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January 2026 • Volume 47 • Issue 4

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PLEASE NOTE: Due to space constraints in this printed issue, directory listings, including Charity, Clubs and Associate Members, can be found in this month's digital version at www.iowasnowmobiler.com.



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IOWA SNOWMOBILER

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Three in a Row

Iowa snowmobilers take advantage of consecutive winter storms.



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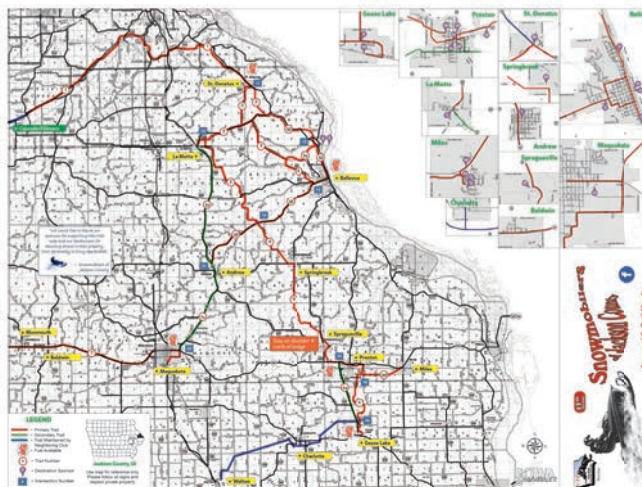
ISSA honors student snowmobilers during annual banquet at convention.



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This Month's Map Center Spread Sponsor:

- Snowmobilers of Jackson County, Region 9



COVER: Arlyn Wood from Rudd heads north out of Kanawha in Region 3 on Dec. 6 as flurries begin to fly during the second round of snow to hit Iowa in the early part of the 2025-26 riding season.

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Taking the freshly groomed Britt bypass Dec. 6.

Great Start to Winter

Consecutive storms create opportunities for early riding; clubs reminded about groomer care

by Cameron Hanson

Iowa snowmobilers are naturally skeptical when it comes to winter weather forecasts. Who can blame us? We've become quite jaded after coming off four straight seasons of lackluster snowfall. So when a Black Friday system was threatening to move through the state the day after Thanksgiving, the sarcasm flew before the flurries.

Social media memes poked fun at weather advisories by "predicting 1 to 99 inches" of snow with some areas of the state "probably getting some" to others "probably getting a lot." In the end, though, all cynics with a sled became believers, as a trio of successive winter storms landed in Iowa and dumped twice as much snow as all last winter combined.

Greatly disrupting holiday travel, the first major system arrived in Iowa Friday afternoon, Nov. 28, and covered the state with up to 15 inches falling along the Highway 20 corridor from Waterloo to Fort Dodge. On average, the state received 8.8 inches of snow during that first cell, making it the fourth snowiest November in 138 years of recordkeeping in the state, according to the Iowa Climatology Bureau.

Then, like a second helping of mashed potatoes at grandmother's house, another storm came in the following weekend and produced an additional six to 10 inches of snow. Finally, the third consecutive weekend saw six inches of snow falling in a band from northwest Iowa to the Quad Cities.

Altogether, the trifecta of storms dumped close to 30 inches of snow in some parts of the state, and as shown on the map at right, every county in the state observed at least some snowfall. The white blanket was a nice reprieve from the brown landscapes of recent winters for most snow-starved

snowmobilers in Iowa.

In Region 7, the Webster County Ice Breakers probably benefited the most from all three storms. "We've been busy grooming," club president John Gallentine said the Monday after the second storm. "One of our machines is down, but we're getting the most traveled areas hit the best we can. We'll see what we can get done this week."

By the middle of December, two-thirds of the 50 clubs in Iowa reported grooming efforts and posted trail updates on the Groomer Tracking Systems trail app, according to officials with the Iowa Snowmobile Trail Grant Program (ISTGP). Compare that early season activity to last winter when only 14 clubs reported grooming efforts and just 14.4 inches of snow fell across the state on average.

"We've probably had 70 percent of our clubs out grooming or least packing trails already this winter, and we're not even to Christmas yet," ISTGP co-administrator John Kahler said Dec. 9. "Normally in Iowa, we don't even have enough snow to groom until after the first of the year if we're lucky, so we're expecting to have some heavy bills come due this winter."



Mid-December snowfall coverage map, courtesy NOAA.

In November at the ISSA convention in Ames, the ISTGP released its budget showing \$220,000 earmarked for grooming expenses this season. Since 2023-24, clubs have been reimbursed by the mile for their grooming efforts. This winter's rate remains \$11 per mile, so doing the math, the ISTGP is expecting clubs to groom 20,000 miles this winter.

"We may have to adjust our budget if the snow keeps up like this," Kahler said, noting only 2,200 miles of trail were groomed last year.

Trail access debate

The early arrival of snow did spark a social media debate between ditch trails and cross-country trails in Iowa. Keyboard warriors criticized clubs in northeast Iowa for closing their trails during both shotgun deer hunting seasons, while elsewhere in the state, clubs were able to groom and open right-of-way trails on Dec. 1, as allowed by law. Eventually, the ISSA had to intervene.

"Many trails may not be open at this time," the ISSA posted on Facebook. "If landowners ask that the trails not be used until after deer season, then clubs respect their wishes, as it is their land. This normally isn't an issue because we don't usually have rideable snow until after the deer seasons end."

In Hancock County in Region 3, where the club maintains mostly ditch trails, the conflict with deer hunters wasn't an issue. After the first storm, their volunteer operators groomed 140 miles of ditch trail by the first Saturday in December, according to Dan Stromer of Klemme, who recently ended a 10-year run as president of the Hancock County Snowmobile Association.

"It's years like this why we keep our trails primarily in the ditches, so we don't have to worry about any issues during hunting season," Stromer explained. "We do have a few cross-country trails, but we didn't groom those miles out of respect for

our landowners. Everything else on our map got covered except north of Britt."

For this reporter, the 2025-26 riding season began where it ended last year with a trip back to Hancock and Kossuth counties. As we had in early March, we unloaded in Britt on Dec. 6 and followed Highway 18 west toward Algona before turning south toward Corwith and Kanawha, where we ran into Stromer, his brother, Will, and other members of the Hancock County club.

Covering more than 100 miles, the weekend was a nice start to the year, and hopefully clubs around the state will see an uptick in memberships from the state's early season riding. How long those opportunities will last remains to be seen, though. At press time, the forecast for the back half of December appeared to threaten some of the snow depth with predictions calling for several days of above-freezing temperatures through the holidays.

ISSA leadership was optimistically banking on the snow totals from the first half of December holding steady against the warmup. "We're due for some good news, and we hope our clubs can have the events they plan on this winter and can help bump up their memberships for us," ISSA President Matt Miner said.

Increased registrations

The ISTGP is also counting on the number of snowmobile registrations to increase as well across the state, as the timely arrival of snow should have spurred early renewals. Over the past couple of years, the number of registered snowmobiles in Iowa has dwindled from around 20,000 machines to just over 13,000 last winter, mostly due to low snow conditions and declining interest in the sport.

Registration dollars are important for the overall health of organized snowmobiling in Iowa. The ISTGP uses the revenue from the \$30 registration fee to cover trail maintenance and development expenses, including equipment purchases, liability

SETH BRAM

ISSA VICE
PRESIDENT



Hello sledders!

Hopefully you've already been able to get some miles in with this early snow. It's a great feeling to have winter show up on time for once and to kick off our favorite season right away.

