



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JJ and Kristine Johnson Named Entrepreneurs of the Year

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

Door County, WI -The Door County Economic Development Corporation announced today that JJ and Kristine Johnson, owners of three landmark restaurants in Door County, are the winners of the seventh annual Door County Entrepreneur of the Year Award. The announcement came this afternoon during the DCEDC annual investors meeting at Stone Harbor Resort & Conference Center in Sturgeon Bay.

Offering everything from burgers and Mexican cuisine to fine dining, JJ and Kristine Johnson are the owners of JJs/La Puerta and the Waterfront in Sister Bay, and their newest venture, JJ's of Jacksonport ("Triple J's"). Over the past thirty years, this year's award winners have created many successful businesses, including retail t-shirt shops and three busy restaurants in Northern Door County, catering not only to seasonal residents and vacationers, but also to very loyal local Door County patrons.

These entrepreneurs have survived and overcome more than the usual share of obstacles faced by business owners. Just last year, their signature location in Sister Bay suffered a devastating fire that forced them to close the restaurant's doors for six months. At the same time, they were being challenged by the process of opening their third location.

They employ fifteen people year round in Northern Door, which is significant for an area with a seasonally fluctuating economy. That number historically climbs to between forty and fifty during the busy summer months. The number is likely to go up even more in 2010, as this will be the first summer they will have all three restaurants open for business. They also contribute to the community through quiet but very steady and generous support of a number of local charitable causes.

"It is our pleasure to recognize JJ and Kris with the Entrepreneur of the Year award," said DCEDC Executive Director Bill Chaudoir. "They have built a strong reputation in Door County, based on their desire to serve people quality food and provide a great environment. Their contributions to our economy and our community are almost incalculable. We wish them nothing but continued success."

The Entrepreneur of the Year Award celebrates those individuals who have taken the initiative to start and grow a successful small business in Door County. Eligible businesses include those with fewer than 50 employees, exhibiting exciting growth

potential and that have at least three years of successful business experience. Last year's winner was Roger Utnehmer, President and CEO of Nicolet Broadcasting and the radio stations of DoorCountyDailyNews.com.

The Door County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) is a public/private partnership dedicated to improving the economic vitality of the county and its residents. Founded in 1989, DCEDC has been successful in helping existing businesses create and retain thousands of jobs through a myriad of programs and initiatives. Additionally, DCEDC places strong emphasis on fostering entrepreneurial instincts in county residents as well as those who vacation on the Door County Peninsula. Door County Economic Development Corporation offices are located within the small business incubator DCEDC founded in 1997 at 185 East Walnut Street in the Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park.