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MEMBERS

# IOWA SNOWMOBILER

January 2024 • Volume 45 • Issue 4

## LeMans Racing at Clear Lake

Snocross Legend  
Talks at State  
Convention

Membership  
Recruitment  
Strategy





Vintage  
Snowmobile Racing

**Saturday, February 10, 2024**

**Clear Lake State Park  
Clear Lake, IA**

**9 am LeMans Race  
Radar Runs  
Noon Kitty Kat Race  
Youth 120 Race  
3 pm Stud Boy  
Challenge**



(641) 420-0248 | [midwestsledfest.com](http://midwestsledfest.com)  
[midwestsledfest@yahoo.com](mailto:midwestsledfest@yahoo.com)

**IOWA SNOWMOBILER**

The Official Magazine of the Iowa State Snowmobile Association

www.iowasnowmobiler.com  
1924 270th Street  
Marble Rock, IA 50653  
issa1257@yahoo.com

**ISSA OFFICERS**

**President**

John Kahler  
635 Greene St.  
Slater, IA 50244  
(515) 202-4061  
jfkahler@hotmail.com



**Vice President**

Matt Miner  
11256 Robin Ave.  
Cresco, IA 52136  
(563) 380-7142  
mmmffarms@hotmail.com



**Secretary**

Kelsey Bram  
17313 Packard Ave.  
Clarksville, IA 50619  
(515) 538-0884  
bram.kelsey@gmail.com



**Treasurer/Membership**

Brittany Paulus  
1924 270th Street  
Marble Rock, IA 50653  
(641) 228-0977  
bepaulus@outlook.com



**ISSA COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Jim Willey, Chair  
Becky Willey  
20752 247th St., Delhi, IA 52223  
(563) 920-0911  
james.willey2019@gmail.com

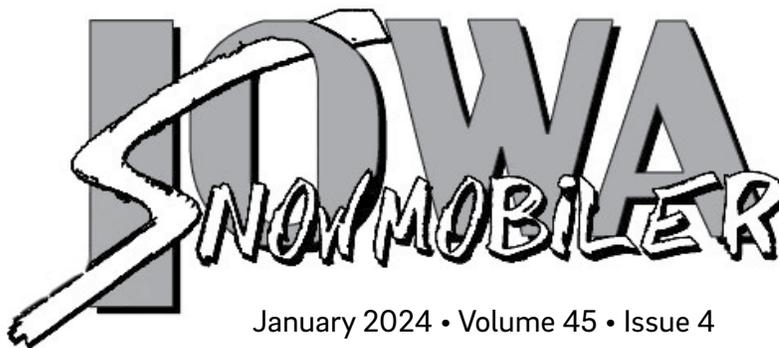
Gary and Karen McVicker  
1012 Lark Ave., Hampton, IA 50441  
(641) 425-1375  
gmcvic@yahoo.com

**Managing Editor**

Cameron Hanson  
2552 Woodland Place  
Charles City, IA 50616  
(641) 330-5565  
editor@iowasnowmobiler.com

**CHANGE NOTIFICATION**

If your club has elected new officers or if you have an address change, please notify the ISSA office at issa1257@yahoo.com. You can also fill out the form at the bottom of the ISSA homepage at www.iowasnowmobiler.com. Thank you.



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Trespassing's impact on snowmobile access a recurring topic at convention.



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**Recruiting Tips**

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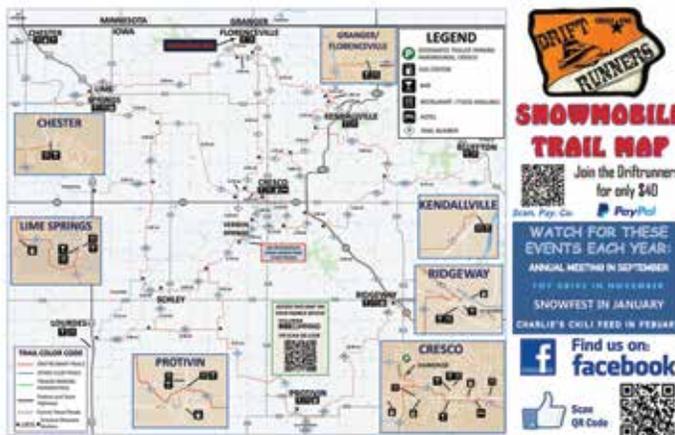
**Midwest Sled Fest**

Vintage racers test their skill, endurance on LeMans-style course at Clear Lake.



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This Month's Map Center Spread:  
• Driftrunners, Inc., Region 5



COVER: As evidenced by the number of entries in the 2023 race, the 600 class continues to be a fan favorite at the Midwest Sled Fest at Clear Lake each February. Overall, last year's race drew close to 80 competitors. This year's event is planned for Feb. 10, once again in front of Clear Lake State Park.

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## JOHN KAHLER

ISSA  
PRESIDENT



Everyone needs to be doing their “Snow Dance” in order to get this season going. It’s the end of the first week in December as I write this article and to date, we have had very little sign of winter other than some light dusting here in central Iowa.

I hope all the clubs have gotten their trails established and marked and their groomers serviced and prepared because at this point, when the snow decides to come, it will be gone before we know it. Even our northern states seem to be in the waiting category.

This gives me an opportunity to talk about the importance of volunteering and being involved with your clubs and maybe neighboring clubs around you. Without the commitment of all the members of the ISSA and the snowmobile clubs across Iowa, our trail system would simply not exist.

I invite you to install a free app on your phone or tablet called Groomer Tracking Systems, LLC. Set up your username and set up your password. This app will give you a better sense of all the trails in Iowa currently, and with the new tracking system the ISTGP has introduced recently, more trails will start to show up as grooming across the state starts to happen.

Some club trails are missing at this point, but with the help from Mother Nature, those trails will start to appear as they groom. This map system should provide proof that volunteerism in Iowa is strong and committed, knowing that the majority of these trails are put in and pulled every year.

I want to say “Thank you” to all of the clubs and their members for making snowmobiling great in Iowa. I would be remised to not mention also a big “Thank you” to all the landowners, county and state officials and the towns and cities for granting us access to your property for making this happen as well. Let’s hope the snow starts flying soon.



*Shown here on the north end of town, part of Trail 13 coming into Eagle River, Wis., from the south is shut down this winter due to trespassing and off-trail riding.*

# Trespassing Will Get You Nowhere

## Off-trail riding concerns a recurring theme at convention

by **Cameron Hanson**

Trespassing and off-trail riding continue to be identified as the two main threats to trail access for snowmobilers across the Snow Belt. Curbing this reckless behavior remains a top priority for groups within the organized snowmobiling community, and the topic became a recurring theme at the ISSA Annual Convention in Cedar Falls in November.



The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) recently began encouraging riders to ‘Take the Pledge’ by committing to only riding their machines “where it’s legal and accepted.” The American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) has also been promoting responsible conduct through public awareness campaigns.

According to ISMA, “the pledge was created to make snowmobilers aware of the importance of recognizing the ownership of the land we ride on, and the impact we have on it. The record level of interest in enjoying the great winter outdoors demands our attention to the awareness of legal riding areas and making sure everyone knows the rules.”

At convention, invited guest speaker Stan Stutheit, an ACSA board member from neighboring Nebraska, shared his thoughts on trespassing and discussed trail access issues in Montana, Michigan and Wisconsin. At Eagle River this winter, he said a main artery into town from the south has been closed due to riders disrespecting private land.



**Stutheit**

“This issue involved a private landowner dealing with people constantly trespassing, and he finally said he had enough and you can’t go through there any more,” Stutheit said. “The trail is closed this year, and it may take three to four years to get an alternative route done because they will have to build a bridge. If you’re on a trail on private property, stay on the trail. There are other opportunities to go play.”

Stutheit said he became active in ACSA because he hails from a state that doesn’t have any public snowmobile trails, and as a result, he typically has to travel 500 to 800 miles to go riding. “So when I get there, I want to make sure there’s a place for me to ride,” he said. “ACSA is very important to me for that reason, and that’s why I’m involved.”

Ski-Doo Ambassador Bret Rasmussen, a backcountry expert from Idaho, also spoke at convention and listed trespassing as one of four main complaints policy-makers and private landowners can use to shut down trail access.

“Stay in bounds,” he said. “If you have access to trails on private property and you decide it looks kind of fun to go through someone’s field without their permission, that track might be the one piece of ammunition that will shut down access for everyone.”

