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October 2023 • Volume 45 • Issue 1



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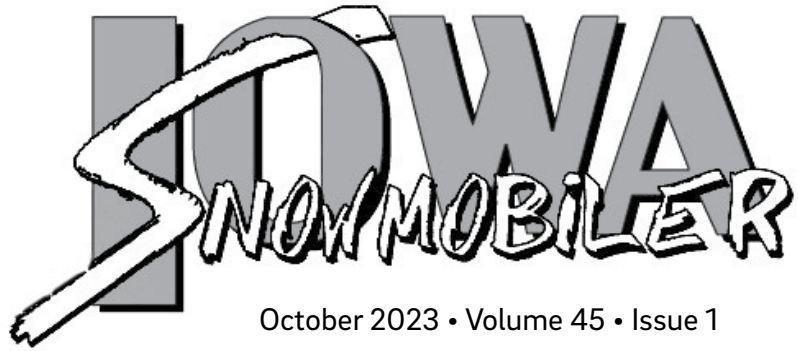
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CHANGE NOTIFICATION

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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COVER: Barry Starmer and Zac Parry from the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club in Region 7 lead the way down the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail at Huxley for the ISSA's annual Winter Fun Day with the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa. See more on this event from last February on p. 11. Photo courtesy Jenny Condon Photography.

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JOHN KAHLER

ISSA
PRESIDENT



And just like that, BOOM! Summer is over. When this issue hits your mailbox, Hay Days will be history, and the official start to the snowmobile season will be on everyone's mind.

I'm sure some of you know it—many do not—but this is a big year for the ISSA as we hit our 50th Anniversary. It's really fun to talk to some of the original members who helped mold this organization to what it is today. Many of them are still members today, continuing to serve their clubs and attend meetings.

But as we reflect on this, a long list of trail blazers who helped shape the ISSA have passed on. We need to take off our caps and thank them for giving so much to the sport we love and their wisdom to set this organization on a path to survive for 50 years. Thank you to the forefathers and foremothers of the ISSA. We appreciate you.

Now, a little about what I've been doing this past spring and summer. Chris Willey (co-administrator/RSC) and I attended the ACSA DC Fly-in in Washington, D.C. April 23-25. We had several meetings set up with U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

We then spent an entire day meeting with our own Representatives and Senators for the state of Iowa. We were able to spend quality time with Sen. Grassley personally and Sen. Ernst's Deputy Legislative Director, as well as the legislative assistants of Hinson, Nunn, Feenstra and Miller-Meeks.

Our main topic of discussion was WOTUS (Waters of the United States) and how its language can hurt snowmobiling all across our country. A better definition of what is "navigable waters" affects every private property owner in the United States. The other topic was discussion about minimum snow depth before operating any type of snowmobile or snow groomer and the impact it can have to the sport in the mountains and on the trails.

June 7-11 was dedicated to time spent at the International Snowmobile Congress in Moline, Ill. It was a great time to see people from all over the United States and Canada with one goal in mind and that's supporting and improving the sport of snowmobiling for everyone.

Start dusting off the sleds and getting them ready because we are just 90 some days from possibly squeezing the flipper!

Rubbing Elbows

Iowa delegation talks policy with decision-makers at April's D.C. Fly-In



by Cameron Hanson

Snowmobilers from across the Snow Belt met in person in Washington, D.C., for the first time in three years for the American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) annual D.C. Fly-In, a three-day visit to the nation's capitol to discuss federal issues related to snowmobiling.

The previous three years had been thwarted by restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic. ISSA President John Kahler and Past ISSA President Chris Willey represented Iowa at the April 22-25 event. They were among 40 snowmobilers overall in attendance.

Delegates from each state met with legislators and policy-makers from such agencies as the U.S. Forest Service, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Bureau of Land Management. Topics ranged from deferred forest maintenance to travel planning to bridge inspections.

"This was my first time attending this event, and it was filled with information beyond my expectations," Kahler said. "We were able to spend an entire day meeting with our own legislators or their aides."

Now in its 20th year, the D.C. Fly-in is an opportunity for organized snowmobilers to "tell the truth about snowmobiling," explained ACSA Executive Director Christine Jourdain. Business and staff meetings were held the first two days, and the third day was reserved for legislator visits.

"While all legislators vote on issues that



impact snowmobiling, the Fly-In focuses on those states that enjoy the many benefits that snowmobiling brings to their states," Jourdain said, saying it was nice to "finally" meet in person again.

"We want to remind these agencies, as well as the legislators, of the benefits from the economic impact from multiple-use trails and from the millions of snowmobilers who travel to rural America in the winter to enjoy them," she said.

ACSA describes itself as "your voice in Washington, D.C., on national snowmobile issues." The ISSA is a dues-paying mem-



ISSA Officers John Kahler and Chris Willey seated front left at the ACSA board meeting in Washington, D.C., in April.



John Kahler and Chris Willey with Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley last April in D.C.

ber to ACSA, and up until this year, Willey served in an at-large capacity on the ACSA Board of Directors.

Other issues addressed at the three-day conference included minimum and/or adequate snow depth requirements for grooming on forest land, Recreational Trails Program funding and FHWA grant waiver proposals.

Recapping the trip at the May ISSA Board of Directors meeting, Kahler said the minimum snow depth discussion was particularly concerning with the U.S. Forest Service potentially mandating a requirement of 12 inches.

“Fortunately, we have zero national forests in Iowa, but what happens out west and up in Michigan usually trickles down to Iowa, so we have to pay attention to what’s going on elsewhere,” he said. “In Iowa, we’re hoping for four inches to get out packing. If we had to wait for a foot, we would never be able to groom.”

The Iowa delegation was also brought up to speed on WOTUS, or Waters of the U.S., a rule finalized by the Biden Administration in December that lays out which wetlands and waterways merit federal protection. According to ACSA, WOTUS could impact motorized recreation, housing development, ranching and other outdoor interests.

“Under WOTUS, the government could control any drop of rain if it makes a puddle,” Kahler said for emphasis. “As clubs, we often use lands that have creeks that we have to put a bridge over. Under WOTUS, that landowner would have no say in what happens in that creek. I think the government is overreaching here.”

In May, according to ACSA, the Supreme Court “narrowed the reach of federal clean water protections,” and in August, the Environmental Protection Agency announced a final rule that could remove protections from the majority of U.S. wetlands, “saying the Supreme Court forced its hand.”

Calling it a “huge victory,” ACSA announced in an E-News release this summer the decision could “complicate” the Biden Administration’s legal defense of its new definition on which wetlands and streams qualify as WOTUS.

“The rule is now on hold in more than half of the country,” ACSA reported. “This is very important to snowmobilers and our trail systems that include many ponds, creeks, rivers, lakes and bridges.”



Sidebar discussion.

MATT MINER

ISSA VICE PRESIDENT



Greetings, fellow snowmobilers.

As I’m writing this, we are in the worst drought in 47 years. So hopefully Mother Nature will make up for it and drop some of the white gold this winter. That way we all can put some miles on our sleds this year.

This year marks the 50th Annual ISSA Convention that is going to be held in Cedar Falls at the Hilton Garden Inn Hotel. It is Nov 17-19. As you are reading this, the committee is planning a fun weekend for everyone to come out and enjoy themselves. On Friday night, we have tickets to the Waterloo Black Hawks hockey game in town and also a room for those who don’t want to go to the game. Saturday, we have the annual meeting in the morning and then breakout meetings in the afternoon. That night, we have the awards banquet, and on Sunday is the ISSA board meeting. It should be a fun weekend for everyone. More information is in this month’s magazine starting on p. 17.

This year, the ISSA has changed our awards up a little and have decided to ask for nominations to be turned in by Oct 8. As we know that when it comes to snowmobiling, most sledders think that trails just happen, but as we know, that is not true. From the club members who run the groomers to the ones who mark trails, to the members who go out on cold days and nights to help fix the trails or rescue the groomer or someone lost, and to the ones who do the paperwork to help the clubs run, and the family members who support them. Everyone is important!!! So nominate those hard-working members today. All you have to do is go to the ISSA website and click on the awards site to get started.

