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November 2023 • Volume 45 • Issue 2



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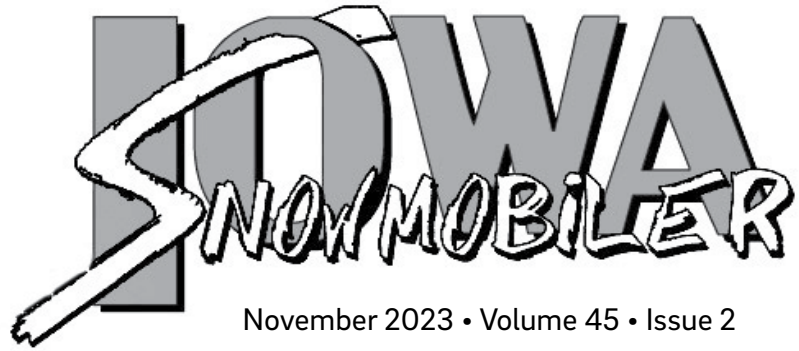
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CHANGE NOTIFICATION

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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Mandatory Meetings

RSC requests representatives from each club at three group sessions across state.



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Legislative Agenda

ISSA to solicit input at convention on future of snowmobile-friendly bill.



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Directors Ride

Board members, guests tour Iowa Great Lakes Region last January.



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Iowa Nationals

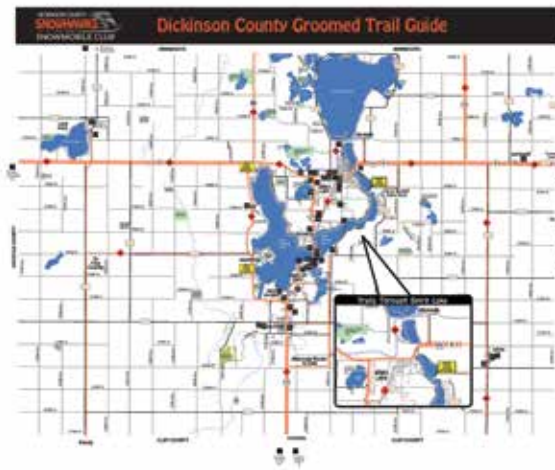
Central Iowa Snowmobilers host grass drags at Grundy Center in September.



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This Month's Map Center Spread:

- Dickinson County Snowhawks, Region 1



COVER: Region 1 Assistant Director Nyles Schimmer leads Past ISSA President Scott Nauman and others down the rail-trail between Lower Gar Lake and Milford on the Dickinson County Snowhawks trail system Jan. 24. This leg started a 45-mile loop for ISSA board members on a post-meeting Directors Ride last winter.

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JOHN KAHLER

ISSA
PRESIDENT



I can feel the crisp in the air as I write this article. Tomorrow morning is supposed to hit in the low 30s, and just a few days ago it was over 90. Iowa never seems to disappoint us with extreme temperature swings in a very short period. Let's hope Mother Nature has plans for excessive snowfall this year, so we snow lovers can enjoy the fruits of our labor right here on our trails.

Sept. 30 was an exciting day for the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa (SBAIA) at the annual Walk & Roll event that was held at Easter Seals of Iowa Camp Sunnyside in Des Moines. It was held in conjunction with the lowAbility Fair, where participants can come and enjoy all types of sports and games and all types of recreational activities.

I'm always impressed with the turnout for this event and the amount of money that is raised by teams to support their cause. It makes me proud that ISSA has been a big supporter of spina bifida for many years. On this particular day, the teams for the Walk & Roll raised over \$54,000 for spina bifida.

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club members Craig Krapfl, the ISSA's liaison for SBAIA board, his daughter, Mackenzie, along with Barry Starmer, Zac Parry and myself represented the ISSA that day. We had a nice display of snowmobiles for the kids to get their pictures taken on. Some took home information about our Winter Fun Day on the first Sunday in February, where ISSA members donate their time and equipment to take kids and families affected by spina bifida for rides on our snowmobiles and ski-booses. This event is worthy of your time to attend sometime in your life.

There are lots of important dates and events coming up for the ISSA and the clubs that make up the ISSA. Please relay all your dates and events to Cameron Hanson, so we can keep this publication as current and event filled as possible. If you have any good ideas for informative articles or you are good at writing articles about your club's events, send them on to our editor Cameron.

I hope to see new faces at our 50th Anniversary Annual Convention coming up soon in Cedar Falls. It's always a good time! Join us.



Thanks to early season snowfall last winter, Kevin Winters, president of the Dickinson County Snowhawks of Region 1, was able to test out his club's new Prinoth groomer on the railroad grade north of Spirit Lake Dec. 10. Along with a club match, this groomer was purchased with registration dollars instead of federal grant money to work around the Buy American Act. Prinoths are built in Italy and distributed through Canada.

Mandatory Meetings

Review and Selection Committee to review program changes with clubs across Iowa

by **Cameron Hanson**

The ISSA's Review and Selection Committee (RSC) has scheduled three meetings across the state this fall to explain groomer reimbursement changes to the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program. Each club is expected to send at least two representatives to the location for their respective RSC region to learn firsthand of the transition.

The first mandatory meeting was set for Ellsworth on Oct. 18 in Central Region 2. The next two meetings are at Seibert Park Hall in Manchester on Oct. 25 for Eastern Region 3 and at Weasy's Lounge and Grille in Spencer on Nov. 8 for Western Region 1. All meetings start at 6:30 p.m. Refer to the map on p. 5 to see which region covers your club.

The RSC announced its program changes in September. Effective this season, snowmobile clubs will be reimbursed \$13 per mile to cover the expenses incurred by their grooming efforts, primarily fuel, pre-season maintenance and general upkeep. Previously, clubs estimated their expenses for the upcoming season and applied for grants accordingly. Then at winter's end, they submitted reimbursement requests with receipts of their actual costs.

"Now, it's going to be up to the clubs to pay for those expenses based on the miles they groom each year," ISSA President John Kahler explained at the September

board meeting in Cedar Falls. "Once that money comes to you, it's not 'use or lose'. If you don't use it all, the balance after expenses stays in your general account."

"Next spring, we'll sit down as a committee, verify all the miles and then cut each club a check," added ISSA Vice President Matt Miner. "It's always been a reimbursement program and will continue to be, just in a different way."

"Every mile that groomer is used needs to be attributed and accounted for, whether moving it for service or repair or taking it down the trail," Kahler noted. "This new program is going to be literally that detailed."

GPS tracking

To record groomer movements, every groomer will be outfitted with a new GPS tracking device from Groomer Tracking Systems. The RSC has purchased 55 units to install across the groomer fleet in Iowa. The devices will be handed out at these fall meetings, and club members will be shown how to install them in their machines.

"You can send more than two people to these meetings, but we need at least two people to show up who are the most familiar with your club's grooming operations and paperwork," Miner said.

Installation of the GPS units is fairly straightforward and basically amounts to connecting three wires: power, ground and

switch. For optimal signal reception, each tracker must be mounted on the front windshield with double-sided tape that's provided. Installation instructions will be handed out at the meetings.

Representatives will also be signing their clubs' cooperative agreements for the 2023-24 season at that time. In the past, these documents have been taken care of digitally through email, but with the significant changes to the program this year, RSC officials felt it was best to take care of everything in person.

"Each club representative will be responsible for signing their agreement, relaying the program information back to their club and making sure the GPS unit is properly installed in their groomer," Past ISSA President and RSC Co-Administrator Chris Willey said in announcing the meeting dates.

Funding workaround

The RSC is moving to this new reimbursement schedule to make better use of federal grants through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). These funds represent a portion of the federal fuel taxes paid by off-road enthusiasts, and both motorized and non-motorized recreation groups are eligible to apply for them.

For more than 20 years, the state snowmobile program has been taking advantage of these Federal Highway Administration grants to help cover groomer purchases. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources first applied for them in 2001, and the RSC has continued the process since taking over the program in 2017.

