FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Bavarian Inn Matriarch Recognized as a Top 10 Michigan Business Woman**

***Dorothy Zehnder Honored by National Association of Women Business Owners***

Frankenmuth, Mich., March 7, 2013 – After 63 years in business, Bavarian Inn owner and co-founder Dorothy Zehnder continues to be recognized for her legendary business acumen. The much beloved family matriarch has been selected by the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Greater Detroit Chapter for its Top 10 Michigan Business Women Awards. Dorothy is being honored with a “Pinnacle” Award -- a distinction granted to awoman business owner who has owned one or more businesses for 25 years or more. The 19th Annual Awards Luncheon will take place at the Roostertail in Detroit, March 11, 2013 at noon

“I am honored to receive this award and consider it recognition of my entire family, our team members and our guests,” said Dorothy. “I have been blessed with a love of service, hard work and dedication to family. We are a multi-generational family business serving multi-generational families.”

Celebrating its 125th year in continuous operation this year, the Bavarian Inn has become one of the oldest and largest eateries in the country, serving more than 600,000 meals a year. Dorothy began waiting tables in 1937 when the restaurant was Fischer’s Hotel. Three children and 13-years later, she and late husband William “Tiny” Zehnder were installed as managers. This was at a time when working outside the home was unfamiliar territory for women. Dorothy took immediate control of the kitchen, developing the cooking processes, menu items, quality control and production scheduling.

At age 91, Zehnder continues to work six days a week at the restaurant, saving Mondays to bake with family. Today the Bavarian Inn is much more than the “family style” chicken dinners that made it famous, thanks to the restaurant’s resilient dynamo. Dorothy contributed to many of the family’s new businesses, including the Castle Shops, Frankenmuth Cheese Haus, Covered Bridge & Leather Gift Shop, Bavarian Inn Lodge and Frankenmuth River Place Shops. Dorothy also drives the restaurant’s “farm-to-table” philosophy and encourages using locally grown and raised products.

“Despite our 125 years of service, our business has been evolving since the day Tiny and I became managers,” she said. “It’s up to me, our children and grandchildren, to make Bavarian Inn relevant in 2013 and beyond. That means listening to our guests, trying new things and staying true to our core values. We have 125 years of customer expectations to honor. People come here to create memories.”

Dorothy is a civic leader, educator and mentor, and continues to participate in various tourism, religious and philanthropic organizations. In 2011, she published “Come Cook with Me,” a collection of recipes, wisdom and classic stories. As for retirement, Dorothy admits that is nowhere on the horizon.

The NAWBO Top 10 Michigan Business Women Awards are sponsored by Comerica Bank, DTE Energy, General Motors and Sam’s Club.

**About Bavarian Inn**

Celebrating 125 years of service this year, the Bavarian Inn Restaurant has become a Michigan landmark. Generations of diners, lodgers and tourists from around the globe have discovered true Bavarian hospitality thanks to Dorothy and her late husband William “Tiny” Zehnder. Guests experience the old-world European charm of the Bavarian Inn – whether it’s the famous chicken dinners, fresh baked goods or Michigan’s greatest selection of German beer. Bavarian Inn also prides itself on being one of the top consumers of Pure Michigan agricultural products. Nestled within a backdrop of authentic German architecture, a variety of shops and other fun activities, a trip to Frankenmuth would not be complete without a visit to the Bavarian Inn. Learn more at [www.bavarianinn.com](http://www.bavarianinn.com).

**About NAWBO**

The Greater Detroit Chapter of NAWBO has a membership of the finest women entrepreneurs in the area who share their experience and empower each other through NAWBO membership. Their businesses include emerging entrepreneurs, sole proprietors and longstanding companies with multi-million dollar revenue. NAWBO Greater Detroit is the premier business resource for women business owners in Southeast Michigan. To learn more or to register for the event, visit <http://nawbogdc.org/>.

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