As your clubs start getting together for the year and planning their activities, PLEASE let the ISSA know so that we can put your events on our Facebook page or the website to let people from around the state know and try to attend. The more people who know, the more that can try and make it. Since this is the first magazine of the 2023-24 season, please watch the ISSA website and Facebook page for updates and information about what is happening around the state and dates.

Thanks again to everyone who helps with making snowmobile fun.

Have an enjoyable riding season.

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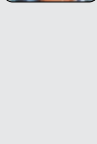
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Kurt Bonnstetter with the Palo Alto Rough Riders of Region 2 grooming Highway 18 east of Cylinder Jan. 22.

Restructuring

Review and Selection Committee announces major change to club reimbursement process

by Chris Willey
RSC Co-Administrator

As I write this at the end of August, we just had the hottest week of the year, but cooler weather and the next snowmobile season are not far off.

The Review and Selection Committee (RSC) has been working over the summer to finalize and implement some big changes for the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program. Ever since our team was formed, the goal was to find better ways to utilize program funds and get as much of those funds back to the clubs as possible. We are now ready to move into the next phase of this program.

Starting with the 2023-24 season, we will be transitioning to a Pay-by-Mile grooming program. With this new program, clubs will be paid \$13 per mile groomed. Trail development and major repairs will be handled with a funding request process outside of the pay-by-mile structure.

To facilitate this new program, we are working with Groomer Tracking Systems, LLC (GTS). You may be familiar with this company as they are the provider for the state of Wisconsin groomer program. After extensive research, we found GTS to be the best fit for our needs.

We will be fitting all machines used to groom state snowmobile trails with GPS tracking units to track the miles and upload the information directly to a new website. RSC will provide these units on RSC Pro-

gram owned groomers, and any club-owned machines will be equipped on a cost-share basis. We are currently waiting for the GPS units to arrive. When we get the units, we will be holding regional meetings across the state to distribute the tracking units, explain the program in greater detail and have the club sign their cooperative agreements for the coming season. These meetings will be mandatory for every club to have representatives attend.

To set up the website and its data collecting programs, we need the best possible trail map data your club has. Digital forms are best. Per the program developer, the preferred GIS file types for sending trail map files are KML(KMZ), Shape or JSON. GTS can try to work with other file types as needed, but these three would be the most accurate and convertible to our map



Review & Selection 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)

Please communicate with the committee via email at ISSA.RSC@gmail.com.

system. For areas and/or clubs that are unable to obtain GIS map data images, we can use paper maps as a last resort to get rough trail locations into the system and then refine them as we collect GPS data from the groomers.

To submit your files, please send a separate email to issa.rsc@gmail.com with your clubs name in the subject line and your trail map files attached. We need to keep each club's information in separate emails for best accuracy. If you want to get paid for your club's miles, we need this information

and your attention to detail is greatly appreciated.

We know this is a BIG change for our program and there will be questions and concerns. We believe this change will help clubs and provide opportunities for growth and expansion. Every dollar the club is paid stays with the club for them to utilize as they see fit. This will also allow for a statewide trail map.

Any questions or concerns, please contact any RSC member or email us at the address listed earlier.

IN MEMORIAM

Past ISSA President Muth Passes Away in August

Past ISSA President Roger Muth of Garner passed away Aug. 9. He was 87.

Muth was a charter member and past president of the Hancock County Snowmobile Association in Region 3. He taught snowmobile safety to area youth for several decades and raised money for both local and state charities.

He served as president of the ISSA from 1987-88 and was a regular fixture at ISSA summer campouts. He is perhaps best known for his long-distance riding to raise awareness for the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa.

"Roger was probably one of the main reasons our club has really tried to support the ISSA's designated charity over the years," said current Region 3 Director Ben Diekhuis, a fellow Hancock County club member. "He really believed in helping that organization out and raised funds for them in any way he could."

A Mason City native, Muth was a welder by trade, and during the summer, he was equally as passionate about adult league recreational softball as he was about snowmobiling in the winter.

He is survived by a daughter, son, eight grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.



Roger Muth
1936-2023

ACSA Looks to Grow Youth Ambassador Program

At the recent International Snowmobile Congress held in Moline, Ill., this past June, the American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) voted to move forward with further development of the Youth Ambassador Program.

The decision was based upon committee recommendations and discussions at the ACSA full board meeting. The ACSA full board moved and endorsed to continue development of the creation of an ACSA Youth/Young Adult Ambassador program outline, along with a proposed budget.

Additionally, the committee was charged with facilitation of an online survey to be sent out nationwide, targeted at youth and young adults to further help drive program initiatives. The survey ended Oct. 1.

"The objectives of the program are to



ACSA youth meeting at Hay Days in September.

grow future leaders within the snowmobile community and to help advocate for the sport of snowmobiling across the nation," ACSA explained in a press release.

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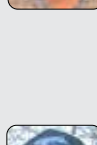
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Dave Carmichael (1995-96)
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Past ISSA President Dale Vagts (right) received the Iron Dog Brigade's Distinguished Service Award at the International Snowmobile Congress in Moline, Ill., this past June. Making the presentation were Iron Dog officers Duane Sutton of South Dakota and Judy King of Iowa.

Vagts Honored by Iron Dog Brigade at 2023 ISC

by Cameron Hanson

Past ISSA President Dale Vagts of Cresco received the Iron Dog Brigade's Distinguished Service Award at the 2023 International Snowmobile Congress (ISC) in Moline, Ill., this past June. The award recognizes "individuals who have distinguished themselves in the furtherance of snowmobiling as a fun, family sport."

Snowmobiling most of his life, Vagts has been a member of the Iron Dog Brigade since 1983. The organization was created in 1975 and describes itself as an "honorary society dedicated to the fun of snowmobiling." Membership is by invitation only, and of its 130 current members, 48 belong to the International Hall of Fame (ISHOF).

Active in the ISSA since moving to Cresco in 1982, Vagts was honored for his contributions to organized snowmobiling, most notably developing the snowmobile trail insurance program with fellow Past ISSA President Dan Martin of Davenport in 1985. Nearly 40 years later, V&V Insurance continues to provide coverage to more than 700 clubs in 24 states.

"I am proud of the insurance program that Dan and I put together," Vagts said in his acceptance speech at ISC. "That pro-

gram's been going for 40 years, and we're still insuring clubs from Maine to Washington. It keeps growing, and that's a testament to you people because you keep this sport clean and honest."

Vagts said he was "overwhelmed" to receive the award and even skipped part of his granddaughter's wedding to accept it in person. Duane Sutton from South Dakota, president of the Iron Dogs, presented the plaque to Vagts, saying the recognition was long overdue.

"Dale has dedicated over 50 years of service to snowmobiling and continues to work tirelessly every day for the sport, both locally and nationally," Sutton said. "We feel Dale has been passed over too long for this important award. He definitely deserves the recognition that goes with it."

Vagts, now 83, has been snowmobiling since 1967. His wife, Joyce, has also been along for the ride for all of those years. When most couples their age retire to Arizona or Florida, they've made a point to remain in their northeast Iowa community and vacation at their winter home near Hayward, Wis.

"Snowmobiling has been our life," Vagts said. "We have met so many friends and

had so many experiences and visited so many places we wouldn't have otherwise. It is truly our passion."

Vagts is a member of the Cresco Drift-runners in Region 5 and served as Region 5 Director and ISSA vice president prior to becoming president in 1990. He was inducted into the ISHOF in 2007 and has served as its treasurer since 2017.

"Over the years, Dale has done a lot for the sport of snowmobiling that not a lot of people see," the Driftrunners posted on their Facebook page this summer. "(He

deserves this recognition, and we are delighted (he has) received this very prestigious award."

Vagts is among five past ISSA presidents who currently belong to the Iron Dog Brigade. They also include Martin, Bruno Andreini, Dennis Nauman and Terry Durby. Bob and Judy King of Council Bluffs also serve as officers: Judy is treasurer and Bob is immediate past president.

To learn more about the organization, visit irondogbrigade.com.

Supplemental Insurance Policy Renewed



The ISSA has reinstated its Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy with American Income Life (AIL). This \$3,000 coverage is free to any paid member 18 years or older. The ISSA counts its memberships as families, so any member of a household satisfying the age requirement qualifies for coverage.

"We do not care how you count your members. If you say they are a member, they're covered," explained AIL's Michael Cooper at the March ISSA Board of Directors meeting in Cedar Falls.

