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SUBJECT: Duluth "Water Safety Surf Rescue" Class

BY: Amy Norris, Public Information Coordinator

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Duluth “Water Safety Surf Rescue” Class

As Drownings Increase in Great Lakes

Duluth, MN – The Duluth Fire Department is hosting the [Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project](#)’s “Water Safety Surf Rescue” class July 21 at the Park Point Beach House, 9:30 a.m.

“We are extremely grateful to host this nationally recognized drowning prevention program designed to raise water safety and rip current awareness on the Great Lakes,” said Charlie Smith, Training Chief for the Duluth Minnesota Fire Department. “The class teaches the general public who are active in the water such as surfers and kayakers, as well as first responders, to recognize swimmers in trouble and tactics to successfully rescue them.”

“We urge everyone to take the time to learn about the Great Lakes, their hazards and how to react to them, especially rip currents. Swim only at beaches which are designated for swimming and are protected by on-duty life guards.”

According to Smith, Lake Superior is not like inland freshwater lakes. “Due to its size, Lake Superior possesses many of the behaviors of what would normally be found on ocean coasts. All water activities

must be respected and treated with caution, but Lake Superior presents unique hazards and is not forgiving of mistakes.”

There has tragically been one drowning adjacent to Canal Park this year for which we extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends affected. In addition, since July 1 there have been five rip current rescues from beaches on Park Point. All of these incidents occurred on days when Red Flag Conditions were present and the beaches were closed to swimming.

“If it were not for the actions of good Samaritans, many of these rescues would have been fatalities,” Smith added. “The water is life threatening when Red Flag Conditions are present. Please heed the warnings provided to the community by the Duluth Fire Department regarding dangerous surf conditions.

This class comes as the Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project reports [49 Great Lakes drownings](#) to date in 2012.

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