

FREE TO
MEMBERS

IOWA SNOWMOBILER

February 2021 • Volume 42 • Issue 6

Applications Due
to New Club
Insurance Provider

December
Snowfall Spurs
Early Riding

Midwest Sled
Fest Set for
Clear Lake



SNOWMOBILE IOWA

Date	Host Club	Meeting Location	Contact	Phone Number
Feb. 6	Humboldt Sno-Skimmers	2050 13th St. N., Humboldt (north end)	Shane Braby	(515) 890-1945
Feb. 13	Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club	West Elementary School, Slater	Barry Starmer	(515) 240-5444
Feb. 20	Dyersville Driftskippers	Dirty Ernie's, 201 1st St. NW, Farley	Ryan Ameskamp	(563) 599-6312

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ABOUT US

IOWA SNOWMOBILER

The Official Magazine of the Iowa State Snowmobile Association

www.iowasnowmobiler.com

1924 270th Street

Marble Rock, IA 50653

issa1257@yahoo.com

ISSA OFFICERS

President

Scott Nauman

402 Fifth St.

Rudd, IA 50471

(641) 425-9898

sdnauman04@gmail.com



Vice President

John Kahler

635 Greene St.

Slater, IA 50244

(515) 202-4061

jfkahler@hotmail.com



Secretary

Sue Paulus (Joe)

1631 227th St.

Rockford, IA 50468

(641) 430-1815

suepaulus81@gmail.com



Treasurer/Membership

Brittany Paulus (Mike)

1924 270th Street

Marble Rock, IA 50653

(641) 228-0977

bepaulus@outlook.com



ISSA COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Jim Willey, Chair

Becky Willey

20752 247th St., Delhi, IA 52223

(563) 927-4670, (563) 920-0911

james.willey2019@gmail.com

Gary and Karen McVicker

1120 110th Street, Hampton, IA

50441(641) 425-1375

gmcvic@yahoo.com

Managing Editor

Cameron Hanson

2552 Woodland Place

Charles City, IA 50616

(641) 330-5565

editor@iowasnowmobiler.com

MAGAZINE DEADLINES

March.....Feb. 12

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. Thank you.



IOWA SNOWMOBILER

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RSC Updates

New club insurance found; Gallentine joins committee; new trail app to be explored



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ISU CSC Fundraiser

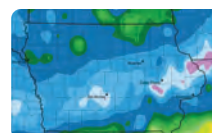
Saylorville club renews challenge to support engineering students



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First Half Winter Recap

December snow covers central, eastern Iowa; blizzards warnings in western Iowa in January



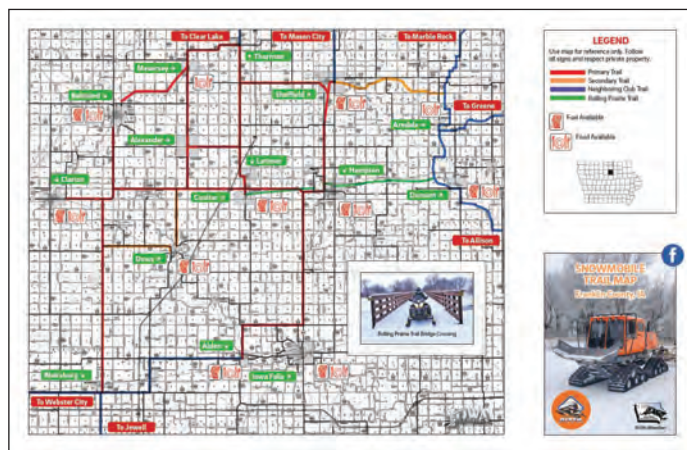
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Vintage Racing at Clear Lake

Midwest Sled Fest enters second season this month as successor to The Jack Race



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Iowa River Riders Trail Map Inside

COVER: Nine-year-old Jake Stromer of rural Klemme pilots his dad's 1978 Polaris 340 TXL in the 9-11 age group at last year's Midwest Sled Fest at Clear Lake. This month's event is set for Feb. 13. See page 13 for more details. Photo courtesy Chris Barragy, Lakeview Photography.

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**REGION ONE**

Jim Skinner, Director
4871 Pierce Ave., Paullina, IA 51046
(712) 448-2567
mjmanure@tcaexpress.net



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



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

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

REGION TWO

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



Jeff Felkey (Lori), Assistant
5391 190th Street
Armstrong, IA 50514
(712) 864-3741, jfelkey@ringtelco.com

Terril Johnson, Assistant
203 S. Finn Dr.
Algona, IA 50511
terril.johnson@motorinnmail.com

REGION THREE

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



Matt Trunkhill (Monica), Assistant
135 310th St.
Woden, IA 50484-8520
(515) 320-0737, mtrunk@wctatel.net

**REGION FOUR**

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



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



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

**REGION FIVE**

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



Plenty of Events This Month

Greetings, fellow snowmobilers. Here's hoping that by the time this article is published, the unseasonably warm weather we are experiencing in the first part of January has changed for the better and given way to plenty of snow all across our state and not just in the southern portion of the state.

With that in mind, be sure to check the list of upcoming events in this magazine for the locations of many rides and races that are sure to be a great time, some of which include Team Iowa snowmobile club hosting ice drags on the 6th, the Midwest Sled Fest in Clear Lake on the 13th and the Butler County Snow Snoops annual vintage ride on the 20th.

Two of these events, I have had the opportunity to attend or take part in during the past and plan to attend again this year—along with as many other events as time and work schedule will allow.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who both sold and

SCOTT NAUMAN

ISSA
PRESIDENT



bought raffle tickets for the Escape Reality trip/cash drawing that we finished up last month. The proceeds of this raffle will help greatly in planning for the upcoming International Snowmobile Congress that ISSA will be hosting in 2022 in Dubuque. I would also like to personally congratulate Steve Fishwild on being the lucky name drawn.

Until next month, please, everyone ride safe, respect private property and, of course, think snow.

Invite Me to Your Club Meetings

Greetings from the VP.

As I sit here today writing this article, the sun is shining, and I'm sure we will be losing what little snow pack we have left. I was able to ride our trails a little on New Year's Day, but my sled hasn't moved since. This week's forecast for central Iowa is not looking to help our cause either.

Yesterday, Sunday, Jan. 10, the ISSA board met via Zoom, and it was my first official meeting as your Vice President. David Eide was officially appointed to fill my previous position as Region 7 Director, and I look forward to working with him. David has done wonderful things for his home club and brings new ideas that I think helps everyone in this sport.

One of my many goals as your VP of the ISSA is to get to know more of our membership by being available to the clubs. Our region directors and assistant directors do an amazing job of funneling information, answering questions, troubleshooting problems that clubs of the ISSA have, and they rarely get recognized for doing all this work on a volunteer basis. We wouldn't have an organization without the help of these 25 people, and I applaud them!