The ISSA approved the coverage as a way to add value to a family's or individual's membership in the ISSA. Members should have already received a letter in the mail explaining the program and are being asked to return the enclosed card to receive their certificate of coverage and to designate beneficiaries.

In exchange for this coverage, ISSA members may be offered additional coverage from AIL representatives. There is no obligation to purchase. Those who return the card may also receive a Health Services Discount Card that offers savings on prescriptions, hearing care and other benefits.

American Income Life currently serves more than 280,230 snowmobile organization members and snowmobile enthusiasts covered under AD&D policies at no cost. Since 1990, more than \$2.3 million in life, health and AD&D benefits have been paid to more than 1,840 snowmobilers.

Award Nominations Due Oct. 8; Winners Announced at Convention

The ISSA Awards Program returns this year after taking last year off to reorganize. ISSA Secretary Kelsey Bram is now in charge of the committee, and nomination forms are available electronically through fillable Google Forms at iowasnowmobiler.com/awards.

Recognized annually, ISSA awards are designed to encourage the active participation of ISSA members in the organization and in the sport of snowmobiling in Iowa. Plaques are handed out in the following categories:



- Snowmobiler of the Year
- Young Snowmobiler of the Year
- Snowmobile Family of the Year
- Groomer Operator of the Year
- Dealer of the Year
- Club of the Year

Nominations for 2023 are due Oct. 8 with forms centered around the level of participation in club activities and in the promotion of snowmobiling in the state. Winners will be announced at the ISSA's 50th Annual Convention in Cedar Falls Nov. 18. All nominees are judged by a non-partisan panel that also includes non-snowmobilers. All winners are forwarded on to the national competition in June.

For more information, contact Bram at (515) 538-0884 or bram.kelsey@gmail.com.

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Deceased

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

Rich Moench (1980)
2155 Iowa Ave., Humboldt, IA 50548
(515) 332-3587

Gary Fairchild (1979)
933 170th St., Ogden, IA 50212
(515) 275-4133

Bill Nordstrom (1978)
Deceased

Gary Bruns (1977)
102 Honeysuckle, Baytown, TX 77520

Richard Grosse (Mar 1975-Dec 1976)
7543 Ford Rd., Janesville, IA 50647
(319) 987-2155

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

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Brian Carmichael, snohawk68@gmail.com

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OPEN

BREAST CANCER AWARENEES
OPEN

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

SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION
Bruno Andreini, awbrunoa3@gmail.com

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

ISMA Sets 'Snowmobile Day' for End of October

The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) has set Saturday, Oct. 28, as 'Snowmobile Day' to celebrate the snowmobiling community and to begin preparations for the upcoming season. Snowmobile clubs, local dealers, state associations and snowmobile groups are invited to participate.

Snowmobile Day is patterned after the successful "Snöskoters Dag," held in Sweden for more than 45 years. That celebration began in the 1970s and expanded rapidly through the 1980s as snowmobiling in Sweden grew. The success of the event is traced to creating a fun family atmosphere with involvement from clubs, associations, media, dealers and other industry stakeholders.

According to ISMA President Ed Klim, snowmobile clubs are encouraged to begin

the season with a party that might include, for example, food, vintage shows, safety training and maintenance workshops.

"Snowmobile Day should be a fun, family festival type event, where BBQ, refreshments, music and an open house can get snowmobilers excited for the upcoming season," Klim said.

Snowmobile clubs are also encouraged to sell trail permits and boost sled registrations. Klim said this event is a "perfect opportunity" for clubs and associations to increase membership and recruit volunteers for trail activities.

To support this effort, ISMA is offering up to \$200 to snowmobile clubs or associations that plan a Snowmobile Day celebration. If your club would like to be considered for this offer, please visit snowmobile.org and fill out the application.

Fun Facts About Snowmobiling*

- The average snowmobiler is 54 years old.
- Approximately 85% of snowmobilers are male.
- The average snowmobiler last season rode 1,154 miles, a four percent increase in ridership compared to 2022.
- Many snowmobilers belong to a club and participate in many of their club's events.
- About half of the people who snowmobile, trailer their snowmobile to their riding area. The other half ride from their home or cabin.
- Most of all those responding to surveys report that they snowmobile with family and with friends and club members.
- Snowmobilers are outdoor recreationists all year around.

** Based on 2023 survey conducted by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association.*

Take a Friend Snowmobiling Week Planned for February

The 'Take a Friend Snowmobiling' campaign for the winter of 2023-24 has been set for the week of Feb. 10-19.

Greatly supported by the snowmobile community over the past 14 years, snowmobile clubs and associations across the Snow Belt have taken military personnel snowmobiling, coordinated enlightenment rides with land managers and often just had fun organizing snowmobile rides with friends and family.

"The trails and riding areas in many parts of North America are amazing and offer great opportunities to take friends snowmobiling," said Ed Klim, president of the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA).

According to ISMA, the Take a Friend Snowmobiling campaign highlights the "wow-factor" and the pure enjoyment that people have when they first ride a snowmobile.

"First-time snowmobilers can't quit talking about how much fun the ride was," Klim said. "When you take a friend snowmobiling, remember this may very well be their first time on a snowmobile.

"Chances are that your normal ride would seem like a marathon to an uninitiated friend," he continued. "Let your friend enjoy that first day of snowmobiling. Make it relatively short, make it simple, and remember that it is always a good idea to feed your guests."

Learn more at gosnowmobiling.org.

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Winter Fun Day

ISSA members spend time with spina bifida families on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail at Huxley

Photos courtesy Jenny Condon Photography

by Cameron Hanson

Last season marked the 40th straight year Iowa snowmobilers have raised funds for the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa (SBAIA). The 2022-23 campaign began at last November’s convention and continued throughout the winter, resulting in \$7,850 in new funding for the ISSA’s official charity.

The ISSA began supporting spina bifida families in 1982, and over the past four decades, total contributions have exceeded \$310,000. Founded in 1972, the SBAIA obligates those donations for educational programming, family outreach and expenses related to patient medical care.

Janet Regier from Urbandale serves as chair of the SBAIA board and helps take care of her aunt, Mary Helen Biller, who suffers from spina bifida. Both were on hand at the 2022 convention in Ames to show their appreciation to the ISSA and to discuss the impact snowmobile donations have had on the families within their organization.

“I want to thank you so much for all of your support and for everything you have done for us the last 40 years. We really ap-



Bundled up and ready to ride.



Zac Parry from the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club in Region 7 stops along the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail at Huxley with passenger Mary Helen Biller of Clive.

preciate it,” Regier said. “Our mission is to improve the lives of everyone affected by spina bifida, so it’s not just about all of these wonderful people who were born with the birth defect but also their families and their communities.”

Spina bifida is a medical condition where the spinal cord does not close properly. The disability leads to incontinence, mobility issues and other physical limitations. Children and adults often rely on crutches and wheelchairs to get around.

With financial help from the ISSA, SBAIA members like Rhonda Brown are able to improve their situation. Along with other sources of funding, Brown said she was able to use some of those donations to purchase new wheels for her wheelchair, as her insurance would not help cover the \$2,000 expense.

“That happened really because of the support you have given us. Your fundraising goes directly to helping our members.” Regier said.

“We certainly could not be successful without you, and I wanted to share with you how all of you have helped me the last 33 years,” Brown wrote in a letter that was read aloud at convention. “We look forward to continuing our relationship for years to come.”

Long-time friends

Through their association, Brown said she has become friends with several snowmobilers, including Past ISSA President Bruno Andreini. They first met in 1989, and up until two years ago, Andreini had served as the ISSA's liaison with the SBAIA.

In that role, he always made sure the ISSA and his home club, the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club in Region 7, were represented at various SBAIA functions, such as staffing a booth at the Walk-N-Roll each fall and participating in adaptive sports events in the winter.



Krapfl

During his tenure, Andreini also organized the first Winter Fun Day for spina bifida families in 2007. Sixteen years later, he's proud to see that tradition continue. Hosted by the Saylorville club, the event typically lands on the first Sunday in February and includes food, fun and fellowship at the Safe Room in Huxley. Most importantly, the day features snowmobile rides on the nearby Heart of Iowa Nature Trail, when conditions permit.