Some grooming has already been underway to get the trails flat and fast, and with a solid snowpack, not many nasty warm-ups, and more white gold in the forecast, it's finally looking like a winter we can be excited about.

There are plenty of fun events happening around the state, so be sure to check out the events calendar on the Iowa Snowmobiler website and get them on your schedule.



A welcome sight in Iowa.



Members of the Hancock County Snowmobile Association parked in Kanawha Dec. 6 as flurries begin to fall in Region 3.

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insurance, trail signs and administrative expenses. The budget for each season depends on the revenue generated by registrations from the previous winter.

As a volunteer arm of the ISSA, the ISTGP assumed control of the "local side" of the state snowmobile program from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) nine years ago. Under this codified arrangement, the ISTGP receives 70 percent of annual registration receipts, while the IDNR retains 30 percent for safety, law enforcement and the electronic licensing system which collects the fees.

According to the ISTGP's slideshow at convention, the IDNR kept \$102,576 to cover its "state side" expenses for Fiscal Year 2025, while the ISTGP was awarded \$393,173 for its portion. Besides mileage reimbursement for the clubs, the ISTGP committee pairs this annual funding with federal grant money to purchase groomers and drags.

As detailed in previous issues of this magazine, the ISTGP bought two new Tucker groomers and seven new Mogul Master drags for clubs to use this season for a combined total of more than \$730,000. Some of that expense will be refunded through the federal grant match, but the balance was covered by snowmobile registration money.

"We're doing what we set out to do when we took over this program, and that is putting more equipment on the snow," noted ISTGP co-administrator Chris Willey. "Because when the snow's on the ground, we have to groom when and where we can."

Groomer carousel

The arrival of new equipment has reshuffled the groomer fleet in Iowa. As of convention weekend, 18 clubs in Iowa have

new, updated or reallocated equipment to use this winter, including a frame-off restoration of a 2006 Tucker Terra 1000 which was transferred from Dubuque County in eastern Iowa to the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club in Des Moines.

The Butler County Snow Snoops in Region 4 also traded their 2006 Pisten Bully for a 1998 Tucker previously used by the Highbridge Trailblazers. The Region 7 club bought out Butler County's cost-share agreement, and the Snow Snoops now operate a 1998 and a 2002 Tucker, which past club president Seth Bram said they are more used to wrenching on.

"We've run the 2002 Tucker since it was new, and we are just more familiar with those machines," explained Bram, who is the ISSA's current vice president. "We like the simplicity of the Tuckers, and while they're older, they can go a long time with proper maintenance. Plus, we wanted out of the cost-share agreement for a second groomer. Both of our machines are now owned by the ISTGP."

"Butler County had indicated that they would like to give up their 50 percent ownership of the Pisten Bully and get back into a quad track machine that their operators were more used to," Willey said at convention. "They're used to the Tucker, and the familiarization of the Tucker was simply more comfortable to the club there."

Equipment maintenance

With all of those equipment moves around the state, convention organizers in November felt it was important to have a groomer maintenance workshop in Ames, so they booked an afternoon break-out session with Drew Gaffney, a sales rep for Track Inc, the Tucker dealer for the Iowa region, to go over some tips on upkeep.

"Drew gave my home club a lot of solid advice about updating our groomer over the past year, so I thought it'd be helpful for other clubs to have a hands-on class with him at convention," explained 2025 ISSA convention co-chair Craig Krapfl, a member of the Saylorville Dam club.

Gaffney said the most important maintenance item for clubs to complete is to routinely wash their grooming equipment, particularly those machines which operate in road ditches and drive through snow plow tailings filled with sand, salt and brine—elements which are corrosive to the undercarriage and internal components of the drivetrain.

"That's what clubs miss out on the most," Gaffney said from the parking lot at the Quality Inn and Suites while leaning against the 2006 Tucker which needed to be restored this off-season. "When I see machines like this one that didn't get washed and eventually needed to get rebuilt, I have



ISTGP co-administrators Chris Willey and John Kahler (center) visit with Region 1 Director Kevin Winters (left) and Nathan Matter with Groomer Tracking Systems (GTS) following the ISTGP update at convention in Ames in November.



Track Inc.'s Drew Gaffney goes over groomer maintenance during a workshop at the ISSA Annual Convention Nov. 15 in Ames. The groomer on the trailer was restored earlier in the off-season and transferred to the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club in Region 7.

found accelerated wear on almost every component.”

According to Gaffney, regular fluid level checks are also critical for trouble-free operation. He said a groomer’s drive sprockets should be rotated annually, and each zerk should be greased a couple of times during the season. Depending on the blade configuration, a Tucker groomer, for example, has between 24 and 36 lubrication points.

“I’d like to see these machines get greased about every 50 to 100 hours,” Gaffney said.

Long-term investment

With the amount of money invested in grooming equipment across the state, the ISTGP wants to make sure clubs are taking care of their machines as much as possible. Increasing ownership responsibility is one of the reasons the program started cost-sharing the equipment 15 years ago. With an ownership stake, the logic was clubs would take better care of their equipment.

“We’ve written some pretty large checks recently,” Kahler noted. “So we want this equipment to stick around for as long as we can. We’re happy to see everyone getting out and using their machines finally, but we want to make sure they’re taking care of them properly too.

“As a club, make sure you are lubricating everything this winter, checking the fluids regularly and also washing these machines as much as you can to prevent rust, premature wear and unnecessary expense to our program,” Kahler said.

The ISTGP is also encouraging clubs to store, park and thaw out their groomers inside whenever possible, especially during

periods of blowing snow and freezing rain. Those extreme conditions combined with cold temperatures can negatively impact exposed parts and disable a machine.

“Please be mindful of where you are parking your groomer during high winds and blowing snow,” Willey advised by email after the second Iowa storm. “Double check and protect air intakes and related parts so they don’t become packed with snow and ice.”

If there are breakdowns this winter, the ISTGP has budgeted \$50,000 to cover what they call “major repairs” to the groomer fleet. To qualify for that emergency funding, the impacted club needs to notify the ISTGP of the issue right away. Expenses under \$1,500 can be approved by the co-administrators. Any amount above that level needs to go before the entire eight-person committee for approval.

To contact the ISTGP (formerly known as the Review and Selection Committee), send an email to ISSA.RSC@gmail.com.



That same Tucker from above was out rolling and packing the Heart of Iowa Trail Dec. 8 in Region 7. The Saylorville Dam club retained access to this multi-purpose trail this winter by requesting a rubber-tracked machine from the ISTGP.

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Getting Their Homework Done



by Cameron Hanson

A team of engineering students from Iowa State University will return to northern Wisconsin next month to participate in the Clean Snowmobile Challenge (CSC) for the 12th straight year. They finished 10th out of 14 teams last winter and are looking to improve on that performance this year by concentrating on the core objectives of the competition.

"Our primary focus last year was horsepower, so now we are going to move on to a cleaner and quieter sled by reducing noise and exhaust emissions," explained Project Director Nick Lueder during a group presentation this past November at the 2025 ISSA Annual Convention, held just a few miles down the road from their Ames campus.

Lueder was joined up front at the Quality Inn and Suites by fellow Cyclones Chase Goodwin, Mason Radtke and Tait Nemmers. Goodwin, who serves as Technical Director for the group, hails from the Goodwin Performance family in southern Wisconsin; he said his team will have stiff competition at Eagle River in February.

