

**Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association  
General Membership Meeting  
Saturday, July 13, 2019  
Flying Goose Campground, Fairmont, MN**

The Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association held its Quarterly General Membership meeting Saturday, July 13, 2018, in Fairmont, Minnesota. A moment of silence was given in memory of Merlys Pankratz, wife of director DeLyle Pankratz, and Dennis Tennison, MnUSA past officer and director.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by President Seibel at 9:12 AM. Present were Executive Board members: President Rod Seibel, Vice President Greg Sorensen, Secretary Rick Johnson, and Treasurer Scott Wakefield.

**Welcome:** By President Seibel, owners of the campground, and Fairmont city officials.

**Introduction of Executive Board and Guests:** The Executive Board members introduced themselves. Also present were MnUSA Lobbyists Doug Franzen and Christian Franzen.

**Approval of Agenda: Motion** by Randy Laberge, seconded by Mike Clevenger to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

**Secretary's Report: Motion** by Larry Shepherd, seconded by Jerry Hanson to waive the reading of the minutes and approve the secretary's report as written. **Motion carried.**

**International Snowmobile Congress Report:** Greg Sorenson attended. His report is attached.

**Snowmobile Celebration, October 25-27:** This is a promotional event patterned after a long-standing celebration in Sweden. It coincides with the MnUSA Fall Workshop. Clubs are encouraged to cooperate with local dealers.

**Officers' Reports:**

**President:** Rod Seibel commented on success of the motorcycle ride-in.

**Treasurer:** Scott Wakefield reported that the former Waconia ride-in has been renamed the "Midwest Ride-In" and will be held at the ERX Park in Elk River, MN on February 24-26, 2020. He is also spearheading language revision of collector sled legislation.

**Legislative/Trails Report:** Christian Franzen reported on the results of MnUSA initiatives in the recent legislative session:

Safety Training Fee adjustment: Passed

Collector Sled Fee: Withdrawn at MnUSA request.

Sales Tax exemption: Failed—not in final Conference bill

Outdoor Recreational Office: Defeated. MnUSA opposed this bill.

Snowmobile fund FY 20 appropriation: Passed. Due to good snow in FY19, it appears there will be adequate funds in the dedicated account to fund the "Capital/Emergency" fund up to \$500,000 as initiated by the Minnesota Snowmobile Advisory Committee (MSAC) and passed

by the MnUSA Board of Directors and also increase in Maintenance and Grooming Grants by about 10% over FY 18 (This increase was 16.5% in FY 19).

Doug Franzen repeated his plea for members to make fully refundable political contributions to their local legislators.

**Business Coordinator's Report:** See attached.

**Region Reports:**

**Region 1:** Gary Gorden. Region is working on Rendezvous 2019. One county is looking at returning rail grade to the adjacent landowners which would cause significant trail issues.

**Region 2:** Region is working on seminar topics for Fall Workshop.

**Region 3:** Absent

**Region 4:** Nothing to report.

**Region 5:** Mike Clevenger. Clubs are attending fairs, etc. September Grass Drags will move from a Saturday to a Sunday date. There is much flood damage to trails throughout the region so much trail work will be needed in the fall.

**Region 6:** David Murphy. Region is looking for a new meeting location. Rice Creek Trails have been actively pursuing groomer maintenance activities.

**Region 7:** Randy Laberge. They are recruiting support for the MnUSA booth at the Thanksgiving weekend snocross. Keep Bob Klein in our prayers as he battles cancer.

**Region 8:** Ted Breeggemann: Region continues to meet monthly except for a couple of months in the summer. Planning for the Region's annual picnic and will be doing their usual membership booths.

**Region 9:** Nothing to report.

**Minnesota Snowmobile Education & Advancement Fund (MSEAF):** Larry Shepherd.

MSEAF continues to support the Rider Assist Directory (RAD), Safety billboards, development of a virtual simulator, club trailhead and information signs and the Veteran's Appreciation Ride. A live auction will be held this evening to support the Vet's ride. (Editor's note: that auction raised almost \$1000 for the ride.) Thanks to those organizations that donated items for the auction.

**Committee Reports:**

**Legislative/DNR/Trails:** See attached.

**Membership/Booth/Charity & Awards:** Jerry Hanson.

-Membership numbers are up slightly from last year.