This past February saw enough snow on the trail to give plenty of snowmobile rides to spina bifida members. The kids and adults traded their wheelchairs and crutches for cutters and two-ups, and supporters cheered them on as volunteers with the ISSA and Saylorville club made multiple passes on the trail.

"I thought last year's ride went great," said Saylorville club member Craig Krapfl, who replaced Andreini as the ISSA's liaison in 2021. "It was the biggest turnout ever. While snow conditions could have been a little better, we made do with what we had. The warmer weather actually attracted a lot of families."

The year prior, low snow conditions had forced event organizers to resort to UTV rides, so Krapfl said he was pleased get everyone



Past ISSA President Bruno Andreini continues to participate in the Winter Fun Day he helped start 17 years ago.

back on sleds. He thanked all the volunteers for helping out and bringing the necessary equipment to make the day a success.

"We are excited to host the event again this winter and hope to make it even bigger than last year," Krapfl said. "Anyone interested in getting involved is more than welcome and encouraged."

For Regier, events like the Winter Fun Day show that spina bifida youth and adults can lead a fairly normal life. She said snowmobilers inspire their members, and with the coronavirus pandemic behind them, they say they have "renewed energy" to take on new challenges.

"We said to ourselves, 'if we can go snowmobiling, we can do anything, right?' You have given that to us and have inspired us to do all of these other things," Regier said. "We go kayaking now. We play tennis. We've hiked the Grand Canyon.

"We've done amazing things because we have the inspiration you've provided us," she continued. "It doesn't matter if we have spina bifida; spina bifida is not going to get us down. We thank you so much for your organization and the things you've given us."



Supporters cheering the riders on from the pedestrian bridge over the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail.

Driftrunners, Inc., Region 5
by Zach Gooder, Past President

Hello, everyone! The season is getting closer. As always, this means the prep work for the Driftrunners is in full swing. Our club is actively planning on what hopefully will be a plentiful snowy riding season. Trail work, signage prep and event organizing is well underway.

Our club recently annointed a new president of the Driftrunners at our annual meeting. Chris Shimek is our new president with Steve Burke moving up to vice president. Zach Gooder fulfilled his term and will now serve as past president. Chris and Steve and the entire board will continue to provide quality trails and entertainment in Northeast Iowa, and we encourage you to make plans to come visit!



The Trail Blaz-zers in Region 5 helped serve beverages at the Tripoli Truck and Tractor Pull in August to help raise funds for a new groomer.

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club, Region 7
by Barry Starmer, President

Hello, everyone. Hope you had a fun, safe summer. Like most clubs, we have been busy. We have done regular maintenance on the groomer and started to mark trails. Plus, our first club meeting of the season is in the books.

Again this year, we partnered with the Central Iowa Snowmobilers to sponsor the youth classes at their grass drags in Grundy Center in September. This year was a two-day event with great turnout. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped make this event happen.

We are making plans for our club's 50th Anniversary to celebrate. We are having special edition shirts made for this accomplishment. It's a busy, fun time to be a club member.

Until next time, be safe and get involved.



Some Saylorville club members at the Winter Fun Day in Huxley last February.

Southwest Iowa Snow Scooters, Region 10
by Trent Larson, President

We got lucky and got about eight inches of snow the third weekend in February. While it melted quickly, we were able to hold a club ride to Wilson Island State Park at Missouri Valley. We ate a quick lunch at the picnic shelter next to the Missouri River. The entire ride covered 75 miles.

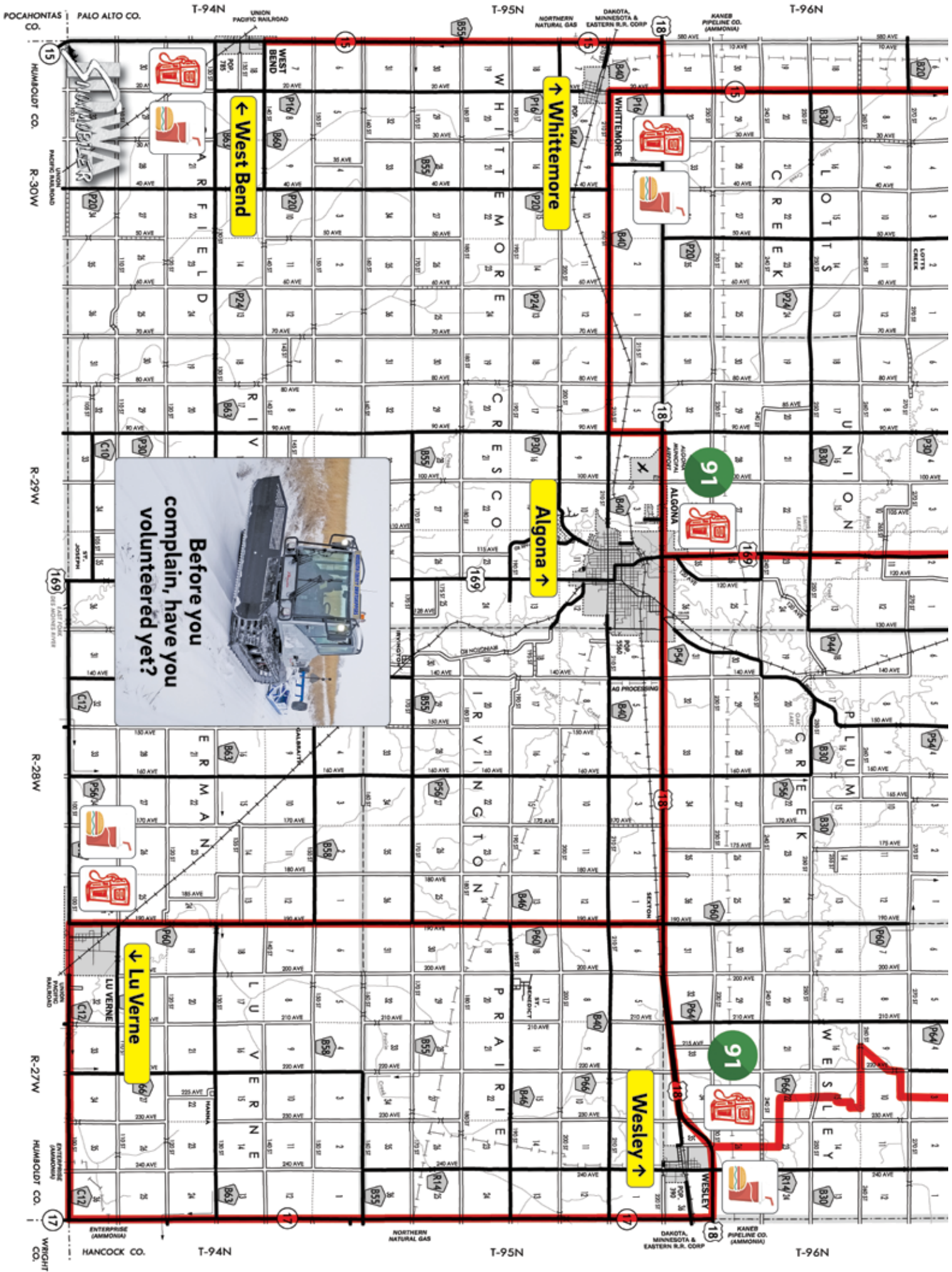


Southwest Iowa ride last February.



CLUBS



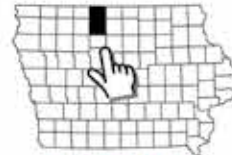


Before you complain, have you volunteered yet?



LEGEND

This trail map is sponsored by the area merchants shown on reverse. Please support those who support us. Thank you. Kossuth County Drift Skippers.



You are here

 Primary Trail


 Fuel Available

 91 Octane Fuel Available


 Food & Drink Available




Watch for Signs!


 Trail Marker - identifies trail, or areas where snowmobiles are allowed.


 Restricted Area Signs - identifies trails or areas where snowmobiles are not allowed.

 Stay on Trail Signs - reminds riders of the importance of staying on the designated trail.


 Trail Signs/Directional Bases - informs riders that they are on a trail. Arrow indicates changes in direction ahead.

 Chevron/Turn Ahead - additional guidance to the rider in a sharp turn.