RTP funding amounts to an 80-20 match, where the RSC pays for the groomers up front and then applies for 80 percent reimbursement from RTP. In Iowa, the grants are administered by the Iowa Department

of Transportation, and the snowmobile program typically applies for \$240,000 from the motorized portion.

The RSC is currently working through four active RTP grants. This backlog was created by the Trump Administration's Buy American Act, which stipulates federal money cannot be used to purchase equipment made from materials sourced outside of the U.S. Not all groomers and drags qualify, and therefore the RSC, like other states across the Snow Belt, are looking to obligate that money in other ways.

As a workaround, the RSC is now moving to a "contract grooming" model, using RTP money to pay clubs to groom by the mile and then using the revenue from the state's snowmobile registration fees to buy equipment. Previously, registration dollars were used to reimburse clubs for their grooming and trail development expenses.

"Registration dollars are now what's going to be used to buy equipment and buy the steel we can't with RTP grant funds," Kahler said. "We've just flipped our funding sources. This way, we don't have to get approval from anybody to spend the registration dollars other than the ISSA."

Balance stays with club

The RSC estimates the cost per mile for clubs to operate their groomers at \$5 for fuel and \$8 for everything else. What they don't spend stays with the club and can be used for bridges and other trail development projects. The RSC will still be paying for major groomer repairs, sign orders and trail liability insurance. That process has not changed, Kahler emphasized.

"That still has to be reported as it was before," he said. "If you have a major breakdown with your groomer, anything that qualifies as a major expense, you still have

MATT MINER

ISSA VICE PRESIDENT



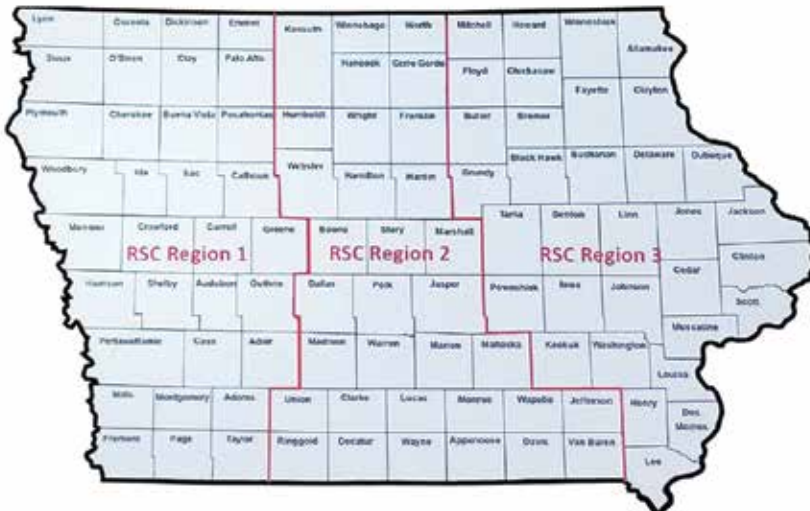
Hello, fellow snowmobilers. As I'm writing this, I'm sitting in my combine looking at some snowmobile trail signs on a trail that goes through one of my farms and am thinking about the enjoyment that we will be having in a few months with our sleds. Hopefully Mother Nature will make-up for a dry summer with lots of snow this winter. Personally, I think that she owes us a good winter with lots of snow.

As we move into more of the fall season, clubs are busy with trail work and pulling groomers out of storage. Clubs are always looking for help to get things ready. Plus, remember to get your registration and trail pass bought before the first of the year. That money stays in the program and helps fund new groomers, trail signs, insurance and repairs of grooming equipment.

I also want to put in a plug for everyone to get their registration and hotel rooms for the upcoming 50th Annual ISSA Convention being held in Cedar Falls at the Hilton Garden Inn Hotel Nov. 17-19. The committee has some fun things lined up and everyone should have a great time. From the hockey game on Friday night to the banquet on Saturday night, it will be a great time for all. Big thanks to Seth and Kelsey Bram and their committee for all the hard work that they are doing to put on this convention.

Another thank you goes out to Cameron Hanson for putting together a great magazine for the ISSA. Each issue has great photos and articles that make our magazine one of the best in the country. So, if you see him around, give him a pat on the back for the work that he does. Without him and the rest of the great ISSA board, we would not have the great magazine that you are reading right now.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, just get ahold of me and I will try my best to help you out.



The ISSA's Review and Selection Committee has divided the state into three regions. The boundary lines do not follow the 10 regions the ISSA uses.

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Nov. 18 Election Date Set for Eastern Iowa Representative on RSC

The ISSA's Review and Selection Committee will be holding an election Nov. 18 at the ISSA's 50th Annual Convention for the open Eastern Iowa Representative seat. Incumbent Todd Sieverding has indicated he will not be seeking re-election.

As posted on the RSC's page at iowasnowmobiler.com/RSC, nominations were due Oct. 15. Nominees do not need to be a member of the ISSA. The only qualification is to own a currently registered snowmobile in Iowa. The election will be at noon at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls as part of the RSC's annual update.

"You do not need to register for the convention to attend this session and to vote in the election," RSC member John Kahler noted. "The seminar is open to any currently registered snowmobiler in Iowa."

For more information on the election, contact the RSC at ISSA.RSC@gmail.com. Here is the roster of current committee members:

Permanent Administrative Positions

- Chris Willey, Past ISSA President
- Terry Durby, Past ISSA President

Members By Position

- John Kahler, ISSA President
- Matt Miner, ISSA Vice President

Members By Election

- Randy Magg (Western rep)
- John Gallentine (Central rep)
- Todd Sieverding (Eastern rep)

Iowa DNR

- Jessica Flatt



to contact the RSC and make the request for the repair or part. We're still going to be buying parts from the manufacturers, but that comes out of another side of this program."

Once the RSC completes its meeting schedule this fall, a final wrap-up session will be held at the ISSA's 50th Annual Con-

vention in Cedar Falls. A three-hour block has been set aside for final program updates, groomer operator training and certification and follow-up on GPS tracking software.

For more information on any of the program changes or for questions regarding an upcoming meeting, contact the RSC via email at ISSA.RSC@gmail.com.

State Trail Grant Recipients Announced

On Oct. 10, the Iowa Transportation Commission approved \$2,753,115 for seven state Recreational Trails Program projects.

Not to be confused with the federal Recreational Trails Program, the state Recreational Trails Program was created in 1988 with the purpose of developing and maintaining recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized trail users.

This funding is available to cities, counties, state agencies, local governments and non-profit organizations through an annual application-based program.

The projects and approved funding amounts are listed below:

- Raccoon River Valley Trail to High Trestle Trail Connector Phase VI (Dallas County Conservation Board).....\$675,000
- Red Rock Prairie Trail: Prairie City to Mitchellville (Jasper County Conservation Board)..... \$499,800
- Fontana Park Learning and Discovery Trail (Buchanan County Conservation Board).....\$238,534
- Hoover Trail Bridge #2 (Cedar County Conservation Board)\$130,000
- Copper Creek Mountain Bike Park (Polk County Conservation Board).....\$400,000
- Little River Scenic Pathway Phase 2 (Decatur County Conservation Board) \$346,913
- Ballpark to Ballpark Trail Phase 2 (Shelby County)..... \$462,868



ISMA Sales Update

Last winter, 124,769 new snowmobiles were sold worldwide, according to figures released by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA).

U.S. sales were reported at 53,553 sleds, while Canadian sales were 48,252 units. Additionally, 1.27 million snowmobiles were registered in the U.S., and more than 618,000 snowmobiles were registered in Canada. In Iowa, 22,740 snowmobiles were registered last season.

ISMA President Ed Klim shared this data in June at the 2023 International Snowmobile Congress in Moline, Ill., where he also discussed the economic impact of snowmobiling. Klim said the sport contributes \$26 billion annually in the U.S. and another \$9.4 billion in Canada. Overseas in Europe, the benefit was reported at \$4 billion annually.