-Attended the DC Fly-In and met with legislators and/or their staffers. Much appreciation should be given to the work done by legislators' staffers in the US Congress.

-Clubs that participate with trail reports can sell ads on the Polaris Ride Command and keep the funds raised

-Ski-Doo is working on a similar program to Ride Command.

-The Snow Goer promotion is available again this year. For \$49 your club can be listed in the magazine and on the Snow Goer website. (Forms are available on MnUSA's website at [www.mnsnowmobiler.org/clubs/information](http://www.mnsnowmobiler.org/clubs/information). Deadline is August 15.) Snow Goer has been very good at publishing articles on the importance of club membership.

-MnUSA will have booths at Princeton, Hay Days, Byron, Elk River and the Duluth Snow Show and is always looking for new venues.

-MnUSA information is available to clubs and regions. Regions have supplies.

**Communications/Website/Social Media:** Scott Wakefield.

-Introduced Pat Bourgeois, new editor of Minnesota Snowmobiling.

**Safety:** Greg Sorenson.

-Helmet medical ID tags are available.

-Will be working on safety billboards for the upcoming season

-The Rider Assist Directory needs more participants.

**Site Selection:** Mark LaBaw.

-Need bids/locations for 2021 Rendezvous. Contact the MnUSA office for criteria.

**Elections:** See Nominations below.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

-Fall Convention and Workshop: October 25-27, 2019, Giants Ridge, Biwabik, MN.  
Region 2 host.

-2020 Winter Rendezvous: February 6-9, 2020 at Hampton Inn, Bemidji, MN. Region 1  
host.

**Nominations:**

Larry Shepherd conducted the nominations for MnUSA officers to be elected at the Fall Workshop. The process for absentee ballots was explained.

Randy Laberge nominated **Greg Sorenson** for President.

Woody Widness nominated **Scott Wakefield** for Vice President.

Judy Shepherd nominated **Cheryl Clevenger** for Secretary.

Mark LaBaw nominated **Janet Widness** for Secretary.

Ted Breeggemann nominated **Tim Pommier** for Treasurer.

Paul Maruska nominated **Rick Johnson** for Treasurer.

All nominees present accepted the nominations. Tim Pommier was not present but had accepted by email prior to the meeting. **Motion** by Dick Kuttner, seconded by Randy Laberge to suspend further nominations for officers until Fall Workshop. **Motion carried.**

**Other Business:** None.

**Adjournment:** **Motion** by Mark LaBaw, seconded by Woody Widness to adjourn. **Motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Johnson, Secretary

2019 International Snowmobile Congress Report  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Submitted by Greg Sorenson

**American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA):** Meeting was called to order and immediately a motion was made to have a closed meeting. After much confusion all folks that were not individual or state members were asked to leave the room. They were trying to exclude any United Snowmobile Alliance (USA) members. In the end two USA reps were also ACSA members and stayed for the meeting.

There is still a lot of confusion over the breakup of the ACSA chapters. Instead of the three chapters (Northeast, Midwest & Western) under ACSA, we now have two groups under ACSA - the mountain group and the trails group. The chapters remain under the International Snowmobile Council (ISC). States can chose to belong to whichever ACSA group they wish. Nobody seems to know what to do with these groups. It was stressed that they are NOT committees under ACSA. Bob King was elected Chair and I was elected Vice Chair to the trails group. I guess we will try to sort things out and try to find some direction as we go. A committee was set up to decide if the Midwest Chapter should be in ACSA ISC or both. As I said, still much confusion. A decision should not have been made without more thought, but the board was under pressure to get this done.

ACSA wants club email addresses from the states for better communication. MnUSA does not give that out but will provide clubs with information to sign on to ACSA's email list. If you would be interested in serving on an ACSA committee please let me know, most if not all meetings are conference calls.

The International Snowmobile Hall of Fame (ISHOF) induction is September 20 and 21, 2019 in Eagle River, WI. Les Ollila a long time DNR employee and an active snowmobiler is being inducted.

ACSA will be looking into partnering with other groups on land access issues, may not be groups we would usually work with, but we may be able to work together on this and other issues.

There was much discussion on how to increase attendance at the International Snowmobile Congress (Congress). Cost seems to be a big factor, both for hosts and for attendees. Michigan was very concerned if they would even break even on their expenses. One thought to help the hosting states is to do away with the off site. They are open to ideas.