Rasmussen said noise was also a “huge issue” for the sport and said “it drives me crazy when people are riding with a loud can.” The last two negative impacts he said snowmobilers can control were littering and wildlife interaction.

“Those are four things that you should not give as ammunition to other user groups that they can use to shut down access to our lands,” Rasmussen said. “What I’m talking about is preserving access to our trails and our lands. You may not have many public lands here in Iowa, but you do have a trail

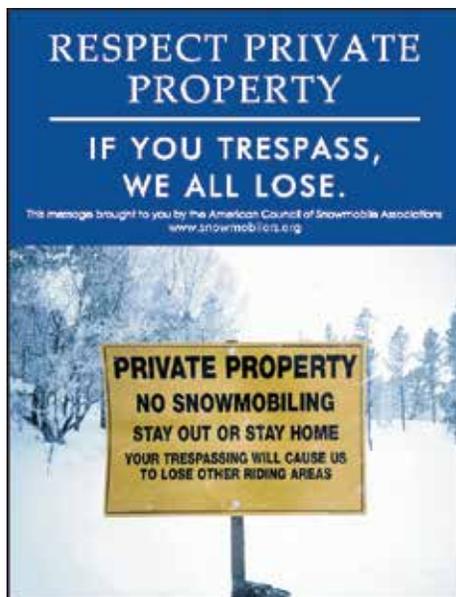


*Bret Rasmussen holds a PHD, or what he calls a post-hole digger.*

system you need to be concerned about preserving.”

Rasmussen also discussed the significance of “wilderness designation” on snowmobile access. In Idaho, Rasmussen said their riding area is almost entirely on public land, and “there are acres and acres of wilderness designation out west that may look enticing, but they are out of bounds for us,” he said.

Stutheit also brought up the Biden Administration’s plan to have 30 percent of all public land and water placed into conservation by 2030. “That’s a lot more than what we have today,” Stutheit said. “Besides outdoor recreation, that can stop all mining, oil drilling and logging because it falls under conservation.”



*ACSA Public Service Announcement.*

## Take the Pledge

According to ISMA, snowmobilers across the Snow Belt enjoy more than 120,000 miles of trails on public and private land. Those partnerships have been built and maintained by snowmobile volunteers for more than 40 years. Responsible riders are encouraged to Take the Pledge at [www.snowmobilerspledge.com](http://www.snowmobilerspledge.com) and agree to the following conditions:

- I Pledge to ride off trail only where I know it’s legal and accepted.
- I Pledge to check before going off-trail if I don’t know.
- I Pledge to protect access for future generations by doing the right thing.
- I Pledge to protect access by encouraging those I ride with to take the Pledge also.

## MATT MINER

ISSA VICE PRESIDENT



Greetings, fellow snowmobilers.

Hopefully when you are reading this, Mother Nature has dropped some of the white gold, and you have put some miles on your sleds.

As you know, Iowa has some of the best trails to ride, and the clubs that take care of them are the greatest around—from the Driftrunners in northeast Iowa with their annual Snowfest Jan 25-28 and the Dickinson County Snowhawks in northwest Iowa that help with the Iowa Winter Games to the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club that hosts the Spina Bifida Ride in Huxley Iowa on Feb. 4 or the Snowmobile Iowa Events going around Iowa in Jan and Feb or any of the club runs and events.

So if you have a day or a weekend, load up you and some friends and go see a new trail system. Someone from that club will be more than willing to take you around their trail system and show how great it is. As you are out riding, don’t forget to thank all the sponsors of the clubs and the volunteers that make the trails great.

As I have just said, each club has some great areas or events to ride. So if your club is having a fun run, a vintage snowmobile ride, a radar run or just a club ride on the weekend, PLEASE let the ISSA know so that we can put on our Facebook page and the website to let people from around the state know and try to attend. The more people who know, the more that can try and make it. I know that each snowmobiling event that I have attended over the years I meet lots of new people and make friends with.

Also if you have any questions or concerns, PLEASE GIVE ME A CALL. As always, the board is open to new ideas and ways to keep snowmobiling great in Iowa.

As this is the last Magazine till the fall of 2024, please watch the ISSA website and Facebook page for updates and information about what is happening around the state and dates for stuff like the ISSA Scholarship deadline, the ISSA Awards program, Campout, ISC Convention or info on the 2024 ISSA Convention.

Thanks again to everyone who helps with making snowmobile fun in Iowa. Have an enjoyable riding season.

**REGION ONE**

Kevin Winters, Director  
PO Box 305, Lake Park, IA 51347  
(712) 320-9530



Randy Magg, Assistant  
1728 280th Ave.  
Spirit Lake, IA 51360  
rdmagg5460@gmail.com



Steve Wiersma, Assistant  
5801 370th Street  
Primghar, IA 51245  
(712) 461-2774



Nyles Schimmer  
216 W. Maple Dr.  
Hartley, Iowa 51346  
712-363-7386  
nlschimmer@gmail.com



**REGION TWO**

Jason Harvey, Director  
1826 450th Ave.  
Estherville, IA 51334  
(712) 392-0475  
emmetcodriftbusters@gmail.com



Jeremy Walker, Assistant  
1402 170th St.  
LuVerne, IA 50560-8552  
(515) 341-1626  
jlkwalk@gmail.com



Kolby Wagner, Assistant  
749 South St., Rockwell City, IA 50579  
(712) 830-3821  
kolbywagner@yahoo.com



**REGION THREE**

Ben Diekhuis, Director  
2115 Nash Ave.  
Britt, IA 50423  
(515) 291-2329, diekhuis@gmail.com



Lenny Watts, Assistant  
2835 Sycamore Ave., Dows, IA 50071  
(515) 571-6034  
lenny@usa-chemical.com



**REGION FOUR**

Seth Bram, Director  
17313 Packard Ave.  
Clarksville, IA 50619  
(641) 512-1932, sethbram@gmail.com



Brent Nauman, Assistant  
23667 210th St., Rockford, IA 50468  
(641) 425-8964  
bnnauman@gmail.com



Jeremy Wolf, Assistant  
3006 Cheyenne Ave.  
Nashua IA 50658  
(641) 330-7410  
jeremy.randjtrucking@yahoo.com

# Legislative Resolution

## ISSA members endorse renewed effort at increased trail funding through fee merger

by Cameron Hanson

Iowa snowmobile clubs are being reminded to return resolutions indicating their support for snowmobile-friendly legislation aimed at increased trail funding. The measure was unanimously ratified at the ISSA Annual Convention in Cedar Falls in November, and letters requesting individual endorsements were emailed to clubs in December.



At convention, ISSA members passed a resolution

to support the re-branded Iowa State Snowmobiling Funding Legislation. Working closely with ISSA Lobbyist Mike Heller, the ISSA is hoping to find a sponsor this month to introduce the bill in the Iowa Legislature to combine the registration sticker and the resident trail pass into one user fee.

The initiative is expected to close a loophole in current legislation and no longer makes the trail permit optional. Generating significant additional revenue for the Iowa Snowmobile Trail Grant Program, the move will hold all snowmobile trail users accountable for the expenses required to maintain 8,800 miles of trail in Iowa.

“The combined registration will improve the funds available to support Iowa snowmobile trails, marking and grooming equipment by about \$100,000 per year, ensuring the Iowa snowmobile program receives the funding it needs to continue to provide the trails for all Iowa winter recreationists to use,” ISSA Legislative Committee Chair Jim Willey wrote in the letter.

Currently, a \$15 registration fee and a separate \$15 trail pass (plus writing fees) are required for any Iowa resident to operate their snowmobile on public trails, rights-of-way and frozen bodies of water. Some snowmobile owners choose not to purchase the trail permit, claiming they do not ride in state. Since the permit’s inception in 2013, compliance has hovered around 60 percent.

“This proposed legislation will eliminate the problem of snowmobilers who buy only the registration and ride Iowa trails without the trail pass,” Willey explained. “This makes law enforcement easier and eliminates unintentional errors. The non-resident trail pass program will continue unchanged, reciprocal with other states that accept out-of-state registrations.”

Previously known as the “single sticker bill,” the ISSA decided to change its ap-



ISSA Lobbyist Mike Heller and Past ISSA President Jim Willey make their legislative pitch to snowmobilers at the 2023 convention in Cedar Falls in November.

proach this year after six consecutive years with very little progress. The measure has twice passed the Iowa House but stalled just as many times in the Iowa Senate. The resolutions from clubs are designed to demonstrate unilateral support for the fee increase to legislators who may be opposed to such raises.