 Intersection Ahead - warn riders that they are approaching an intersection.

 Bridge Ahead - warn riders that there is a bridge ahead.

 Directional Arrow - indicates trail direction.

 Stop Sign - instructs riders to bring their machine to a complete stop before proceeding with caution.

Use map for reference only. Please follow all signs and respect private property.



**SNOWMOBILE
TRAILMAP**
KOSSUTH COUNTY, IA



CALENDAR

October

- Club News deadline Oct. 6.
- ISSA award nominations due Oct. 8. Find forms and categories at iowasnowmobiler.com/awards.
- ISMA's 'Snowmobile Day' Oct. 28. Visit snowmobile.org for more details.

November

- Driftrunners winter Kick-Off Dance Nov. 11.
- Club News deadline Nov. 17.
- 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.

January

- 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.

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 Stretchers	\$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 Stretchers	\$250
Snow Pioneers	\$200
Iowa River Riders	\$100
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100

ACSA Legal Defense Fund

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club.....	\$250
Worth County Fence Stretchers	\$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 Stretchers	\$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 Stretchers	\$250
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$100
Dickinson County Snowhawks	\$100

ALS of Iowa

Worth County Fence Stretchers	\$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

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Larry Huntley and Richard Grosse
1975



ISSA Summer Campout
1986



Youth Safety Training
2005



Region Elections
2014



Golden Celebration

Region 4 & 5 clubs planning for milestone convention in Cedar Falls in November

by Cameron Hanson

The ISSA turned 30 in Mason City and 40 in Altoona. Next month, the state snowmobile association reaches another milestone with its Golden Anniversary convention in Cedar Falls. To commemorate this special occasion, organizers are working hard behind the scenes to make this 50th birthday bash a weekend to remember.

Returning to the Cedar Valley after two straight years in Ames, this year's three-day convention is slated for Nov. 17-19 at the Hilton Garden Inn. Among the planned activities so far are an off-site excursion Friday evening, special guests and speakers on Saturday and a stroll down memory lane all three days in the hotel lobby.

With the host hotel landing close to the boundary line of Regions 4 and 5, clubs from both areas will be chipping in to sponsor and spearhead convention efforts. Region 4 Director Seth Bram and ISSA Vice President and former Region 5 Director Matt Miner are co-chairing the ISSA's Convention Planning Committee.

"Being our 50th Anniversary this year, we're going a little bigger with our activities," Bram said. "We have reserved a hospitality suite at the local hockey game Friday night and also have verbal commitments from a couple of well-known snowmobilers to attend. We also hope to display neat artifacts from the ISSA's history mixed in with the usual fun that is had every year."

"We're putting a lot of effort into making this convention a fun and memorable one," Miner said. "We hope to see you there."

All past presidents are invited to attend this year's convention. They will be honored during the banquet Saturday evening. All ISSA clubs are also encouraged to set up booths for the Snowmobile Iowa display, not only to showcase their trails but



to share any events they may have been involved with for the ISSA over the years.

"From vintage clothing and sleds to old photos and banners, we encourage members to bring anything they feel will help us celebrate our past," Bram said.

Final details are still being ironed out for the weekend. A tentative agenda appears on p. 19. Besides the special events, convention attendees can expect the return of the ISSA's awards program this year, a lengthy update from the Review and Selection Committee, groomer training and other informative seminars and meetings.

"We plan to have two sessions on GPS mapping and training, one for the new groomer tracking software and another with Polaris Ride Command," Bram said. "Be sure to brush up on your knowledge and bring your questions."

Sign up today

Members can register for the 2023 convention by filling out the form on p. 20. 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. 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.

Please note registration fees do not cov-

er the Waterloo Black Hawks hockey game. This semi-pro event costs \$25 extra and includes bus transportation to and from the game at Young Arena. ISSA members can reserve their seat by checking the line on the registration form. Light snacks will be provided. Beverages are not covered.

For the game, the Black Hawks will be hosting the Fighting Saints from Dubuque. Bram said the hockey excursion was planned in the spirit of off-site events seen each June at the International Snowmobile Congress. The bus departs the hotel at 6 p.m. Friday and should return by 10 p.m. Those wishing to drive separately can expect a 14-mile round trip.

“Hopefully, the ice and the chill in the air will get everyone in the mood for the colder temperatures coming in the months ahead,” Bram said, adding the hospitality room at the hotel starts at 8 p.m. Friday for those not interested in attending the game.

The drawing for the ISSA Grand Raffle will be held Saturday night. This year, the ISSA is raffling off \$1,000 in Beef Bucks as well as a half pallet of beer. Tickets cost \$10 each, and only 500 have been printed. Contact Bram, who chairs the ISSA’s Raffle Committee, at (641) 512-1932 to purchase. “Tickets are going fast,” he said.

Bram is also soliciting sponsorships from ISSA clubs to help cover the expenses of special guests at this year’s convention.



Sally Carmichael of the Cedar Falls Sno-Hawks in Region 4 will once again donate a quilt to benefit the ISSA’s Education and Scholarship Foundation.



Snocross champions Blair Morgan and Tucker Hibbert visit at the 2018 Theisen’s Snocross National at Sundown Mountain Resort at Dubuque.

Idaho backcountry expert Bret Rasmussen is confirmed to return to Iowa next month after last attending the state convention at Dubuque in 2014. This time around, Rasmussen, a Ski-Doo ambassador with Ride Rasmussen Style, will lead a mountain riding clinic Saturday afternoon.

Snocross legend Blair Morgan is also expected to make an appearance in Cedar Falls next month if his schedule permits. Morgan, a Canadian, is a technical advisor to Ski-Doo sponsored snocross teams and has been involved at professional races at Dubuque in the past.

“We are excited to have these big names in snowmobiling here in Iowa to help us celebrate our 50th anniversary,” Bram said. “If you’re willing to donate and help defray some of their travel costs, please give me a shout. We would love the support.”

Clubs are also reminded the ISSA’s fundraising year renews at convention. Representatives are asked to bring their donation checks to the Saturday morning meeting for collection and recognition. The ISSA supports the following programs and charities: spina bifida, ALS, scholarship, lobbying, communications, ACSA and the ISU Clean Snowmobile Challenge. A current list of dona-

tions appears on p.16.

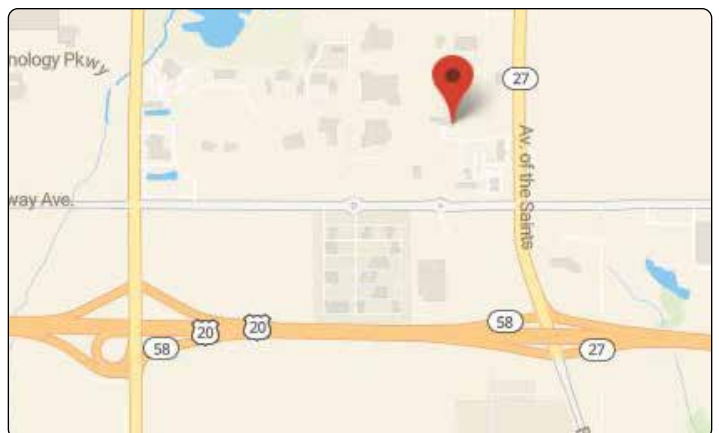
“All of our programs are important to support, but I would stress that once clubs start meeting this fall, they give serious consideration to the Club Challenge,” ISSA President John Kahler said. “Any money we get in that account, we give right to our lobbyists. Due to our recent budget cuts, they receive no other payment for their work on behalf of snowmobiling in Iowa. They are still a watchdog for us because there are bills that still affect us in Des Moines. It’s still a legitimate cause to donate money to. We are just grateful they are still willing to serve the ISSA under those terms.”

Like the Club Challenge, many ISSA programs also benefit from the various raffles and drawings at convention, so clubs and sponsors are also asked to donate items and door prizes for the silent auction and general raffle. Donations and sponsorships can be made in person, by mail or through Venmo. When using Venmo, scan the QR code on p. 20 and be sure to note the intended beneficiary. Venmo can also be used to pay registration fees for convention.

Proposed by-law change

More convention details will appear in the November issue as the schedule firms up. In the meantime, members can plan on director elections in the odd-numbered regions as 2023 is an odd-numbered year. No change in leadership is anticipated this year, as both Miner and Kahler are in the middle of their two-year terms.