ACSA held elections - Scott Herzog (MT) was elected President, Dan Long (IL) VP, Dean Meakin (WA) Sec/Treas. Jim Willey (IA) and Bert Miller (WY) were elected as delegates at large.

**Midwest Chapter:** The organization will continue under ISC  
They are looking for a host for the 2022 Congress

Fall Midwest Chapter meeting may be during ISHOF weekend in Eagle River on Sept, 21.  
Wis. snow show is Oct. 18, 19, & 20. Mich. is Nov. 1, 2 & 3.  
Bob King (IA) was elected chair and Ron Corbett (MI) was elected Vice Chair.

**International Snowmobile Council:** This meeting includes delegates from all states and Canadian provinces and from time to time includes European representatives. This was another contentious meeting from the beginning. A motion was made to not approve the agenda, for two reasons. First a bylaw change was proposed, but the proper notification had not been timely made, second USA was on the agenda to speak. A vote was taken and it was a tie, so the chair was going to break the tie. It then turned into a battle between two parliamentarians, one from each side. The Bylaw change was removed and another vote was taken and again it was a tie. I was the only US non USA member delegate to vote with the group that wanted to hear what USA had to say. I was pressured hard to change my vote. Knowing the feelings of the E board and directors I stood my ground. Finally one member abstained so the meeting could move on. Needless to say I was not very popular; sure I am still not with some. In the end USA took their 15 minutes, made their presentation and we all moved on. Nothing changed, no harm done. Like I said in my column, if ACSA is threatened by USA and is concerned other states may leave, perhaps they need to make some changes. Having closed meetings is sure not the way to make the states that have left feel like they will be welcomed back to ACSA if they change their minds. The split is unfortunate and not good for snowmobiling, but I don't see a solution any time soon.

The Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO) completed their health study. Contact the MnUSA office if you would like a digital copy.

Once again Minnesota dominated the charity numbers. We raised \$1.76 M and all the other states and provinces that reported raised a combined \$585,300.

**International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA):** ISMA introduced an exciting new campaign from the manufacturers to celebrate snowmobiling. This is a dealer focused open house event very similar to what MnUSA has done in the past. All dealers, state associations and clubs are invited to participate. They are trying to make it a fun family weekend for all. A handout is available, please pick one up and plan to participate. This will be a good chance to gain some new members. Unfortunately the dates are the same as our Fall Workshop and meetings, October 25-27, 2019. Could be a big deal, even if you can't personally be there, talk to your dealer and start planning now.

Sales were down worldwide but up in the US 1846 units. Canada went down 240 units.  
41% of the US sleds sold were in the Midwest, 30% both in the NE and West.  
There are 1,236,439 sleds registered in the US.  
75% of first sleds purchased were used, 25% new.  
Average age of riders is 45 years old.  
62% of riders belong to a club and/or a state association.  
Average miles ridden was 1500, 15-30% more than last year.

79% are male, 21% are female.

Riding from home or trailering is split even 50-50.

Average spent, not including sled or trailer was \$3369.00.

Outdoor recreation adds 734 billion dollars to our economy, 5 million jobs, and 72 billion in taxes. \$40 billion is generated by snowmobiling.

Interesting side note, Yamaha will sell 2 million outboards in the US this summer.

DC issues: ISMA will attend the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable - RTP, suggested wilderness areas, and the US Forest OHV travel plan update will be discussed.

Stressed the importance of NOT using E15 in your small engines. Use E10 or less. E15 causes very high exhaust gas temperatures and will burn down your engine. Be cautious as it may not be clearly posted.

International Safety Week is January 18-26, 2020. A lot of information is available from ISMA.

Take a Friend Snowmobiling week is February 8-17, 2020.

ISMA grants are available to state organizations for state or government rides, Safe Rider support, land access and support, lawsuits regarding land access issues, and economic impact studies. Grant requests are due by Oct. 1, 2019. If you have ideas for projects, contact the MnUSA office.

**Iron Dog Brigade:** Looking for new members. Must have been active for 15 years in organized snowmobiling and nominated by an Iron Dog member. Talked about limiting the new inductees because of time.

Judy King was elected treasurer.