"Most teams up there run four-stroke engines, while we compete with a two-stroke," Goodwin noted. "As a result, we have a lot of ground to cover in terms of emissions. Two-strokes naturally have worse emissions, as they emit higher levels of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide than four-strokes. Catalytic converters are also much harder to incorporate in two-strokes due to high exhaust pressures."

This year's CSC event is slated for Feb. 8-12 at the World Championship Derby Complex. After a 25-year run as a sanctioning body, the Society of Automotive Engineers is no longer in charge of the event. According to Lueder, the competition is now hosted by the newly-formed Advanced Snowmobile organization.

The challenge started out west in 1999 in response to proposed regulations limiting snowmobile access to Yellowstone National Park due to their perceived impact on the wildlife there. The five-day contest encourages college students from across the Snow Belt to innovate and apply new designs and technology to late-

ISU Team Prepares for Clean Snowmobile Challenge

model machines.

The overall goal of the challenge is to lessen the sport's environmental footprint by curtailing emissions, reducing noise and improving fuel economy. The ISU students are in their third year of modifying a 2022 Arctic Cat Blast M 4000, donated to them by the manufacturer. The volunteer students wrench on it in the engineering department on campus during their spare time.

Work in progress

Previous improvements to the sled include upgrading the suspension from a monorail system to a dual-rail skid with aftermarket shocks. Last season, they added a turbo to get more horsepower out of the 400cc single-cylinder, two-stroke engine. Now this year, they will be installing a new muffler design to improve exhaust emissions and reduce noise.

"We feel a new muffler will give us the most bang for our buck," Lueder said. "We have three prototypes we're working with right now and are going to test and see which one produces the best capabilities. We also have an internal stinger planned for the expansion chamber that will help reduce high-frequency noise."

To fit the turbo and the exhaust, the team has had to do some body work on the hood to create the necessary room. They've also ordered a new cylinder head from RK Tek that has been machined with a patented surface "to make the air swirl and allow us to run more power with more compression," Lueder said.

"That's actually fitted now and will help us reduce emissions and improve our fuel efficiency," he added.

"With emissions being one of our primary focuses this year, we're going to spend a lot of time trying to really hone that in and find a way to reduce that as much as possible," Radtke said.

At the competition, the sled will be put through its paces on the snow and around the track through acceleration tests, cold starts, endurance rides and obstacle courses. The students are scored in 12 different categories, including handling and technical inspection. Emissions testing is changing this season, however.

"In the past, they would hook our sled up to an emissions trailer



Representing the Clean Snowmobile Challenge team from Iowa State University this past November at the ISSA Annual Convention in Ames were, from left, Nick Lueder, Chase Goodwin, Mason Radtke and Tait Nemmers.

Club Donors to ISU Team

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$250
Dickinson County SnowHawks.....	\$250
Worth County Fence Stretchers	\$250
High Bridge Trailblazers	\$100
Raccoon Valley Snow Chasers	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers.....	\$100

Donations can be mailed to ISSA Treasurer Amy Kahler at her address found on page 5.

that weighed 350 pounds,” Lueder explained. “Now this year, emission specialists from Michigan Tech University will wear a backpack with gear to test for hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides. That change is going to make it simpler for everybody.”

With the new on-board system, Lueder said the team’s sled needs to meet all safety standards for the protection of the rider, including heat shielding around all wiring and keeping the fuel line at least three inches from the exhaust. Once the sled passes inspection, the hood is sealed to prevent further work or tampering by the teams on site.

Sponsorships appreciated

Falling under the umbrella of the engineering department’s Cyclone Racing team, the CSC group includes 27 dues-paying members and a leadership “cabinet” of 10 students. The team sends 11 members to the CSC competition, where they are not only scored in several test events but they also have to explain their work in oral reports to the judges.

“We are going to put an emphasis on our presentations this year,” said Nemmers, who is the Project Administrative Coordinator for the team. “We also hope to complete the endurance race, because last year our expansion chamber broke and we weren’t able to finish it. Overall this year, though, we just want to show up ready ahead of time and be ready to compete in general.”

After this season, the ISU team will have one more year to tinker on their Arctic Cat as part of the four year rotation on machine eligibility. Dating back to their first competition in 2015, the team started out with a Polaris before moving on to an Arctic Cat ZR7000 and eventually the current Blast, which was a mountain sled they converted to a trail sled.

“Next year will actually be the last year the Blast can compete,” Goodwin said. “The team is hopefully going to optimize the sled for its final run with possibly a new expansion chamber and see if we can mess around with some volumes to get some more power out of it.”

As they look for a new project sled for 2028, the ISU team said they will remain focused on internal combustion engines, despite a growing shift at the competition toward hybrid engines. “We’re not on that train yet,” Goodwin said, adding they plan on continuing their partnership with Arctic Cat.

“We don’t know what we’re going to get yet, but we are working with Arctic Cat on acquiring a new snowmobile for the future,” Goodwin continued. “I’m actually in the process of talking with one of the engineers up there now. They’ve been such a huge help to us, and our team wouldn’t be possible without them.”

Goodwin also thanked the ISSA for their continued support and for the generous donations from clubs around the state, as listed on page 10. Operating with a budget of \$7,000 to \$10,000 annually, the team relies solely on fundraising to help cover their costs for parts, travel and lodging at the competition and at other outreach events.

“We’re an engineering club that is primarily focused on sponsorship,” Goodwin said. “We don’t get a lot of funding, so we appreciate all of the support we can get.”



Emmet County Club Marks 50th Anniversary

by Jason Harvey

A small group in Armstrong gathered on Aug. 23, 1975 to put into motion the formation of a local snowmobile club, formed as the Armstrong Driftbusters with a goal to emphasize on growing the sport, having family fun and being safe while doing so.

They had many fundraising breakfasts at the VFW in Armstrong, membership drives that would bring the group together with local businesses supporting their cause with door prizes and donations. They also hosted ice drags and hot dog roasts in the winter and had quite the array of floats in the summer Fourth of July parade.



Fast forward a few years—along with name change from the Armstrong Driftbusters to the Emmet County Driftbusters—we have been able to stay thriving through the high and low times. With the dedication of our members and directors over the years, we are proud to announce our celebration of our 50-year anniversary in November.

As a group we voted to have a celebration unlike any the club has done prior, or at least for many years. We hosted a celebration that brought long tenured, distant, current, young, and even a few non-club members to come and celebrate with us! Hosted at the Elks Lodge in Estherville, we started the evening right as our guests walked in with Layla Harvey taking Polaroid pictures and posting them in a guest book.