“Over 100,000 full-time jobs are generated by the snowmobile industry in North America,” Klim said. “Those jobs are involved in manufacturing, dealerships and tourism-related businesses.”

Other statistics reviewed by ISMA at Congress revealed the median age of a snowmobiler at 54 years old, and each one, on average, spent close to \$2,500 last year on snowmobile-related recreation.

“Half of all snowmobilers trailer their snowmobiles to ride, and half snowmobile from their primary residence or have a vacation home where they keep and use their snowmobiles,” Klim pointed out.

Worldwide, there are more than 3,000 snowmobile clubs involved in trail maintenance and preparation. Together, they raised over \$3 million for charity last season. “Snowmobilers are caring neighbors,” Klim said.

Klim also said snowmobiling is great exercise and brings people outdoors to interact with nature as well as each other. He described snowmobiling as an “invigorating sport, great for stress release and good mental health.”

It also brings families closer together, he added.

“Snowmobiling is a great family lifestyle,” Klim said. “It is an activity keeping parents and kids together. Historically, individuals who snowmobile at a young age continue to snowmobile with their parents throughout their lives, sharing great experiences as a family.”



Klim

Avalanche Class Planned for Mason City Dec. 21

Mason City Powersports will be hosting an Avalanche Skills 2023 class Dec. 21 as part of Ski-Doo’s Responsible Rider program. Certified instructor Mike Duffy of Avalanche1.com will lead the training session.

With an emphasis on avalanche transceivers and new rescue techniques, Duffy will guide backcountry riders through an interactive educational format with demonstrations, powerpoint presentations and videos. Besides transceivers, attendees will learn about avalanche avoidance, forecasting and terrain analysis.

Snowmobilers are encouraged to bring their riding partners to the class as well as their transceivers, shovels, probes and backpacks. With more than 30 years experience in avalanche training, Duffy is expected to provide hands-on training with equipment and help Iowa riders identify and avoid common mistakes while riding in the mountains.

Pre-registration for the class is recommended. Contact Mason City Powersports at mcpstina@gmail.com or 641-423-3181.

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Sleds fill the parking lot at the Softail Saloon in Superior in Region 1 last January.

Snowfall Pattern Benefits Northwest Iowa Last Winter

by Cameron Hanson

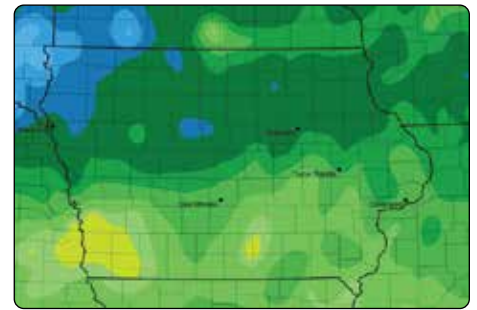
Northwest Iowa outpaced the rest of the state for snowfall last winter, receiving close to 44 inches and nearly doubling the statewide average of 24 inches for the entire season, according to figures from the Iowa Climatology Bureau.

Measurable snow was reported each month from November through March, as timely systems tracked across I-29 towards I-90. Parts of Kossuth County saw 14 inches of snow in November alone, and a Dec. 8-9 storm produced enough cover for a club ride that weekend in Lyon County.

In the Iowa Great Lakes Region, Spirit Lake received close to eight inches from that same widespread low-pressure event. Mixed with rain, the storm laid down a blanket of heavy, wet snow and gave the Dickinson County Snowhawks an early-season opportunity to work their new Pritnooth groomer.

With last winter ranking in the bottom third for overall snowfall in 136 years of recordkeeping, northwest Iowa continued to buck the trend in January and again led the state for snowfall totals for the month at 15.5 inches. According to Iowa Climatologist Justin Gilsan, some weather-reporting stations indicated as much as 20 inches of snow had fallen in spots.

For the third consecutive winter, Gilsan said Iowa endured a “classic” La Nina weather pattern last season, and the trails in Regions 1 and 2 were not immune to unseasonal temperatures. However, thanks to the existing snowpack in the ditches, they survived the warm-ups, and what snow had melted was replaced by favorable snowfall



January 2023 snowfall map.

later on in February and March.

“We had very good snow early, but then it got warm, and we lost some,” recalled Snowhawks President Kevin Winters. “Fortunately, we got more at the beginning of February to replace it. So for our area, it was actually a pretty good snow year, and our club put well over 100 hours on our new groomer.”

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Yamaha to Exit Snowmobile Market after MY 2025

In June, Yamaha Motor Co. announced plans for its eventual withdrawal from the snowmobile market. Production began in 1968 with the SL350 and will end with the 2025 model year in North America. In a press release, the Japanese company explained its decision to exit the snowmobile industry.

“Yamaha has concluded it will be difficult to continue a sustainable business in the snowmobile market,” the company said. “Going forward, Yamaha will concentrate management resources on current business activities and new growth markets.”

Yamaha will ensure parts availability, service and related customer satisfaction through the final production run. Current models remain scheduled for fall delivery, and Yamaha distributors will be working closely with dealers to minimize impact and to position the business over the next few years.

Yamaha initially entered the snowmobile market 55 years ago based on the small engine technology it had developed in the motorcycle business. They also “aimed to grow” the business by introducing environmentally-friendly four-stroke models and by forming alliances with other companies.



The SL350 was Yamaha’s first entry into the North American snowmobile market in 1968. The sled featured a two-stroke, two-cylinder 350cc engine with a V-belt continuously variable transmission. It weighed just 315 pounds. For comparison, the dry weight of the RX-1—Yamaha’s first four-stroke in 2003—was 555 pounds..

In the end, Yamaha thanked customers for their loyalty.

“Yamaha snowmobile dealers and customers throughout the world have proven to be among the most passionate,” the company stated. “Yamaha thanks and cherishes all for their years of loyalty and shared enjoyment of this special winter pastime.”

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

Online Apparel Store Now Open for Christmas Orders

The ISSA Promotions Committee has opened an online apparel store to sell shirts, sweatshirts, caps and hats featuring the ISSA logo. Members can now purchase their customized apparel direct and have their order shipped right to their door.

Scan the QR code below or visit rivalsinc.com/issa/shop/home to start shopping. Hurry, the store closes Nov. 30 to ensure completed orders by Christmas. Another store will be opened later this season with additional options.



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OPEN

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Craig Krapfl, ckrapfl@gmail.com



The Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls is the host hotel for the ISSA's 50th Annual Convention Nov. 17-19. Room reservations can be made by contacting the hotel directly at (319) 266-6611. Ask for the ISSA rate of \$119. The block of rooms will be released Nov. 3. The hotel is located near the intersection of Highways 20/58/27 on the southern edge of Cedar Falls. The address is 7213 Nordic Drive.

Future Legislation

Convention poll to again determine course for upcoming session in Des Moines

by Cameron Hanson

Last winter marked the 10th straight season for the snowmobile trail pass program in Iowa. Officially known as a 'user permit', the \$15 fee (plus writing costs) was created in 2013 as a compromise to a registration fee increase and added a second sticker to a registered snowmobiler's windshield.

Applying to both resident and non-resident riders, the permit is required for anyone to operate a snowmobile on public trails, ice and ditches in Iowa. Since its inception, trail pass compliance has hovered around 60 percent, as some Iowans claim they do not ride in state and therefore consider the sticker "optional."

Since 2017, the ISSA has been attempting to close that loophole and merge the registration fee with the trail pass fee into one decal. The so-called "single sticker" bill has failed to gain significant traction in the Iowa Legislature, passing the Iowa House twice but stalling as many times in the Iowa Senate.

"Until we have enough snowmobilers behind it to push for it at their local level, we will never get it passed," Past ISSA President Jim Willey, chair of the ISSA's Legislative Committee, said at the Sept. 17 board meeting. "As we all know, it starts with a grassroots effort. Every legislator needs to know it's important to us."