JOHN KAHLER

ISSA VICE
PRESIDENT



This is where one of my first goals comes into play. I asked the directors to provide me with the information of when their clubs meet, days, dates, times and locations, so I can join them in attending a meeting if they would have me. Every club is different, every club handles their meetings differently, but the end result is we're all trying to have fun and to keep this sport alive and growing. So, if you would like to have me come to one of your meetings in the next two years, get a hold of me or get with your region director to make this happen.

There are a lot of events coming up in February that promote snowmobiling and provide fun to everyone, so get your hotel rooms, round up your buddies and get out there and squeeze that throttle!

RSC UPDATE

Gallentine Joins Committee; Options Weighed for Next Two RTP Grants

by Cameron Hanson

John Gallentine of the Webster County Ice Breakers in Region 7 has replaced John Kahler as the Central Iowa representative on the ISSA's Review and Selection Committee (RSC). Kahler moved up to 'Member by Position' status on the RSC following his election in December as ISSA Vice President.

Since 2017, the RSC has managed the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program. Committee members decide annual trail funding and determine groomer purchases and placement through the money generated by annual snowmobile registration fees and trail pass revenue.

As detailed below, the committee make-up includes two permanent administrative positions, the top two ISSA officers, an official from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and three representatives from each third of the state. Terms for elected positions are for three years and can be filled by non-ISSA members.

RSC Co-Chair and Past ISSA President Chris Willey said he is looking forward to Gallentine's input, given his experience with smaller, alternative grooming units. His club currently operates two VMC groomers and relies on a third machine for parts.

"We're excited to have somebody new on the committee to get some fresh perspectives," Willey said at the ISSA Board of Directors' virtual meeting Jan. 10. "We will be able to better canvas the state on how and where we use our different

pieces of equipment."

In November, the RSC placed the state's newest groomer with the Iowa River Riders in Region 3. That club worked with the Franklin County Board of Supervisors to purchase a 2018 Tucker on behalf of the ISSA through federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) dollars.

The RSC still has two active RTP grants to obligate with grooming equipment. All purchases made with federal grant money must satisfy the Buy American Act, and the committee has been eyeing either used Tuckers (model year 2018 or newer) as well as new drags.

"We're going to roll into the next grant as soon as possible," Willey said. "We are looking at purchasing new drags and working with all American manufacturers. Groomer purchases may have to wait until spring. It's just a matter of what our dealer gets for trade-ins."

Limited operator training

As reported earlier this season, all large-group groomer operator certification classes have been suspended due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. As a result, all current operators have been granted an additional year of eligibility. If a club has a new operator wanting to get trained, Willey said instructors may be able to hold classes in small-group settings.

"We are not really worried about the operators who have already been certified. They get another year," he said. "But we don't want to put off get-

Turn to page 7

Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program Review and Selection Committee

Permanent Administrative Positions

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

Members By Position

- Scott Nauman, ISSA President
- John Kahler, ISSA Vice President

Members By Election

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

Iowa DNR Representative

- Rhonda Fowler

Iowa Recreational Trails Advisory Committee Representative

- John Kahler (by appointment)

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



ISSA DIRECTORY



Randy Kaune, Sr., Assistant
11419 90th St., Fayette, IA 52142
(563) 920-8491
randysr05@hotmail.com



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

REGION SIX

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

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



REGION SEVEN

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



Daryl Promes, Assistant
810 4th St. Gowrie, IA 50543
(515)-352-3393
dpromes@wccta.com



REGION EIGHT

Geo Prescott, Director
302 Main St., St. Anthony, IA 50239
(641) 485-6525
geomoney@icloud.com



REGION NINE

Jamie Prull, Director
1101 First Street, Palo, IA 52324
(319) 981-0397, jprull@aol.com



Todd Sieverding, Assistant
4737 St. Catherine Rd.
Bellevue, IA 52031
(563) 599-0584
tsfire10@gmail.com

REGION TEN

Aaron Dorothy (Anna), Director
502 E. Cedar Ln., Mt. Pleasant IA 52641
(319) 986-5188(h), (319) 217-6361(c)
aarond65@hotmail.com



Cody Krueger, Assistant
19272 Danville Rd.
New London, IA 52645
(414) 313-5973
hawkeyemba17@gmail.com



Jim Fitzgibbon
1729 180th St., Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
(319) 931-3410
drumcat9800@gmail.com



PAST PRESIDENTS

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



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



Merv Hoermann (2007-08, 2015-16)
P.O. Box 22
Sutherland, IA 51058
(712) 260-4810
mebeefeater2@yahoo.com



Jim Willey (2013-14)
20838 247th St.
Delhi, IA 52223
(563) 927-4670, (563) 920-0911
james.willey2019@gmail.com



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



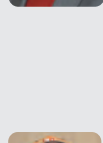
Gary McVicker (2009-10)
1120 110th Street
Hampton, IA 50441
(641) 425-1375
gmcvic@yahoo.com



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



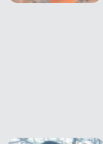
Jerry Kramer (2003-04)
1930 Lincoln Ave.
Humboldt, IA 50548
(515) 890-1099



Dennis Nauman (2001-02)
402 Fifth St. Rudd, IA 50471
(641) 395-2933
cdnauman@myomnitel.com



Jeff Jans (1999-2000)
308 2nd St. NW, P.O. Box 153
Fostoria, IA 51340-0153
(712) 262-3309



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



Dave Carmichael (1995-96)
Deceased

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

RSC UPDATE

New Map App Considered for Tracking Trails, Groomer Miles

by Cameron Hanson

The Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program, managed by the ISSA's volunteer Review and Selection Committee (RSC), has been approached by another GPS map app provider to use their services.

Most snowmobile clubs in Iowa have already uploaded their trails to the Polaris RideCommand app. Now, onX, a hunting and off-road map app company, has reached out to the ISSA, inquiring about the state's 8,800 miles of snowmobile trails.

At its Jan. 10 virtual meeting, the ISSA Board of Directors decided to form an exploratory committee to determine what the new company is offering, what type of commitment they are asking for and what expense, if any, there would be to the organization.

"I don't want to step on anyone's toes with our existing app provider, but from an association standpoint, I think it's good to have versatility," said Past ISSA President Chris Willey, co-chair of the RSC. "Whatever we decide, we want to control the information and what they will be doing with the data."

"I agree with having some options," added ISSA President Scott Nauman. "Let's find out what their ideas are."

"Any app we can benefit from for very little money is worth investing some time into," ISSA Vice President John Kahler acknowledged.

Willey, Nauman and Kahler will serve on the committee as will Region 7 Director David Eide and Region 10 Director Aaron Dorothy. Eide has experience with onX through the agricultural industry, and Dorothy plotted the state's trail system in Google four years ago.

"GPS data is a whole different ball game, and it may not be completely accurate by recording just a trail ride. Did they get to the gas station by approved routes? Did they ride on the correct side of the road?" Dorothy said. "These are important questions to ask."

Besides his existing familiarity with the service, Eide said he was interested in the new app as he was recently approached from volunteer operators in his area about finding an app to track groomer miles.

"We have looked into doing that," Willey said. "Other states do it, but there's always been a pretty good cost involved. Our preference to this point with the RSC budget has been to focus on newer equipment and parts. We can at least explore this new option and see what we get with it."