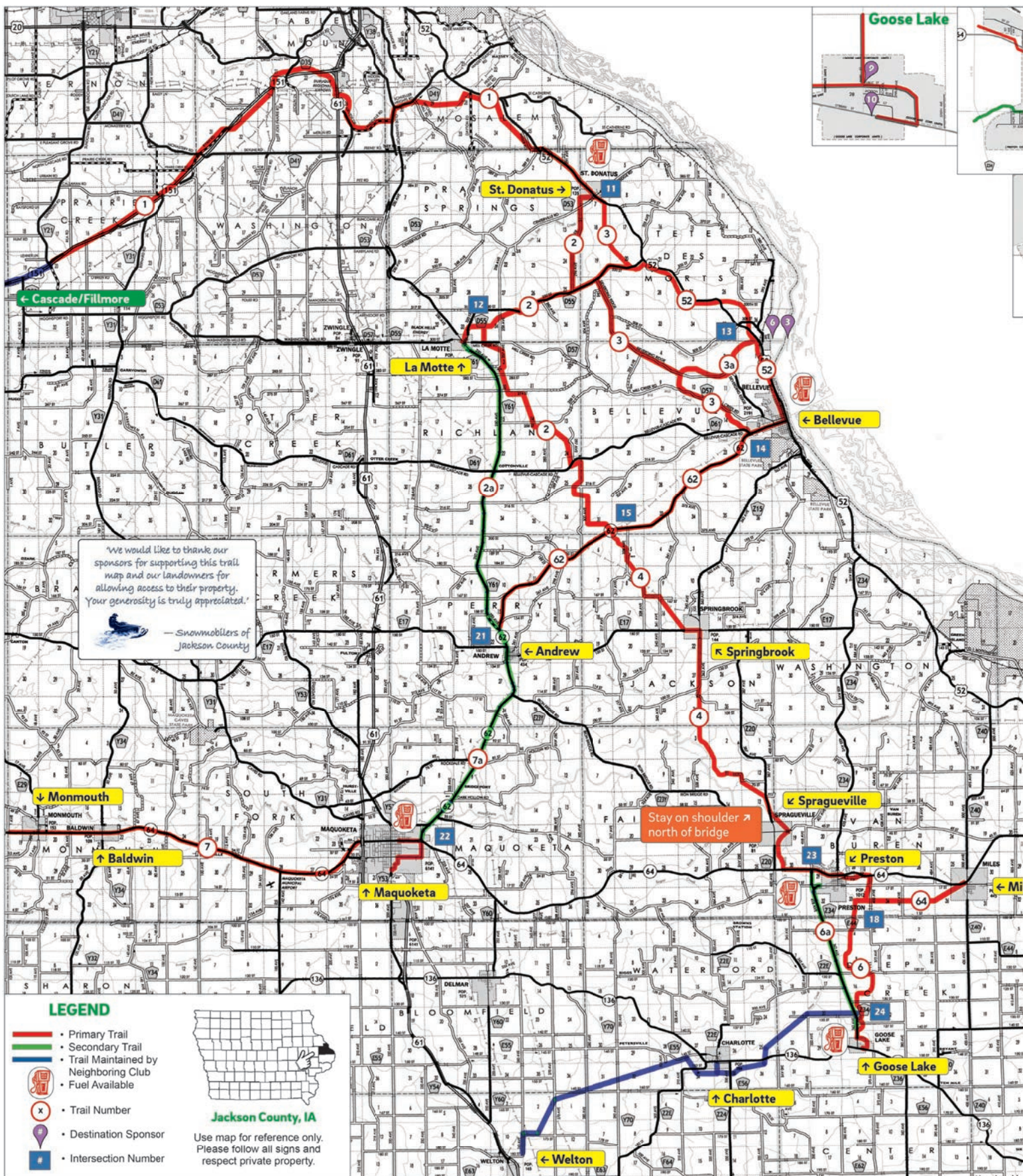
As our guests entered the main hall, they were greeted by an array of vintage snowmobiles, ranging from a Kitty Cat, Scorpion Bullwhip, and an Arctic Cat El Tigre. As I mentioned in an earlier edition of this magazine, we are proud to be the home of the world’s fastest Pro Extreme 55 snowmobile; with no convincing to let us display that on our special day, Tyson loaded it up, and we had that right next to the bar for all to see.

We held a fine meal, sno-cones, silent auction, live auction, some fun raffles, and had a 50th Anniversary painting commissioned by JD Speltz of Armstrong to commemorate our milestone. We had a slide show with some of the pictures scanned in from old photo albums to show the crowd, while the actual photo albums were at some of our longer tenured members tables, reminiscing about the good days when trailing arms were replacing leaf springs.

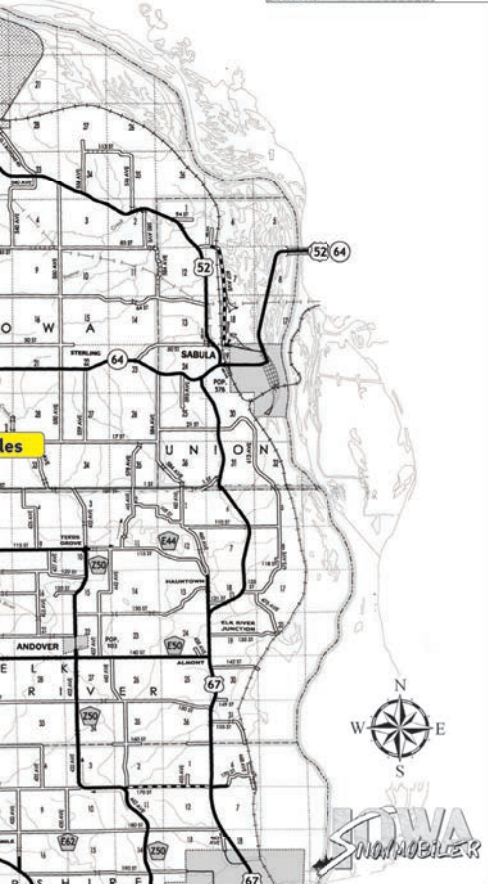
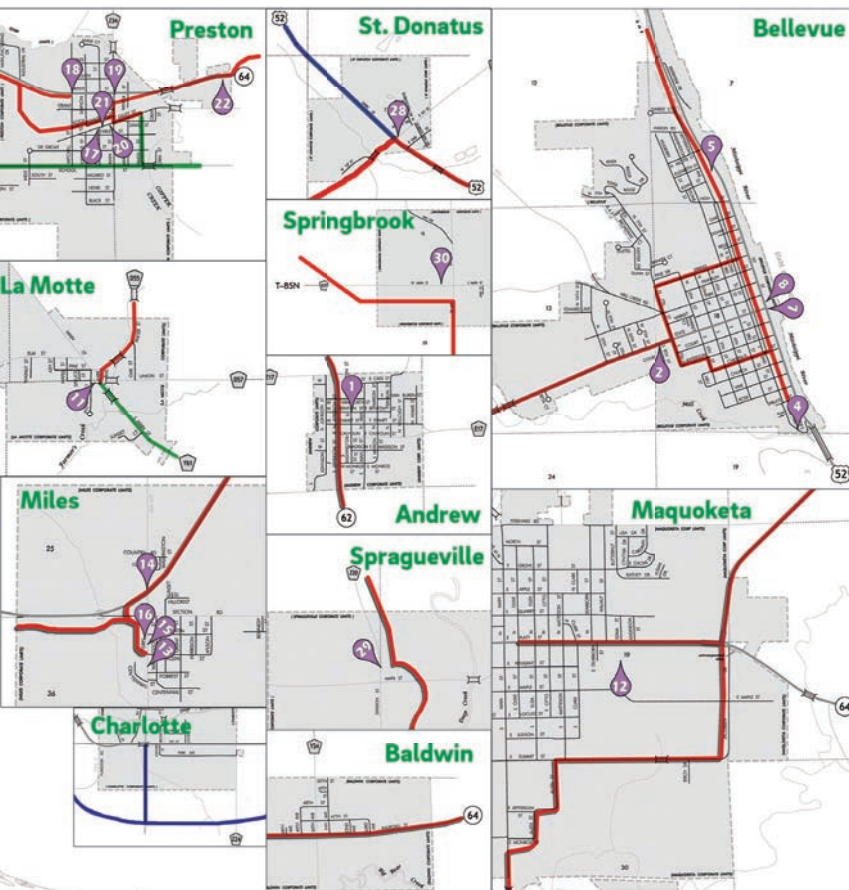
To entertain, we debuted Ben Erdmann, an acoustic artist from the Sioux City area, who held a great show for us that evening amidst a couple more snowmobiles featuring a Scorpion Sidewinder and a John Deere Trailfire.