Somewhat defeated and definitely exhausted by the ongoing effort, ISSA officials took last season off and did not actively pursue any such legislation. At this month's 50th annual convention in Cedar Falls, the topic will likely resurface at the Saturday morning General Assembly meeting, when members will be polled once again on their feelings for the fee merger.

"At some point, we're going to have to decide what we're going to do before state legislators start meeting in January," Willey said. "We need to think about whether we want to go after the single sticker any more or if we want to go after something else. If we want to increase funding for the program, we need to figure out how we can get it done this year."

Changing perception

According to Willey, merging the two stickers would capture those riders "who don't pay their way now" and would generate approximately \$90,000 in additional revenue for the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program, which has been managed by the ISSA's Review and Selection Committee since 2017.

Willey said this increased funding would be "extremely vital" to trail maintenance efforts in the state, as the cost of fuel and machines continues to increase. Discussing strategy, he also suggested rewording the

Saturday Afternoon Craft Class Planned for Convention

The 2023 ISSA Convention Planning Committee has added a special Ladies Event to the Saturday afternoon schedule at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls Nov. 18.

Chalk Pretty 2 Me, a Chalk Couture art and home decor creative class, will be held opposite the groomer update and training session at the hotel from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The event costs \$30, and seating is limited to 20 people. Reservations are encouraged, and fees can be paid at the time of the class. Please note convention registration does not include this event.

To reserve a spot or for more questions regarding this class, contact Kelsey Bram at (515) 538-0884.



bill away from the “single-sticker” mentality will likely help its chances to survive in Des Moines.

“We need to come up with a more comprehensive name to better describe what we’re trying to accomplish with this bill. Do not make it about a sticker,” Willey said. “Make it something different than what they’ve heard before even though it will accomplish the same thing. Change the wording. Change the perception.”

The fine for getting caught riding on public trails, ice and ditches without a trail pass is \$127.50 plus court costs. Updated statistics on non-compliant tickets have been requested from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Willey said enforcement helps, but getting everyone to buy in—literally—is what needs to happen.

“Besides the cleaner aesthetics of only having one sticker on our windshields, this legislation would be good for our funding and also good for the vintage sled owners, because the one-time vintage registration fee would cover everything then,” he said. “Those two benefits alone are enough to make this legislation worthwhile.”

Willey said ISSA Lobbyist Mike Heller is scheduled to provide a legislative update to members at convention. Retained since 2003, Heller is entering his third legislative session this year representing Iowa snowmobilers without a formal contract with the



Leslie Boucher, event and catering manager at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls, gives a tour of the facilities following the ISSA Board of Directors meeting there Sept. 17.



2023 ISSA Annual Convention

Registration Form

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone Number _____
 Email _____
 Snowmobile Club _____
 Organization _____

Include quantity for each that apply:

- Full Registration \$80 (hockey game not included)
- Friday night-only Registration \$20
- Friday night Hockey Game \$25 (includes bus fare)
- Saturday-only Registration \$75
- Youth Registration \$30 (5-14 years old)
- Under 5 are Free.

Please Note: Registration fees do not include lodging. For hotel rooms, please contact the Hilton Garden Inn Cedar Falls at (319) 266-6611 (press 0). Be sure to tell them you are with the ISSA Convention to receive the block rate of \$119 plus tax.

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make check payable to the
2023 ISSA Convention.

or pay by Venmo

Iowa State Snowmobile Assn
 @IowaState-SnowmobileAssn



Mail payment (or Venmo receipt)
 and completed registration form to:

Seth Bram
 17313 Packard Avenue
 Clarksville, IA 50619

For more information, contact Seth at:
 sethbram@gmail.com or (641) 512-1932

2023 ISSA Convention Agenda

Friday, Nov. 17

4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Convention Registration
Snowmobile Iowa Set-Up
6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Black Hawks Hockey Game
8 p.m. Hospitality

Saturday, Nov. 18

7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Convention Registration
Snowmobile Iowa Set-Up
8:30 a.m. Opening Ceremonies
8:45 a.m. Region Meetings & Elections
8:55 a.m. General Membership Meeting
10:30 a.m. Brunch/Silent Auction/Donations
Noon RSC Update
1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Groomer/GPS Training
1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Chalk Pretty 2 Me (Ladies Event)
2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Ride Rasmussen Style
3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Polaris Ride Command
4 p.m. Groomer Reception
5 p.m. Dinner
6 p.m. Awards Banquet/Raffles
8:30 p.m. Snocross Legend Blair Morgan
9:30 p.m. Dueling Pianos

Sunday, Nov. 19

9 a.m. ISSA Board of Directors Meeting

“Cedar Falls and the Hilton Garden Inn will be a memorable location for the ISSA’s 50th celebration,” ISSA President John Kahler said. “Our members should find the facilities very welcoming.”

The convention registration form is available on p. 11, and the agenda appears on this page. They are also available for download at www.iowasnowmobiler.com. Full registration costs \$80 and includes Friday night hospitality at the hotel and two meals on Saturday. Ala carte registration is also available for those individuals who can’t make the entire weekend.

Please note registration fees do not include lodging, so book your room directly with the hotel by dialing (319) 266-6611. Ask for the ISSA convention rate of \$119 plus tax. Registration does not cover the special off-site excursion to the Black Hawks hockey game Friday night in neighboring Waterloo.

With this year’s convention honoring the ISSA’s 50th birthday, special events are planned throughout the weekend. Members are asked to bring vintage ISSA memorabilia, and all Past ISSA Presidents are invited to attend. They will be honored during a special recognition ceremony at the Saturday evening banquet.

Additional convention activities were previously covered in the October issue of this publication. They include special guest speakers, informative seminars, region elections and meetings. Members will also be asked to downsize the number of ISSA regions from 10 to 9.

This month’s convention is being hosted by clubs from Regions 4 and 5. ISSA Vice President Matt Miner and Region 4 Director Seth Bram are co-chairing the event. They can be reached at (563) 380-7142 or (641) 512-1932, respectively.

ISSA. Due to budget cuts, his only compensation comes from the donations to the Club Challenge. Willey said he hopes clubs keep that in mind.

“We need to get better support for our lobbyist, because right now, he’s representing us out of the goodness of his heart for the amount of money he’s getting from us,” Willey said. “We’re not even covering his expenses. After Mike retires in a few years, we are not going to get anybody to do what Mike has done for us all these years without spending some serious money.”

More to come at convention

This year’s convention is planned for Nov. 17-19 at the Hilton Garden Inn just off Highway 20 on the south edge of Cedar Falls. At its board meeting in September, ISSA officers and directors toured the facility and were impressed by the amenities, saying they were up to par with the ISSA’s Golden Anniversary celebration.



Sign up on p. 11 for the Waterloo Black Hawks hockey game Friday night, Nov. 17, as part of ISSA convention weekend in Cedar Falls. Tickets cost \$25 and include bus transportation from the hotel. Please note registration fees do not cover this off-site event.

Official Notice of ISSA Elections & Proposed By-Law Changes

Who:

Officers & Directors from
Odd-Numbered Regions

When:

ISSA General Membership Assembly
ISSA Annual Convention
Nov. 18, 2023

Where:

Hilton Garden Inn, Cedar Falls

2023 ISSA Annual Convention

Snowmobile Iowa Club Showcase

Club Name _____ Region _____

Contact Person _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Yes, our club would like to host a state ride this winter.

Mail completed form to:

Seth Bram
17313 Packard Avenue
Clarksville, IA 50619

For more information, contact Seth at
sethbram@gmail.com or (641) 512-1932

ISSA President John Kahler makes his way back to East Lake Okoboji Jan. 24.



Directors Ride

ISSA board follows snow to Okoboji for post-meeting ride last January

by Cameron Hanson

If you didn't live in northwest Iowa last winter, chances are you were traveling elsewhere to ride your sled. That's what ISSA President John Kahler did.