“The problem is really in the Senate,” Heller explained at the ISSA convention. “It’s a little more difficult there because it will have to pass two committees, and members are very leery about anything that could be perceived as a fee increase. The Senate tends to be more conservative. They have a very hearty dislike for anything that may be perceived as a fee increase.”

Heller said Republicans control the Statehouse in Des Moines. He’s confident the bill will pass the Iowa House, but it will need to clear the two hurdles in the Iowa Senate: the Natural Resources Committee and the Ways and Means Committee, the chair of which is from a district with very little snowmobile activity.

“It’s not that we don’t have strong supporters who are Republican, but we need to focus on getting grass-roots support,” Heller said. “We need those Republican senators to go to their leaders and ask to get the bill on the agenda and move it. We have to get it out of committee and get it up for a vote. We haven’t been able to do that. It’s been difficult, to be really honest.”

With the support of clubs, Heller said the ISSA can be successful this year in increasing funding for the trail program. For inspiration, he pointed to the success-

ful passage of legislation 15 years ago that returned \$950,000 in de-appropriated funding back to the snowmobile program. He feels snowmobilers can make it happen again this year.

“I think we can do it. I think we have a real shot at it, more than I felt that we’d ever get the registration funds back in 2008,” Heller said. “I encourage you to invite your legislators to your club meetings. It’s more important to invite Repub-

licans than Democrats because they are the ones who are going to control what’s on the agenda.”

“The passage of this legislation will continue to make our program self-sustaining, keeping it as one of the only recreational programs in Iowa that receives no tax dollars,” Willey said. “We are completely funded by the snowmobilers using the trails, and we are confident that this legislation will be successful in 2024.”

## Durby Inducted into Iron Dog Brigade at Moline

Past ISSA President Terry Durby was inducted into the Iron Dog Brigade at the 2023 International Snowmobile Congress in Moline, Ill., this past June. Membership in this prestigious organization is by invitation only, and Durby was nominated by Past ISSA President and current Iron Dog member Bruno Andreini.

Durby was honored for more than 30 years of service to the ISSA. He served as president from 2005-06 and played an active role in several legislative initiatives, including the recovery of nearly \$950,000 in snowmobile program reserves in 2008 and separating the state snowmobile program from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in 2017.

“These things didn’t happen right away, and it took a lot of arm-twisting to get them done,” Durby said. “I applaud our lobbyist for being there, always pointing us in the right direction. I think we’ve done a great job getting to where we are today, and a lot of support comes from active past presidents staying involved. I don’t think I’ve seen another non-profit organization that utilizes past presidents and their expertise like we do.”

Andreini recognized Durby’s Iron Dog induction at the awards banquet at the ISSA Annual Convention in Cedar Falls in November. The Iron Dog Brigade was formed in 1975 and describes itself as “an honorary society dedicated to the fun of snowmobiling.” Membership is capped at 130 members, and openings are created by the



Past ISSA President Bruno Andreini, left, congratulates fellow Past President Terry Durby on his induction into the Iron Dog Brigade last June.

passing of a current member.

To qualify, nominees need to have contributed at least 20 years of service to the sport through affiliation in organized snowmobiling, industry, media, government, tourism or other snowmobile-related activity. Most have 30 years or more of service, Andreini pointed out, and besides his dedication to the ISSA, Durby was also recognized for his service to the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, for which he volunteered as president in 2011-12.

“Iron Dog members are the most respected and hardest working members of the snowmobile community,” Andreini said. “Terry certainly falls into that category.”

### 2024 ISSA Summer Campout Host Needed

The ISSA is soliciting bids from clubs to host the 2024 Summer Campout, normally held in July. As always, the ISSA provides \$200 in incentive money, and as much as \$600 in expenses can be reimbursed through the ISSA. Events can be as simple or as elaborate as desired. If your club is interested in hosting this year’s campout, please reach out to your Region Director or contact ISSA President John Kahler at [jfkahler@hotmail.com](mailto:jfkahler@hotmail.com).



#### REGION FIVE

Kate Taylor, Director  
18325 90th St., Maynard, IA 50655  
(563) 920-3306  
[kdttaylor2009@hotmail.com](mailto:kdttaylor2009@hotmail.com)



Steve Vorwald (Sherri), Assistant  
1582 210th St., Manchester, IA 52057  
(563) 927-5362



Sue Michels (CJohn), Assistant  
5904 Palace Rd., Oelwein, IA 50662  
(319) 238-1831  
[cjsredangus@gmail.com](mailto:cjsredangus@gmail.com)



Sam Johnson (Jessica), Assistant  
2961 River Rd., Decorah, IA 52101  
(563) 379-9370  
[Samjohnson.44.09@gmail.com](mailto:Samjohnson.44.09@gmail.com)



Steven Burke, Assistant  
7246 Unity Ave. Cresco, IA 52136  
(507) 251-0644  
[steven@burkecresco.com](mailto:steven@burkecresco.com)



Nathan Gudenauf, Assistant  
2763 180th Ave. Ryan, IA 52230  
(563) 608-2243  
[nathang4440@gmail.com](mailto:nathang4440@gmail.com)



#### REGION SIX

Jamie Rohlf, Director  
408 Center, Wall Lake, IA 51466  
(712) 830-2196, [jrohlf70@gmail.com](mailto:jrohlf70@gmail.com)



Gene Gerdes, Assistant  
P.O. Box 826, Lake View, IA 51450  
(712) 665-8541  
[gaskgerdes@gmail.com](mailto:gaskgerdes@gmail.com)



#### REGION SEVEN

David Eide, Director  
3339 Stagecoach Rd.  
Stratford, IA 50249  
(515) 835-8000

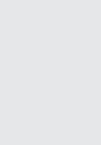


Craig Krapfl, Assistant  
3614 SW 29th ST.  
Ankeny, Iowa 50021  
515-707-7237  
[ckrapfl@gmail.com](mailto:ckrapfl@gmail.com)



#### REGION EIGHT

Rob Schneider, Director  
1864 Marsh Ave  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
(641) 750-7927  
[17schneider@gmail.com](mailto:17schneider@gmail.com)



Teresa Arrowood, Assistant  
1507 Sanford Ave  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
(641) 352-0886

#### REGION NINE

Open, Director

Todd Sieverding, Assistant  
27818 Sieverding Ridge Rd.  
Bellevue, IA 52031  
(563) 599-0584, [tsfire10@gmail.com](mailto:tsfire10@gmail.com)



Scott Nauman (2020-21)  
402 Fifth St.  
Rudd, IA 50676  
(641) 425-9898  
sdnauman04@gmail.com



Brian Carmichael (2019-20)  
1369 Midway Ave.  
Tripoli, IA 50676  
(319) 215-5006  
snohawk68@gmail.com



Chris Willey (2017-18)  
1765 Firefly Road  
Manchester IA, 52057  
(563) 920-9010  
kioti79@gmail.com



Merv Hoermann (2007-08, 2015-16)  
*Deceased*

Jim Willey (2013-14)  
20752 247th St.  
Delhi, IA 52223  
(563) 920-0911  
james.willey2019@gmail.com



Gary Burger (2011-12)  
7255 NW 54th Court  
Johnston, IA, 50131  
(515) 334-0360,  
gary@burgersofiowa.com



Gary McVicker (2009-10)  
1012 Lark Ave.  
Hampton, IA 50441  
(641) 425-1375  
gmcvic@yahoo.com



Terry Durby (2005-06)  
44232 Hwy 69  
Leland, IA 50453  
(641) 590-7007  
tdurb@yahoo.com



Jerry Kramer (2003-04)  
1930 Lincoln Ave.  
Humboldt, IA 50548  
(515) 890-1099



Dennis Nauman (2001-02)  
1540 Kirkwood Ave.  
Floyd, IA 50435  
(641) 425-4141  
cdnauman@myomnitel.com



Jeff Jans (1999-2000)  
308 2nd St. NW, P.O. Box 153  
Fostoria, IA 51340-0153  
(712) 260-4309



Bruno Andreini (1997-98)  
2306 230th St., Dallas Center, IA 50063  
(515) 240-3858  
awbrunoa3@gmail.com



Dave Carmichael (1995-96)  
*Deceased*

# Snowmobile Program Requires Paper Trail for Expenses Now

by Cameron Hanson

Formerly known as the Review and Selection Committee, the Iowa Snowmobile Trail Grant Program (ISTGP) is moving forward with its plan to reimburse snowmobile clubs \$13 per mile to groom and maintain their snowmobile trails in Iowa this winter. There just have been a few more wrinkles to iron out along the way.

