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Otter Tail Lakes Country Association Recognized by Governor's Office

June 14, 2021—Otter Tail County, MN— The Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener has been a tradition since 1948, designed to improve Minnesota's economy through the promotion of the state's recreational opportunities, especially fishing. After applying and being selected to host the event in 2019, Otter Tail County successfully held the event May 15, 2021. After the many challenges presented by the global pandemic, Governor Tim Walz recognized their efforts with two awards.

Erik Osberg, Rural Rebound Initiative Coordinator, Otter Tail County accepted an award from Governor Walz on behalf of Otter Tail Lakes Country Association for 'Outstanding Leadership' in hosting the 2021 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener held in Otter Tail County. Osberg was the Executive Chair and Fishing Committee Chair for the 2021 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener.

"We are so grateful for the staff, volunteers, boat hosts, attendees, sponsors and other supporters who made the 2021 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener one to remember," said Osberg. "Our goal all along was to highlight Otter Tail County's numerous lakes, our diverse outdoor recreation opportunities, and our welcoming communities. I believe we accomplished that. Our guests left with a smile on their face, memories made and stories to tell."

Marie Noplos, Marketing Director for Otter Tail Lakes Country Association received an award for her outstanding service in hosting the 2021 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener. Noplos sat on the Local Planning Committee and Chaired the Outreach, Volunteer, Lodging and Closing Ceremony Committees. "There are countless hours, thousands of emails, phone calls, and hundreds of meetings that go into hosting an event like this. I am so proud of every committee member, volunteer, sponsor, partner and community member who stepped up and made this event possible.," said Noplos. "Without their support we would not have been able to pull off the 2021 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener: The Year of Firsts."

According to Noplos, in 73 years, Otter Tail County was the first organization to host the event countywide; first to have to restart planning after it was canceled; first to introduce an online statewide fishing derby; and the first to host during a pandemic. "When they say it takes a village, in our case it took a whole county to come together," remarked Noplos. "In my opinion this was a huge success, and it is exactly what we needed to do for our local communities. After a year and a half of the pandemic this was a great way to stimulate our local economy and jumpstart our tourism season in Otter Tail County. I am very humbled and honored to receive this recognition."

The host community for the 2022 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener is yet to be announced.

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