



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**City of Duluth Communications Office**

---

411 West First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
218-730-5230 | [www.duluthmn.gov](http://www.duluthmn.gov) | Don Ness, Mayor

For more information contact Pakou Ly, Public Information Coordinator 218-730-5309  
or Amy Norris, Public Information Coordinator 218-730-4312

**DATE: 01/10/2014**

**SUBJECT: Duluth Mayor Don Ness Honored as “Person of the Year” by Twin Cities Business Magazine**

**BY: Daniel Fanning, Communication and Policy Director**

---

## **Duluth Mayor Don Ness Honored as “Person of the Year” by *Twin Cities Business Magazine***

[Duluth, MN] –Duluth Mayor Don Ness has been honored as *Twin Cities Business Magazine*’s 2013 Person of the Year. In a statement released by *Twin Cities Business*, Editor-in-Chief Dale Kurschner explained the Mayor “stood out for outstanding leadership that has strengthened our state’s economy, business opportunities and culture.”

"There is a remarkable narrative being created in Duluth these days. I feel incredibly fortunate to be mayor at a time when Duluth is finally starting to fulfill its tremendous potential. My role is just one of many, but I am proud of our accomplishments and excited for Duluth's future," said Mayor Ness. "I've always greatly appreciated *Twin Cities Business* and their profiles of the innovative and courageous people from across the state. It's an honor for me to even be part of that conversation as the leaders who continue to make Minnesota a great place to live and do business."

This is the first year *Twin Cities Business* has designated a Person of the Year. The full story is available online at <http://tcbmag.com/Honors-and-Events/Person-of-the-Year/Don-Ness> and will be available at select newsstands later this month.

Under the leadership of Mayor Ness, Duluth has triumphed over direct challenges by addressing significant issues head on and has come through the Great Recession and a devastating 2012 flood with prospects brighter than it’s seen in several decades:

- An unfunded retiree health care liability has been cut in half, having been reduced by \$186 million.
- The city's general fund reserve has increased from a negative balance of \$1.35 million at the end of 2008 to a reserve of \$7.53 million in 2011, meeting its goal of a 10% reserve for the first time in a decade. As a result, Standard & Poor’s Ratings Service recently increased the City’s credit rating to AA. Furthermore, the Mayor’s 2014 Budget will result in a property-tax reduction for the first time since 2000.
- The City developed and implemented an aggressive plan to completely eliminate sanitary sewer overflows into Lake Superior—a plan that’s both under budget and ahead of schedule.

- Duluth has reclaimed its downtown business district after aggressively confronting the sale of synthetic drugs. Crime has since significantly decreased while business has increased.
- Duluth is experiencing unprecedented economic revitalization which now includes an unemployment rate of 4.6%, below the state and national average, and historic job creation and economic development. Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) recently identified Duluth's job-growth rate as one of the highest in the State. During the next seven years, employment is projected to grow by 13 percent.
- All of this has resulted in a renewed spirit of growth and optimism in Duluth, as well as confidence in the City's leadership. In 2011, Mayor Ness became the first mayor to run unopposed in Duluth's history. In the 2013 National Citizen Survey, Duluth citizens expressed a 90% job approval rating for Ness.

For additional information or to request an interview with the Mayor, please contact Daniel Fanning at (218) 730-5307 or [dfanning@duluthmn.gov](mailto:dfanning@duluthmn.gov).

###