Escape Reality Raffle Winner Drawn



Steve Fishwild from Dubuque won the ISSA's Escape Reality raffle drawing New Year's Day to benefit the ISSA's hosting of the International Snowmobile Congress (ISC) in Dubuque in June of 2022. Chaired by Andrea Willey, the ISSA's 2022 ISC Planning Committee sold 195 tickets at \$25 each for a total of \$4,875. The winner had the choice between a \$3,500 travel voucher or \$3,000 in cash. As pictured at right, Fishwild chose the latter, leaving \$1,875 for the committee.

Willey said the proceeds will offset expenses related to hosting the Hospitality Room at the 2021 ISC in Omaha this June. Here, committee members will spread the word about the 2022 event in Iowa and help generate early registrations. The 2022 ISC will be held at the Grand River Center in Dubuque. This year's ISC is planned for June 9-12 at the Omaha Hilton.



RSC UPDATE

New Club Insurance Found for Next Season; Applications Due Now

by **Cameron Hanson**

The Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program will be working with a new club liability insurance company next season as the current provider, Employers Mutual, will cease offering this specialty line of insurance on May 1.

Long-time agent for the ISSA, V&V Insurance of Cresco, notified the ISSA's Review and Selection Committee (RSC), which oversees the state snowmobile program, of the impending change last fall.

"We had been using this company for over 30 years, so this came as a surprise to us and left us searching for a new carrier," V&V's Dale Vagts wrote in a letter to clubs recently. "This had nothing to do with anything you had done or with what we have done. It was simply a business decision."

For the 2021-22 season and beyond, V&V has partnered with West Bend Mutual from West Bend, Wis., to continue club coverage. "Because of the large number of clubs we insure, we were able to develop a very nice package for our snowmobile clubs' insurance," Vagts said.

By now, all affected snowmobile clubs in Iowa should have received their notification

letter. In it, they will find an application for club liability coverage. If they have not already done so, club contacts should fill this form out and return it to V&V as soon as possible.

"Once we receive the application back, we will submit to the new company for a quote," Vagts explained.

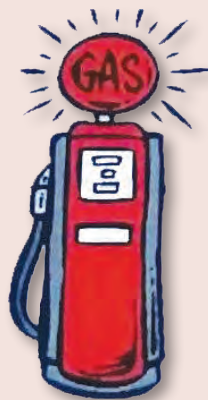
"We will pay the premium," assured RSC Co-Chair and Past ISSA President Chris Willey. "There is no money needed from the clubs. V&V needs the applications back to determine coverage. Premiums should be close to what we've been paying. It should be a pretty seamless transition."

"You will not have to do a new application every year," Vagts added. "Just let us know if there are any changes to be made during the policy period. There will be flexibility as far as coverage is concerned, which is to your benefit."

Among other advantages, club liability insurance provides legal representation to landowners who are sued following a snowmobile trail incident on their property. In Iowa, landowners are "released of any and all liability resulting from the use of said snowmobile trail," as provided by Section 321G.22 and Chapter 461C.3, Code of Iowa.



ISSA Education & Scholarship Foundation



Second Annual Raffle

Prize: \$300 Gas Card to Casey's General Store
Drawing: April 2021
Tickets: Donation of \$5 each or 5 for \$20
To purchase, call or text (515) 240-3858

Proceeds benefit ISSA students pursuing post-secondary education.

From page 5 ting new operators in the seat. We don't want to lose their enthusiasm. Training can be scheduled on a case-by-case basis on what the instructor feels comfortable doing."

For more information on groomer training or to request a small course, contact the RSC at ISSA.RSC@gmail.com. Clubs should also use this address to report

groomer breakdowns and to request repairs within 24 hours of the incident.

"We've had a lot of groomers running already this year so that means there will be a lot of repairs, like bogey wheels, tracks and other components," Willey said. "Let us know of these issues as soon as possible so we can get the parts ordered and repairs made in a timely manner."

ISSA DIRECTORY



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

Dick Melick (1989-90)
1314 Washington St. Cedar Falls, IA 50613-4153
(319) 231-0819

Roger Muth (1987-88)
365 West 5th St., Garner, IA 50438
(641) 923-3560

Larry Childs (1986)
311 E. Prospect St., Manchester, IA 52057-1456
(563) 927-5934

Dan Martin (1984-85)
4712 Candlelight Dr., Davenport, IA 52806
(563) 386-3769

Marv Heikens (1982-83)
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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Dan and Kolette Delperdang, Spirit Lake.....	\$100
Bob and Judy King, Council Bluffs	\$100
Dickinson County SnowHawks	\$100

ISSA Lobbyist Club Challenge

Wapsipinicon Snowmobile Association.....	\$500
Tri-County Snowmobile Association	\$407
Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$350
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$300
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks	\$250
Lyon County Sno-Lyons.....	\$250
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$200
Iowa River Riders.....	\$100

Spina Bifida Association of Iowa

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club	\$1,000
Cedar Falls Sno Hawks.....	\$500
Central Iowa Snowmobilers	\$500
Hancock County Snowmobile Association	\$500
Worth County Fence-Stretchers.....	\$500
Tri-County Snowmobile Association	\$407
Floyd County Groomers Association	\$300
Howard County Stumpjumpers	\$250
Iowa River Riders	\$200
Team Iowa Snowmobilers	\$200
Trail Blaz-zers, Inc.	\$200

ACSA Legal Defense Fund

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club	\$250
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$200
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$200
Iowa River Riders.....	\$100

ISSA Scholarship Foundation

Central Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$250
Howard County Stumpjumpers	\$250
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club	\$250
Floyd County Groomers Association.....	\$200
Iowa River Riders.....	\$200
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$200
Dickinson County Snowhawks.....	\$100

ISU Clean Snowmobile Challenge

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club	\$250
Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$200

ALS of Iowa

Team Iowa Snowmobilers.....	\$200
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Please mail donation checks to the ISSA office at 1924 270th St., Marble Rock, IA 50653. Each donation to the ISU Clean Snowmobile Challenge will be matched by the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club in Region 7 (up to \$500 total). To donate there, contact Club President Barry Starmer at (515) 240-5444.

Spina Bifida Winter Kids Day Cancelled

The ISSA's Winter Kids Day with families from the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa (the ISSA's official charity) has been cancelled due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

"We're in agreement that this year is not going to be a year for a kids ride with COVID-19 and pre-existing conditions for the children," ISSA President Scott Nauman announced Jan. 10.

Saylorville Club Renews ISU CSC Fundraiser



The CyClean snowmobile team at Iowa State University will be participating in its seventh straight SAE Clean Snowmobile Challenge this March, but due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the competition will be held virtually only.

To help with the team's fundraising efforts, the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club of Region 7 has renewed its challenge by matching any donations to the ISU team up to a total of \$500. The club has maintained a close relationship with the engineering students from Ames and has supported the team since its inception.

