

**March 8, 2007**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Ashland's Superior Sauna carrying on 2,000 year old tradition and loving every minute of it**

For Chuck Porter, founder of Superior Sauna, LLC, Ashland Wisconsin, manufacturing and selling saunas is more than a business, it's a labor love.

On the one hand, he's in the business of selling saunas, and must take a businessman's approach to what he does. He must take stock of inventory and maintain customer service and make sure orders (from all over the world, thanks to the company's impressive website) reach their destinations, and on time. This, he does from his facility in the open farm spaces of north-central Bayfield County, which would seem to be the perfect place to operate a sauna business. (More about that in a moment.)

But for Porter, Superior Sauna is also a lifestyle that is as deeply ingrained into his daily life as grocery shopping.

"I feel lucky to love what I'm selling," says Porter, whose staff of eight fashion custom-made saunas that are not only functional but aesthetically pleasing, the perfect way to augment any property. "'Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!' That's become the American disease, and sauna is the perfect means of beating the stress of modern living. It has a 2,000 year old track record, going back to the Romans."

Porter is coming off a busy year, a spurt of growth in sales that coincides with an increased awareness of his product. Miss Wisconsin paid him a visit last spring for his grand opening, and a letter from the Governor of Wisconsin, Jim Doyle, would seem to echo Porter's enthusiasm for sauna as a viable business and a healthy addition to the dairy state's economy: *'You will add to the diversity of options available locally,'* the Governor wrote, *'and your online business will provide an unlimited customer base.'*

"Sauna is one of the two things I love most in life," says Porter, adding with a smile, "next to beer."

According to Porter, sauna is a workout without working out.

"The heat raises your heart rate like exercise, and does wonders for your skin," he says. "It can be a great addition to the regiment of anyone trying to lose weight."

Not to mention - and here's where Porter's location really comes into play - taking a sauna at least once per week can have truly positive psychological and spiritual benefits. In the Midwest, winters are often long and severe. Psychologists have already determined that a lack of sunlight mixed with extended periods of cold conditions can lead to depression during the winter. Sauna is a perfect means of combating this phenomenon.

Porter's experience with sauna dates back to his youth spent at the local Y, but his enthusiasm for the practice was a slower seduction, stretching across a history in sales dating back to the 1970s. Back then, he and some high school friends were the largest importers of Mexican pottery and black velvet paintings in the United States, which they would sell to department stores across the country. Always gripped with the urge to travel while he did business, Porter met countless prospective clients sitting in saunas all around the world during these years; fascinating people who conducted business while taking a sauna as readily and naturally as people meet for coffee in our country.

"I came to realize that in other countries sauna is such a big part of things," he says, "and I came to enjoy sauna tremendously. This intrigued me."

In Europe - Scandinavia especially, but throughout the region - the health benefits of sauna are

recognized to such an extent that hospitals keep at least one as part of their rehabilitation center, and nearly all hotels, even small ones, offer the service to guests.

Porter says that contrary to popular belief, the history of sauna stretches far beyond Scandinavia, the culture it is most frequently associated with.

"Historically, it's been found around the world," he says. "The American Indians had a form of sauna in their sweat lodges, and the Mayan civilization as well. Many different types of cultures figured out the benefits, physically and mentally, of intense heat."

Superior Sauna is the only sauna manufacturer in Wisconsin. They sell sauna kits and pre-assembled structures, both indoor and outdoor, with hand-picked logs from locally harvested aspen, cedar, spruce and other woods, as well as stocking a full compliment of accessories and parts. They ship worldwide from their on-line store, as far afield as Israel and South Africa.

But what makes Superior Sauna unique, truly 'superior', is the attention to detail.

"Anybody can fashion four walls and a roof together and make it hot inside," says Porter, "but what we do is attempt to enhance the experience."

This goal has resulted in sauna buildings that really are a cut above. The attention to detail makes the difference between just any old 'hot box' and a truly aesthetically pleasing experience. Many of their custom-made models, from the modest 'Copper Harbor' to the granddaddy of them all, the 'Log Chalet', a 16' by 28' with vaulted ceilings, changing room and enough space to accommodate a celebrity entourage, it's all about the details at Superior Sauna. Customers can pick from various features, like different types of heat, or mirrored and tilting windows.

In fact, double-paned, tempered and insulated glass windows are among superior sauna's most unique features in their outdoor models.

"A lot of times taking a sauna is like sitting a box," says Porter, "windows let in a lot of natural light, and create a view, which can enhance the experience, especially at certain times of the day. That, combined with vaulted ceilings, any size of Superior Sauna has a spacious, comfortable feeling."

Since 2004, Porter has enjoyed success with his enterprise, and enjoyed making it grow. He feels lucky to be able to do something he loves doing, and educate people at the same time.

"The biggest surprise has been how many people are building saunas across the country," he says. "We've received 5 – 8 phone calls a day. Some of these are inquiries into complete saunas, but a lot are people asking if we carry a certain heater, part or accessory."

For Porter, the key to any successful business is selling people what they want. He says he feels very fortunate to be able to offer them advice and expertise as well, and happy that what he's selling can help improve their quality of life.

Superior Sauna Mfg, LLC is located in Ashland, Wisconsin. For wholesale and retail inquiries, call 877-872-2806, or visit their on-line store at [www.superiorsaunas.com](http://www.superiorsaunas.com)

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**Editors: Chuck Porter is available for interviews at your convenience.**

**PHOTO CUTLINE: Wisconsin State Wrestling Champ Jerry Kramolis, left, and Miss Wisconsin 2005 Tracy Gest, are all smiles in a deluxe sauna from Superior Saunas, of Ashland, Wisconsin.**