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Contact: Zach Schneider
Marketing & Public Relations Director
zach@grandmasmarathon.com
(218) 727-0947

148TH FIGHTER WING RECEIVES 2026 RUDY PERPICH PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Start Line Flyover Has Become Popular Tradition of Grandma's Marathon

(DULUTH, MINN.) – The Minnesota National Guard's 148th Fighter Wing has been named the recipient of 2026 Rudy Perpich Public Service Award, it was announced today by Grandma's Marathon.

The guard members have long been active on Grandma's Marathon weekend, whether it's through participating, volunteering, or simply supporting. While the 148th Fighter Wing doesn't have "its spot" on the Grandma's Marathon racecourse, the event is something near and dear to a lot of its members.

"Grandma's Marathon is cornerstone of our community," Colonel Scott Prom said. "It's a showcase of the spirit and endurance of Minnesota. For years, our members have proudly supported this event."

One perk for the race over the years is its proximity to the Duluth guard base, which has created opportunity in many years for a ceremonial military flyover at the start line. That relationship has become more official in the last decade, and now the flyover is one of Grandma's Marathon's most treasured traditions.

This year, Prom will be one of the pilots flying over the 50th annual Grandma's Marathon.

"I'll be covering the 26.2-mile course twice in about 4 minutes," Prom joked. "Anyone want to place a wager on beating that?"

The relationship has gone both ways over the years, with Grandma's Marathon supporting deployed members of the 148th Fighter Wing enjoy virtual events by sending finisher medals, shirts, and other race supplies overseas.



“That kind of support means the world to our members when they’re thousands of miles away from their families and friends,” Prom said. “Our relationship with the race truly has been a two-way street.”

Prom and the 148th Fighter Wing were officially presented with the 2026 Rudy Perpich Public Service Award on Thursday, June 18 during a breakfast at The Garden Event Center in Duluth.

RUDY PERPICH PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

2026

148th Fighter Wing

2025

Chad Nagorski, *Duluth Police Dept.*

Mayo Clinic Ambulance

Lake County Ambulance

2024

John Petrich, *Chaplain, Duluth Police Dept.*

Clifton Volunteer Fire Department

2023

Pete Goman, *Minnesota State Patrol*

Mike Tusken, *Duluth Police Dept.*

2022

Carey Johnson, *Lake County Sheriff*

Bob Shene, *Duluth Police Dept.*

2019

Phil Olsen, *Essentia Health & Marathon Security*

Joe Tarnowski, *DECC*

2018

David Montgomery, *City of Duluth*

William Stovern, *Duluth Police Dept.*

2017

Kevin Gray, *St. Louis County*

Erik Rish, *Duluth Police Dept.*

2016

Don Ness, *City of Duluth*

Roger Reinert, *Minnesota State Senator*

2015

Kevin Hakala, *City of Duluth*

Shawn McGovern, *Cities of Duluth & Proctor*

Brad Wick, *Duluth Police Dept.*

2014

Jim Benning, *City of Duluth*

Bob LeDoux, *City of Duluth*

Earl Stewart, *City of Duluth*

2013

Tom Ehle, *Duluth Police Dept.*

Brad Miller, *Minnesota Dept. of Transportation*

John Schlangen, *Lake County Highway Dept.*

2012

Steve Anderson, *St. Louis County*

Gary Doty, *City of Duluth*

Paul Scanlan, *City of Duluth*

2011

Scott Collver, *Minnesota Dept. of Transportation*

John Foschi, *City of Proctor*

George Lewis, *Duluth Parks & Recreation*

2010

Al Goodman, *Lake County*

Kent Lunda, *St. Louis County*

Ed Moroney, *Duluth Police Dept.*

2009

Jim Miles, *Minnesota Dept. of Transportation*

Sharon Montgomery, *Duluth Police Dept.*

Doug Nelson, *City of Duluth*

2008

William Amberg, *Minnesota Dept. of Transportation*

Bob Troolin, *City of Duluth*

Mark Wick, *Duluth Police Dept.*

2007

Helene Abbott, *Duluth Police Dept.*

Roberta Dwyer, *Minnesota Dept. of Transportation*

Jim Gorny, *City of Duluth*

2006

Bob Brandt, *Lake County Highway Dept.*

Richard Hansen, *Minnesota Dept. of Transportation*

Lenore Johnson, *Lake County Board of Commissioners*



For any questions or interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via phone at (218) 343-9874 or via email at zach@grandmasmarathon.com.

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ABOUT GRANDMA'S MARATHON

Started by a local group of runners in 1977, Grandma's Marathon has grown from just 150 participants its first year to now one of the largest and best-known marathons in the United States. Widely regarded as a world class event with small town charm, our race has now added the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon and William A. Irvin 5K to its weekend offerings.

With all three races combined, our race weekend welcomes more than 20,000 participants – usually from all 50 states and from 70+ different countries – and brings with it close to \$40M of economic impact to the region.

The race got its name from the Duluth-based group of famous Grandma's Restaurants, the first major sponsor of the marathon. As the popularity of Grandma's Marathon weekend has grown, our mission has stayed the same – to organize, promote, and deliver annual events and programs that cultivate running, educational, social, and charitable opportunities to our communities.

Grandma's Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a 10-person, full-time staff and a 17-member Board of Directors.



Advantage Embroidery & Screen Printing | Anderson's Maple Syrup | Black Woods Grill & Bar | Circle K | Cirrus Aircraft | City of Duluth | CM2 Supply
Country Hearth Natural Breads | Dasani | Duluth Economic Development Authority | Duluth News Tribune | Essentia Health | Grand Casino Hinckley/Mille Lacs
Grandma's Restaurant Co. | Holiday Inn & Suites | Jamar | maurices | Michelina's | Michelob Ultra | Minnesota Pork Board | Minnesota Power/ALLETE
Napa Auto Parts | Northland FAN 106.5 | Powerade ION4 | Storm Creek | Stryker | Super One Foods | WM | WDIO/WIRT-TV