At its club meeting Jan. 12, the Saylorville club donated \$250 to the ISU team and then matched the \$200 donation from Team Iowa Snowmobilers, also in Region 7. Accepting the checks from Saylorville President Barry Starmer (above) and Team Iowa President David Eide (below) are team leader Kate Lyon and team member Carsen Otremba.

For more information on the challenge, contact Starmer at (515) 240-5444. You can also follow the team on Facebook.



December Snowfall Spurs Early Riding

Another timely system arrives mid-January

South snowmobile trail around Lake MacBride on the Iowa Snowdrifters trail system in Region 9 Jan. 1.

by Cameron Hanson

Before a Jan. 14 storm system brought blizzard conditions to western and parts of north central Iowa, the first half of this winter had flipped the script in Iowa, producing more rideable snow south of Highway 20 than to the north of it.

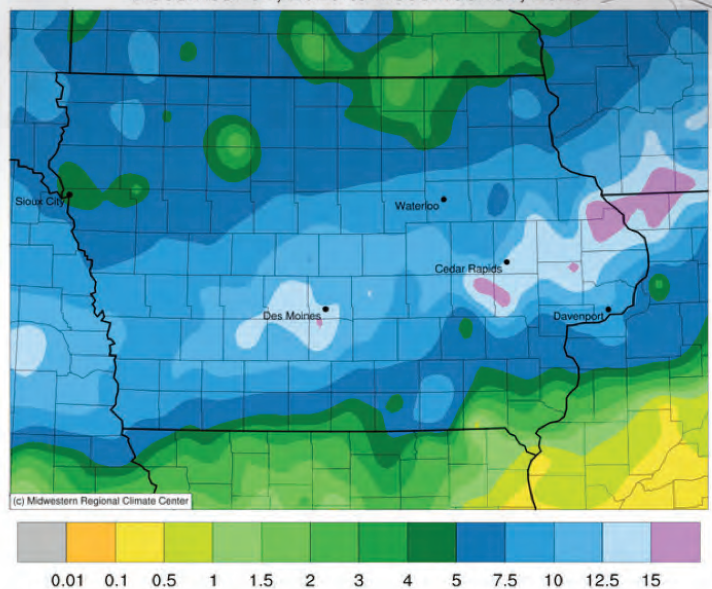
“This season so far has been the tale of two halves,” Region 5 Director Matt Miner lamented during the Jan. 10 virtual meeting of the ISSA Board of Directors. “The northern part of my region has not had enough snow to groom, while clubs to the south have been riding and grooming for a while now.”

In December, a pair of storms delivered eight inches of snow on the 13th to the Des Moines area and another nine inches to Ankeny 16 days later. Those same cells dumped more than a combined 16 inches of snow in the Cedar Rapids region, including a foot at Fairfax on the 29th alone.

According to Iowa Climatologist Justin Gilsan, the statewide average for snowfall in December was close to 8.5 inches with pockets between Des Moines and Dubuque reporting more than 15 inches of snow, or nearly half of the seasonal statewide average of 32 inches.

Accumulated Snowfall (in)

December 01, 2020 to December 31, 2020



Source: Iowa Climatology Bureau

“Multiple winter systems moved through Iowa, leaving behind measurable snow statewide,” Gilsan wrote in his monthly weather report for December. “Over the month, above-average snow totals accumulated from Omaha northeast through Dubuque, and portions of central and eastern Iowa measured totals of four to six inches above average.”

Groomer sightings

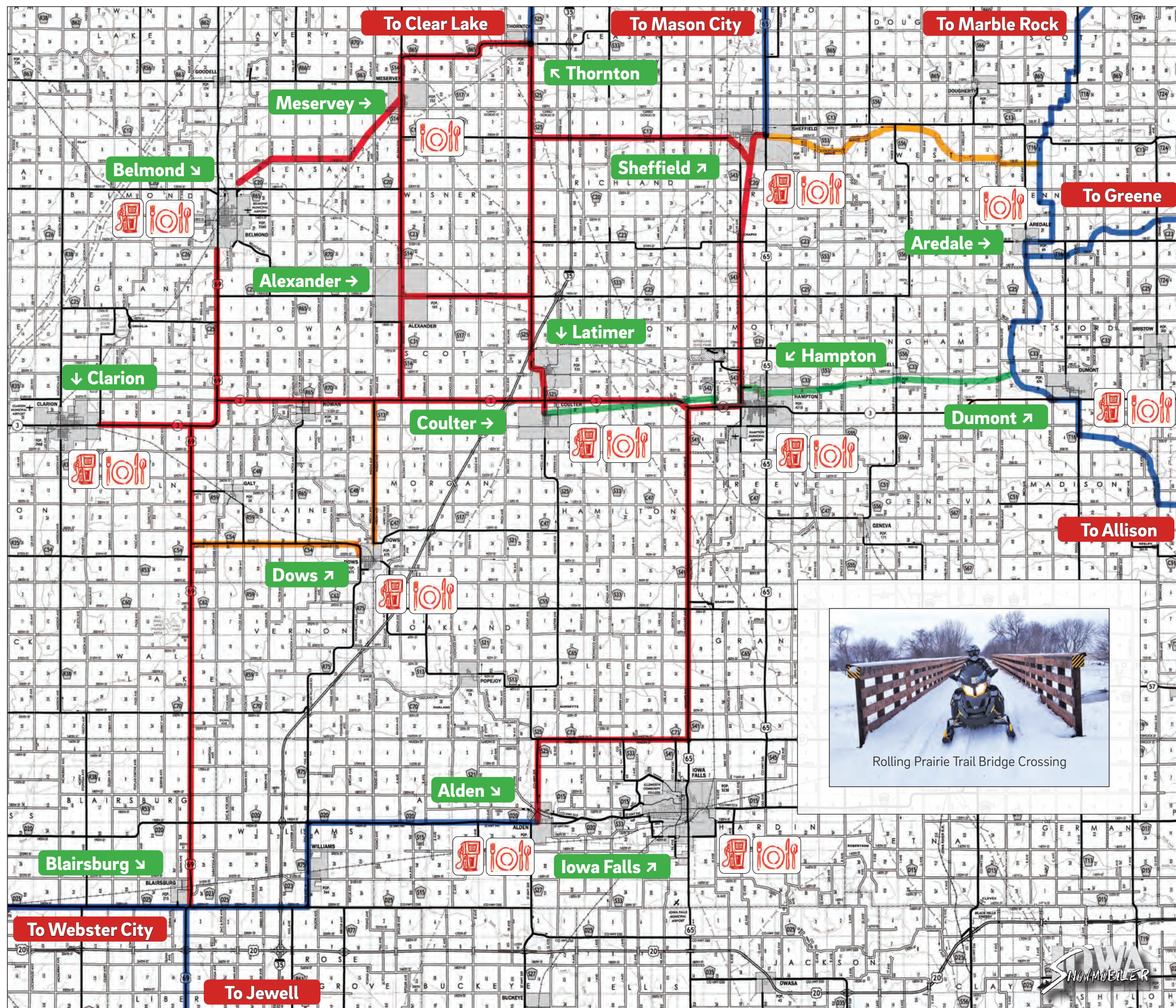
Early-season riding began in mid-December and continued for nearly three weeks before warmer temps and snowmobile pressure thinned out most trails. Several riding opportunities and groomer sightings were reported during the state board meeting.