Elections will be held during the General Assembly meeting



The Hilton Garden Inn is located near the intersection of Highways 20/58/27 on the southern edge of Cedar Falls. The address is 7213 Nordic Drive.

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 Opens
Noon RSC Update
1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Groomer/GPS Training
1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Ladies Event TBD
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
Donations/Raffles
Entertainment
8:30 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 19

9 a.m. ISSA Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday morning. Members at that time will also be asked to vote on a proposed by-law change to help improve attendance at regular ISSA board meetings. The board continues to struggle to meet quorums despite efforts in the past to increase region director participation, including an overall reduction in the number of monthly meetings and the option to participate virtually.

Quorum requirements are based, in part, on the number of regions in the ISSA, so the board is once again looking to reduce the number of regions in the state. Six years ago, the ISSA voted to redistrict from 12 to 10 regions by merging the three regions south of Interstate 80 into one large Region 10.

Now the board is considering reducing the number of regions from 10 to 9. If ratified by the general membership, the measure will disband Region 10 altogether, and the two remaining active clubs from those two corners of the state will be absorbed into Regions 6 and 9, respectively.

“We need to do something to keep the interest level up so we can effectively conduct the business of the ISSA,” Kahler said.

Attendance at regular board meetings can be seen as a direct reflection of overall membership totals in the ISSA. As of September, paid family memberships hovered around 1,900, down from 3,000 just 12 years ago. The numbers seem to follow the same curve as snowfall totals in the state. While nobody can control the weather, Kahler said he is open to ideas to enhance the level of participation.

“We all know people who ride but don’t want to join a club or get involved at the state level for one reason or another,” Kahler said. “We need to incentivize them in some way and make them want to be a part of the culture and future here. We need more people on the team.”

The impact from low membership totals in the ISSA can be felt in a number of ways. Less people do more work and have less money to get it all done. As noted earlier, declining dues have led to recent budget cuts, which, in turn, have affected several ISSA programs, including lobbying efforts and the number of issues of

this publication.

“The success of the ISSA is based solely on our membership, and we struggle to get participation from several clubs and even entire regions,” Kahler noted. “We need to do something to ramp up morale. We’ve talked about rebranding, and we need to get serious about it. Bring your ideas to convention.”

Less work, more play

Bram said adding the hockey night to convention weekend this year is one way to increase participation and make it fun for everyone. Kahler said reinstating the Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy from American Income Life is another way to add value to an ISSA membership. Both agree the Snowmobile Iowa program also helps...when it snows.

Snowmobile Iowa is a spin-off of the long-established club showcase at convention of the same name. Indoors, clubs set up booths to display their trails, maps and event photos. Outdoors, the trail ride portion of the program takes the concept a step further by encouraging clubs to organize group rides each winter.

Now entering its eighth season on the snow and 20th year overall, Snowmobile Iowa allows clubs to brag about their trail systems and to introduce non-local riders to their trail systems. This year, Bram, who organizes the rides with program founder and Past ISSA President Bruno Andreini, is looking to get a headstart on the schedule for 2024 and have as many clubs lined up prior to convention weekend. Last year, three of the eight rides took place, and the remaining five had to be canceled due to poor trail conditions.

“We are hoping to get an idea of how many clubs are interested in hosting a ride this winter, so we can announce the schedule at convention,” Bram said. “Obviously, there is no shame in canceling due to low snow, but we at least want to be able to offer as many rides around the state as we can. They’re a great way to increase our exposure to non-members.”

To sign up to host a state ride or to reserve booth space at this year’s convention, fill out the Snowmobile Iowa form on p. 20. For more information on the program, contact Bram at the number listed earlier. He can also be reached for general questions on the convention. Miner can be contacted at (563) 380-7142.



Region 4 Director and Convention Co-Chair Seth Bram met up with Idaho’s Bret Rasmussen at the Ski-Doo booth at Hay Days in September. Rasmussen, a backcountry expert and Ski-Doo ambassador, is confirmed to host a convention seminar Nov. 18.



2023 Convention Checklist

- Mail in registration form
- Book hotel room
- Sign up for hockey night
- Send in sponsorship money
- Bring checks for charity
- Reserve booth space
- Offer to host state ride
- Have fun
- Other

2023 ISSA Annual Convention Nov. 17-19 Cedar Falls, IA

Snowmobile Iowa Club Showcase

Club Name _____ Region _____

Contact Person _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

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Clarksville, IA 50619

For more information, contact Seth at
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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 Nov. 17-19, Cedar Falls, IA

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Snowmobile Club _____

Organization _____

Include quantity for each that apply:

___ Full Registration \$80

___ 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
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Iowa State Snowmobile Assn
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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



Legislative rewind

A quick recap of the hits and misses for the ISSA over the past five decades

by Cameron Hanson

The ISSA was incorporated on Nov. 20, 1973. Early on, organizational meetings were held in the Fort Dodge area, and conventions drew between 400 and 500 members. Larry Huntley of Alta was installed as the ISSA's first president, and since then, 27 other Iowa volunteers have followed that same leadership path.

Initially, the state was divided into 12 regions with representatives from each serving on the ISSA's Board of Directors. By-laws were ratified, and SOPs approved. Along the way, members helped to guide the organization into a strong and stable presence in Iowa, enduring several low-snow years and facing many legislative challenges.

"From 1973 until now, snowmobiling in Iowa has evolved tremendously," current ISSA President John Kahler acknowledged. "I would like to congratulate the committed people who have kept organized snowmobiling around for the past 50 years. I'm curious to know what the next 50 years will look like."

Since its inception, the ISSA has successfully lobbied for the privilege to ride snowmobiles at night and to ride in ditches along highways. Nearly 25 years ago, officials were able to eliminate the safety flag requirement on all sleds, and 12 years ago, they lobbied hard for an annual registration period and a resident trail pass to raise much-needed funds for trail maintenance.

In the fall of 2017, as the result of landmark legislation, the ISSA finally gained control of the state's snowmobile trail program. Through its Review and Selection Committee (RSC), the ISSA now oversees groomer purchases, club grants and fleet maintenance with 70 percent of snowmobile registration receipts earmarked for the "local side."



Organizing in 1975.

A few setbacks

Along the way, the ISSA has encountered some rough patches on the trail. In May of 2002, the ISSA saw the Iowa Legislature de-appropriate nearly one million dollars in snowmobile registration receipts. The move forced the ISSA to retain a lobbyist, and through their joint efforts, the funds were eventually restored six years later.

For nearly a decade, ISSA leaders were unsuccessful in their attempts to recapture the state fuel taxes paid on the fuel burned in their off-road machines. After a 10-year run, the gas-tax push eventually faded, and the ISSA's legislative efforts shifted to creating a trail pass system as a compromise to a registration fee increase in 2012.

Up until last year, the ISSA had also attempted to merge the registration fee and trail permit into one decal, but the measure failed to gain significant traction. On two separate occasions, the bill unanimously passed the Iowa House, only to be stalled in the state Senate. After six straight years, the ISSA eventually abandoned its efforts to merge the two stickers in 2022.

"Sometimes you beat something to death that it's not worth taking up again," Kahler said.

Despite these setbacks and because of its successes, the ISSA has learned to keep a closer eye on events in Des Moines. The organization has developed a reputation for its grass-roots efforts on the legislative front, and its leaders—particularly through the RSC—have also maintained a positive working relationship with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

"We've done some good things over the years," Kahler said. "We just need to keep the momentum going and not get too discouraged about the things that didn't go our way. We are clearly a passionate group and have a lot to be proud of."



Planning a response in 2004.

Know the Rules. Take the Pledge.

The members of the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) are joining together again this season with the snowmobile community with the 'Take The Pledge' campaign.

"The pledge is designed to ensure snowmobilers protect existing riding areas and trail systems for current and future generations and landowners who give us access to their property," explained ISMA President Ed Klim.

Those who take the pledge agree to the following:

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



Snowmobilers enjoy over 120,000 miles of trails located on public and private land and have been built and maintained by snowmobile volunteers for over 40 years.

