

NEWS RELEASE

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Active visitors are attracted to Brainerd Lakes Area's solitude, lack of crowds in the fall

BRAINERD, Minn. – The summer vacationers may have returned home from the Brainerd Lakes Area but that doesn't mean life grinds to a standstill here. In fact, quite the opposite happens in the fall.

Cooler temperatures, seasonal specials and a quiet, slower pace brings out the active visitor who comes to the Brainerd Lakes Area to enjoy the recreational opportunities, attractions and fall colors without competing for elbow room with the larger crowds that typify the summer vacation season.

Many visitors take advantage of the great fall specials offered by golf courses and lodging properties. They also come to bike the Paul Bunyan Trail, canoe or kayak the many lakes and rivers, fish, hunt, trail ride on horseback, go birding and take in the local flavor that accompanies community events and festivals. Visitors also enjoy the fall colors that make Brainerd a favorite fall destination for many.

Fall also brings with it opportunities that aren't available any other time of the year. The Oktoberfest, the Great Pumpkin Festival and the Taste of the Lakes are examples of seasonal activities that are only available during the fall.

"The whole complexion of the Brainerd Lakes Area changes after Labor Day," said Gretchen Ennis, Brainerd's Tourism Director. "A lot of visitors can't wait to come up in the fall to enjoy the solitude of our lakes by kayak, or bike the peaceful Paul Bunyan Trail. Without the summer's hustle and bustle, people can be as active or inactive as they want."

Below are some of the Brainerd Lakes Area's fall events and activities:

- **Oktoberfest at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge** – One of the most popular annual fall events in the area, Ruttger's Oktoberfest is a weekend-long celebration of our German heritage that features authentic German food, entertainment, costumes and much more. Activities for kids as well. Oct. 17-19 at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge.
- **Great Pumpkin Festival** – An afternoon full of contests, activities, arts and crafts, and food awaits the whole family. Scheduled Oct. 18 in Gregory Park in Brainerd, the festival features Pumpkin Seed Spitting Contest, Sack Races, Pumpkin Carving Contest, Pumpkin Rolling Races, Pie Eating Contest, Spooky Reading Tent and more.
- **Birding** – The Brainerd Lakes Area is located on a major flyway for migrating birds, making this area a popular birding destination for visitors from throughout the world. Migration for most species peaks during October. It's not unusual for birders to see 100 different species in a single day. The luckiest birders may spot the very rare northern goshawk or an American woodcock. Migrating species includes Canada geese, swans,

flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers, tanagers and sparrows. Guided birding trips are available.

- **Murder Mystery Weekend at Madden's on Gull Lake** – Murder mystery weekends are a popular phenomenon where audience participation leads to exhilarating detective work to solve cold blooded murder. Staged specifically for Madden's by the country's largest producer of murder mystery weekends, this event is scheduled for Oct. 3-5.

- **Haunted House and Haunted Trail** – Described as “haunted theater,” the Haunted House and Haunted Trail at The Farm on St. Mathias Road features a spooky trail that winds around to a Haunted House filled with animation, pneumatic props, sound effects and live actors. Getting there is half the fun. The Haunted House is open the last three Fridays and Saturdays in October. Throughout the weekend, hayrides, farm garden and corn maze are also available.

- **20th Annual Taste of the Lakes** – A fundraiser for Kinship Partners, the Taste of the Lakes features the finest restaurants and caterers in the Brainerd Lakes Area. Scheduled for Nov. 21 at Breezy Point Resort, the event includes a silent auction.

- **Haunted Corn Maze** – Paul Bunyan Land at This Old Farm hosts a Haunted Corn Maze (and Hardly Haunted Corn Maze for kids) the last three weekends in October and Halloween night. After dark, the maze is full of actors, animatronics and other effects to scare the heck out of you. Also available are hayrides, a kiddie maze and nightly bonfires.

- **ROC Grass Drags and Swap Meet** – The Crow Wing County Fairgrounds in Brainerd hosts some of the fastest snowmobiles on grass Oct. 4 during this one-day annual event. Racing is open to anyone, including kids.

A comprehensive list of activities and events is available by visiting the Brainerd Lakes Chamber Web site at www.explorebrainerdlakes.com. Lodging and golf specials and packages are available on the property's or golf course's individual Web site; some are featured on the chamber's Web site as well.

For more information or photos, contact PR Coordinator Geoff Gorvin at 218-821-9513 or 218-829-2838.