Past ISSA President Chris Willey, a member of the Snow Pioneers in Region 5 in eastern Iowa, said he put on roughly 250 miles New Year’s weekend, while David Eide, president of the Team Iowa Snowmobilers in Region 7, said his club groomed close to 100 miles in central Iowa.

On New Year’s Day, trailers filled the parking **Turn to page 12**



Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club members Alan McHose and Barry Starmer ride through Big Creek State Park in Region 7 Dec. 15.



LEGEND

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

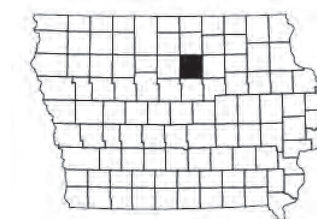
- Primary Trail
- Secondary Trail
- Neighboring Club Trail
- Rolling Prairie Trail



Fuel Available



Food Available



SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAP Franklin County, IA



100% Member



Rolling Prairie Trail Bridge Crossing

SNOWMOBILE



Iowa Snowdrifters trailhead parking at the Lake View OHV Park near Solon in Region 9 Jan. 1.

From page 9 lot at the Iowa Snowdrifters' trailhead at the Lake View OHV Park near Solon, and members of the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club met in Slater on Jan. 2 for a 75-mile ride on their trail system.

Farther north in Region 3, the Iowa River Riders were out New Year's weekend as well, testing out their new Tucker groomer, as detailed on Facebook and pictured in this month's trail map insert. Throughout central and eastern Iowa, club activities and trail reports peppered social media as snowmobilers took advantage of the fleeting trail conditions.

Besides scratching the itch for in-state riders, Iowa's early snowcover—coupled with tighter COVID restrictions in neighboring states—also led to several ISSA officials fielding inquiries from out-of-state snowmobilers looking for places to ride, stay and eat in Iowa.

"I was getting calls from guys from Wisconsin and Minnesota wanting to come down to Iowa to ride," Region 4 Director Seth Bram said. "That's nice to hear when we normally go up there to ride."

"People are getting tired of sitting home and are looking for places to go and have some fun," Miner said.

"I had a lot of calls too," added Willey. "It will be interesting to see how many out-of-state trail passes were purchased."

Dance lessons

By the time of the state board meeting the second Sunday of January, most grooming efforts had faded throughout Iowa, and the forecast the following week was calling for above-freezing temperatures. Directors joked they would need to take dance lessons to improve their proverbial 'snow dance'.

Whatever they did seemed to work.



Team Iowa Snowmobilers grooming between Stanhope and Stratford in Region 7 Jan. 3.

A day after recording 40-degree temperatures, a Jan. 14 system swept through much of Iowa, producing blizzards and bringing measurable snow to several parts of the state. An average of five inches of fresh snow was reported along Highway 9 from Spirit Lake to Cresco, with larger amounts falling locally. The new snow basically replaced what had disappeared just days earlier.

"Our area got anywhere from 4-5 inches of nice heavy snow," the Cresco Driftrunners reported on their Facebook page Jan. 15. "This covered up many bare areas that had melted over the last few days. What also helps is the wind was not blowing, creating a nice level blanket of snow. The trails are open but are in early-season conditions right now."

On the other end of the state, high winds were reported west of Interstate 35, and poor road conditions, ironically, forced the cancellation of the first of six Snowmobile Iowa rides with the Sac County Snow Lovers on Jan. 16. Once the winds died down, the Region 6 club was able to groom the next day and whip their ditch trails into shape.

As of press time, several events were still planned as scheduled for the rest of January in Iowa, including two more Snowmobile Iowa rides, a cross-country race at Okoboji, Snowfest at Cresco and Winter Games at Okoboji.

How the second half of this winter will end remains to be seen. Hopefully, the output will be equal to or better than the first half.



Sac County Snow Lovers grooming north of Breda along Highway 175 in Region 6 Jan. 17.

CALENDAR

February

- Trail Blaz-zers' Jed's Ride Feb. 6. Club meeting to follow at Oran Fire Department.
- Team Iowa Snowmobilers Ice Drags Feb. 6 at Little Wall Lake in Jewell. Follow the club on Facebook for up-to-date information.
- Trail Blaz-zers' Vintage Ride Feb. 7. More details to follow.
- Midwest Sled Fest Feb. 13 at Clear Lake featuring vintage LeMans racing. For the latest information, visit midwestsledfest.com or follow on Facebook.
- Cresco Driftrunners Charlie's Chili Feed Feb. 13 starting at 11 a.m. at the warming bin on the trail south of Granger.
- Butler County Snow Snoops Fourth Annual Vintage Ride Feb. 20 at 11 a.m. at Dumont. Unload at Outlaws and ride to Outpost in Aredale and back. \$15 registration fee includes meal. For more information, call (319) 239-5408.

March

- ISSA Board of Directors meeting Sunday, March 14, at 9 a.m. at Farm Bureau in Hampton. In person. Masks recommended.

See p. 2 for Snowmobile Iowa dates and information.

Midwest Sled Fest returns to Clear Lake this Month

Photos courtesy Chris Barragy
Lakeview Photography

New name. Old rides. Next
generation of volunteers keeps
vintage ice racing alive in Region 3.

by **Cameron Hanson**

The Midwest Sled Fest at Clear Lake lived up to its new name last February by drawing competitors from both sides of the state as well as Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota and Illinois. Organized by local club volunteers, the vintage ice race enters its 12th season this month and hopes for another strong showing.

“We were very fortunate to have many generous sponsors and several new members on the committee to help us start off with our best foot forward last year,” acknowledged race co-chair Mindy Eastman. “We had very similar numbers of participants and spectators to years prior, and overall, we were thrilled with the success of the event. We hope to keep growing from there.”

Prior to last winter, the day-long event—featuring LeMans-style racing—was billed as the Jack Helgren Memorial Race, paying tribute to a local snowmobile dealer. After 10 years, charter members of ‘The Jack Race’ committee decided to retire and passed the torch onto the next generation of committee members, who wanted to keep the tradition going.

Active members stayed on, and new volunteers joined the effort, which Eastman said made for a “really smooth transition.” Entering its second decade, the new regime felt a new name was in order to better reflect what the regional event had become. They came up with the Midwest Sled Fest but decided to keep the lineup



Older, low-profile machines have a distinct advantage on the tight corners at the Clear Lake track.

virtually unchanged with LeMans races, youth events, radar runs and a vintage snowmobile show.

“For our first year, we thought it best to keep the format the same as The Jack,” said Eastman, who is in charge of registration and scoring. “The overall format will remain the same again this year, but we may be making some changes to the classes, eliminating some that barely had enough entries to run and adding a trail stock sled class to hopefully encourage more participation from the casual snowmobiler.”