In December, program officials were notified by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) that receipts will still need to be collected by clubs for their fuel and maintenance expenses in order to qualify for grant reimbursements through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a federal grant program administered in Iowa by the IDOT.

“In the meetings on the program changes we had this fall, it was recommended to keep these documents. We have now been told it will be required,” program co-administrator Chris Willey explained in an email to clubs Dec. 11. “We apologize for the last-minute change to the program, but we have to follow the regulations and stipulations of the RTP grant program if we want to be able to utilize those funds.”

Working with clubs over a series of mandatory meetings last fall, the ISTGP has installed GPS units across the groomer fleet to track groomer miles. According to Willey, clubs may be able to use that same system to upload images of the receipts that are now required along with the groomer miles.

“We are asking clubs to keep and track their grooming operations as they have in the past years and submit everything at the end of the year,” he said. “We are working to make an adjustment to the tracking system program that will allow you to upload images of these receipts directly to your grooming log.”

In September, the ISTGP announced it will be using RTP money to pay for grooming expenses and then using the state’s registration dollars and trail pass revenue to purchase grooming equipment. Modeled after a similar “contract grooming” program in Wisconsin, this spending shift works around the Buy American Act, which stipulates federal money cannot be used to purchase equipment made from



Download the GTS trail app for digitized trail maps and timely groomer reports.



materials sourced outside of the U.S.

Not all groomers and drags satisfy the Buy American mandate, thereby limiting the equipment options available to the ISTGP. Registration and trail pass revenue collected in Iowa are not held to the same standard as the federal grant money and therefore can be used to purchase grooming equipment, regardless from where it is manufactured.

Adding another layer of complexity, the ISTGP is now eligible to apply for a waiver to the Buy American Act, and if approved, officials could use RTP funding to purchase grooming equipment under a \$500,000 limit. The ISTGP is currently working through three existing RTP grants and has applied for another \$340,000 in the latest round of grant askings. Awards will be announced later this month.

As explained at the ISTGP update at the ISSA Annual Convention in Cedar Falls in November, the program is still waiting on RTP authorization to purchase six drags and a used Tucker for the Trail Blazers, Inc., in Region 5. Any Tucker manufactured after 2018 is eligible for RTP funding under the Buy American Act. Program officials now need to decide if they want to apply for the waiver for additional equipment upgrades.

“We may end up using some money from both registration dollars and RTP funding to buy equipment and pay for the contract grooming,” explained ISSA President John Kahler, an ISTGP board member. “We may be able to pool the money together for all program expenses this year. It will just take a little bit to iron out all these details.”

Besides the RTP funding, the program will have about \$340,000 in registration and trail pass dollars to work with if the funding stream holds true based on past seasons. That money is collected quarterly from the Iowa Department of Natural and varies based on the timing of registration and trail pass purchases.

“That’s why that amount was left to be determined during our PowerPoint presentation at convention,” Kahler noted.





# Changing Lives One Dollar at a Time

Joe Paulus from the Floyd County Groomers in Region 4 visits with Heidi Kriener, left, and Jessica Dane at the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa's booth at the 2023 ISSA Annual Convention in Cedar Falls in November.

## by Cameron Hanson

Iowa snowmobilers raised more than \$5,000 for the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa (SBAIA) at the ISSA Annual Convention in Cedar Falls in November. That total included \$4,400 in club donations and another \$800 in Silent Auction items. With plenty of winter left to go, the ISSA should be able to close in on last season's total of nearly \$8,000.



The ISSA began supporting the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa in 1982. Total donations to the ISSA's official charity over the last 40 years have far exceeded \$300,000, and the non-profit group has used that generous funding for educational programming, family outreach and expenses related to patient medical care.

The SBAIA was formed in 1972 and works with families affected by the birth defect where the spinal cord does not develop completely. The condition often leads to incontinence, mobility issues and other limitations. At convention, SBAIA member Heidi Kriener thanked snowmobilers for their ongoing support.

"Your donations go so far for people with spina bifida," she said. "This year, it helped a little girl get a new walker. It helped other people with equipment. It helped many of us go to camp this summer for a week. It helped with our education day where people get to learn about spina bifida that they may not know already or it helps parents with kids with spina bifida.

"Your support helps with so many

things," Kriener continued. "You guys are changing the lives of so many different people with spina bifida, and we can't thank you enough."

Next month, ISSA members will gather in Huxley for the 18th Annual Winter Fun Day with spina bifida families. The event is hosted by the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club of Region 7, and in addition to food, fun and fellowship, the day will include games, entertainment and, best of all, snowmobile rides on the nearby Heart of Iowa Nature Trail.

Saylorville club member Craig Krapfl serves as the ISSA's liaison to the SBAIA board, and speaking at convention, he invited ISSA members to support the Feb. 4 event at the Safe Room in Huxley. He is also asking ISSA members to bring cutters and two-up sleds to help make sure all of the spina bifida kids and their families have an opportunity for a trail ride.

"Last year was the first year since I've been involved that nobody had to wait a turn," Krapfl said. "We walked outside and the machines were all lined up and ready to go. There were spots for not only the children but also the adults who wanted to go."

Krapfl said they did get "a little low on helmets," so he is also looking for additional snowmobile gear to go with the dozen or so suits and helmets the ISSA already owns. Blankets are also provided to keep the participants warm.

To volunteer at the event or if you have questions, contact Krapfl at (515) 707-7237. The Winter Fun Day starts at 11 a.m. with lunch and speakers at noon. Snowmobile rides start at 1 p.m. The address for the Safe Room in Huxley is 515 North Main.

Scott Kooiker (1993 -94)  
261 160th Ave.  
Ellsworth, MN 56129  
(507) 360-4667  
sjkooiker@hotmail.com



Dale Vagts (1991-92)  
24573 Kings Rd.  
Cresco, IA 52136  
(563) 547-2161



Dick Melick (1989-90)  
*Deceased*

Roger Muth (1987-88)  
*Deceased*

Larry Childs (1986)  
311 E. Prospect St., Manchester, IA 52057-1456  
(563) 608-1138

Dan Martin (1984-85)  
4712 Candlelight Dr., Davenport, IA 52806  
(563) 343-0075

Marv Heikens (1982-83)  
*Deceased*

Chuck Colegrove (1981)  
5606 6th Ave., Armstrong, IA 50514  
(712) 864-3170

Rich Moench (1980)  
*Deceased*

Gary Fairchild (1979)  
933 170th St., Ogden, IA 50212

Bill Nordstrom (1978)  
*Deceased*

Gary Bruns (1977)  
*Deceased*

Richard Grosse (Mar 1975-Dec 1976)  
7543 Ford Rd., Janesville, IA 50647

Larry Huntley (Nov 1973-Mar 1975)  
401 East 1st St., Alta, IA 51002

## COMMITTEES

ALS CHARITY LIAISON  
Brian Carmichael, snohawk68@gmail.com

AWARDS  
Kelsey Bram, bram.kelsey@gmail.com

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS  
OPEN

BUDGET/FINANCE  
Brittany Paulus, bepaulus@outlook.com

BY-LAWS AND SOPS  
Matt Miner, mmmfarms@hotmail.com

CHARITY  
Brittany Paulus, bepaulus@outlook.com

COMMUNICATIONS  
Jim Willey, james.willey2019@gmail.com

CONVENTION 2024  
OPEN

EFC  
Matt Miner, mmmfarms@hotmail.com

GROOMER TRAINING COORDINATOR  
Chris Willey, ISSA.RSC@gmail.com

IOWA REC TRAILS ADVISORY REP  
John Kahler, jfkahler@hotmail.com

LEGISLATIVE  
Jim Willey, james.willey2019@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP  
Brittany Paulus, bepaulus@outlook.com

NOMINATIONS  
Jim Willey, james.willey2019@gmail.com

PROMOTION  
Jason Harvey, emmetcodriftbusters@gmail.com

RAFFLE  
Steve Wiersma

IOWA SNOWMOBILE TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM  
Terry Durby, ISSA.RSC@gmail.com  
Chris Willey, ISSA.RSC@gmail.com

TRAIL SIGN & TRAIL DEVELOPMENT  
Matt Miner, mmmfarms@hotmail.com

SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION  
Bruno Andreini, awbrunoa3@gmail.com

SPINA BIFIDA CHARITY LIAISON  
Craig Krapfl, ckrappfl@gmail.com

# International Snowmobile Safety Week Jan. 20-27

The ISSA is joining the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) in recognition of Jan. 20-27 as International Snowmobile Safety Awareness Week for 2024. Club-related activities are being encouraged at the local level.