I am glad that we took the initiative to put this event together and not just let this milestone slide by like any regular year. Thank you to all of those who helped plan, setup, man the stations and help cleanup. Thank you to the Elks Lodge personnel that volunteered their time to be there. Thank you to all of our monetary and silent auction donators; they helped us cover a lot of the expenses and make this event happen. Here is to another 50 years to the Emmet County Driftbusters!

Make Tracks to Jackson Cou



nty this Winter



Snowmobilers
of Jackson County



**Snowmobile Trail Map for
Jackson County, IA**

\$1.00
Donation



Member



Serving Riders South of Dubuque for 50 Years

by Todd Sieverding

Jackson County has had a long history of snowmobile trails and clubs, private and eventually going public.

The county had many years of two separate clubs that operated and maintained trails on the north side and into Dubuque County, and on the south side of the county into Clinton County. The south side started as the 49ers Club, as we are the 49th county of Iowa, around Preston, Miles, Sabula and Goose Lake. They started around 1975 with roughly 20-30 members and 50-80 miles of trails.

The club to the north of the county was named the Mississippi Bluff Busters, which started roughly around the same time and had around 30 members and 60-70 miles of trail that spanned from Massey Station to St. Donatus Bellevue and Lamotte.

Both clubs survived solely on the membership fees and materials that were salvaged from area businesses and many volunteer hours. Around 1995, the 49ers went to public trail and became state funded; and in the early 2000s, the Bluff Busters could not sustain the lack of memberships or volunteers to continue.

Around 2010-12, a spike in membership involvement led to fast and vast growth of both membership and trail miles, and the Jackson County Snowmobilers club evolved into the club we are today, with around 240-260 miles of marked and groomed trail, as shown on the map here.

The club requested and received our first groomer in 2014. We have since upgraded to our current Tucker Terra 2000 and Mogul Master drag. Memberships have varied depending on snow conditions from year to year, but we average around 80-90 memberships per year. All members receive an ISSA membership with our club.

Our trails are very versed in different terrain, from farm fields to some ditches to hills and timber. We have river bottoms and high hills with great views of the Mississippi River valley with vantage points that you can see Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa. Our trails meet up with the south neighboring club, the Eastern Iowa Sno Riders in Goose Lake, and on the north end, we connect with the Cascade and Dyersville Driftskippers clubs.

We thank all those who voluntarily maintain our trails and all the trails throughout Iowa for us all to travel and enjoy. If you are looking for information about our trails, please check out our Facebook page: Jackson County Snowmobilers.



55th ANNUAL



SNOWFEST

JANUARY 22 – 25, 2026

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

- BOY SCOUT BREAKFAST - 6-11 AM
- VINTAGE SLED SHOW - 9 AM
- CHILI COOKOFF - 11 AM
- BINGO - NOON
- FOOD & BEVERAGES @ EXPO ALL DAY
- VINTAGE SLED RIDE - 12:30 PM
- JIGSAW PUZZLE RACE - 2:30 PM
- TORCHLIGHT PARADE - 6:30 PM
- SNOWBALL DANCE - 8 PM FEATURING:

THE SCHMIDT BROTHERS

SUNDAY

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

Driftrunners Snowmobile Raffle



Drawn Saturday evening,
January 24, 2026
at Expo Center, Cresco, IA

~ need not be present to win ~
Winners responsible for any applicable
fees, title registration, and taxes

ONLY 200 TICKETS SOLD!

PRIZE PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 1st prize - 2025 Ski-Doo MXZ-600
- 2nd prize - \$2,500 Cash
- 3rd prize - \$1,000 Cash

Package Value is \$15,449

\$100 Per Ticket

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MAKE PLANS IN FEBRUARY TO JOIN US FOR
CHARLIE'S CHILI FEED



An invitation to the Expo Building at the Howard County Fairgrounds.

Driftrunners to Celebrate 55 Years of Snowfest

by Brandon Plaht

For more than half a century, the Driftrunners Snowmobile Club has been a cornerstone for winter recreation in northeast Iowa.

What began from a group of local snowmobilers with a love of snowmobiling has grown into one of Iowa's longest-running winter celebrations and the region's most cherished winter traditions.

According to the Cresco Times Plain Dealer archives, the Cresco Chamber of Commerce sponsored in 1971 the first International Snow Festival alongside representatives of the Chamber, CIDC (Cresco Industrial Development Corp.), Cresco Jaycees and the Driftrunners.

From Jan. 22-25, the Driftrunners will celebrate the 55th Annual Snowfest in Cresco, which will highlight the tradition, community spirit and the smell of two-stroke in the air.



Cherished tradition

Snowfest traces its roots back to the early days of organized snowmobiling, with the first Snowfest being a benchmark event for all subsequent events. Over the years Snowfest has included sanctioned United States Snowmobile Association (USSA) competition racing, winter sports show, hockey games, snow sculpturing, plus many other family activities.

Snowmobile races over the years have had up to 200 entries from Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Nebraska and South Dakota. One event was a 25-mile cross country race on the trails, with other events including drag races at the airport and races around the track at the fairgrounds.

The favorite Hobo stew was served at the nearby Wildlife Club building costing just 25 cents with a Sno-Button at the time. Friday nights featured the popular Torchlight Parade that would begin at the fairgrounds and travel around Cresco with once having a band riding in a horse drawn sleigh playing music along the route. A bonfire was held after the Torchlight Parade, notably being hosted in the Vernon Springs area.

Over the years, guided Snow Safaris became popular traveling to surrounding communities, including Lime Springs, Protivin, Ridgeway, Granger, Davis Corners, Schley and Lourdes. The fifth anniversary of Snowfest in 1975 drew an estimated 1,000 snowmobiles as the ground was covered with snow that year from Thanksgiving until spring. The safaris that year had groups between 150 and 200 snowmobiles participating in each ride.

The early 1980s featured new notable events that would carry on as well for the future. In 1983, club members started a moonlight ride on Sunday ending with a chili supper sponsored by Cresco Yamaha. That event started what today is known as Charlie's Chili Feed which is held in February each year. In 1985 at the 15th annual Snowfest, the ISSA (Iowa State Snowmobile Association) was coming to Cresco raising funds for spina bifida. This was the first year for Driftrunners to embrace spina bifida as its main charity. Throughout the years of Snowfest many events have come and gone, but each year is a new experience for those attending. The goal is to always host Snowfest with or without snow.

What to expect at the 55th Annual Snowfest

This year's 55th Snowfest blends long-standing traditions with a full slate of activities for riders, families and community members of all ages. Thursday's Early Bird Ride sets the tone for the weekend: relaxed, friendly and filled with familiar faces swapping stories about snowmobiling. By Friday, things start getting busier with the Ladies Trail Ride and the always-popular Snowfest Dinner, but let's be honest—Saturday is where Snowfest becomes Snowfest.

Saturday morning kicks off with the Boy Scout Breakfast, because no one wants to start the day on an empty stomach. Vintage sleds, which brought the sport to life, roll into town for the Vintage Sled Show. At the show, you'll hear the stories that come with them too: "This one hasn't failed me yet," or "We hauled this out of a shed that hadn't been opened in 20 years." By late morning and afternoon, the Expo Center hums with chili pots, bingo cards, puzzle pieces and plenty of local chatter.