Kahler, who lives in Slater in central Iowa, followed the snow-line northwest often last season, as he found himself riding the trails up there "nearly every weekend" in January.

The above-average conditions in Region 1 even influenced him to relocate the Jan. 24 board meeting to the Iowa Great Lakes Region in order to host the ISSA's inaugural 'Directors Ride'.

"We had been planning to meet in Cresco during Snow Fest that weekend, but the trail reports from earlier that week did not look promising, so I made the decision to move our meeting to the other side of the state," Kahler explained.

Off and on over the years, board members had talked about organizing a ride, but nothing ever materialized. Kahler said he was determined to make it happen during his first year in office, and thanks

to the abundant snowcover in northwest Iowa, he was able to pull it off with help from the Dickinson County Snowhawks.

"The purpose of the ride was to add some fun to the doldrums of coming to a regular board meeting every other month," Kahler said. "We always find ourselves talking about snowmobiling but never getting together to actually do what we all love to do."

Extended visit to area

Some board members made a weekend of it, riding both Saturday and Sunday. The official ride followed the regular board meeting Sunday morning. Approximately 25 sledders departed

The Ritz on East Lake Okoboji shortly before 11 a.m. and made a 45-mile loop south to Milford, west toward Terril, north toward Superior and then west back to the lake. See the Snowhawks map on the following pages to trace the entire route.

Snowhawks President Kevin Winters led the way, and fellow Snowhawks member Randy Magg brought up the rear. Both Winters and Magg represent Region 1 on the ISSA board as director and assistant, respectively. Magg also serves as the Western Region Representative on the ISSA's Review and Selection Committee.

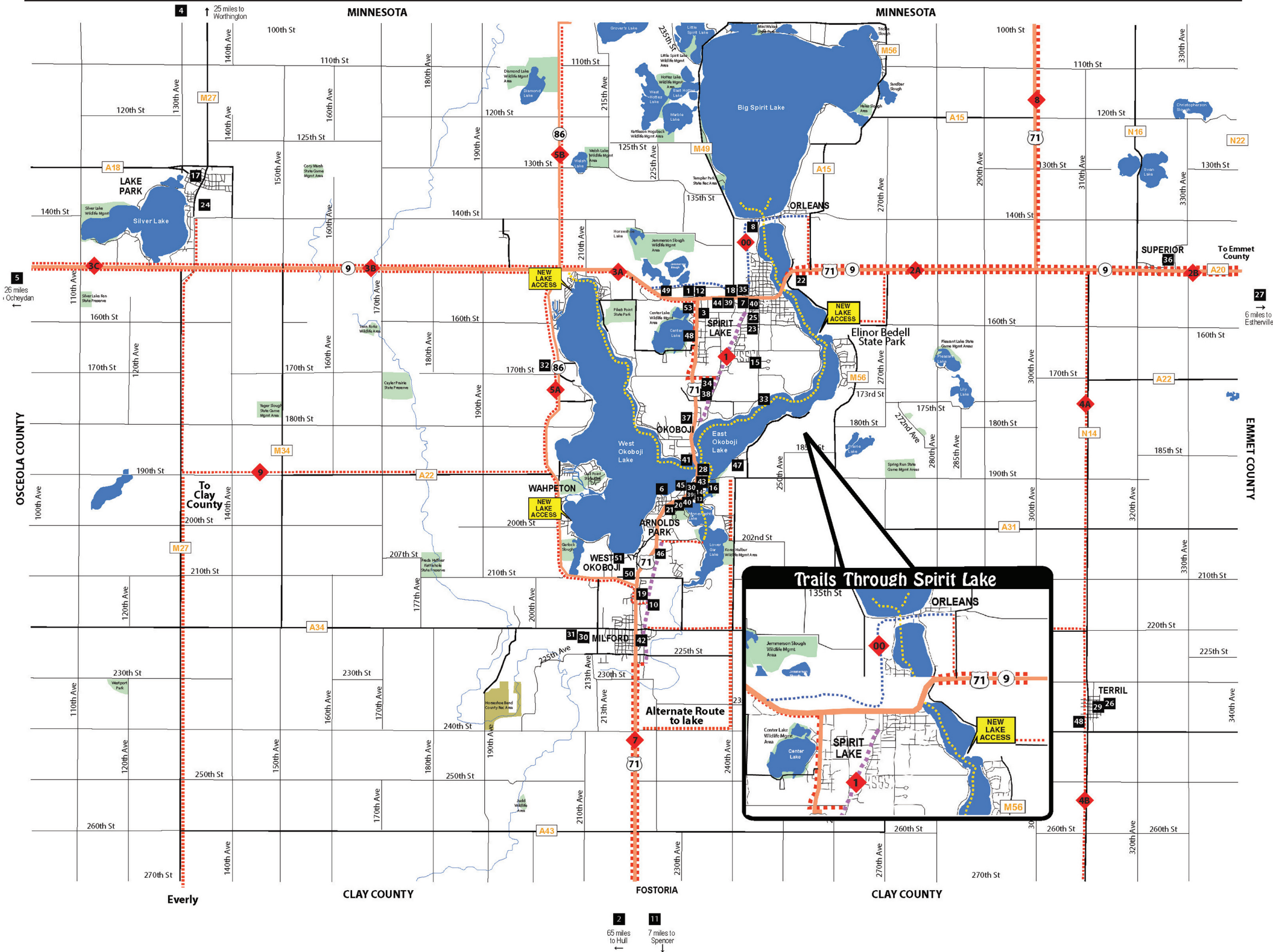
In fact, all four board members from Region 1 participated in the event with new assistant Nyles Schimmer riding in the caravan, and fellow assistant Steve Wiersma meeting the group for lunch at Superior. Past ISSA President Chris Willey also brought a group of riders over from eastern Iowa for the weekend.

"I thought it was great to get everyone together" Turn to page 16



Past ISSA President Chris Willey cruising down to Milford.

Dickinson County Groomed Trail Guide



Riders emerge from Elinore Bedell State Park and head onto East Lake Okoboji Jan. 24.

New Lake Access Expected near Elinore Bedell State Park

Please watch for a reroute on the Dickinson County Snowhawks trail system near Elinore Bedell State Park following the Iowa Heritage Foundation's purchase of 2,000 feet of shoreline along East Lake Okoboji.

Club president Kevin Winters said they are working with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for another access point to the lake this winter.

"That issue is not fully resolved yet, but we are working to get through another part of the park in a different spot," he said.

This part of the trail is reached after dropping down from Highway 9 along 270th Avenue. This section provides easy access to the Iowa Great Lakes chain, which serves as a hub for the club's trail system.

"You can pretty much ride in every direction from the lake," Winters pointed out.

TRAIL MAP LEGEND	
	Numbered Trail
	Sponsoring Business
	Highways
	County Roads
	Secondary Roads
	Wildlife Management Area/Preserve (snowmobiles not permitted)
	Groomed Trails
	Highways groomed both sides
	Groomed Bike Trails
	Multipurpose trails - watch for pedestrians
	Suggested Lake Routes
	NOT GROOMED OR MARKED - ride only if conditions allow and NEVER ride under bridges (use tunnels or overpasses)
	Groomed Rail Trail
	Temporary trail groomed through Spirit Lake

- QUICK REFERENCE FOR SNOWMOBILERS**
- Snowmobiles must have and display a valid DNR registration decal to ride on any public property.
 - All snowmobiles must have and display a DNR user permit to ride on any public property.
 - The following age restrictions apply to persons operating a snowmobile on public property:
 - Persons under 12 must be accompanied by a qualified person riding on the same snowmobile.
 - Persons 12 to 15 must have a valid safety certificate and be under the direct supervision of a qualified person.
 - Persons 16 to 17 may operate unsupervised but must have a valid safety certificate.
 - Persons 18 and older may operate without a safety certificate.
 - Riding is prohibited:
 - On public land without a measurable snow cover
 - In or on any park or fish and game areas, except on designated snowmobile trails
 - In any tree nursery or planting in a manner that damages or destroys growing stock
 - Careless, reckless, or negligent operation is prohibited.
 - Speed greater than that which is reasonable or proper under all existing circumstances is prohibited.
 - Riding while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or narcotics is prohibited.
 - Snowmobiles may not exceed an engine noise limit above 86 decibels measured at a distance of 50 feet.