“The purpose of International Snowmobile Safety Week is to expose people to safe snowmobiling practices and to demonstrate how operating safely can prevent mishaps,” explained ISMA President Ed Klim. “Snowmobiling is a fun and exciting family activity enjoyed by more than four million people across the United States and Canada. The sport is a safe and enjoyable form of recreation if done properly and with respect.”

In Iowa, snowmobiles are operated by men, women and children of all ages. Depending on weather conditions, approximately 8,800 miles of snow-covered trails are maintained and groomed by snowmobile club volunteers across the state. Before heading out to enjoy those trails, ISSA President John Kahler encourages riders to follow these basic safety tips.

“Never ride alone. Always ride with friends or buddies,” he said. “Always follow trail etiquette and always ride on the right side. Know your trail conditions and never follow too close. Trespassing is illegal, so stay on the trail!”

“Everything happens fast on a snowmobile, so always ride within your limits and skill set,” Kahler continued. “We cannot afford to lose anyone while we are trying to make memories. Please, always remember to never operate while under any type of drug or alcohol.”

According to Kahler and Klim, snowmobilers should always take along a spare belt, spark plugs and tools to do basic re-



pairs when they ride. They also said riders should not leave home without emergency supplies, such as a basic first aid kit, and overnight survival provisions, such as food, matches, flashlights and extra batteries.

Ideas and suggestions for activities during Snowmobile Safety Awareness Week are available online through ISMA’s Campaign Action Manual at [www.snowmobile.org](http://www.snowmobile.org). Also posted there is information on ISMA’s Safe Riders! program.

“Activities and events held during Snowmobile Safety Awareness Week should promote responsible attitudes and actions that will foster the safe, family image of snowmobiling,” Klim said.

Educational materials from ISMA include the following: posters, fact books, a safety video, public service announcements and decals that highlight safety messages.

“We hope that you will find this web-based information useful in your organization’s snowmobile safety campaign,” Klim said. “The suggested activities contained there can be modified to meet your club’s needs.”

## Safe Snowmobiling Means...

1. Never consume alcohol or drugs.
2. Become familiar with the snowmobile you ride.
3. Operate at safe and reasonable speeds.
4. Stay on trails and areas where snowmobiling is permitted.
5. Avoid travel on unfamiliar frozen bodies of water.
6. Use extra caution at night.
7. Keep your snowmobile properly maintained.
8. Become familiar with the terrain you will travel on.
9. Listen to the weather forecast before you leave.
10. Always wear a helmet and proper clothing.
11. Never ride alone and let someone know where you’re going.
12. Carry emergency supplies and learn survival skills.



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# Snocross Legend

Blair Morgan reflects on racing career at ISSA event in Cedar Falls

by Cameron Hanson

Canadian snocross legend Blair Morgan made up for his last-minute cancellation at the International Snowmobile Congress at Dubuque in 2022 by serving as the keynote speaker for the ISSA's 50th Annual Convention at Cedar Falls in 2023. His special guest appearance was part of the ISSA's Golden Anniversary celebration this past November.

Speaking at both the Saturday morning general assembly and the Saturday evening banquet, Morgan, 47, from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, discussed his championship career in snocross racing and also reflected on the untimely practice accident which sidelined him during his peak competitive years.

"You are definitely a treasure to our sport, and we appreciate you hanging out with us this weekend," said Region 4 Director Seth Bram, who chaired the 2023 convention planning committee and who, along with his wife Kesley, invited Morgan down to Iowa for the commemorative occasion.

## Superstar status

Morgan's resume is impressive. The superstar racer with the world-famous 7c bib is a 13-time Snocross World Champion, a five-time X Games Gold Medalist and a five-time Canadian Motocross Champion. He was recently ranked No. 2 on *Snow Goer* magazine's list of all-time best snocross racers.

His podium finishes helped to validate the rider-forward chassis design of current sleds, and he has also been credited with popularizing the sport's modern high-flying, stand-up style of racing. Always a showman, he was the first known snowmobiler to perform a heel-clicker on a race sled in competition. "Yeah, I'll take credit for that," he joked on stage at convention.

In 2008, a motocross practice accident left him paralyzed from the waist down, and he remains wheelchair-bound. After taking time to focus on family and life, he returned to competitive racing in the Adaptive Snowbike Class in 2018, and he currently advises the Ski-Doo factory race team.



*Morgan fielded questions from the audience and showed clips from his X Games tribute video at the Saturday evening banquet.*

## Video Tribute

<https://youtu.be/TI01a1F7Pg?si=p7Zvlsz30XXzNigR>



"I guess you could say I'm a mentor or coach or consultant for some of the younger guys on the team," Morgan explained. "I go to all the races, and if I see a better line on the track, I'll say something to them. I'm kind of their eyes in the sky."

In his role for Ski-Doo, Morgan has been to Iowa several times for the professional snocross races at Dubuque. Although he was unable to make the ISC two years ago due to illness, he said he enjoyed his time in Iowa for convention. He said he appreciates the efforts of volunteer organizations like the ISSA to help keep the sport around for generations to come.

"Thank you guys for putting in all the hard work and for keeping the trails alive," Morgan said. "It doesn't look like you get very much snow down here, and it looks pretty similar to my home area. We don't get very much snow either, which makes it tough for the clubs to keep the sport alive. But like my motto has been throughout my entire racing career, you need to put in the work to have the fun."

### Influential success

Growing up on a farm in Canada, Morgan said he rode snowmobiles as a kid but admitted his real passion was dirt bikes early on. While competing in an indoor arenacross race back home, he caught the attention of some Arctic Cat brass, and they invited him down to the states to try out his skills in snocross.

"Motocross was my big thing. Snowmobile racing wasn't even really in the picture back then," Morgan admitted. "I did grow up on sleds, but my dream was always motocross racing. My whole career in snocross was by chance really."

His first snocross race was in the spring of 1997 at West Yellowstone. He was supposed to compete in the semi pro class but set his sights right away on the pro class.

"I was watching them practice, and it didn't seem like the guys



*Ski-Doo Ambassadors Blair Morgan and Bret Rasmussen helped the ISSA celebrate its Golden Anniversary this past November in Cedar Falls.*

out there were going that fast," Morgan recalled. "I was taking the jumps differently and was standing up everywhere on the track."

Morgan eventually finished second to Kirk Hibbert, a legend in his own right and father to 14-time X Games and 11-time snocross champion Tucker Hibbert. "Finishing second to Kirk Hibbert was just like winning," Morgan said.

Rick Tiede, marketing director for Woody's Traction Products, which backed Morgan throughout his career, remembers that first race and how Morgan changed the game.

"When Blair showed up at that first race, standing up on a ZR sled, everybody wondered, 'What's this kid doing? He's going to get himself hurt'," said Tiede, who filled in for Morgan's absence at ISC two years ago.

"Everything pretty much blew up after that first race," Morgan said. "Everyone was happy with my result, and I was able to make some money and get a new outlook on life. This snowmobile thing might work out. Motocross ended up taking a back seat."

Arctic Cat offered him a full-time ride in 1998, and he remained with team green until 2002. That's when he first saw prototypes for Ski-Doo's revolutionary Rev chassis and decided to change colors and brands.

"I was pretty worried about switching manufacturers at the time," Morgan said. "But once I saw the Rev, I thought they were pretty awesome, and that setup definitely fit more of my style of riding."

Throughout his career in snocross, Morgan said he and other influential racers helped to spur innovation in the sport. Besides the rider-forward movement, he said they worked on suspension tweaks and improved the overall geometry and balance of the sleds. What worked on the track eventually made its way to the trail.

"We weren't just racers back then. We were engineers, too," Morgan said. "We were trying out stuff out on the race track before they released it in production. I guess you could say we were the guinea pigs. If it didn't break out on the track, it probably wouldn't break on the trail."

"Blair literally revolutionized so much of the sport, and everything truly went from the track to the trail for the consumer market," Tiede said.