Age matters

In 2020, the Midwest Sled Fest planned for 25 races, with four getting cancelled on race day due to the lack of participants. Classes are determined by year and size of the sled as well as age of the rider, including the Old Timer classes for competitors 50 and older and youth classes for 9-17 year-olds. During intermission, the popular Youth 120 and Kitty Kat events are held on a smaller track nearby.

Mark Kuennen, a powersports dealer from Maynard in northeast Iowa, has participated the past several years and, last winter, competed in the Old Timer 501cc and Above Class and the 80-Plus Class Up to 500cc, where the age of the sled and the age of the rider must add up to at least 80 years. “For me, this is just about



Youth racing is important to current and future growth of the Midwest Sled Fest.

having fun and getting the chance to get the old adrenaline flowing again,” he said.

The Midwest Sled Fest is set up on the south shore of Clear Lake in front of Clear Lake State Park. In true LeMans fashion, the 1.25-mile serpentine track is staked out past the beach with little to no surface preparation. Some years, competitors have raced on glare ice; other years, across snow drifts; and yet a few times, on slush. By race day, ice thickness on the lake is close to two feet.

“We want to make it as challenging as possible,” explained race co-chair Rusty Peters, who, along with countless other volunteers, spends two days laying out the track, plowing the parking area, clearing the ice for the radar runs and setting up the registration and VIP booths.

Racing lineup

Beginning with the 1973 and Older 340cc category, classes are staged in order of age and average 3-5 laps in length. Payback depends on the number of entries in each class. The last race of the day is the open, 15-lap Stud Boy Challenge. Here, low-profile machines with picked tracks and sharpened carbides see the most success on race day.

Peters’ son, Luke, a north Iowa native now living in Altoona, has won the open challenge the last five years on a 1996 Polaris XCR 600. He said it’s always nice to come back home and compete in a challenging race that benefits the local community.

“One of the big reasons I like racing on Clear Lake is the track is constantly changing with the amount of riders that are going around the track,” he said. “You have to stay alert and make sure you hit your marks in the corners or you can be out in the powder pretty quick.”

Also piloting older machines, four racers from Wisconsin competed in the final race of the day in Clear Lake last winter after their home race at Neosho was cancelled the same weekend due to warm weather and poor ice conditions northwest of Milwaukee.

Coming over the last two winters, Mitch Sebastian, a semi-



Radar runs

professional cross-country racer from Spencer, finished fifth in last year’s Stud Boy Challenge and admitted his 2018 Arctic Cat ZR600 race sled wasn’t quite set up for this type of racing. While his higher-profile machine doesn’t corner as well as the older sleds, he said it’s still fun to come over and race close to home when his schedule allows.

“I definitely love coming to that kind of smaller, local track type race,” he said. “Every race that we go into, I think I’m in it to win it. But to be honest, we come to it just because we love racing, and I want to support the event. The track that they have there is quite a bit different than what we’re used to for our normal cross-country ice races. The national series usually plows and will have sometimes close to a mile-long straightaway covering the whole lake.”

Sebastian’s dad and mechanic, Bryan, echoed his son’s comments.

“We certainly have enjoyed racing the past couple years in Clear Lake,” he said. “We feel very strongly about supporting a local event when we can and promoting snowmobiling and racing in Iowa. When it does not conflict with our cross-country schedule, we will absolutely attend. It’s not really a test-and-tune session for us. It’s more like a less stressful race weekend, if you will.”

Go online for complete details

Final results from the 2020 Midwest Sled Fest are posted on the race website at www.midwestsledfest.com. You can also follow race updates on Facebook. This month’s event is planned for Feb. 13 and is officially sponsored by the North Iowa Snow-Seekers and the Hancock County Snowmobile Association, both from Region 3.

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, participants will be asked to social distance and wear masks. Eastman also said competitors will need to pre-pay and pre-register for the LeMans races on the website to prevent overcrowding at the registration



Vintage show



ACSA Tip

Ride Right on the Ice

Taking the sled out for a ride is a great way to enjoy a change of scenery and get some fresh air, but don't ignore ice conditions while appreciating the ride, reminds the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, (ACSA).

Not all ice is created equal and, as such, won't support in the same way. While many riders consider a 5" thickness safe for sleds, experts say that overall measurement may not be as safe and that minimum thickness should be doubled if ice is covered by snow.

"Ice fluctuates in freezing and thawing cycles, making it potentially unstable and dangerous," said Scott Herzog, ACSA president and long-time rider. "The best ice to ride on is clear ice with a blue tint, as that is typically the thickest and strongest ice."

Always stay away from white, gray or murky colored ice, as well as slushy ice and open bodies of water. Snow, while a necessity for the enjoyment of snowmobiling, can also be a cause of dangerous ice conditions. Because it acts as an insulator and can render ice layers uneven and weakened, experts recommend assuming any ice under snow may be unsafe and to drive accordingly.

The easiest way to stay safe on a snowmobile is to pay attention to snow reports, weather conditions, your surroundings and use common sense. The most important tip, though, is to not be a reckless driver.

"When it comes to ice—if you don't know, don't go," said Herzog.

booth on race day. Friday night events and post-race activities on Saturday have also been cancelled this year.

"In consideration of the current public health situation and with the health and safety of everyone in mind, we will be moving to online registration and payment this year," she said. "Getting registrations entered ahead of time will also help us start on time and run the event more efficiently overall. Any state or local public health requirements in force at the time will also need be followed."

For more information, call or text Peters at (641) 420-0248 or email Eastman at midwestsledfest@yahoo.com.



Kitty Kat races at the Midwest Sled Fest.



Casler's new rocket

The fastest snowmobiler in Iowa, Aaron Casler of 515 Racing, unveiled his newest dragsled at the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club meeting in Slater Jan. 12. This latest version of the Black Mamba produces more than 1,000 horsepower and consumes a gallon of methanol with each pass.

In 2014, Casler set a world record time of 3.97 seconds in 500 feet at Hay Days, and at the former Jack Race in Clear Lake in 2018, he topped 157 mph. To support his racing habit, the Saylorville club in Region 7 donated \$250 to Casler, a club member.

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Region 1

CLUB NEWS

O'Brien County Snowtrackers

by Allison Schimmer, Secretary

As a new snowmobiling season approached with a club that was ready to call it quits, a change in scenery happened to a now ever-booming club. Not even COVID could stop the O'Brien County Snowtrackers from bringing their club back to an exciting season.

A year ago, the members of the club were ready to call it quits. They had worked countless hours trying to get members and were coming up empty-handed. However, the O'Brien County Snowtrackers didn't take NO for an answer! Not having a club sounded awful, and they all busted out to gather 27 members for this season!