And of course, there's the unforgettable Torchlight Parade, which this year will go down Cresco's downtown Main Street. It's a moment that seems to freeze time, and one by one, snowmobiles roll by, lighting up the winter night in a way that never gets old—no matter how many times you've seen it. The parade captures everything special about the weekend: community pride and the shared excitement of snowmobiling.

And when the parade is over, the night isn't. Everyone heads to the Snowball Dance, where this year Iowa's own band—The Schmidt Brothers—will take the stage, and the celebration keeps rolling well into the night. There's always that moment—usually about halfway through the night—when the floor is packed, the music is rolling and the crowd is singing along. That's when you realize Snowfest isn't just a snowmobile weekend. It's a winter reunion.

After a weekend like that, Sunday morning's Snowfest Brunch hits the spot. The Family & Youth Ride has become the perfect way to wrap things up with a reminder of why the Driftrunners started this event in the first place: to share the joy of snowmobiling with the next generation.



Celebrating 55 years—and looking ahead

Reaching the 55-year milestone is a testament to the dedication of club members, volunteers, sponsors, landowners and the Cresco community. Snowfest remains an example of what can be accomplished when passion for a sport brings people together. Whether you're a long-time rider, someone experiencing Snowfest for the first time, or just wandering over from a few blocks away, the Driftrunners Snowmobile Club welcomes you to Cresco for a weekend filled with tradition, camaraderie and adventures.

A full schedule of the 55th Annual Snowfest appears opposite this page. Event updates and changes will be posted on the main event page, so make sure to follow Driftrunners Snowmobile Club on Facebook. Here's to 55 years of Snowfest—and many more to come.

Lightning in a Bottle

Northwest Iowa's Ish Racing Sets Pro 55 Speed Record with Compressed Air



by Cameron Hanson

Think about the last time you rode a fan-cooled snowmobile in subzero temperatures. The cold, dense air delivered more oxygen to your two-stroke machine and noticeably generated more horsepower. The faster speeds and added exhilaration definitely made up for the limited visibility of a frosted faceshield.

If you missed out on those good ol' days, then think about how cold the air hose gets coming off the air compressor in your garage. Now amplify either scenario, and you might get an idea of what Dave Mart and Tyson Enerson were after when they strapped a container of compressed air on the back of their Arctic Cat drag racing sled last summer.

Hailing from the small northwest Iowa community of Gruver, the co-owners of Ish Racing captured lightning in a bottle when they harnessed clean, compressed air for their 700-horsepower engine. Revolutionizing snowmobile racing, the boost they created was 40 times greater than the pressure coming out of a typical shop air compressor.

Later that fall, the team—credited by their peers for engineering “outside the box”—not only set a new world record for speed and time in the Pro Extreme 55 Class, but their innovative design ended up changing the rules for their sport.

The record-setting pass came Oct. 4 at the Chi-Town Showdown at the Great Lakes Dragaway in Union Grove, Wis. Busy farming at the time, the pair from Ish Racing loaned their rocket-ship to friend and veteran drag racer Aaron Casler from Des Moines. Casler laid down an elapsed time (ET) of 3.51 seconds and a top speed of 158.8 mph

in 500 feet, besting the previous record by a full seven seconds.

A month later, all three racers recounted their game-changing achievement during an afternoon break-out session at the ISSA Annual Convention in Ames. According to Enerson, the previous Pro 55 record had been set just minutes before Casler's run by another racer at 151 mph. “Then Aaron showed up and blew him out of the water,” Mart said.

Verified by Velocity Race Management, the fast pass came during the final qualifying run at the southeast Wisconsin track, located about an hour north of downtown Chicago. Casler said he made a few “adjustments” during previous qualifying attempts and was able to dial everything in during the elimination run on Saturday.

“You only have about three to four seconds during a pass to react, so you have to make pretty quick decisions if you're going to keep into it or not,” Casler said, calling the Ish machine “an absolute beast.” “Going 158 mph in 500 feet is like jumping off a cliff. We were getting it done. The record stands today, and no one's going to touch it.”



From left, Tyson Enerson, Dave Mart and Aaron Casler shared their record-setting experience at the 2025 ISSA Annual Convention in Ames in November.

Experienced pilot

If the Casler name sounds familiar, it should. He owns 515 Racing and knows a thing or two about going fast. His team has claimed five wins at Hay Days, including two Outlaw Class titles. His Black Mamba four-stroke turbo drag racing sled is capable of producing 1,100 horsepower with a billet aluminum block fueled by nitromethane. Speeds in the open Outlaw Class can reach up to 163 mph in head-to-head competition, generally 10-20 mph faster than the Pro 55 division.

Additionally, the Pro 55 Class is limited to 700 horsepower with a two-stroke OEM engine, and their sleds can only be fueled by gasoline and fed by a 55mm turbo. Enerson said he has been racing in that lower division since he entered the sport seven years ago. He had found success on the track in both Iowa and Minnesota but was looking to increase his performance with the compressed air technology, a first for snowmobile racing.

“Before going this route, we had a 55mm turbo on this sled, and we were very successful with it,” Enerson acknowledged at convention. “It was always right near the top of the pack, and we won a lot of races. But we wanted more. So we checked the rules and didn't find any limitations on a supercharger, and that's basically what our compressed air system is.”

Mart and Enerson said they began toying with the idea of adding compressed air to their sled after visiting the Eddyville Raceway Park in southern Iowa last summer. Along with Casler, they saw the system in action on outlaw cars drag racing on asphalt.

“We really didn't know a lot about it at the time, so we went down to the track and started talking to the street outlaw guys

VELOCITY RACE MANAGEMENT PROS LLC			
Chi-Town Showdown			
Union Grove, WI			
Oct 4, 2025			
M. Griffin	Entry	A. Casler	
370	77		
0.360	TREE SPEED	0.360	
0.00	DIAL-IN	0.00	
0.083	REACTION	0.153	
1.072	--- 60 Ft ---	1.006	
146.70 MPH	158.81		
3.644 ET	3.510		
==>>> WINNER			

about it,” Casler said. “We asked a bunch of questions, and we really didn’t get any negatives. Nobody said it wouldn’t work.”

Enerson then reached out to Mark Griffin with Compressed Air Superchargers (CAS) to see if the technology could be adapted to a snowmobile. “They had never done it on a small engine base before,” Enerson said. “They had always done it on V8s. So Dave and I started talking to him about what would work and sizing it for our application and horsepower levels.

“Admittedly, we were a little bit out of their wheelhouse for what we were trying to do with a two-cylinder engine,” Enerson said. “It was a little hard for them to wrap their heads around that. They were thinking more in the 200-horsepower range for a small engine, not 700 horsepower.”

The team at CAS eventually came on board with the project and sent Ish Racing the parts they needed for their sled. Enerson said it took plenty of computer work and mathematical calculations to make it work, but with the benefit of an in-house dyno tester, they were able to get it done.

Let the Cat out of the bag

The heart of the system is a 4,500 PSI air tank that is secured on top of the tunnel behind the seat. Holding 150 cubic feet of air, the reinforced tank is filled with the same air scuba divers and fire-fighters use to charge their Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) backpack tanks.

“We have a ton of volume back there—basically twice what we need for this sled,” Enerson admitted. “However, we can regulate how much air we’re going to put at it. We can control all that with a computer, and it took a lot of learning and testing to get it to work.”

The CAS system is different from a turbo, like the one Casler uses in the Outlaw Class. A turbo takes atmospheric air, compresses it and “throws very hot air back at the motor,” Casler said. The compressed air supercharger, on the other hand, delivers cold, regulated air at a predetermined rate and at a much colder temperature to generate more horsepower.