A vertical advertisement for Prinoti. At the top, the Prinoti logo is in red. Below it, the text "PROUD TO BE YOUR TRAIL GROOMING PARTNER IN IOWA" is displayed in white and black. The background shows a snow-covered trail with several snowmobiles parked. At the bottom left, contact information for Bob Wolf is provided: "REACH OUT TO YOUR LOCAL SALES REP Bob Wolf bob.wolf@prinoti.com (612) 251-4094". At the bottom right, there is a QR code and the text "SCAN THIS CODE TO LEARN MORE!".

# Secrets to Success

Driftrunners follow up convention offer by sharing what works for their club

by Cameron Hanson

The reigning Snowmobile Club of the Year in Iowa is also the largest club in the state six years running. While the club award is not tied directly to membership numbers, their census is clearly an indication of the health of the club. Let's see what's been the secret to their success for the Driftrunners, Inc., of Region 5.

Founded in 1969 in Cresco, the Driftrunners have finished each of the past six seasons above the century mark for total club members. They ended the 2022-23 campaign at 157 members and are on pace to finish just as strong this season. By Dec. 1, they already had more than 100 members signed up, a goal they set each preseason.

Accepting their club award at the 2023 ISSA Convention in Cedar Falls this past November, club secretary Brandon Plaht offered to share their membership recruitment and retention strategy with other clubs in the state, and as the ISSA struggles to gain new members, we accepted the invitation. Perhaps your club can find inspiration from their ideas.



Plaht

## Getting an early start

The Driftrunners credit their success to meeting year-round and staying active in their local communities all four seasons, "not just when the snow flies." Plaht said their efforts begin early each year. Besides entering floats in local parades, the club sends out a few hundred mailers in August, promoting upcoming club events and the benefits of membership.

"These mailers are sent out to all people who have been a club member for the previous three years, as well as non-members who have a registered snowmobile in Howard and Winneshiek counties," he said. "We get close to 30 percent of our yearly memberships this way by mail before fall even arrives."

In September, the club holds its Annual Meeting and Membership Drive, and this event is followed by an Early Bird promotion, where members who join by Dec. 1 receive a free raffle book entered into the drawing at Snowfest, the Driftrunners' annual snowmobile festival held the fourth weekend in January.



Promoting memberships and events with a Snowmobile Iowa booth at the ISSA convention in Cedar Falls in November.



Regular grooming efforts and timely posts on Facebook greatly enhance the Driftrunners' image within the riding community.

Like most clubs in the state, the Driftrunners also rely on social media to advertise their events and club activities. They have also created a QR code linking to an online store, making it easier to join the club with an electronic payment option. Paper forms and sign-ups are made available at nearly every club event as well.

The Driftrunners also count on Facebook to promote their 200-mile trail system in Howard, Winneshiek and Chickasaw counties.



Facebook post last season.

In-season posts keep everyone informed by providing timely updates on trail conditions and groomer activity. The club also uses this media platform to alert the snowmobiling public of trail closures to their 3,400 followers.

"Our club works to maintain the best trails in the state, not only from just having them groomed, but also having them signed well," Plaht said. "We have a dedicated team of groomer operators that work with the groomer boss to ensure the groomer is out grooming as much as possible when the conditions are right."

## Strong community bond

As detailed on the map center spread this month, the Driftrunners' trail system primarily crosses private land and features fields, fence lines, scenic bluffs and woods. They have a few connector ditch trails, but the club is grateful for their long-standing relationships with private landowners. Depending on annual snowfall, the club grooms between 800 and 1,400 miles each season.

"Each year when the snow falls, we have a team of groomer operators ready to get behind the wheel," Plaht said. "But we'll only groom when the trails are ready with adequate snowfall. If only a portion of the trail is good to groom, we will groom and open up that area and leave the other section of the trail until more snow falls in that area."

Turn to page 17





# SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAP



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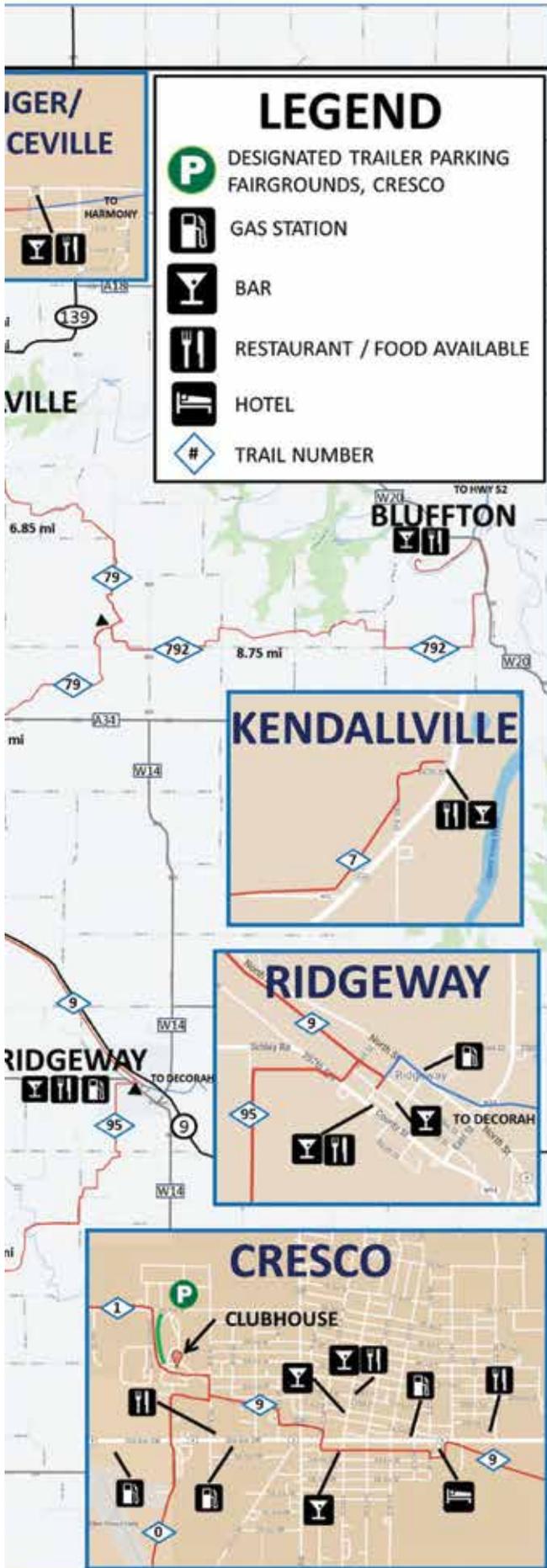
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# SNOWFEST

January 25 – 28, 2024

## THURSDAY

- EARLY BIRD RIDE - 11 AM
- POKER RUN FOR SPINA BIFIDA BEGINS
- CLUB TRAIL RIDE - 6:30 PM

## FRIDAY

- LADIES TRAIL RIDE - 11 AM
- POKER RUN CONTINUES
- SNOWFEST DINNER - 5 PM
- CLUB TRAIL RIDE - 6:30 PM

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR EVENT UPDATES BY SCANNING THE QR CODE



## SATURDAY

- RAFFLE & SILENT AUCTION - ALL DAY
- BOY SCOUT BREAKFAST - 6-11 AM
- VINTAGE SLED SHOW - 9 AM
- CHILI COOKOFF - 11 AM
- BINGO - NOON
- FOOD AND BEVERAGES AT EXPO ALL DAY
- VINTAGE SLED RIDE - 1:45 PM
- JIGSAW PUZZLE RACE - 2:30 PM
- TORCHLIGHT PARADE - 6:30 PM
- BONFIRE - 7 PM
- SNOWBALL DANCE - 8 PM

## SUNDAY

- SNOWFEST BRUNCH - 10 AM
- FAMILY & YOUTH RIDE - 1 PM



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IN FEBRUARY





From page 13

Posting accurate trail information on Facebook three to four times a week improves the club's credibility among the riding community. Plaht said the club is very responsive to feedback from others who ride their trails, especially those who travel to northeast Iowa to ride. The Driftrunners want to make sure their trails are enjoyable and memorable for everyone.

"If your trails are poorly marked, you can expect people to become lost and ride off trail and possibly come to an unsafe situation," Plaht explained. "When we hear comments that our trails need more or better signage, we are proactive on that and will get out there as soon as we can to improve that trail with the materials we have."