Departing The Ritz on East Lake Okoboji.

From page 13 and ride,” Willey said. “We so often just meet in a meeting room and don’t actually get to enjoy the sport we work so hard for together as a group.”

Winters said he recognized the effort required of others to drive up to their corner of the state, and in return, he said he was grateful for the opportunity to showcase his club’s trail system to fellow board members. According to Magg and Winters, the Snowhawks maintain close to 110 miles of trail with the chain of lakes serving as the hub.

“We had a really good winter in our area last year, and it was good to see everybody who came from all over the state to ride our trails in Dickinson County,” Winters said. “Not everybody had good snow around the state, so it was great to have them come up and see what our area has to offer.”



Winters

Kahler said he plans to host another Directors Ride this January. Where that meeting ends up will obviously depend on the snow-cover. Winters said he would like to see the tradition continue for years to come.

“I really hope we can continue to do these rides because it was a fun time,” he said. “Normally, for the board, it’s all work and no play. It’s kind of fun to ride with everybody you only get see at meetings throughout the year and never get to ride with them.”

“I’m hoping the January meeting becomes a regular thing,” Kahler said. “It’s a great way for the officers, directors and their guests to build comraderie and fellowship as an organization.”



Waiting for Highway 9 traffic to clear.

2023 DONATIONS

Spina Bifida Association of Iowa

Driftrunners.....	\$1,250
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$1,000
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks.....	\$500
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$500
Eastern Iowa Sledheads.....	\$500
Hancock County Snowmobile Association.....	\$500
North Iowa Sno-Jammers.....	\$500
Tri-County Snowmobile Association.....	\$500
Worth County Fence Stretches.....	\$500
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$300
Bremer County Sno-Knights.....	\$250
Chickasaw Sno-Riders.....	\$250
Frozen Few.....	\$250
Mitchell County E-Z Riders.....	\$250
Snow Pioneers.....	\$200
Trail Blaz-zers, Inc.....	\$200
Winneshiek Trail Twisters.....	\$200
Iowa River Riders.....	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100

ISSA Lobbyist Club Challenge

Mitchell County E-Z Riders.....	\$500
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$350
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$300
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks.....	\$250
Worth County Fence Stretches.....	\$250
Snow Pioneers.....	\$200
Iowa River Riders.....	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100

ACSA Legal Defense Fund

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$250
Worth County Fence Stretches.....	\$250
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$200
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100

ISSA Scholarship Foundation

Chickasaw Sno-Riders.....	\$250
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$250
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$250
Worth County Fence Stretches.....	\$250
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$200
Snow Pioneers.....	\$200
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Dickinson County Snowhawks.....	\$100

ISU Clean Snowmobile Challenge

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	(\$250+\$500 match) \$750
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$500
Worth County Fence Stretches.....	\$250
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Dickinson County Snowhawks.....	\$100

ALS of Iowa

Worth County Fence Stretches.....	\$250
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$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

Dickinson County Snowhawks, Region 1

by Jantina Carney, Publicity Director

What a great summer and now fall it as been in the Iowa Great Lakes Area! We are looking forward to another great winter - last winter could be tough to beat! We've had a couple meetings already this fall, our trail clean day is coming up in November and we have been busy marking our trails!

Plans are in the works for our Vintage Snowmobile Ride and the Randy Loerch Memorial Ride on Jan. 20! Randy was a very active member and passed away this summer in a tragic motorcycle accident. We will miss Randy's infectious smile, his laugh and his passion for snowmobiling!!

More information on these two rides will follow, but your mark your calendars as this is always a fun event! The following



Dickinson County Snowhawks vintage ride last winter

CALENDAR

November

- RSC Region 1 meeting Nov. 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Weasy's Lounge and Grille, Spencer.
- Driftrunners winter Kick-Off Dance Nov. 11.
- Club News deadline Nov. 17.
- Scott County Sno-Seekers Turkey Day Shootout Nov. 18.
- 50th Annual ISSA Convention Nov. 17-19 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Cedar Falls. See p. 8-12 for more information.
- ISSA Board of Directors meeting Nov. 19 at 9 a.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn, Cedar Falls.

December

- Club News deadline Dec. 15.
- Avalanche training Dec. 21 at Mason City Powersports.

January

- International Snowmobile Safety Week Jan. 14-21.
- 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.
- 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.
- Take a Friend Snowmobiling Week Feb. 10-18. Visit GoSnowmobiling.org for more information.



The Driftrunners entered a float in several area parades this past offseason to promote their club and advertise upcoming events this season.

weekend is the 44th annual University of Okoboji Winter Games! Events start on Thursday and last thru Sunday! We are very active on social media, so I invite you to follow our Facebook page for meeting locations, trail updates and events!

Driftrunners, Inc., Region 5

by Zach Gooder, Past President

Things are getting busy with the Driftrunners Snowmobile Club! Our club has switched from monthly meetings to bi-weekly meetings, which means the season is getting closer. Our club is looking forward to getting out on our trail system and preparing it for what we can only hope to be a very busy winter. Our trail bosses do a great job every year with laying out our trails in NEIA to provide excellent riding and views. We are looking to revamp our trail numbering system over the next year to aid riders in navigating our trails. Preparations are also underway for our 53rd Annual Snow Fest in January. A lot of work goes into this four-day event, and we want to make it enjoyable for all ages.

We plan to be at the ISSA convention this year to learn more about the new grooming requirements and to socialize with other clubs throughout the state. Thank you to the ISSA for putting this on every year!



The Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club of Region 7 staffed the ISSA's booth at the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa's Walk-N-Roll as part of the IowAbility Fair at Camp Sunnyside in Des Moines Sept. 30. Photo courtesy Stewart Thomas Photography.

Iowa's 515 Racing Claims Outlaw Title at Hay Days

by Cameron Hanson

515 Racing from Des Moines captured its fifth grass drag win at Hay Days in September, taking home the coveted Outlaw title for the second time in seven years and recording the top speed of 151.81 mph on the famed Black Mamba land rocket.

Team owner Aaron Casler said every detail mattered, as they out-dueled “premier team” Eagle 1 and driver Dominick Ernst for the victory. He also praised his driver, Ethan Erhardt, for their outstanding performance on the Minnesota track two months ago.

“We were able to take on the favorite up there and came out on top,” Casler said. “Our success was based on Ethan having a really good reaction time, and secondly, where we set up the sled at staging. We were able to determine how close to the second beam we wanted to be and made sure we were going to get out of the gate first.”

Casler entered two sleds into Hay Days competition the weekend after Labor Day. Besides the Outlaw class, the team also competed in the Pro 700 class with driver Taylor Marmin. According to Casler, he was the only twin-cylinder racer to make the finals in that division.

Considered one of the elite teams in this high-octane sport, 515 Racing has been competing at Hay Days for more than two decades. Casler last won the Outlaw class in 2016. He captured the Lake Racer trophy (now Pro 55) in 2014, and in 2009 and 2010, he brought home hardware in the Pro Stock 700 and Pro Stock 800 classes, respectively.

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Above, 515 Racing celebrates Black Mamba's victory at Hay Days Sept. 10. The team from Des Moines won the Outlaw title and top speed. Left, driver Ethan Erhardt shows off both trophies.

Casler personally did not race at Hay Days this year but still competes in the Pro Mod stock turbo class when his schedule allows. He has recently turned over the reins to younger riders in the other two classes, primarily to save weight, especially with the 26-year-old Erhardt piloting Black Mamba.