Snowmobilers are joined in this effort by snowmobile manufacturers, snowmobile clubs, snowmobile dealers, lodges, local chambers of commerce—all of whom have a vested interest in maintaining responsible access. The campaign has been joined by snowmobile community leaders.

"The pledge was created to make snowmobilers aware of the

www.snowmobilerspledge.com

importance of recognizing the ownership of the land we ride on, and the impact we have on the landowners, their pets and their livestock," Klim said. "The record level of interest in enjoying the great winter outdoors demands our attention to the awareness of legal riding areas and making sure everyone with us knows the rules."

Including Arctic Cat, Polaris, Ski-Doo and Yamaha, the members of ISMA invite every snowmobiler to take the pledge at www.snowmobilerspledge.com and encourage those they ride with to also take the pledge.

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North Country

Navigating wrecks, repairs and restrictions during COVID trip to Keweenaw Peninsula

by Cameron Hanson

Snowmobilers were wearing facemasks long before the coronavirus pandemic came around three years ago. There was just a two-year stretch when we had to carry two: one for the trail and one for the restaurant. Hopefully, those days are behind us. They seemed to be last winter anyway.

Two years ago was a different story, though, when a snowmobile trip to the Western U.P. of Michigan painfully reminded us we were in the middle of the pandemic. Despite trailering seven hours from home, we couldn't seem to escape mask mandates, indoor dining restrictions and other inconvenient regulations.

Leaving work early, we arrived in Bergland the night of Friday, Jan. 29, 2021. For the most part, the trails around Lake Gogebic were comfortably familiar, but we definitely took for granted places we had visited on previous trips to the area would be open this time around.

As we quickly learned throughout those first few days, area restaurants were not keeping regular business hours and could only offer take-out orders and outdoor seating. Not ideal for a group of guys looking for a place to warm up. At several stops, we were greeted by a note on the door, and a couple of times, we had to bring food back to the hotel room for edge-of-bed dining.

Fortunately, the gas station next door to the hotel was open most of the time to fill our bellies and our gas tanks when needed. Additionally, by that Monday, Feb. 1, restrictions on indoor seating would be lifted, so the second half of our stay would return to somewhat normal expectations—mask rules notwithstanding.

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What you don't expect to see in the middle of the trail.



A little whine with our lunch, waiting for food outside the bowling alley in White Pine.

Unexpected scenery

Our first full day of riding in the U.P. came on Saturday and included an obligatory run up to the Lake of the Clouds scenic overlook in the Porcupine Mountains. While the overlook didn't disappoint, it wasn't the most memorable part of this leg. On the way to the overlook, we passed by a burned-out groomer operated by the North Country Snowmobile Club.

According to the club's Facebook post, the New Holland quadtrac had caught on fire earlier that morning about seven miles up the trail to the overlook. Fortunately, the operator was unharmed, but the machine was a total loss. The club had been out grooming in preparation for the increased traffic expected from the ease in restrictions that Monday.

"This has been a tough season for our area," the club wrote on social media. "Many of our sponsoring businesses have been shut down or pressed into a minimal takeout model by the ongoing pandemic. With indoor dining poised to re-open on Monday, we needed to be at the top of our game to facilitate the local economy in a quick recovery by providing the best trails possible."

Describing the incident as a "sad night," the club had clearly



DNR checkpoint.

marked the area around the damaged equipment, and the trail was plenty wide to safely get around it, allowing us to make our destination. Attracting plenty of attention in both directions, the groomer served as an easy conversation-starter with other snowmobilers once we reached the top.

On the way back down from the overlook, we came across the Michigan Department of Natural Resources stopping sleds for valid stickers and paperwork. Unlike some riders, we had nothing to worry about and were able to motor right on past the checkpoint, making our way over toward Silver City and then back down to White Pine for fuel and lunch.

By Iowa standards, we found the snow depth and trail conditions in the U.P. to be quite satisfactory, but local Yoopers were telling us the totals for the season thus far up there were below average.

According to one report we saw, total snowfall for the area by the end of January was only 54.6 inches, nearly double an Iowa winter but just a fraction of their normal output.

We didn't complain about the snowcover, but after lunch, we did notice the trails starting to thin out as we headed east over to Ontonagon and then back south down to Rockland, where the trail conditions sort of lived up to the town name. Just like bad weather, we rode out of it and found better trails on our way back to the hotel, finishing the day at roughly 120 miles.

Lake Gogebic stretch

The next morning saw us heading south around massive Lake Gogebic with our turnaround point for the day planned for the Northern Waters Casino at Watersmeet. I personally had never been south of the lake in previous trips to the U.P. so I was game. Plus, throwing a 20 dollar bill into the video poker machine and



Clubhouse at Ontonagon.



Snow beach at Gogebic Lodge.

drinking free pop seemed like an okay-way to waste an hour.

We initially started down the east side of the lake on Trail 13, planning for an early lunch at a resort there, but they were closed. The sign on the door just confirmed what the empty parking lot had already told us. So we jumped onto the lake and skated west across the ice to Gogebic Lodge, where we ate a sandwich at their makeshift 'snow beach'.

After fueling and visiting with a group of riders from Indianapolis, we continued south on the west side of the lake before heading southeast toward Watersmeet. At the south end of Gogebic, we picked up connector Trail 100 and rode back east to Trail 13. Trail 13 took us down to Trail 2, and we followed 2 into Watersmeet.

Doubling back pretty much the same way we came, we finished Sunday with close to the same mileage as Saturday. We probably could have ridden more, but one of our riding companions hit a hot streak at the casino and stayed long enough to pay for most of his trip.





Riding the rail-trail into Ontonagon.

Backpacking to Copper Harbor

The final two days of our visit to the Western U.P. included an overnight ride to Copper Harbor on Monday. We started off by taking Trail 8 over to Bruce Crossing and then turned north on Trail 3, pretty much following that corridor all the way up to the point on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Seemed pretty simple, right? But I'd be lying if I said that first day of backpacking was uneventful. Right away that morning, an unexpected ski bushing failure had us stopping 13 miles out of route for a two-hour repair in Ontonagon. Then lost luggage forced us to backtrack at Mass City, and finally, a blown belt that afternoon found us making a trailside swap near South Range.

Fortunately, we made it to Houghton in time to buy a new spare before the local dealer closed, and we were finally able to make it up to Copper Harbor, albeit four hours behind schedule but early enough to still get checked into our room and grab a bite to eat.

While the first day's delays forced us to ride more at night, it did give us the unique perspective to ride down from atop Brockway Mountain and into Copper Harbor with the harbortown lights on.



Thinking warm thoughts at Copper Harbor.

We certainly couldn't have seen that spectacle in the daylight.

The next morning, we took Trail 134 out of town for a scenic loop back to Trail 3. From there, it was back south through copper country and past the infamous lift bridge at Houghton. Tuesday went much more according to plan, ending back at the hotel in Bergland with 146 miles on for the day and pretty much matching the previous day's total.

An odometer check while loading the trailer the next morning put the total mileage for the trip well over 550. Satisfied and itching to head south, we closed the trailer door, loaded our gear and packed away our snowmobile facemasks, making sure the other one was easily accessible in our pockets for any stops along the way home.



Passing the famous lift bridge at Houghton.

