

**Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association
General Membership Meeting
Sunday, February 10, 2019
Cragun's Resort, East Gull Lake, MN**

The Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association held its quarterly General Membership meeting Sunday, February 10, 2019 at Cragun's Resort, East Gull Lake, MN. The meeting was called to order by President Rod Seibel at 8:02AM. Present were Executive Board members: President Rod Seibel, Vice President Greg Sorenson; Secretary Rick Johnson; Treasurer Scott Wakefield, Director-at-Large Mark Kavanaugh.

Introduction of Executive Board and Guests – The Executive Board members introduced themselves. Also present were MnUSA Lobbyist Doug Franzen; DNR personnel Laura Preus, Andrew Korsberg, and Bruce Lawrence; Marlys Knutson, Polaris Industries; and Ron Potter, ATVAM President.

Approval of Agenda – Motion by Roger Letcher, seconded by Nicole Pankratz to approve the agenda. --**Motion carried.**

Secretary's Report -- Motion by Mark LaBaw, seconded by Randy LaBerge to waive the reading of the minutes and approve the secretary's report as written. **Motion carried.**

Officers Reports:

President: Rod Seibel reported on visits to a Roseau Club and a Region 9 meeting. Region 9 has unfortunately lost one club which has disbanded.

Vice President: Greg Sorenson reported on the annual Veteran's Ride (see MSEAF report, below). Greg also reported on the 20th annual Blizzard Tour, a charity ride for ALS research and treatment. This year's ride raised \$1.23 M, and over \$710M for the 20 years. Greg encouraged those who can offer help to traveling snowmobilers to get your names in the Rider Assist Guide, published annually.

Secretary: Rick Johnson attended a Region 7 meeting.

Treasurer: Scott Wakefield attended a Region 5 meeting; recapped the final Waconia Vintage Sled Ride-In, and thanked Bryan Bleeke for mentoring the 10,000 Lakes youth group. The charity sled auction at the Waconia Ride-In raised over \$16,000.

Director-at-Large: Mark Kavanaugh also attended the Region 9 meeting and recapped progress on development of the Camp Ripley Veteran's Trail.

Business Coordinator's Report: Thank you to the clubs for sending in their rosters. This is the busiest time of the year so there may be some delay in returning the updated rosters. The **Federal Recreational Trail Program** Grants are due February 28th. This program has a 25% match

for trail projects and up to \$75,000 for equipment. Projects must meet Buy-American and at the present time the only groomer that complies is a Tucker. Contact the MnUSA office if you have questions.

Legislative Report – Doug Franzen reminded that because of Governor Dayton’s veto of last session’s Omnibus Bills we will be starting over on our priorities (see attached). This handout was also used at the Legislative Reception.

DNR Reports:

Parks and Trails: Laura Preus briefly touched on a potential new emergency fund which is being discussed by the Minnesota Snowmobile Advisory Committee and would replace the former Capital Improvement Fund. She noted that the new DNR Commissioner loves snowmobiling, the Governor’s proposed gas tax increase could be a windfall to the snowmobile fund, and announced Andrew Korsberg’s promotion to Policy and Planning Supervisor. Andrew Korsberg noted that revenue is on target halfway through the season and funding appears stable for now.

Enforcement: Bruce Lawrence reported that the on-line class fee has been reduced to \$24.95 and the family/group discount is still available. Last season 3473 youth students were certified and 3,252 adults certified with 39 traditional classes and 164 online classes held during the season. He cited numerous statistics on insurance reports, and enforcement actions. Members questioned why the high frequency of “warnings” vs citations during stops continues when “zero-tolerance” policies have supposedly been instituted by enforcement management. He noted that 18 new CO’s have been fielded; they will be hiring 12 more this year. Each CO is responsible to patrol 65 square miles. There have been three CO fatalities: one farm accident, one suicide, and one (30 year old) cancer death.