“A lot of the team owners have gone with smaller drivers,” explained Casler, who continues to tune the 1,000-hp motor and prep the Hypersports chassis on race weekend. “There is no weight limit in Outlaw, so the lighter you can make it, the faster you go.”

Casler said he has known Erhardt since he was a kid. He raced against his parents, Jamie and Carmen Erhardt from Traer, in the late 2000s and has remained family friends since. The results on the track prove his move to go younger and lighter was the right one.

“Ethan is a good match for our team, and I trust him to make the right decisions,” Casler said.



Team owner Aaron Casler giving some last-minute advice to driver Ethan Erhardt at the Iowa Nationals grass drags Sept. 23.

Cleared for Take-Off

Central Iowa Snowmobilers outlast inclement weather for annual grass drags at Grundy Center

Photos courtesy Scott Vavroch Photography



by Cameron Hanson

Snowmobilers are used to monitoring the weather. Their favorite pastime hinges on adequate snowfall, so paying attention to the forecast is fairly routine each winter. The rest of the year is less critical, unless your club is trying to put on a snowmobile grass drag race.

Earlier this fall, members of the Central Iowa Snowmobilers in Region 8 found themselves checking the radar often, as wet weather threatened their two-day event the fourth weekend in September at the Grundy County Fairgrounds.

The skies eventually opened up Friday afternoon, Sept. 22, and rain showers soaked the Grundy Center track for several hours. The rain finally stopped around supper time, but wet conditions

forced most events to the next morning.

Wind gusts and dark skies continued to be a menace for activities on Saturday, but the club was able to persevere and hosted all scheduled races and radar runs as planned. Club president and race director Rob Schneider said the weather was definitely the story of the weekend.

“Friday was pretty frustrating, but everything went well for the most part on Saturday,” Schneider said. “We just regrouped and adjusted our schedule as needed. Despite the weather, we had one of our better turnouts for spectators. We were probably short a few teams due to the uncertainty with the weather, but everyone who showed up seemed to be happy.”

“We got it all in,” added race team owner Aaron Casler from Des Moines, who helped coordinate the top-tier pro races. “The rain held off long enough, and we pushed through it as fast and as hard as we could on Saturday. I was getting weather reports all the time. I think every three minutes, someone had a radar in my face.”

Tyson Enerson, a Pro 55 racer from up by Estherville, won two of top three races at the Grundy Center event and said the rain

actually improved track conditions, making the clay surface at the front more tacky.

“The rain kind of wrecked our plans for Friday night, but getting all that moisture sure made it better for Saturday,” Enerson said. “It held the starting line together better. Most of the time, if it gets too dry, the surface can kind of break up and fall apart. This year, the track could not have been better.”

New name for race

Rebranded this year as the Iowa Nationals, the Central Iowa Snowmobilers have been hosting grass drags for 26 straight years, and September’s event marked the fourth consecutive year at the fairgrounds in Grundy Center.

Since relocating there, Schneider said his club has worked close-



Most of northeast Iowa saw wet weather Sept. 22, as shown in this KWWL.com graphic.



Muddy conditions persisted most of Saturday morning.

ly with the fair board to build the 1,800-foot track into a world class surface. The two-lane venue includes a hard-pack clay starting line and a generous 1,300 feet of shut down lanes, just what the top-tier racers want.

“Our club has been doing this for a long time, and we seem to be going in the right direction,” Schneider said. “It has really evolved lately, and we’ve started to draw some big-name racers the last few years. With the four strokes and what they are able to do with them, these guys can get more out of their sleds and put on a really good show. We definitely want to grow the top three classes.”

Schneider said he credits Casler’s connections for recruiting



Mike Graham from Faribault, Minn., crosses the inspection scale.

professional teams to the event. In addition to Iowa, the Iowa Nationals pulled drivers from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Schneider said they are also working with a promoter to bring another series to Iowa for a third day of racing next year.

“This race can be a premier event for Iowa,” said Casler, who considers Grundy Center his “home track.” “We have the space. We have the track. It’s getting better every year. More pros are turning out. We just need a few more folks to come down to it so we can continue to grow the pro level. We need to get the word out.”

“It’d be good to see a few more racers head down this way in the future,” added Enerson, who won the King of the Track Outlaw title and the Pro 55 race.

Besides Outlaw, Pro Mod and Pro 55 classes, the weekend offered 19 additional race classes, including youth events organized by the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club of Region 7. Overall, 86 entries competed on race day with several taking advantage of the radar runs to fine tune their sleds. Full race results can be found on the Central Iowa Snowmobilers Facebook page.



Matthew “Chewy” Cone from Fairmont, Minn., won the Improved Stock Turbo class.



The Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club once again organized youth racing at the Iowa Nationals.

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The two-lane, 500-foot track offered exciting head-to-head competition.

With sponsors and entry fees, Schneider said the club was able to pony up \$7,200 in purse money this year. Sizeable checks were written to the winners in the three high-performance classes, and new this year, they were also able to pay back in the Pro 700 and Pro 800 events.

“Total participation this year was up over previous years,” Schneider said. “Offering money in two more classes definitely helped double the number of entries there.”

Hard work pays off

The hard work and months of planning appear to be paying off for the Central Iowa Snowmobilers. Schneider said he’s grateful for the effort of his fellow club members and thanks their sponsors for making it all happen.

“This event requires a lot of logistics and takes a lot of volunteer hours,” he said. “We have a lot of time invested, and we have a lot of dedicated families working on it to make it happen every year. It’s a team effort.”

Schneider said as soon as the races are done on Saturday, the club meets on Sunday to start planning for next year. Preparation for race weekend begins in earnest Memorial Day Weekend, when members start mowing the grounds and repairing any damage to the track caused by the winter weather.

Enerson, who often races outside of Iowa, said he appreciates the club’s efforts and relishes the opportunity to race in his home state. He said he will be back next year to defend his title.

“They’re running an awesome race down there and have done a phenomenal job every year we’ve been there,” he said. “They’ve worked hard on it every year and are always looking to do everything they can to improve it.”



Tony Thein and nephew Dillon Thein show off their hardware from their wins in the Trail Stock 850, Trail Performance 850 and the Trail Stock Un-Studded 850 classes.

Scott County Sno-Seekers to Host Turkey Day Shootout

Snowmobile grass drag enthusiasts looking for another venue to compete at in Iowa can head to the Quad Cities the third weekend in November for the Scott County Sno-Seekers Fifth Annual Turkey Day Shootout.



Multi-lane action will begin at noon on Saturday, Nov. 18, at the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds in Davenport. Classes range from trail stock to youth to unlimited four-strokes. The entry fee is \$35 per sled, and trophies will be awarded in each class.

The club will also be offering fun runs throughout the day. Gates open at 8 a.m. For more information, contact Kevin Toft at (563) 340-9671.



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Photos courtesy Scott Vavroch Photography



Fear the beard.



Dave Mart towing Tyson Enerson back to the pits.



Ish Racing had some pretty big checks to cash after the team's performance in Grundy Center Sept. 23.

Catching Up with Ish Racing

Enerson Finds Success on Track in September

by Cameron Hanson

Newlywed Tyson Enerson loves racing snowmobiles so much he planned his wedding day around his grass drag schedule this fall. Needless to say, he has a very understanding wife.

"She couldn't be any better," he said of his new bride. "She was very good about all this. In fact, when we were setting the date, I told her this is the weekend after Hay Days, so I'm not going to be much help. She said that's fine; we'll make it work."

Enerson, a tire shop owner in the small northwest Iowa community of Gruver, married Shelby Gruse on Sept. 16. The weekend before, he placed second in the Pro 55 class at Hay Days. The weekend after, he won the King of the Track title and the Pro 55 class at the Iowa Nationals in Grundy Center. He then backed up his Iowa win with another Pro 55 victory at Princeton, Minn., Sept. 30.

"We're finally getting this missile down the track like it should and doing it consistently," Enerson said. "We've gotten to the point where we've done pretty well, and that's a pretty good feeling."

