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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Survey of Jefferson County seasonal residents reveals interesting information

Watertown, New York — Assemblyman Darrel J. Aubertine (118th Assembly District) today unveiled the results of a survey conducted among Jefferson County seasonal residents earlier this year, for which his office provided funding assistance. At a press conference held at the Greater Watertown-North Country Chamber of Commerce office in Watertown, Assemblyman Aubertine, along with 1000 Islands tourism director Gary DeYoung, announced the release of the survey results, and discussed its initiation, methodology and impacts.

Gary DeYoung offers some background on the seasonal resident survey project: “The 1000 Islands Region has a strong tradition of welcoming seasonal residents. ‘Summer People’ have been an integral part of waterfront communities in the region for over a century. Nationally, the second home market has been booming. The National Association of Realtors estimated that second homes accounted for a third or more of residential sales in 2004. Since they are not residents, census data does not reflect information on second home owners and little research has been done that provides information about them for business and public decision makers.

“The Thousands Islands Regional Tourism Corporation received a grant as a member item initiative sponsored by Assemblyman Darrel Aubertine to outreach to Jefferson County out-of-county home owners. The outreach effort included the development of a newsletter and website launched late in the year.”

“In consultation with the Northern New York Travel and Tourism Research Center at SUNY Potsdam, the corporation developed a short survey that was mailed to a list of 5,950 out-of-county residential property owners, along with a newsletter. A total of 1,245 responses were tabulated from those who voluntarily returned the form or completed the survey on line. The goal of the survey was to gather basic information that could be helpful in designing future research regarding the North Country’s seasonal homeowners.”

The release of the information from the survey reveals some interesting information. Some highlights include:

- The spending patterns of seasonal residents vary greatly. Responses spread across a range from under \$1,000 annually to well over \$30,000 annually. Applying the response pattern to the total number of second homes in Jefferson County generates an estimate of total spending by seasonal residents in excess of \$48 million dollars annually.
- The survey also revealed that the seasonal residents are active hosts of visiting friends and family. With 60% hosting seven or more overnight guests annually. Extrapolation of these numbers would indicate that over 55,000 people visit Jefferson County annually as guests of seasonal home owners.
- Generally speaking, the second home owners had positive outlooks on quality-of-life factors such as recreation and entertainment opportunities. Concerns were voiced about high property taxes, blight and threats to the quality of the environment.

The Thousand Islands International Tourism Council is interested in the seasonal home community in relationship to its impact on hospitality and tourism businesses in the region, and hopes to be a part of further research projects on the subject. This survey shows that the presence of this particular market in Jefferson County has a significant impact on area recreational services, entertainment enterprises, and dining, shopping and other tourism businesses.

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