Minnesota Snowmobile Education and Advancement Fund: Terry Hutchinson and Larry Shepherd. The Veterans Appreciation ride on January 12, 2019 had to be moved from Paynesville to Grand Rapids again due to lack of snow. Thanks to Duluth Lawn & Sports, Polaris and dealers for donating sleds and all who helped with logistics. Special thanks to Sugar Lake Lodge and the folks in Grand Rapids for putting the Saturday ride together on short notice. At the final banquet, there were several poignant stories from veterans who related that this event had changed their lives by helping them overcome depression, including at least one suicide prevention. Cash donations are always welcome.

Committee Reports

Membership - Jerry Hanson helped Region 7 with a booth at the Duluth Winter Snow Show, selling club memberships along with MnUSA. Clubs that receive a new member email from the MnUSA website should contact the prospective new member and provide them with information on how to join their club. These member inquiries do not generate a payment either to MnUSA or to the club. It is important that clubs keep a current email address on their page on MnUSA’s website to receive these inquiries.

Communications: Scott Wakefield reported that Pat Bourgeois is the new editor for *Minnesota Snowmobiling*. Pat has been around snowmobiling all his life and has been a contributor to the magazine in the past.

Merchandise: Ted Breeggemann hoped all had the opportunity to see the merchandise that was set up in the silent auction room. Continue to go to the MnUSA website to order merchandise.

Safety Greg Sorenson reminded about availability of helmet stickers, medical ID carriers, and activities books. He also noted that the Blizzard ALS ride is the largest of its kind in the entire world.

Site Selection - Mark LaBaw reported that MnUSA is looking for a venue for the 2020 Rendezvous.

Old Business

Spring Meeting—April 26-28, 2019 at Arrowwood Lodge in Brainerd

Summer Campout – July 12-14, 2019 in Fairmont. Room and Campsite blocks will be released on June 12. Get your reservations in as the organizers are hoping for upwards of 250 participants. Rod Seibel and Greg Sorenson are planning to organize a motorcycle ride-in, similar to the Mud Dog ride in to Rendezvous. Contact either if you are interested in participating.

Take a Friend Snowmobiling Campaign– January 1-March 31, 2019

New Business

Fall Convention and Workshop – October 25-27, 2019, Region 2

Region Reports

All Regions report good snow and riding conditions except as noted below.

Region 1: Jim Folz: Using Facebook posts from groomers. Clubs are having many fun activities such as the Ditch Bangers Ball, Karlstad, and the Naytahwaush Snodeo.

Region 2: Jack White: They have excellent snow and Jack invited everyone to come up riding. They are planning for the 2019 Fall Workshop

Region 3: Tom Jann: Conducted the Rendezvous with the greatest snow in a long time.

Region 4: Dick Kuttner: Rain has hampered trail conditions. They are preparing for upcoming Antique Sled show in March in Hutchinson and will feature a “Restore-a-Wreck” event involving youth and parents.

Region 5: Mike Clevenger: Thanks to Paul Maruska’s club for hosting the Hospitality Room at Rendezvous. Vintage is a growing sport and he expects several shows and rides yet this winter. Three clubs hosted a suicide prevention fund-raiser that raised \$4200. Lots of kids at a “Try and Go” event. The Great Southern Grass Drags will be Sept. 22. The Region is proud that two of the three awardees at the Saturday banquet were from Region 5.

Region 6: Roger Letcher: Pushing to sign up business members. Finally they have snow so the groomers are out.

Region 7: Randy Laberge: 40 inches of snow, grooming since Christmas and having fun.

Region 8: Mark LaBaw. Jack Speckel, past MnUSA director, recently passed away. Jack was very active in antique/vintage events with his Arctic Cat snowmobiles. The Region donated \$500 to the U of M Clean Snowmobile Challenge and MnUSA's logo will be on their clothing. Members of the team joined MnUSA. 25th Anniversary Waconia Ride-In is the last at that venue. The Prior Lake Club is holding demo rides today. The Chaska Snow Hawks have its benefit ride/chili feed in March. Directors are visiting each club.