“When it’s going down the track, we’re not pulling air from the atmosphere,” Casler said. “It’s just all pulling from the tank itself. And it’s cold air, no matter what the temperature is outside.”

“Think about your air compressor at home running at 100 PSI and how cold the line gets there,” Enerson explained. “This is about 40 times that because we’re at more than 4,000 PSI and we’re releasing all that pressure going down the track.”

“In a sense, we’re doing the same thing a supercharger would,” Enerson continued. “We’re pressure feeding the intake of an engine. By definition, that’s what a supercharger does. When we tell it to, it flips a valve to seal off the intake completely, and we’re

running the engine solely off the bottle back here.”

Once testing was completed at their shop, Ish Racing was able to unveil their new setup at the grass drags at Princeton, Minn., in August. They admittedly went into the event with low expectations, but Enerson said he ended up putting down his personal best “right off the trailer” at 147 mph in 3.67 seconds.

“We made a full pass with an unproven setup, and everything worked out great,” Enerson said.

Closing the loophole

Before sending it off with Casler to Wisconsin, Ish Racing also made an appearance at Hay Days and at the Iowa Nationals grass drags in Grundy Center in September. After their record-setting run at Great Lakes, the rules were changed, however, and they are no longer allowed to compete in the Pro 55 Series with their new setup. Team members said they were not surprised when the loophole closed.

“They said no more compressed air in Pro 55 and bumped us up to the Outlaw Class,” Enerson said. “But they didn’t just spring it on us. We were involved in the decision, and we agreed with the change. It’s all good with us. We kind of expected something like that would happen going into this build.”

Enerson said his team is proud of the world record-setting run but is also proud they were able to push the envelope with new technology and change the direction of their sport. They said they were also satisfied with what they accomplished from a safety standpoint with their new design.

“We were very concerned with the safety aspect of having a high-pressure air tank on the back of this sled,” Enerson said. “But after inspecting how we had everything mounted and the lines routed and secured, the technical directors said the safety concerns weren’t an issue to them. That made us pretty happy and proud of how we were able to put everything together.”



Tyson Enerson makes a pass at the Iowa Nationals in Grundy Center in September. Photo courtesy Scott Vavroch Photography.

CALENDAR

January

- International Snowmobile Safety Week Jan. 10-18.
- Butler County Snow Snoops 90s Ride Jan. 17 at 10 a.m. at TJ's in Greene.
- Driftrunners' Snowfest Jan. 22-25 at the Howard County Fairgrounds, Cresco. Follow the club on Facebook for more.
- University of Okoboji Winter Games Jan. 22-25. Visit www.uofowintergames.com for more.
- Snowmobile Iowa ride hosted by Humboldt Sno-Skimmers Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. For more information, contact Leo at (515) 368-5396.
- Iowa River Riders Snow Rodeo Saturday, Jan. 31, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake Conelia between Belmond and Clarion. Trophies will be handed out in the following events: Kitty Cat Corral, Radar Race, Pole and Barrel Race
- Snowmobile Iowa ride hosted by North Iowa Snow Seekers Jan. 31 at 10 a.m. at Ventura. For more information, contact Keith at (641) 420-3225.

February

- Winter Kids Fun Day Feb. 1 at Huxley.
- Midwest Sled Fest Feb. 7 at Clear Lake State Park.
- Team Iowa Ice Drags Feb. 7 at Little Wall Lake, Jewell.
- Take a Friend Snowmobiling Week Feb. 7-16.
- Snowmobile Iowa ride hosted by Sac County Sno Lovers Feb. 7 at 10 a.m. at Breda. For more information, contact Jamie at (712) 830-2196.
- Clean Snowmobile Challenge Feb. 8-12 at Eagle River.
- Butler Co. Snow Snoops Vintage Ride Feb. 14 at Dumont.

ISSA Awards Four Student Scholarships at Convention

The ISSA Education and Scholarship Foundation awarded four scholarships in 2025. The recipients were recognized during the Awards Banquet at the 52nd Annual ISSA Convention in Ames in November.

Checks totalling \$6,000 were handed out to Caleb Utley from the Chickasaw Sno-Riders in Region 4, Katelynn Toft from the Scott County Sno-Seekers in Region 9, Hollie Larson from the Southwest Iowa Snow Scooters in Region 6 and Brooke Havens from the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club in Region 7.

"This is our largest issue of scholarship grants ever presented," noted Foundation Executive Director Bruno Andreini. "I would like to thank all of our supporting financial sources that make all of this possible."

Founded 30 years ago, the ISSA's scholarship foundation has now benefited 80 ISSA students since 1998. The foundation was formed with the seed money left over from the ISSA's hosting of the International Snowmobile Congress in Cedar Rapids in 1995.

The scholarship program is funded by interest and earnings from those investments, plus annual fundraising efforts by the committee. At this year's convention, the foundation raised more than \$2,000 through club donations, auction items and Sally Carmichael's annual winter-themed quilt raffle.

According to Andreini, the foundation determines the amount they give in scholarships each year based on the annual contributions they receive from the snowmobile community.

To qualify, students must belong to the ISSA either individually or through their families. The application period for 2026 opens Jan. 1 and closes April 1. Forms are available for download at www.iowasnowmobiler.com/scholarship.

As part of the application process, each student must submit an essay on 'What Snowmobiling Means to Me'. The winning entries from last year can be found on the following pages.



Above, the ISSA Education and Scholarship Foundation recognized four students at the 2025 ISSA Annual Convention in Ames in November. On hand for the ceremony were Hollie Larson and Caleb Utley. They are flanked by Foundation President Barry Starmer (left) and Executive Director Bruno Andreini. Below, the Foundation also awarded Sally Carmichael from the Cedar Falls Sno Hawks in Region 4 a Certificate of Appreciation for her fundraising efforts each year through a winter-themed quilt raffle at convention.



Lavell Kuennen from the Trail Blaz-ers Inc. in Region 5 won last fall's quilt raffle at the ISSA Annual Convention. Sally Carmichael's annual fundraiser brought in \$600 for the ISSA Education and Scholarship Foundation. Club donations can be found at right.

ISSA Scholarship Foundation Donations Collected at Convention

Central Iowa Snowmobilers	\$250
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club	\$250
Worth County Fence Stretchers	\$250
Floyd County Groomers Association	\$200
Dickinson County SnowHawks	\$100
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks	\$100
Raccoon Valley Snow Chasers	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers	\$100
Webster County Ice Breakers	\$100

Donations can be mailed to ISSA Treasurer Amy Kahler at her address found on page 5.

What Snowmobiling Means to Me

by Caleb Utley

Chickasaw Sno-Riders, Region 4

New Hampton High School, New Hampton, IA

'Ouch!' is a word that I said every snowy winter; I remember my dad pulling my brother and me in a small sled behind his snowmobile. I always remember falling off and it hurting a lot, but being a little kid, I didn't care. I always liked riding and being around snowmobiles when I was little, riding on the jump seat behind my dad and going fast down the trails. As I got older, I got my own snowmobile and got to ride trails alongside my mom, dad, and brother. I always look forward to winter just for that reason, not for riding trails but for spending time with my family. It brought us together. My uncle and cousins would sometimes drive for hours just to spend the day riding trails with us. Riding trails with my family made for some great memories that I would never have if I wasn't a part of snowmobiling. Snowmobiling is a hobby that brings my whole family together.