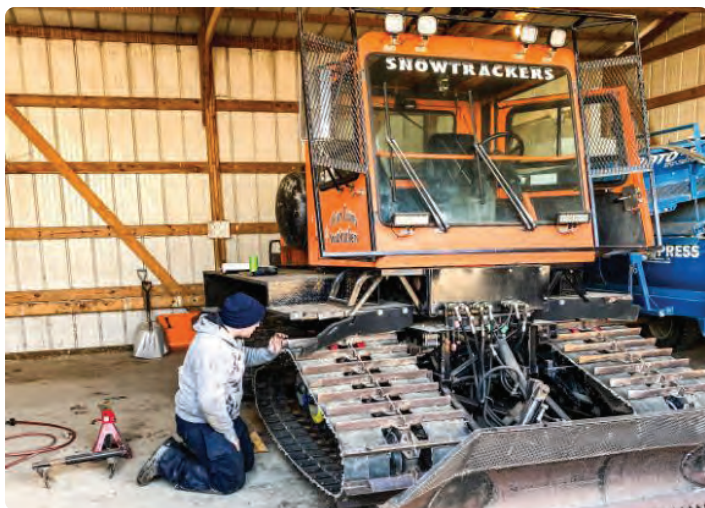
Kelly Jongerius has stepped down from being the heart and soul (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) of the club after many years. Thank you, Kelly, for all the hard work you have put into this club taking on so many duties. You left big shoes to fill!

New officers include Steve Weirsmas as President, Nyles Schimmer as Vice President, Peg Japinga as Treasurer, Allison Schimmer as Secretary, Larry Espey as Groomer Coordinator with assistance from Kevin Klein, and all the past and present members that we couldn't do any of it without.

This season is the year for change, and a good change it is. Not only have we grown as a club, but we also have more members to help make positive improvements in our club. Our members have gone out to make sure our trails are all signed accurately for the safety of the riders that may travel through our ditches. They have also been working very hard on our groomer. The groomer was in need of much work. They are close to finishing it up so that we are able to get it back into the ditches!

The last thing we are trying to update is our O'Brien County Snowtrackers Facebook page! We are working hard to post about all events that are happening or that will be happening. Please head over and like our page for any updates!

Even though we have had a lack of snow this season, man has it been a great one!



Volunteers with the O'Brien County Snowtrackers have been busy this winter, including making repairs to their groomer.

Region 4

Butler County Snow Snoops

The Butler County Snow Snoops will be hosting their fourth annual Vintage Ride Saturday, Feb. 20, at 11 a.m., beginning at Outlaws Bar and Grill in Dumont. The cost is \$15 and covers food



Last winter's vintage sled ride in Butler County drew 20 participants to Region 4.

and registration. A pulled pork meal will be served.

The ride will depart at noon. Participants should unload in the parking lot south of Outlaws. The ride will follow the 10-mile trail to the Outpost in Aredale and should end back in Dumont before dark. Tow sleds and chase vehicles will be available.

For questions or more information, contact Bill at (319) 239-5408 or follow the club on Facebook.

Region 5

Driftrunners, Inc.

by Bob Martinek, Member

Hello and welcome to February from the Driftrunners. Best part of February? Charlie's Chili Feed. This year Charlie's is set for Feb. 13 from 11 a.m. until food is gone or 2 p.m. We hold Charlie's at the warming bin on the trail to Cresco just south of Granger, Minn. We serve up lots of chili, brats, beverages and fellowship for a free-will donation. All are welcome. It is a family event. Please bring the kids. In the event of poor or uncertain snow conditions, we may move the date so keep up on any changes or adjustments on Facebook/ Driftrunners Snowmobile Club.

Lastly after Charlie's, our final event of the season is our Land-owner Appreciation Dinner, usually held in late March. At this time, I have no details to pass on.

Keep doing the Snow Dance, and I hope to see you at Charlie's or on the trails. Thanx.

Region 7

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club

by Barry Starmer, President

Hope everyone had a fun and safe month. Mother Nature blessed us with some White Gold. I have ridden our local trails four times and rode the Snowdrifters trails once. I have also spent seven hours in the groomer. Hopefully, some of you have had the opportunity to do the same.

We had our January meeting. What a great turnout! Two new members joined the Club. That makes a total of 25 new members this season.

At our January meeting Club member Aaron Casler displayed his new drag sled. One awesome looking machine. Good luck, Aaron. Until next month, Keep Dancing, stay Safe and GET INVOLVED!



Grandchildren of Saylorville trail boss David Conova enjoy the early snowfall on Dec. 13.

**REGION ONE****Buena Vista Blizzard Busters**

President: Jeffrey Sassman
709 Hudson St., Storm Lake, IA 50588
(712) 299-1001

Clay County Sno Broncos

President: Doug Alger
912 E 14th St., Spencer, IA 51301
(712) 260-6855
eliteautodoug@gmail.com

Dickinson County SnowHawks

www.dickinsoncountysnowhawks.com
P.O. Box 504, Spirit Lake, IA 51360
President: Kevin Winters
P.O. Box 305, Lake Park, IA 51347
(712) 320-9530
kwinters9530@gmail.com

Lyon County Sno-Lyons

P.O. Box 576, Rock Rapids, IA 51246
President: Walt Dibbern
902 1st Ave., Rock Rapids, IA 51246
(712) 472-3804
walt.dibbern@yahoo.com

O'Brien County Snowtrackers

Steven Wiersma
5801 370th St, Primghar, IA 51245
(712) 461-2774
steelpack2017@yahoo.com

Osceola County High Point Riders

www.highpointriders.com
President: Jeremy Wollmuth
5992 200th Street, Melvin, IA 51350
(712) 461-1510
jeremywoll10@gmail.com

Powder Players Inc.

P.O. Box 154, Remsen, IA 51050
www.powder-players.com
President: Dee Jay Kellen
dkellen91@yahoo.com
(712) 540-5723

Sioux County Snowmobile Club

President: Ben Van Den Brink
3471 Eagle Ave
Rock Valley, IA 51247
(712) 470-1176
bkland@mtcnet.net

REGION TWO**Emmet County Driftbusters**

President: Mike Blomstrom
526 W 9th St., Estherville, IA 51334
(515) 408-8053
mblomstrom@forceamerica.com

Humboldt Sno-Skimmers

President: Shane Braby
PO Box 62, Dakota City, IA 50529
(515) 890-1945
snoskimmers@gmail.com

Kossuth County Drift Skippers

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

Palo Alto Rough Riders

President: Adam Kerr
P.O. Box 118, Cylinder, IA 50528
adamkerr1@outlook.com
(712) 298-0338

Sno-Pak

P.O. Box 122, Rockwell City, IA 50579
Find us on Facebook
President: Kolby Wagner
749 South St., Rockwell City, IA 50579
(712) 830-3821
kolbywagner@yahoo.com

REGION THREE**Hancock County Snowmobile Assn.**

President: Dan Stromer
1840 Hwy 69, Klemme, IA 50449
(641) 587-9903, stromerd@yahoo.com

Iowa River Riders

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

Lakota Sno-Eagles

President: Michael Smidt
3509 185th Ave., Tipton, IA 50480
(515) 320-4052, myiq599@gmail.com

North Iowa Sno-Jammers

P.O. Box 103, Lake Mills, IA 50450
www.northiowasnojammers.com
President: Matt Trunkhill
135 310th St., Woden, IA 50484
(515) 320-0737, mtrunkhill@wgo.net