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Clay County Sno Broncs
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 pclaus14@gmail.com

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Allamakee Sno-Blazers
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Dubuque County Snowhawks
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 President: Kevin Downing
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Team Iowa Snowmobilers

www.teamiowasnowmobilers.com
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 teamiowasnowmobilers@gmail.com
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 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 585-2925

Fischer Farms
 22386 590th St.
 Pomeroy, IA 50575

Fleener Auto Parts & Service
 11475 Hwy 9
 Thompson, IA 50478
 (641) 584-2100

Forest City Ford, Inc.
 P.O. Box 448
 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 585-5555

Friesenborg & Larson Custom Spraying
 45884 70th Ave.
 Buffalo Center, IA 50425
 (641) 584-2258
 joe@fandlirc.com

Fuel
 1513 2nd St. SW
 Clarion, IA 50525
 (515) 532-3835

Garage Tavern
 103 Main St
 Coulter, IA 50431
 (641) 430-6855
 thegaragetavern@gmail.com

Garner Dental Group
 55 State St.
 Garner, IA 50436
 (641) 923-3771
 (800) 450-3771
 garnerdental.com

Hair Designs
 236 E J St.
 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 585-2405
 sbenson@wctatel.net

Happy Time Resort

Harrahdise
 505 Rowan Rd.
 Dows, IA 50071
 (515) 851-8516
 iowariverriders@gmail.com

Helm Farms
 12376 345th St
 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 581-3959
 shelm@wctatel.net

Holland Contracting
 1400 S. 4th St.
 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 585-2231
 hollandcontracting.com

Iowa Central Electric
 PO Box 203
 Alden, IA 50126
 (515) 859-7072
 (641) 373-1186
 jerry@icecontracting.com

Iowa Forklift & Equipment
 404 Park Ave.
 Dows, IA 50071
 (515) 852-3272,
 (515) 835-9708
 brittney@iaforklift.com

JACG LLC Custom Manure Hauling
 1789 Grouse Ave.
 Latimer, IA 50452
 (641) 425-2488
 rodemeyerj@yahoo.com

JM Pork
 507 4th St NW
 Buffalo Center, IA 50424

JT Machine & Tool Co.
 602 S Federal St.
 P.O. Box 304
 Hampton, IA 50441
 (641) 456-4513
 jeff@jtmachineandtool.com

Keel Farms
 1515 335th St.
 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 430-3823

Kirschbaum Electrical & Plumbing
 609 S. Winnebago
 Lake Mills, IA 50450
 (641) 592-8831

Klein Insurance
 1408 250th St.
 Algona, IA 50511
 (515) 320-0213

Lake Mills Motor Sports
 Polaris
 45563 C Hwy 69
 Lake Mills, IA 50450
 (641) 592-2145
 lakemillsmotorsports.com

Manufacturer's Bank & Trust
 245 E J St.
 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 585-2825
 mbtbank.com

Muhlenbruch Insurance
 PO Box 426
 Dows, IA 50071
 (515) 290-2968
 buck@trvnet.net

Murra Farms
 4209 240th St.
 Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Old Fire Liquor
 113 1st St NE
 Buffalo Center, IA 50424

Praile's Wash City
 1271 Jonquil Ave.
 Hampton, IA 50441
 (641) 430-4133
 tessstegg@hotmail.com

RLS Specialties
 19378 Vine Ave
 Mason City, IA 50401
 (641) 696-5566

Shooterz Sports Bar & Grill
 P.O. Box 406
 Forest City, IA 50436

Sietsema Family Monument Sales
 P.O. Box 172,
 Hampton, IA 50441
 (641) 456-9177
 psietsema@gmail.com

Smith Crop Insurance Agency
 2285 Taylor Ave.
 Rowan, IA 50470
 (515) 689-3986
 smithinsavery@gmail.com

The Corner Restaurant & Lounge
 207 East Main
 Belmond, IA 50421
 (641) 444-4451

Timber Tree Service
 3217 Hwy 69
 Forest City, IA 50436
 (641) 581-2579

Timbukbru
 215 6th St. SW
 Clarion, IA 50525
 (515) 532-0015,
 (515) 408-7996
 Sueloats@gmail.com

USA Chemical
 1275 Hwy 69,
 Belmond, IA 50421
 (515) 571-6012
 ryan@usa-chemical.com

Vinje Pub
 15960 490th St.,
 Scarville, IA 50473
 (641) 568-3150

VIP Lounge
 3360 Maple Ave.
 Forest City, IA 50436

West Scott Farm LLC
 1332 Eagle Ave.
 Latimer, IA 50452
 mulhenbru@newcoop.com
 (515) 571-4137

Westside Restaurant & Lounge
 1216 Water St
 PO Box 177
 Alden, IA 50006
 (515) 859-3087

REGION 4
DR Powersports
 Ski-Doo/Kawasaki
 3600 Fast Lane
 Cedar Falls, IA 50613
 (319) 235-6453
 drpowersports.com

REGION 5
Best's Powerhouse
 Used sleds.
 Attn: Cory Best
 11217 E Dunkerton Rd.
 Dunkerton, IA 50626
 (319) 822-2599
 corybest@dunkerton.net

Myers Polaris Inc.
 Polaris
 304 E Main St.,
 Fairbank, IA 50629
 (319) 635-2311
 myerspolaris@mchsi.com
 myerspolaris.com

V & V Insurance Agency
 P.O. Box 159, Cresco
 IA, 52136-0159
 (563) 547-2161
 insurance@vandvins.com

REGION 6
Aaron Nieland Farms
 3036 390th St.
 Breda, IA 51436

AI's Corner/Sparky's
 12053 Hwy 71
 Carroll, IA 51401
 (712) 673-2723

Becker Diesel
 1951 Van Buren Ave.
 Manson, IA 50563

Blackhawk Marine
 3001 Hwy 71/175
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 657-2368

Breda Bar & Grill
 16323 120th St.
 Breda, IA 51436

CarQuest
 1705 W. Main
 Sac City, IA 50583
 (712) 662-4738

Catman's Mowers
 P.O. Box 52
 Lake View, IA 51450

Clean Fun
 15498 120th St.
 Breda, IA 51436

Cobblestone Inn & Suites
 119 Boulders Dr.
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 657-2660

Denny's Auto Center
 119 9th St.
 Lake View, IA 51450

Doc's Place
 111 Main St., PO Box 521
 Wall Lake, IA 51466

Fat Boys
 109 Pine St.
 Auburn, IA 51433

Field Ready
 P.O. Box 256
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 657-2000

Frank's Repair
 3235 390th St.
 Breda, IA 51436
 (712) 673-4661

Haber Plumbing
 106 E Main St.
 Breda, IA 51436

Huegerich Farms
 15498 120th St.
 Breda, IA 51436

Independent Inputs
 111 N 1st St.
 Lake View, IA 51436

Iowa State Bank
 419 Main St.
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 657-2721

Jacobsen Seed
 129 9th St., P.O. Box 379
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 665-2841

Jocks Sport Bar
 215 S Main St.
 Odebolt, IA 51458
 (712) 668-2245

Lake View Motors
 2885 330th St.
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712)-657-8012

Laney's Corral
 319 Main St.
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 830-4967

Odebolt Bowling Alley
 401 S. Des Moines
 Odebolt, IA 51458
 (712) 668-2278

Outcast Lake View Redemption
 502 5th St.
 Lake View, IA 51450

Phillips Manufacturing
 2900 310th St.
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 657-2105

Seiler Appliance Inc.
 317 North Main St.
 Pocahontas, IA 50574
 (712) 335-4100
 emily@seilerappliance.com

The Bar
 416 Main St.
 Lake View, IA 51450
 (712) 665-2614

The Dock-It
 111 Boulders Dr.
 Lake View, IA 51450

Timeless Vault
 730 5th St.
 Lake View, IA 51450

Trailside Roadhouse
 110 370th St.
 Camarvon, IA 51450
 (712) 664-2706

Wall Lake Lumber
 201 1st W St.
 Wall Lake, IA 51466
 (712) 664-2357

Whiskey Run
 17499 Ivy Ave.
 Maple River, IA 51401
 (712) 790-4502

REGION 7
ALS Assn. Iowa Ch.
 3636 Westown Pkwy.
 Ste. 204
 West Des Moines, IA 50266
 (515) 369-2572
 info@alsaiowa.org
 webia.alsa.org

Autism Society of Iowa
 P.O. Box 65311
 West Des Moines, IA 50265
 (515) 327-9075
 autism50ia@aol.com
 autismia.com

Edward Jones
 Justin M. Bjerke
 2575 N Ankeny Blvd.
 Ste. 217
 Ankeny, IA 50023-4703
 515-965-7582
 edwardjones.com

Spina Bifida Association of Iowa
 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 39
 Urbandale IA 50322
 (515) 278-7013
 contact@sbaiaorg,
 sbaofia.org

REGION 8
Stoner's Speed Shop
 105 Griffith St, PO Box
 756 Hudson, IA 50643
 (319) 231-9388,
 (641) 580-0089
 brielle.eddy@gmail.com

OUT OF STATE
Pat's Landing
 7476 N Pats Landing Rd
 Hayward, WI 54843
 (715) 945-2511

Pink Ribbon Riders
 5420 Beckley Rd., Ste. 334
 Battle Creek, MI 49015
 pinkribbonriders.com

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