

# BJ Kohlstedt Named “2020 Emergency Management Director of The Year”

John Strongtharm, Executive Director  
Association of Minnesota Emergency  
Managers

AMEM (Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers) is pleased to announce that BJ Kohlstedt from Lake County has been awarded the 2020 AMEM Minnesota Director of the Year Award. The nomination committee was flooded with support for BJ Kohlstedt’s nomination for The Director of the Year award.

AMEM’s Minnesota Emergency Management Director of the Year is awarded for outstanding performance by a member Director of Emergency Management in furthering the objectives of emergency management in their jurisdiction and/or the Association and emergency management in Minnesota. Below are some highlights from those nominations:

Matthew Huddleston, Lake County Administrator wrote “Ms. Kohlstedt’s emphasis on preparedness and commitment to teamwork have furthered the objectives of emergency management in our jurisdiction and supported statewide efforts in Minnesota. Throughout her tenure with Lake County, BJK has carried herself with a calm demeanor and demonstrated professional integrity. She presents herself professionally and represents the Emergency Management profession with exemplary care. She has not singlehandedly saved us from emergencies. She has supported us with commitment to partnerships, recruiting volunteers, keeping those relationships going, and partnering with everyone on the team”

Sheriff Pat Eliassen of Cook County wrote “BJ takes it upon herself to provide exceptional support and service to all emergency worker, and both city and county governments. She quickly discerns their needs and moves efficiently to provide key information, recommendations, or direction. BJ excels in her duties as Emergency Management Director and I have had the pleasure of working with her for several years. One of her many impressive qualities is to remain calm under pressure and deliver service at an extremely high-level no matter the circumstance. Her knowledge of the emergency management business, and her state-wide relationships, have been a great asset to her which translates into exemplary service to her community.

Marlyn Halverson, President of the Arrowhead Region Emergency Management Association (AREMA) sums up the remainder of the nominations with his words “Each nomination and letter of support gives one word examples of BJ’s professionalism and contributions to Emergency Management, like; Leadership, Expertise, Persistence, Collaboration, Ability to think outside the box, Creative, Knowledgeable, Dedicated, Humble, Thinking of others, Honest, Hardworking, Intelligent, Trustworthy, and Team Player. BJ is tireless in her pursuit of opportunities to improve planning, training and response for her community and their partners, and most of the efforts listed above are beyond her daily responsibilities of maintaining plans, responding to incidents, and managing ongoing mitigation projects.”

AMEM is pleased to congratulate BJ Kohlstedt as the 2020 AMEM Minnesota Emergency Management Director of the Year.

# Ruth's Gourmet Vegetarian Set to Expand

By Kitty Mayo

Recent months have brought unexpected obstacles to expansion plans for Ruth's Gourmet Vegetarian in Two Harbors, but Bruce Bacon is not letting that damper his plans to grow the business full-speed-ahead.

Even with the disruptions of Covid-19, last month Ruth's has recently gone from selling their frozen vegetarian entrees in 25 retail locations to 125, and expects to double that number in the coming months.

Returning to live at his childhood home just outside of Two Harbors this summer, Bacon's fond memories of Two Harbors drew him back, along with a desire to make a positive change.

“When I was a kid mainstreet was busy, there were all kinds of stores, but Two Harbors has not had a lot of economic breaks and I want to do this in my community,” Bacon said.

His parents' decision to choose a vegetarian lifestyle when he was 12-years-old made Bacon a reluctant convert. However, many of his childhood memories of a thriving old-timey small town, are fond ones that include good homemade food in his mom's kitchen. Those delicious homemade foods were intentionally vegetarian, and Bacon has developed a desire to bring those hometown foods to the mainstream.

Bacon was co-founder of Genesis Attachments which started out in Two Harbors, and moved to Superior, Wisc.. The next chapter in his scrap industry career saw Bacon co-founding Exodus Machines in 2009. While Bacon still plays a limited role at Exodus, he was ready for a change.

“I took a look at where I was in life, and realized I wanted to bring something back to the place where I grew up,” Bacon said.