I learned many valuable lessons from snowmobiling, but the biggest lesson I learned was paying for what you have. I told my dad that I wanted a snowmobile of my own, so we went out and eventually found a snowmobile, and my dad said, You will buy it because you need to learn that things you want don't always come cheap. So, by the time I was 14 years old, I was in debt to my dad. It took me an extremely long time to pay him back, but I did every penny. It taught me that if you work really hard for something, it is more valuable to you than what you think.

The best way to pass the time in the winter is snowmobiling. When there is enough snow on the ground, I am the first one to be jumping drifts out in our field. When there wasn't enough snow, my brother and I built a mini track for a little 150 snowmobile. We always found a way to ride even when there was a little snow. Not every winter is going to be snowy, but that makes the snowy winters even better. I can't wait for next winter to be able to ride trails with my family. Snowmobiling has been a big part of my life and has brought my family closer together. I have made many memories riding, and I am very excited to continue to make new memories.

by Katelynn Toft

Scott County Sno-Seekers, Region 9

Durant High School, Durant, IA

In my family, snowmobiling is a way of life. My grandfather first introduced it to my dad, who now has raised a family of snowmobilers. I was sitting on my first snowmobile, an Arctic Cat Z120, before I could walk. Being around the sport of snowmobiling means a lot to me; it has taught me many things. Things like understanding the mechanics and business of snowmobiles, the tasks of being a snowmobile club member and the pure rush of adrenaline you get from these amazing machines.



I often work with my dad in the shop, preparing our sleds for the snowmobile season. I have learned proper maintenance like fluid changes and plug checks. I got to stud my first track when I was 13. I also find it fascinating to go with my dad up to our dealer and learn more about upcoming sled models. I like being able to know the important things about the machine I ride every winter. I am no longer a young girl who just asks for help when getting the sled out of the trailer or getting it started because

I'm not strong enough for the pull cord. Now I can move sleds around, putting them in trailers and onto dollies. I can start the sled with no effort and hold my own when racing on trails. It makes me happy to see my growth through the sport of snowmobiling.

I have been a part of our local snowmobile club, the Scott County Sno-Seekers, forever. My dad has always been a big part of our club, serving as president working to make club events possible. I became an active member of our club when I was 10 or 11. That's when I really started paying attention to what it took to be in a club and start helping out. I have helped mark trails, and I have helped set up and run our club's grass drag event. I've provided sleds and tutored new riders for an event we host, which is a women's day ride for a local club called The Women's Outdoor and Adventure Club. I look forward to continuing my membership by helping spread the word about this amazing sport and drawing more attention.

I have a deep love for snowmobiles. It has taken me to many jaw-dropping places, allowed me to meet many wonderful people and given me opportunities to go relentlessly fast. From the first time I got to drive a snowmobile to my first official race to trips with family, I have loved every second of it. Snowmobiling to me is a way to let go, to forget about whatever is going on and just focus on the hum of the machines, the wind ripping around you and the bite of the cold. It truly feels like freedom. The speed at which you can travel makes it all feel unreal, and I don't know what I would do without it. As I get older, snowmobiling will always be in my life.

by Hollie Larson

Southwest Iowa Snow Scooters, Region 6

Underwood High School, Underwood, IA

Snowmobiling holds a special place in my heart, representing more than just a thrilling winter activity. It embodies adventure, cherished moments with family and friends, and a reminder to always ride safely.

I learned what riding safely means after I got into a near-tragic snowmobile accident on Jan. 8, 2024. In this event, I was riding in a cornfield that I thought was wide open. I was rushing through the snow, following a train of friends in front of me. All of a sudden, I saw a deep ditch and panicked, making a quick decision. I swerved my handlebars quickly to the left, avoiding another snowmobile that had fallen first. Doing so, I ended up landing in the deeper part of the ditch and hit a culvert. With full impact, I ended up flying back out of the ditch and landing in the field across from what I found out was a creek. It took me a second to wake up, and once I did, I could not feel anything below my waist. This gave me the biggest shock of my life. I was quickly transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital and ended up having some minor injuries. My feelings came back, and afterward, I found that I had deep internal bruising on my leg and a goose egg on my head. Even though I had taken precautions by taking my snowmobile safety course, driving slowly and wearing the necessary helmet and clothing, I still got hurt. The sled ended up being totaled, and I couldn't ride the rest of the season. One year ago, this happened, and ever since, I have taken safety to another level.



That accident has changed me and made me look at snowmobiling differently. Yes, riding sleds is a great source of joy, but it has allowed me to have personal growth and pushed me out of my comfort zone. Now, I think about what snowmobiling has taught me. It has taught me the importance of teamwork so that everyone can stay safe when working together. Also, it has taught me about safety and how to help others ride safely, too.

Finally, it has taught me to respect the environment and having

the ability to ride cool machines like this is a gift. So yes, snowmobiling means the most to me. It has taught me so many things and has helped me grow as a person and a rider. As I pursue my education and future career, the lessons I have learned from snowmobiling will continue to guide me. This scholarship would not only support my academic goals but also enable me to share the joy of snowmobiling with others, ensuring that this sport thrives for future generations.

by Brooke Havens

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club, Region 7
Des Moines University (third-year medical student)

Snowmobiling has always been more than just a winter sport to me—it is a cherished tradition, a source of adventure and a rare opportunity to escape from the demands of my academic life. Pursuing a career in medicine, my days are filled with studying, clinical rotations and constant learning. However, when winter rolls around, snowmobiling provides me with a much-needed reprieve from the pressures of school. It allows me to reconnect with my family and challenge myself in an exhilarating way.

For me, the greatest aspect of snowmobiling is the quality family time it fosters. Growing up with divorced parents, my “Dad’s house” consisted of my father, my two brothers and me, so naturally, I grew up racing go-karts and trail riding on snowmobiles. At first, I was a bit skeptical that I would not be able to fit in, but it only took one ride for me to learn that wasn’t true at all. The Iowa snowmobile family accepted me for exactly who I was, and we spent countless winter weekends exploring trails, conquering snowy landscapes, and creating unforgettable memories. These trips strengthened my



bond with my Dad and brothers, teaching us teamwork and patience. Even now, as I navigate the rigorous journey of becoming a physician, snowmobiling remains one of the few opportunities I have to spend meaningful time with my family. The sport allows me to disconnect from the chaos of everyday life and simply enjoy the company of the people I love. Whether it is sharing laughter over a warm meal after a long ride or encouraging each other through challenging trails, the moments we share on our sleds are priceless.

As a female in this male-dominated sport, snowmobiling has also taught me resilience and confidence. I have embraced the challenge, proving to myself and others that women are just as capable on the trails as men. Snowmobiling has given me a sense of empowerment, reinforcing my belief that I can succeed in any field, including the demanding and traditionally male-dominated world of medicine. I take pride in breaking stereotypes, whether it is by mastering challenging terrains on my snowmobile or excelling in medical school.

Snowmobiling is an essential escape for me. The intensity of medical school can be overwhelming, and stepping onto my snowmobile instantly transports me to a place of freedom and exhilaration. The rhythmic hum of the engine and the pristine, untouched snow create a sense of tranquility that is difficult to describe. Snowmobiling allows me to recharge mentally and physically, helping me return to my studies with renewed energy and focus.

Unquestionably, snowmobiling is more than just a hobby for me—it is a cherished part of my identity. It provides me with invaluable family time, an escape from the stresses of medical school and a platform to challenge societal norms. I know that snowmobiling will always remain a constant source of joy, empowerment and community no matter where life takes me—and that is what snowmobiling means to me.

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