North Iowa Snow Seekers

President: Chad Brouwer
15 Williamsburg Cir
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 425-4872
northiowasnowseekers@yahoo.com

Worth County Fence Stretchers

P.O. Box 27, Northwood, IA 50459
President: Mike Peterson
P.O. Box 97, Kensett, IA 50448
(641) 390-1499
petersonex@wctatel.net

REGION FOUR**Bremer County Sno-Knights**

President: Jeremy Happel
141 N. Powell St., Denver, IA 50622

Butler County Snow Snoops

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

Cedar Falls Sno Hawks

President: Gary Matthias
3205 McClain Dr., Cedar Falls IA 50613
(319) 235-7667
gmkm2161@gmail.com

Chickasaw Sno-Riders

President: Nick Winter
2997 Vanderbilt Ave.
Waucoma, IA 52171
(641) 330-1134
nwinter@statebankia.com

Dewar Snow Chasers

President: Jim Paul
11217 East Dunkerton Rd.
Dunkerton, IA 50626
(319) 232-7295

Floyd County Groomers Association

President: Joe Obermeier
1301 Missouri Ave
Charles City, IA 50616
(641) 330-6225
www.floydcountygroomerswebs.com

Howard County Stump Jumpers

President: Jim Owen
602 Cherry St., Riceville, IA 50466
(641) 220-0149
buckarro0149@hotmail.com

Mitchell County E-Z Riders, Inc.,

President: Karl Hermann
128 State St., Osage, IA 50461
(641) 732-5778
jkconstruction92@yahoo.com

REGION FIVE**Allamakee Sno-Blazers**

Allamakee Sno-Blazers
PO Box 94 Waukon, IA 52172
President: Brandon Fahey
snoblazers@yahoo.com

Asbury Snowhawks

President: Tom Spalla
3309 Brook Hollow Dr.,
Asbury, IA 52002
(563) 582-8893, tnspsalla@hotmail.com

Clayton County Snowbirds

12469 Hwy. 18,
Postville, IA 52162
President: Dan Torkelson
302 E Church St.
Farmersburg, IA 52047
(563) 880-2422

Driftrunners, Inc.

Join Us on Facebook under 'Groups'
President: Lee Pecinovsky
17324 175th St., Elma, IA 50628
(641) 229-1588
leepecinovsky74@gmail.com

Dyersville Driftskippers

www.dyersvilledriftskippers.net
President: Ryan Ameskamp
29465 Dyersville E Rd.
Dyersville, IA 52040, (563) 599-6312

Snow Pioneers

President: Mitchell Heims
233 Bailey Dr., Manchester, IA 52057
(563) 920-2141, heimsm@live.com

Trail Blaz-zers Inc.

President: Randy Henniges
1980 Y Ave., Sumner, IA 50674
(319) 269-8239
randyhenniges@gmail.com

Trails Unlimited

1222 Hwy. 150, Festina, IA 52144
President: Bud Winter
(319) 231-3337, bwinter@acegroup.cc

Wapsipicon Snowmobile Association

P.O. Box 802, Independence, IA 50644
www.wsaiowa.com
President: Morgan J. Kuper
1916 Central Ave., Jesup, IA 50648.
(319) 239-0590, mkuper3@jtt.net

Winneshiek Trail Twisters Inc.

P.O. Box 154, Decorah, IA 52101
President: Jake Ludeking
2005 Centennial Rd.
Decorah, IA 52101, (563) 380-6747
jakeludeking@gmail.com

REGION SIX**Sac County Snow Lovers**

P.O. Box 464, Lakeview, IA 51450
President: Jamie Rohlf
408 Center St., Wall Lake, IA 51466
(712) 830-2196

REGION SEVEN**High Bridge Trailblazers**

President: Robyn Heffler
1122 W. Mamie Eisenhower
Ave. Boone, IA 50036
(515) 236-0500
robyn.heffler@gmail.com

Raccoon Valley Snow Chasers

President: Mike Patten
5204 Neva Pt., Panora, IA 50216
(641) 755-3863, mjpatt76@aol.com

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club
P.O. Box 3133, Des Moines, IA 50316
www.saylorvilledamsnowmobileclub.org
President: Barry Starmer
602 NE Trilein, Ankeny, IA 50021
(515) 240-5444
sastarmer@q.com

Team Iowa Snowmobilers

www.teamiowasnowmobilers.com
President: David Eide
3339 Stagecoach Rd.
Stratford, IA 50249
teamiowasnowmobilers@gmail.com
(515) 835-8000

Webster County Ice Breakers

President: John Gallentine
P.O. Box 193 Dayton, IA 50530
(515) 351-7859
jgallentine86@gmail.com

REGION EIGHT**Central Iowa Snowmobilers**

P.O. Box 1751
Marshalltown, IA 50158
President: Blake Matney
PO Box 171, Liscomb, IA 50148
(641) 485-3161
bmatney05@gmail.com

Tri-County Snowmobile Association

P.O. Box 231, Traer, IA 50675
President: John McKenna
5164 23rd Ave., Mt. Auburn, IA 52313
319-721-5895, jnmckenna1@gmail.com

REGION NINE**Cedar County Winter Warriors**

ccwwarriors@yahoo.com
President: Jerry Meier
1241 Jackson Ave., Tipton, IA 52772
(319) 325-6021
jerrymeier2040@gmail.com

Cascade Snowmobile Club

President: Steve Peiffer
916 6th Ave. SE, Cascade, IA 52033
(563) 599-1875

Eastern Iowa Sledheads

P.O. Box 519, Lone Tree, IA 52755
easterniowasledheads@aol.com
President: Mindy Scott
P.O. Box 435, 204 W. Dougherty Dr.
Lone Tree, IA 52755
scott4@iowatelecom.net
(319) 629-4630(h), (319) 325-1903(c)

Eastern Iowa Sno-Riders

President: Logan Goettsch
1945 278th St, Calamus, IA 52729
logan.goettsch@channelseedsmen.com

Frozen Few

P.O. Box 612
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-0612
President: Rodney Rocarek
1718 O'Connor Rd
Mt. Vernon, IA 52314
(319) 533-1115, rocarek.inc@gmail.com

Scott County Sno-Seekers

www.snoseekers.org
P.O. Box 2332
Davenport, IA 52809-2332
President: Conor Flaherty
(563) 505-4806, eagle3382@aol.com

Snowdrifters, Inc.

P.O. Box 5135, Coralville, IA, 52241
www.iowa-snowdrifters.org
President: Bill Hogan
3959 MacBride Pl NE, Solon, IA 52333
(319) 325-5588, bshogan@msn.com

Snowmobilers of Jackson County

President: Dale Sieverding
30939 320th St., Bellevue, IA 52031
(563) 451-6625
dalesieverding@yahoo.com

REGION TEN**Southwest Iowa Snow Scooters**

President: Trent Larson
25817 208th St., Crescent, IA 51526
(712) 309-1516, trentlarsn@gmail.com

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