience, and even each other during a lively discussion that informed and, true to its name, inspired attendees with hope as they learned of the momentum that is building in the fight against this devastating disease. Thank you to the ALS Association for helping to promote this event.

At Saturday night's sold-out Welcome Home dinner, speakers Todd Lauer and Chris Engler, both battling ALS, had the audience in tears with their message of hope. Drs. Cudkowicz, Walk, and Erickson updated the attendees on the latest in ALS research and showed the 600 attendees how the monies raised make a critical difference, both to researchers and to families fighting ALS. Replays of the Light of Hope panel and the Welcome Home event are available on www.blackwoodsblizzardtour.com.

We are incredibly grateful to our sponsors that made this event possible. We would also like to thank our community for their important donations and our riders for not surrendering to Mother Nature and for 'Never Surrendering' in our fight against ALS. In the words of Chris Engler, retired NBA player and person living with ALS, "the difference between 'care' and 'cure' is U (you)!"

Information on the Black Woods Blizzard Tour

Four riders started the idea of an annual fundraising snowmobile ride when they rode their sleds around Lake Superior in 1999. Randy Bannor, Larry Bannor, Greg Sorenson and Dennis Nelson received $15,000 in monetary contributions, which were used to help those fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). A year later, a group of dedicated people banded together to form what is now the *Black Woods Blizzard Tour*. That same year, *Black Woods Bar & Grill* jumped on board as title sponsor of the annual event. In its first year, 38 riders raised $46,000. Twenty-five years later, 300 participants raised $2 million, bringing the lifetime event total to $19.3M.

Each year, the *Black Woods Blizzard Tour* brings people together in the fight against Lou Gehrig's Disease. Though they participate for various reasons, all are united in a quest to find treatments and ultimately, a cure for ALS. For additional information on the event visit www.blackwoodsblizzardtour.com.

The Black Woods Blizzard Tour Board:

Bud Baker, Matt Bordson, Jeff Erikson, Cullen Flaherty, Pete Gassert, Dan Hartel, Doug Jensen, David Kolquist, Whitney Kolquist, Jim Lesemann, Kevin Swanson, Kristen Thoen, Jeff Thompson, Julie Thoreson, Tiffany Tomassoni plus staff members Julie Jacobson and Sandy Judge

Sponsors for the event include: our Title Sponsor: Black Woods Grill and Bar; Presenting Sponsors: Black Bear Casino Resort, KQDS, Lamar Advertising, Northern News Now, Polaris Industries and Ruger; Major Sponsors: 509, Aluma Trailers/Widdes Trailer Sales, Amsoil, Bullyan RV/Winnebago, Cirrus Aircraft, DangerBird Productions, Duluth Lawn & Sport, Fortune Bay Resort Casino, Lake Rock Wealth Management, Marsh & McLennan Agency, ShelDon Print Signs and Design, Stokes Media House, Summit Management, Superior Fuel, TimberLake Lodge, Tischler Wood, Tito's Handmade Vodka, Youngstedt's; Participating Sponsors: Bernick's, Dave Croke CPA, Cruise Marketing, Deuces Wild, Essentia Health, Hartel's Disposal Co, Kolar Chevrolet GMC Buick Cadillac, Kolar Toyota, Milwaukee Tool, Minnesota Twins, Molo, Northland Subway, Overom Law, Park State Bank, and Twin Ports Paper& Supply; Contributing Sponsors: Bell Bank, Duluth Coating Solutions, Holiday Stationstores, Mellin Promotions, Minnesota Coaches, MN USA, Morgan Stanley, National Audio & Visual, National Bank of Commerce, Performance Food Group, Perkins, Pro Print, Regional Diagnostic Radiology, RollX Vans, Skyline Social & Games and Super One Foods; Supporting Sponsors: AmericInn Proctor, Byfuglien Trucking, Citon, Duke's Towing, Enbridge, Fisherman's Corner, Halvor Lines, ITEX, Johnson Brothers Liquor Company, Northwoods Band and SolPacific.

Dates for next year's event are February 5 – 8, 2025