Ruth's Gourmet started on paper in 2016, and moved into the former Pizza Hut building in Two Harbors in 2018. Bacon plans to add a larger facility, more automated equipment, hire staff, and add to the frozen entree selections in the coming two years. Maintaining a commitment being based out of Two Harbors, Bacon

hopes to grow operations there if possible by acquiring or building a larger facility.

Flexitarian is the term Bacon has adopted to describe his own eating habits. While no longer a strict vegetarian, he cares about what he eats.

“I've gone into stores to buy vegetarian food but I look at the label and find highly processed and soy-based with a lot of additives and chemicals. I was looking for something easy to prepare with a really clean ingredients list,” Bacon stated.

This sparked Bacon to go back to his mom's recipes that relied on available ingredients of nuts and grains, a protein entree without trying to replicate meat: a slippery slope in Bacon's opinion.

And, you guessed it, “Ruth's” is honoring Bacon's mother in name and concept.

Relying heavily on social media to spread the word about Ruths, creative services and branding consultant Katrina Pierson says it's just the modern version of “Word-of-mouth” advertising. One way she is getting the word out is through the new online cooking show called “Simply Vegetarian”, a monthly show featuring Pierson preparing Ruth's products in a variety of recipes.

“People want value content, we are in a new era where social media does well, and people can get something relatable and relevant to their lives,” Pierson said.

It's her own experience as a vegetarian that has motivated Pierson to create accessible resources that are convenient, and family-oriented for involving the kids. Not a trained chef, Pierson's message is that if she can do it, you can.

“You don't have to be super crunchy to eat vegetarian once a week,” said Pierson, adding that despite a higher price point for Ruth's products, they are still a reasonable option compared to high-end meat products.

Bacon says that Ruth's is for everyone, whether flexitarian, vegetarian, or just someone who wants to eat a more healthy diet some of the time. Admitting that he is focusing on a niche market, he says that there are growing numbers of millennials concerned about healthy food choices, and growing ranks of vegetarians.

“Everyone has to eat, and we are not trying to tell anybody what they should eat. But these entrees are really palatable for people who care about what they put on the table,” Bacon stated.

## HAVE YOU SEEN OR HEARD SOMETHING INEXPLICABLE COMING FROM ANY NORTH SHORE WILDERNESS AREAS?



**If so, you are not alone. You are one of many very credible people in this area who have reported things like high pitched sustained screams, howls much deeper and louder than that of wolves or coyotes, wood knocks, organized tree structures in densely forested locations, or footprints? If you answered yes, even hesitantly, I'd like to speak with you. Multiple witnesses have volunteered additional, unexpected information that warrants our further investigation. If you have seen inexplicable flying spheres of light at night with no sound, or odd shaped craft, please email me. This is not a Joke. You are not crazy. Between Lake County and St Louis County there have been over 200 people who have contacted me personally with their stories. Including 2 helicopter pilots, credible resort owners, and many other honest, hardworking people. No names are released anywhere without your express permission. As a side note, it is very liberating to talk to someone who knows the truth. That someone is me, Jeff.**

**Contact: [jjs5perctr@gmail.com](mailto:jjs5perctr@gmail.com)**

## Kidney Donor Needed

One year ago, Jeremiah Bartel received the unfortunate news from St. Luke's Nephrology he had been preparing for most of his life. He was born with Alport Syndrome, a rare disease that affects the eyes, ears, and kidneys. Over the past few years Jeremiah had been taking medications to help prolong the need of a kidney donor, but the time has now come.

Jeremiah has been working with the University of MN - Fairview and St. Luke's Nephrology to prepare for a transplant and find a donor. He is currently in late, stage 4 and in talks with doctors about dialysis.

He is in need of a O-blood type donor. If you're interested or considering helping Jeremiah, please go to [www.umnhealthlivingdonor.org](http://www.umnhealthlivingdonor.org). Once there, click on living kidney donor and enter “Jeremiah Bartel/10-17-1985” for the recipient