The Driftrunners are also proud of their relationships with the non-snowmobiling community. They support local and state charities, and all of their events are open to the public. They are also mindful to have activities for all ages at their events. With Snowfest being the longest active snowmobile event in the state, the club offers activities which are less dependent on snow over those four days.

"Our club strives to get as many snowmobilers and non-snow-



The Driftrunners entered a float in the Cresco holiday parade Thanksgiving weekend.

mobilers to come to our events as possible," Plaht said. "We partner with several organizations in the community, and by doing this, it has helped us gain more members as well as club sponsors that support what we do in our area."



The Driftrunners host Charlie's Chili Feed each February at their warming bin on the trail to Florenceville near the Minnesota state line. The event is one of four main activities the club sponsors each year. The other three are the Membership Drive in September, the Winter Kick-Off Dance and Toy Drive in November and Snowfest in January.



The Membership Drive at the Driftrunners' clubhouse at the Howard County Fairgrounds included plenty of kids' activities last September.

### CALENDAR

#### January

- Dickinson County Snowhawks vintage ride Jan. 20.
- Driftrunners Snow Fest Jan. 25-28. Follow the club on Facebook for up-to-date details.
- Okobji Winter Games Jan. 25-28. Visit uofowintergames.com for more information.

#### February

- Butler County Snow Snoops 7th Annual Vintage Ride Feb. 3. Follow the club on Facebook as the event draws near.
- Team Iowa Snowmobilers ice drags Feb. 3 at Little Wall Lake, Jewell.
- Emmet County Driftbusters WinterFest Feb. 3.
- Spina Bifida Winter Fun Day Feb. 4 at Huxley.
- Driftrunners Charlie's Chili Feed Feb. 10.
- Midwest Sled Fest Feb. 10 at Clear Lake State Park.

#### March

- Clean Snowmobile Challenge March 7-9, Houghton, MI.

### 2024 Snowmobile Iowa Schedule

Date	Host Club	Location	Contact
Jan. 13	Team Iowa Snowmobilers	Stratford Fire Department	David Eide (515) 835-8000
Jan. 20	Sno-Pak	The CO-OP Bar & Grill, Pomeroy	Tyler Wagner (712) 297-0062
Jan. 27	Dyersville Driftskippers	Dirty Ernie's, Farley	Ryan Ameskamp (563) 599-6312
Feb. 3	Sac County Snow Lovers	Breda Golf Course	Jamie Rohlf (712) 830-2196
Feb. 10	Dickinson Co. Snowhawks	Parks Marina, Okoboji	Chris Kellner (515) 890-9575
Feb. 17	Saylorville Dam Club	Ballard West School, Slater	Barry Starmer (515) 240-5444
Feb. 24	North Iowa Snow Seekers	Lone Oak Bar, Ventura	Chad Brouwer (641) 425-4872
Feb. 24	Central Iowa Snowmobilers	TBD	Rob Schneider (641) 750-7927

**Emmet County Driftbusters, Region 2**

by Jason Harvey, President

The Driftbusters have been busy this fall by adding a new south loop to our trail system. This loop uses county roads to tie Wallingford, High/Ingham Lake complex, Ringsted, and also gives us an opportunity to explore connecting with Palo Alto near Graettinger. We have also moved the trail over a mile from HWY 15 between Armstrong and Ringsted to a level B road. This will allow us to gain some time and cut some miles as we no longer need to groom both sides of the highway for a good stretch.

We hosted our membership drive on Dec. 3 at All Star Lanes Bowling Alley in Estherville again this year. MB Precision graciously sponsored the bowling and the pizza for us during the afternoon. This is a great drive for us as we have something for everyone.

We are planning our WinterFest for Feb. 3 at Oak Shores on Ingham Lake. This year may include an ice lemans cross-country time trial race. More details will be on our Facebook page as that comes together.

**Driftrunners, Inc., Region 5**

by Zach Gooder, Past President

Winter is getting closer! Although the weather hasn't shown much optimism recently for snowfall, most areas in the country are facing the same situation we are. Hopefully once it turns, it turns for good, and we can all enjoy our trails that we have prepared and work hard on to get ready.

Plans are underway for our Snowfest coming up at the end of January, and we are prepared for snow...or no snow. Our board meets bi-weekly this time of the year and will turn to weekly meetings for the month of January. We enjoy having members from other clubs join our meetings, and we welcome anyone to our future meetings!

Keep an eye on this magazine and Facebook for updates on our club and our trails! THINK SNOW!

**Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club, Region 7**

by Barry Starmer, President



A pair of presentations were made at the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club meeting Dec. 12 in Region 7. Above left, club president Barry Starmer hands a \$500 check to Dylan Yegge with the Clean Snowmobile Challenge team from Iowa State University, representing the club's match of other donations made at the state convention in November. Above right, outgoing ISSA Raffle Committee Chair Seth Bram, left, delivers \$1,000 in beef certificates and a half pallet of beer to club member Nick Leonard, winner of the ISSA's 2023 Grand Raffle drawing Nov. 18.

2024 DONATIONS

**Spina Bifida Association of Iowa**

Driftrunners.....	\$1,000
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$750
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$500
Bremer County Sno-Knights.....	\$300
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$300
Snow Pioneers.....	\$300
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks.....	\$250
Emmet County Driftbusters.....	\$200
Trail Blaz-zers, Inc.....	\$200
Frozen Few.....	\$150
Iowa River Riders.....	\$100
Southwest Iowa Snow Scooters.....	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers.....	\$100
Winneshiek Trail Twisters.....	\$50

**ISSA Lobbyist Club Challenge**

Societal Association of Past Presidents.....	\$550
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$350
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$300
Snow Pioneers.....	\$300
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks.....	\$250
Sno-Pak.....	\$250
Iowa River Riders.....	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers.....	\$100
Winneshiek Trail Twisters.....	\$50

**ACSA Legal Defense Fund**

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$250
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$200
Iowa River Riders.....	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers.....	\$100
Winneshiek Trail Twisters.....	\$50

**ISSA Scholarship Foundation**

Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$250
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$250
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$200
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks.....	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers.....	\$100
Winneshiek Trail Twisters.....	\$50

**ISU Clean Snowmobile Challenge**

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	(\$250+\$500 match) \$750
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$500
Snowdrifters, Inc.....	\$500
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers.....	\$100
Winneshiek Trail Twisters.....	\$50

**ALS of Iowa**

Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers.....	\$100

Fundraising year renews each November at convention.  
Please use Venmo or mail donation checks to the ISSA  
office at 1924 270th St., Marble Rock, IA 50653



# Coming Through

## Midwest Sled Fest Returns to Clear Lake State Park Feb. 10

by Cameron Hanson

The Midwest Sled Fest at Clear Lake each February gets to be a little bit of slug fest, as vintage snowmobiles vie for position on an unmanicured track, stretching out over a mile in front of Clear Lake State Park.

The serpentine layout features a LeMans-style design with plenty of hairpin turns, chicanes and straightaways. Racers of all ages compete for bragging rights, a little bit of cash and some great prizes. With most races lasting three to 10 laps in length, the track gets pretty rough and the corners get bare, often separating the competition as the laps wind down.

“We don’t do much to the course except lay out the cones and set up the start-finish line. Mother Nature takes care of the rest,” explained race coordinator Rusty Peters from Rock Falls. “We let the riders bounce their way through the snow, taking the bumps and carving the ice as they go. It basically comes down to the survival of the fittest for both rider and machine.”



*Competitors slide their way through the chicanes near the start-finish line in February of 2023.*



*Getting a tow back to the pits.*

Lake racing at Clear Lake is a tradition that dates back to the 1970s. It returned in 2009 with the Jack Helgren Memorial Race and, for the past five seasons, continues as the Midwest Sled Fest. This year’s event is slated for Feb. 10. Last winter drew 77 competitors from across the Midwest, including Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota.

With 166 total entries, more than 20 classes offered youth, vintage, stock and open racing across several engine sizes with payouts to the top three finishers in each. The 600cc classes continue to attract the most interest. Last winter, McCain Jennings from Whittemore won the final race of the day, the 15-lap Stud Boy Challenge, which paid out \$500 to the winner. Complete race results can be found online at [midwestsledfest.com](http://midwestsledfest.com).

Sled Fest is hosted by the North Iowa Snow Seekers and the Hancock County Snowmobile Association, both in Region 3. Besides a day full of racing, the event includes radar runs, Kitty Cat



aces, a vintage snowmobile show and on-ice food vendors.

