



## White House-reviewed pre-event Press Alert on Wintergreen

### Wintergreen Northern Wear to be Showcased at the White House

Wintergreen Northern Wear of Ely, Minnesota, has been selected by the Trump Administration to represent Minnesota at the "Made in America" Product Showcase at the White House Monday, July 23. Susan and Paul Schurke, founders of the 30-year old outdoor apparel manufacturing company, say they look forward to joining selected businesses from other states in the East Wing. There they will display samples of their wares for President Donald Trump, cabinet members, White House staff and press who will be visiting the day-long event.

*"On behalf of our two dozen employees, we are deeply honored that Wintergreen was selected,"* said Susan Schurke. *"We're very grateful to the White House for spotlighting a business like ours that represents the vitality of small town manufacturing and is associated with outdoor recreation, which in Minnesota ranks among our key industries."* The annual showcase features a business from each state whose products are American made.

Wintergreen was launched following the 1986 Steger North Pole Expedition for which Susan made garments that kept team members warm in temperatures that dipped to -75 F. Their accomplishment, the first confirmed trek to the top of world without resupply, was hailed by National Geographic as a "landmark in polar exploration" and led to the best-selling book "North to the Pole" by team co-leaders Will Steger & Paul Schurke about their 1,000-mile dogsled trek.

*"For that expedition, we combined centuries-old 'tried & true' Eskimo apparel designs with the best in lightweight synthetic fabrics to create garments that were functional and durable,"* said Susan. *"Given the success of that trek, many people asked us for similar gear for their own outdoor endeavors."* Three decades later, her product line now includes 130 items --including winter anoraks, summer wind shirts, shell pants, canoe shorts, woolen hoodies, waxed cotton jackets, hats and mitts. *"Each item is designed, cut, sewn & sold right in our mainstreet building in Ely, one of Minnesota's most remote towns near the Canadian border. We're proud that Wintergreen gear is home-grown."*

Susan noted that in towns with huge fishing, hunting & vacation appeal like Ely, firms making functional products with design features that reflect the area's ethnic or natural heritage often flourish. She cited Steger Mukluks, Razor Edge Systems, Kondos Outdoors & Brain Storm Bakery as examples of other "small batch-high quality" manufacturing firms in Ely. *"The talent pool is a key advantage in a small town,"* said Susan. *"The work ethic is strong & traditional skills like clothing design & sewing are still highly valued. We're so proud of our Wintergreen team. It often feels we're more like family than staff. Michelle & Marlene, twins who came to the Northwoods for timber jobs and are still known as the "Chainsaw Sisters," started sewing with us at the beginning. Our sewing supervisor LaVerne has been with us nearly as long – and we think she's the best bartender in town as well!"*

In 1996, Susan received the "Entrepreneur of the Year" award from the regional Center for Economic Development. In 2005, Wintergreen was ranked by Outside Magazine among the nation's "Top Ten" most innovative and influential small outdoor businesses. More recently, Wintergreen was highlighted by National Geographic in its ranking of the Ely area among the world's "Top 50 Must-See Destinations."

Since its founding in 1987, Wintergreen has outfitted over 50 Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, including the Bering Bridge Expedition from Siberia to Alaska led by her husband Paul, who operates Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge near Ely. The trek resulted in commendations from U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev who credited the expedition with helping to "thaw the Ice Curtain" and reopen the US-Russia border in the Bering Strait.

During his historic visit to Minnesota in 1990, President Gorbachev was gifted by Paul with a Wintergreen parka. While gifts aren't part of the protocol for this Monday's White House event, Susan said she'll bring a North Pole parka for the President to see if he visits her booth. *"Who knows?"* she said. *"The President might enjoy trying on our North Pole parka & stepping into the driver's position of the dogsled at our booth to get a polar explorer's perspective!"*

**205 E Sheridan St, Ely, MN 55731 | 218-365-6602 or 1-844- ELY- MADE (359-6233)**  
**[www.WintergreenNorthernWear.com](http://www.WintergreenNorthernWear.com)**