



EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM, WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2006

Washington Island Ferry Line Named Door County Industry of the Year

Wednesday, May 10, 2006

Door County, WI - The Door County Economic Development Corporation announced today that the Washington Island Ferry Line is the winner of the Door County Industry of the Year Award. The announcement came during the DCEDC annual investors meeting at Stone Harbor Resort & Conference Center in Sturgeon Bay.

The Washington Island Ferry Line, Inc. is entering its 66th year of service as a year-round transportation provider in Door County, carrying 210,000 passengers and over 75,000 cars, trucks and trailers annually. The daily importance of carrying cargo, US Mail, supplies and freight, in addition to providing the only transportation link for year-round island residents, seasonal homeowners and visitors, gives credence to the ferry line's unofficial title: 'Lifeline to the Island.'

The Ferry Line has 14 full-time and two part-time employees during winter – many entering their second or third decade with the company – with double those numbers during the busy summer season. The Ferry Line payroll is a major contributor to the Washington Island economy.

The Washington Island Ferry Line fleet consists of five ferries, ranging from the 65-foot *C.G. Richter* (1950) to the 104-foot *Arni J. Richter* (2003). The company is particularly proud of the fact that each of their vessels was designed, financed and built in Door County, specifically for service in Death's Door waters off the Door Peninsula.

In 1994, the Ferry Line worked with state and local governments to build the protected harbor at Northport. The WisDOT Harbor Assistance Program, with Door County as the grant recipient, along with financial and property contributions from the Ferry Line, established a safe, dependable mainland docking facility.

Washington Island Ferry Line, Inc. operates under a philosophy that echoes the strengths and personality of the two men who began the company, Carl and Arni Richter. Safety, reliability, good equipment, reasonable fares, attention to customer service, and a healthy respect for weather – especially winter weather – are qualities the company has relied on for success and growth.

“We are pleased to recognize the Washington Island Ferry Line as our industry of the year. They are an important link in the transportation chain of Door County and provide an invaluable service for the residents and visitors of Washington Island,” said DCEDC Executive Director Bill Chaudoir.

This year marks the 33rd year of the Door County Industry of the Year Award, first presented by the Door County Chamber of Commerce in 1973. The Door County Industry of the Year Award recognizes a construction, service or manufacturing business that has made a substantial impact on the community and enjoyed significant accomplishments during the past year. Last year's award winner was Baylake Bank. Other recent winners of the Industry of the Year Award include Bay Shipbuilding Company, Door County Memorial Hospital, Portside Properties, Hatco Corporation and Albert's Plastering.

Founded in 1989, the Door County Economic Development Corporation is a public/private partnership dedicated to improving the economic vitality of the county and its residents. Door County Economic Development Corporation is located within the small business incubator DCEDC founded in 1997 at 185 East Walnut Street, Sturgeon Bay. For more information, please contact DCEDC at (920) 743-3113, on the web at www.doorcountybusiness.com or by email at sam@doorcountybusiness.com.