Region 9: Charles Chadbourne: A bridge or underpass is now being required under a county road for the Heartland Trail. The contract has been let. Wind has been a major problem for trail maintenance. They lost a club due to no one to take over.

Motion to adjourn at 10:15 AM by Mark LaBaw, seconded by Jim Folz. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Rick Johnson, Secretary



Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association 2019 Legislative Priorities

Protection of the integrity of the Snowmobile Dedicated Account – protect against raids on the account for non-snowmobile related uses. The snowmobile dedicated account is funded by snowmobile registration tax, snowmobile trail fees and unrefunded gas tax attributed to snowmobile use. Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association believes funds in this account should only be used to provide the snowmobile opportunity in Minnesota.

Support legislation that requires at least 60% of snowmobiling expenditures from the dedicated fund go to Grants-In-Aid. Clubs maintain approximately 21,000 miles of trail throughout the state. All snowmobile related funds are user based and these dollars should be spent “on the ground” to the greatest extent possible.

Support legislation that provides a sales tax exemption on building materials and supplies purchased by non-profit clubs to construct, reconstruct, or maintain or improve state or grant-in-aid snowmobile trails. Everything the clubs, as agents of the state, do to maintain the snowmobile trails is for public benefit.

Support legislation that requires that registration stickers are a uniform color for each registration cycle. Presently registration stickers expiring on a given year are not all the same color making enforcement of the law unnecessarily difficult for law enforcement.

Support legislation that increases club fees for safety training classes. The state has contracted with third party vendors for online safety training, making training much more expensive for Minnesota families. When online training can be purchased with a group or family discount, instructors take advantage of this opportunity resulting in great savings for the students. Present law only allows the clubs to charge \$5 for the class which doesn’t cover the cost of the online training.

Protection of the unrefunded gas tax attributed to snowmobile use. The gas tax paid on fuel purchased for snowmobile use provides approximately 1/3rd of the funding for the snowmobile program. Without such funding, trail maintenance and grooming, and enforcement and safety programs would suffer greatly. When trails are adequately funded, they can be properly maintained, creating a more enjoyable and a safer trail experience for the snowmobilers who paid for this recreational opportunity. Good trails increase tourism, generate income for local businesses, and taxes for the State.

Protection of the use of snowmobiles on public land. Snowmobiles have been allowed on state owned land since their inception. Land sales and subdivisions have a significant impact on the 22,000 mile snowmobile trail network in Minnesota, a trail network which generates millions of tourism dollars to Minnesota. Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association supports the continued responsible use of snowmobiles on State land and on easements purchased by the State, and will oppose legislation that prohibits or limits such use.

Support of programs and policy that encourage continued access to private land for public use. Landowners permit public use for snowmobile trails to allow for thousands of miles of snowmobile trails across private land. These permits are essential to the interconnected trail system enjoyed by Minnesota residents and out of state visitors alike. The Legislature should promote prudent policies to support and encourage landowners to permit public recreational use on their land.

Support of the use of a portion of the Parks and Trails Legacy Funds and other state funding sources for capital improvements on trails that benefit snowmobiling. Again, when trails are adequately funded, they can be properly maintained, creating a more enjoyable and a safer trail experience. Good trails increase tourism, generate income for local businesses, and taxes for the State.

Support of legislation that will insure any new laws protect and accommodate recreational trail alignments and crossings for new development, specifically for any new publicly funded rail developments for both light and heavy rail.

Support of legislation and/or policy that will allow Grant in Aid trails to remain and/or be added to all existing or new WMA/AMA’s.

Support of legislation that requires all snowmobiles, including collector snowmobiles not in a registered event, have either a current registration or a trail pass to operate on a designated state or grant-in-aid trail.