Enerson primarily competes in the Pro 55 class, which used to be the Lake Racer division at Hay Days. Here, sleds are restricted to gasoline only for fuel, and including the driver, they can only weigh a total of 750 pounds. The turbo is also limited to 55mm, hence the class name.

"Those are the three main rules in Pro 55," Enerson explained. "In Outlaw, you can pretty much do anything you want. We normally don't compete in the Outlaw division, but we did run in both classes at the Iowa drags."

At Grundy Center, Enerson beat Andy Gosch in the Outlaw final for his King of the Track win, reaching 139 mph in 3.758 seconds. For both wins, he took home \$3,045 in combined prize money. He said the checks will just get reinvested into the race team. Every little bit helps, he said, and he openly admits he doesn't know how much he's spent on his "hobby" over the years.

"I don't want to know, and I don't keep track," he said.

Well known for his sense of humor, positive attitude and trademark beard, Enerson owns Ish Racing with friend Dave Mart. "We like to say we're fast..ish," Enerson joked when asked about the team name. "We don't take things too seriously."

Enerson clearly likes to have a good time. Winning is great and cashing big checks is nice, but spending time with the guys in the pit is just as important. Enerson said his team works hard during the week, so they can have fun on the weekends.

"It's an addiction, but we have a lot of fun doing it," he said. "We've made a lot of good friends through this sport, and that makes up about half the fun. We probably only ever see most of these guys at the track a few times a year, so racing is a great way to catch up with everybody and have a good time."



1969

Trail-A-Sled/Scorpion founders, from left, Stub Harrison, Glen Gutzman and Dick Harrison.



1969

Scorpion assembly line inside new modern production facility.



1970s

The Scorpion race team helps promote the brand throughout the decade.



1977

Snowmobile production nearing the end in Crosby.

The former Scorpion production facility in Crosby, Minn., is now home to a packaging company. The main plant was built in 1968 and expanded in 1970, as shown in the inset photo.



Preserving the Past

Harrison Family Helps Keep Scorpion History Alive with Annual Reunion



The Stingerette

by Cameron Hanson

Yamaha's planned exit from the snowmobile market next year and Taiga's foray into electric snowmobiles leaves me wondering just how many snowmobile manufacturers have existed since Carl Eliason built his "motorized toboggan" in 1924.

The official number usually depends on whom you ask or what question you type in the search bar in Google. The general consensus seems to land around the 250 mark, give or take a few. About a fourth of them had some variation of snow or ski in their name.

Most of those companies rose quickly with the popularity of the sport in the 1960s and 1970s. Nearly all faded just as fast by the 1980s with a downturn in the market. We all know which brands survived. Those that didn't live on in barns, personal collections and vintage museums.

One manufacturer which came to mind recently was Scorpion, and earlier this year, I was fortunate enough to meet one of the company's co-founders, Richard "Dick" Harrison, following a snowmobile trip to

Pine River, Minn., in early February.

Granted, Crosby, Minn., wasn't the fastest way home from northern Minnesota, but I was close enough to sidetrack to the birthplace of Scorpion snowmobiles and snoop around the community, looking for any remnants of the brand and its influence in the area.

Self-guided with help from the Internet, I was able to find the main manufacturing campus with very little effort. Other points of interest came with time, including a mural on a bank wall celebrating the community's past. Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful in locating a rumored Scorpion museum and later learned it was a private collection and not open to the public.

As I scrolled through my phone looking for other recognizable landmarks that Sunday morning, Feb. 5, I learned the 19th



Scorpion co-founder Richard "Dick" Harrison with son, Randy. Dick was inducted into the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame in 2003.



1963 Trail-A-Sled.

annual Scorpion Homecoming had just wrapped up the day before out on Serpent Lake. Consumed with curiosity, I ventured out onto the lake to see what was left, and that's where I ran into Harrison and his son, Randy.

Very little remained from the previous day's reunion, but what was there certainly caught my attention, a Scorpion branded trailer that the Harrisons were retrieving from the ice. I knew I was in the right place, so I stopped and introduced myself. They graciously obliged me with an impromptu interview.

Earlier in my career, I had the privilege to meet the founders of Polaris and Arctic Cat, so I wasn't going to miss this opportunity to visit with the Harrisons. I don't collect vintage snowmobiles, and I never owned a Scorpion, but I can appreciate the history of the sport and one of its more popular brands.

Brief Scorpion history

Competing against several manufacturers, including many in Minnesota, Scorpion was once described as "a major player" in the 1970s snowmobile market. At one point, the factory was producing 22,000 snowmobiles each year, and with nostalgic model names like Whip and Stinger (and variations thereof), the brand quickly built a loyal customer base.

Among its industry innovations, the company was credited with developing the Para-Rail suspension that blended Ski-Doo's bogie wheel system with Arctic Cat's slide rail suspension. The company also built its own tracks, seats, hoods and engines, with various plants and offices sprinkled across the Crosby-Ironton cityscape.

Dick Harrison, now 90, started the company in 1959 as Trail-A-Sled with his father, Eugene "Stub" Harrison, and co-founder Glen Gutzman. They originally built propeller-driven air sleds before moving into the burgeoning snowmobile market two years later. In 1968, they opened a brand new, 70,000-square-foot factory after a



Vintage Scorpion snowmobiles line Serpent Lake in Crosby, Minn., for the annual Scorpion Homecoming.

fire destroyed their main production plant a year earlier.

In 1969, the founders sold the business to Fuqua Industries from Atlanta, Ga., a Fortune 500 company at the time diversified in the recreation industry. Under new ownership, the company officially changed its name to Scorpion, and the Harrisons and Gutzman—described by the local newspaper as "snowmobile pioneers"—re-signed by the company within a year.

By 1977, the factory could produce 200 snowmobiles per day, and employment was listed at 450, down from its high of 500 in 1971. In 1978, Scorpion was acquired by Arctic Enterprises (Arctic Cat) and manufacturing eventually transitioned to Thief River Falls, Minn. The last Scorpion made was the Sidewinder in 1981. Later that same year, Arctic Cat filed for bankruptcy.

Scorpion Homecoming

A complete history of Scorpion snowmobiles can be found online at trailasled.com. Randy Harrison manages the site as well as its companion Facebook page. As interest in the brand has evolved over the years and given his family's involvement with the company, Harrison definitely feels a calling to preserve its history and keep the legacy alive.

Things really began to take shape 20 years ago after the Harrisons were invited to a vintage show featuring Scorpion snowmobiles at Glenwood Falls, Minn. Despite helping to start the company, the Harrison family had not kept many Scorpion sleds for themselves, so they were impressed by the number of restored machines at the show.



Deerwood Bank mural.

"My dad really enjoyed his time there, and I remember him getting down on his knees to look at the sleds," Randy recalled. "People started coming up to him and wanting to know stuff about Scorpions. That show became our introduction into the hobby of vintage snowmobiling. Everyone we met there encouraged us to start hosting events to keep the Scorpion memory going."

Partnering with the Cuyuna Lakes Chamber of Commerce, the Harrisons and other vintage enthusiasts held the first Scorpion Homecoming in 2005. Nearly 275 snowmobiles were on display for the first show, which has continued each year since, always on the first Saturday in February on Serpent Lake.

"Our first event was wonderful because you had collectors and local people who worked at the plant coming together and sharing stories back and forth," Randy recalled. "The former employees felt good because people still cared about their handiwork and the collectors in attendance were able to get some priceless inside information."

Last February's reunion drew close to 200 sleds, and in July this past summer, the Antique Snowmobile Club of America held its summer meeting in Crosby, complete with a town tour and oral histories at significant buildings and landmarks. Randy Harrison described the reunion and ongoing interest in Scorpions as "heart-warming."

"The community here loves it, and there is still a lot of tangible stuff in town from the impact of Scorpion manufacturing," he said. "Our show is only about Scorpions. There are no other brands here. It's all about having fun and sharing memories."

Clubs in red reported 100% ISSA Membership

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