Peters said it takes an army of volunteers to make it all happen, and he's grateful for all the help the committee gets—from plowing the pit area on the lake to the cooperation from the City of Clear Lake and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to the countless sponsors which help with the purse, prizes and expenses.

Peters said they could always use more help, though, particularly during the week leading up to the race. For more information or to help out with next month's event, contact Peters at (641) 420-0248 or visit the race website. For sponsorship information and the latest race updates, follow Midwest Sled Fest on Facebook.



*From left, Rusty Peters, Rusty Olsen and Luke Peters discuss track conditions at the 2023 Midwest Sled Fest.*

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*Racers getting their starting position from track volunteer Joe Paulus of Rockford.*



Scenic riding between Eagle River and Land O'Lakes.

# Snowmobile Pilgrimage

## First-time trip to Eagle River doesn't disappoint in January of 2022



Trails 10 and 13 run together through Eagle River and provide the main thoroughfare for the 'Snowmobile Capital of the World'.

### by Cameron Hanson

Word of a trail closure at Eagle River, Wis., this winter means even a club from the 'Snowmobile Capital of the World' isn't immune from losing a landowner lease. Off-trail riding, excessive noise and trespassing all contributed to the closure, and without an immediate remedy, the outcome will likely affect tourism and lead to excessive out of route miles for local riders.

This unfortunate situation got me thinking about my only visit to that area two years ago and if I had ridden on the impacted trail. According to news reports, the affected section was located on Trail 13 south of Eagle River towards Three Lakes. Turns out, I had ridden on the trail but only north of town when it runs concurrent with Trail 10.

We had visited Eagle River in January of 2022 as part of a snowmobile vacation to Vilas County. Our first time this far east, we had decided to tour this part of Wisconsin based on recommendations from other Iowa riders. Plus, this area is filled with rich snowmobile tradition and history worthy of a pilgrimage for anyone with my passion for the sport.

First, Sayner, about seven miles north of St. Germain, is billed as the "birthplace of the snowmobile," where Carl Eliason created a "motor toboggan" in a garage behind his general store in 1924.

This pioneer of the sport is enshrined in both the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame at Eagle River and the race-focused Snowmobile Hall of Fame at St. Germain.

Next, at Eagle River, is the World Snowmobile Headquarters and museum and the World Championship Derby Complex. Both of these facilities are located on the north end of town across the road from the aforementioned Trail 10/13. Later this month, the famed ice oval track will host its 61st annual derby race in Eagle River.

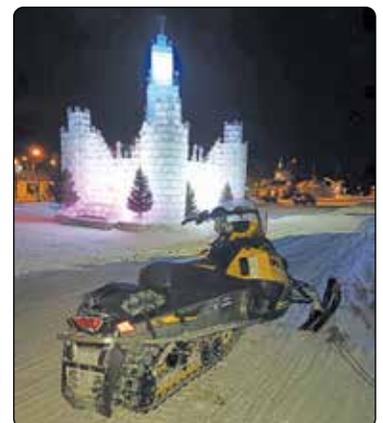
Opposite the derby complex is the local Ski-Doo and Polaris dealer, aptly named Track Side. On our way through town, we had stopped in there to pick up some oil and to kick the skis on a few new sleds. Little did we know that five months later, we would meet the owners again at the International Snowmobile Congress in Dubuque, where they received the ACSA Dealer of the Year Award.

### Return the of the ice castle

All of these landmarks were very noteworthy and quite impressive to see for the first time, but the real jewel in Eagle River was the return of the ice castle near the depot museum downtown. As luck would have it, 2022 was the first time the castle had been built since 2018. Unseasonably warm temperatures the previous three winters had thwarted the town's efforts.

Needless to say, the castle provided a nice trailside photo opportunity both in the daylight and especially on our return trip at night, when it was illuminated with LEDs. According to the local chamber, the ice castle is normally erected during the holiday week by firefighters and other volunteers. They typically put in more than 700 hours to cut approximately 2,000 blocks of lake ice.

Each block weighs 80 pounds, and once completed, the castle stands 33 feet tall. Ice from nearby Silver Lake needs to be between 12 and 15 inches thick before it can be harvested for this temporary winter structure. This





*Twin Lake Pub between Conover and Phelps.*

tradition dates back to 1933, but only twice since 2015 had it been completed, so our timing was definitely pretty good that year.

### Plenty of areas to explore

Our visit to Eagle River was on the second of four days of riding in Vilas County. From Eagle River, we continued north to the Michigan border at Land O' Lakes and then made a loop over to Phelps. Following a lengthy ride across Twin Lake, we stopped at the Twin Lake Pub before returning to Eagle River for supper at the Sweetwater Resort. By the time we made it back to the Hearthside Inn at St. Germain, we had 110 miles on for the day.

Thursday, Jan. 26, was our first full day of riding in the area and, at 97 miles, was fairly short with plenty of exploratory riding. This day was unintentionally bookended by dinner and supper breaks at Woodruff and eventually included a turnaround destination of Mercer. To get there, we chose a meandering path north out of Woodruff.

Along the way, we stopped at Angler's Fine Food at Manitowish Waters and the Lazy Ace Saloon at Manitowish before continuing on to refuel at Mercer. For the return trip, we opted for an easier route home and decided to stay on the Corridor 17 rail-trail south. After donating some money to the Lake of the Torches Casino at Lac du Flambeau, we stopped to eat at Woodruff again and continued back east to St. Germain to call it a day.

At 140 miles, our third day of riding found us heading north from St. Germain to Presque Isle with a late breakfast at Boulder Junction. Unlike our visit to the U.P. a year earlier, we were thankful places were open for business and indoor seating was available



*Located next to the derby track on the north end of Eagle River, the World Snowmobile Headquarters is home to the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum.*

this time around. With limited capacity and long wait times due to short staffing, though, you could tell this restaurant was still recovering from the pandemic. We felt sorry for the only waitress on duty and tipped her accordingly.

After breakfast, we followed Trail 2 west and then picked up Corridor 6 toward Presque Isle. At the top side of this loop, we stopped for supper at the Skyview Lodge and Supper Club and then headed back south toward Boulder Junction by way of Corridor 6 and Corridor 15. Being Friday, trail traffic was fairly heavy by this time of night, so we enjoyed an extended stay at the Headwaters Restaurant for a few hands of 500 and watched the parade of sleds go by.

### Final day of riding

Finally getting to bed after midnight, we slept in the following morning and got a late start on our final day of riding. Having traveled north the first three days, we decided to head down south toward Rhinelander. We stopped at the Moondance Bar and Grill for dinner and made it down to Rhinelander just in time for the weigh-in for a pike fishing contest on Thunder Lake. The free hors d'oeuvres were great, but the Jailhouse Saloon got a bit crowded



*Map check on the way to Rhinelander.*

in a hurry.

Giving up our table to some ice fishermen, we jumped back on the lake, refueled at the first accessible gas station and then rode north on the Rhinelander Flowage. After a short jaunt on Trail 47, we picked up Corridor 12 and followed that west toward McNaughton. By now, it was late Saturday afternoon, and traffic was again very heavy. After a few close calls out on the trail, we were ready for a lengthy supper break to calm our nerves at the McNaughton Pub and Grill.

After dinner, it was back north, where Corridors 12 and 17 ran together for a stretch. At the intersection with Trail 370, we started heading northeast toward St. Germain, stopping one last time at Mackz Hideaway on the Rainbow Flowage. From here, it was a smooth ride back to the hotel along Trail 70A, ending our final day at a mere 83 miles.

Overall, our four days of riding netted us 430 miles. Nothing really to brag about. Just a nice easy vacation to recharge our batteries with plenty of sightseeing, plenty of snow and plenty of new areas to explore.

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 West Des Moines, IA 50265  
 (515) 237-9075  
 autism50ia@aol.com  
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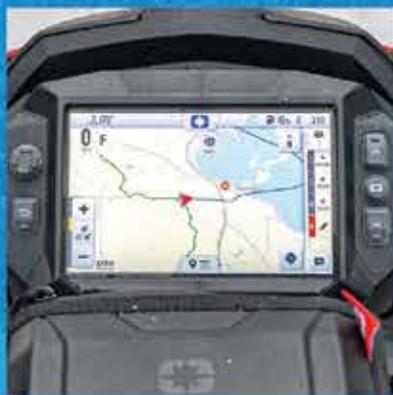


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