If you are an Iron Dog, colored IDB decals are available for your sled, trailer or whatever. Can choose any size you want; 3X5 IDB flags are available.

Looking for feedback on web page and photos for Iron Dog members in action for the newsletter.

Guests will be required to pay for their meals. No dues increase for now.

Midwest ride is in Grand Rapids at the Timberlake Lodge on February, 23-26, 2020.

Business Coordinator Report  
July 2019

Thank you to the Blizzard Snowmobile Club and Greg and Nancy Gellert and MnUSA Region 4 for all of the work they have done to put this Campout/Summer Event together. It is an exceptional event.

We left the MnUSA April meeting on Sunday to get on a plane to DC to attend the American Council of Snowmobile Association Fly-In. As usual, the Monday speakers were high ranking people from the US Department of Agriculture and US Forest Service, along with the Public Lands staff member from the Senate and a representative of the Motorcycle Industry Council, a partner in coalitions in DC.

Vickie Christianson, Chief of the US Forest Service thanked all the clubs & state associations for their stewardship of the land. Legislation we supported on previous trips to DC on use of volunteers on US Forest lands has equaled 3000 full time employees.

MnUSA representatives met with Senator Tina Smith and Congressman Pete Stauber personally and with 7 staff members in other offices, although we did run into Congressman McCollum and Congressman Hagedorn in the hall and spoke with them briefly. Senator Smith again spoke of how much fun she had when snowmobiling with us.

Our issues expressed to the legislators concerned an increase in funding to the Recreational Trails Program – presently the program receives \$84M from an estimated \$270M paid in – and a request that a new study be done on off-road fuel used in recreation. Sen. Klobuchar and others have introduced a bill (S1527), the RTP Funding Transparency Act) which will require that an undated study be done. We also requested support of Rep. Bishop's (UT) bill to use energy development revenue to pay for the backlog of maintenance on all federal lands.

MnUSA has been invited to join the United Snowmobile Alliance, a new organization to support snowmobiling, share ideas, and develop solutions. The group is made up of 11 states, many of them from the east with similar issues as in Minnesota. They have open communications, network with many recreation related business, and have attorneys familiar with land use issues and endangered species available to members. One of their projects is public and private land trespass. Mark Kavanaugh and I have been attending their monthly phone conferences and they are very informative.

Last month I attended the International Snowmobile Congress (ISC). No one from DNR was able to attend (we do not presently have anyone in the snowmobile trails position at DNR) so I was asked to site in for the DNR at the administrators meetings (International Association of Snowmobile Administrators - IASA). There are 18 US and 10 Canadian members of IASA. Most from the US are DNR personnel. The Canadian representatives are association people. IASA is working on a Snowmobile Program Finance Survey, a Snowmobiling Incident Report; and a Jurisdictional Best Management Practice Report (DNR reported in MN on the enhanced safety education requiring mandatory hands on training and the performance based grant program for trail grooming. IASA is sending a letter to the manufacturers stating their objection to the hand signal count down.

Also at ISC I participate in the International Snowmobile Media Council (ISMC) and the International snowmobile Tourism Council (ISTC).

If your club applied for a Federal Recreational Program grant, the grant letters have now been sent out.

Thank you for all the work you do for snowmobiling.

Nancy Hanson

# Snowmobile GIA Funding for 2019-20

MnUSA has completed its yearly GIA Fund review with the MN DNR and the following funding rate for our upcoming season was agreed upon.

Another good snow year, the registration fee increase, and a increase in sled renewals will again allow us to continue last year's **one-time** increase of \$1.2 million in GIA funding statewide for one more year. We now have almost 195,000 registered snowmobiles compared to a low of 186,000 in 2017.

The 16% increase in funding to GIA from FY18 will include a new account being finalized that will provide up to \$500,000 in supplemental funding for major repairs and improvements for the GIA Trails. This account will replace the previous Capital Improvement Account that has not been available for the last several years. It is expected that the first round of funding applications will be this Fall with a date to be announced in the near future.

The \$500,000 being set aside for the new supplemental fund will result in your clubs contracts for 2019-20 being approximately 6% less than last year. Be advised that it may not be possible to maintain the snowmobile GIA funding at this level into future years, so clubs need to manage their finances accordingly and be prudent with their spending.

Terry Hutchinson  
Legislative/Trails  
Committee Chairman