SNORIDERS SPECIAL SNORI

SPECIAL SNORIDERS ASA REPORT



FOCUS ON SAFETY

SMARTPHONE APPS SHOULD NOT REPLACE TRANSCEIVERS BY LYLE BIRNIE, President

Transceivers have been in the snow sport industry for many years now. They have saved many lives when properly used, unless the person is buried too deep or the time frame goes too long; however, they work and every mountain rider or skier should have one and know how to use it. Most mountain riders nowadays will not allow anyone that doesn't have avalanche training to ride with them as it's too much of a risk. It's great that you have all the equipment and training, but if your riding buddies

don't, they won't be able to save you in an emergency.

The ASA has had a very strong focus on avalanche safety over the years and even more so in the last four to five years as our executive director, Chris Brookes, has become a member of the Canadian Avalanche Centre's snowmobile group. We also work hard to provide avalanche

safety training opportunities across the province and through our clubs, notably with Zac's Tracs.

Lori Zacuruk from Zac's Tracs has spent many hours teaching avalanche courses all over Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia through her own company and with the support of the Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) and the Alberta Snowmobile Association (ASA). With the airbags available today, people are getting more prepared than ever. At the Alberta Snowmobile & Powersports Show in Edmonton on the October 18 to 20 weekend, there was lots of interest in the bags available. I watched a few demonstrations from different manufacturers and they all appear to be good products. I even heard one man say, "How can you put a price on your life—just spend the money." Good point, and

this is true with all your avalanche safety gear.

Something that is occurring now is the unveiling of some new smartphone apps, which are telling people this app is usable to replace transceivers. Don't get caught up in this false information because it is just not true. Don't risk your life with a cheap product. If you want more informa-

tion on this go to www.avalanche.ca/cac/ava lanche-search-apps-press-release or contact Mary Clayton at mclayton@avalanche.ca.

The ASA is proud to again this year work with the CAC on our billboard program, helping to get the message of avalanche safety and awareness out to all sledders, not just those who belong to an organization. Watch for these on all the major highways heading into B.C.



>> EVENTS

International Snowmobile Safety Week January 18 - 26, 2014 Details at www.snowmobile.org

ASA/Whitecourt VIP & Media Ride January 29, 2014

ASA Provincial Jamboree 2014 February 21 & 22, 2014 Athabasca Details on the ASA website; click on Events

Spring Sneak Peek April 11 & 12, 2014 Edmonton, AB Watch the website for details: www.snowsneakpeek.com

ASA Annual General Meeting April 26, 2014 Edmonton, AB Watch the ASA website Events calendar

>> NEWS

ASA to work casino in 2014

The ASA applied for and was granted a casino date in the coming year in Edmonton. Funds generated from working an Alberta casino can be used for a variety of purposes (referred to as use of proceeds by Alberta Gaming). From our last few casinos, the ASA has been able to use the majority of our funds to help operate our Safe Riders school program that many of you are familiar with. We offer this program free of charge to Al-Cont'd. on page 40 sidebar ►



Time for some high-octane fun

BY JOEL WASNIDGE, Director at Large

Southern Alberta got its first taste of winter on Sunday, October 27, and by 4 p.m. I had already cleared the steps and driveway three times.

While some may consider this a blast of misery, my heart rate rose with the knowledge that soon I would be able to break out the sled for some high-octane fun. Even my neighbours knew why I had a perma-smile pasted across my face that day—they heard the sled running and caught a whiff of the two-stroke smoke wafting through the neighbourhood. It was hard to contain myself thinking about what awaits and looking forward to it. With five or so inches of snow on my front lawn, I knew it wouldn't be long till I have adrenalin coursing through my veins.

As a new member of your ASA board, I want to express some thoughts about this rewarding posi-*Continued on page 38 sidebar* ►





Pembina Drift Busters BY CLIFF BROMBERGER

The Pembina Drift Busters snowmobile club is located approximately 34 kilometres north of the town of Westlock. Our staging area is located on a local grazing reserve on Highway 801, north of Dapp Corner Store.

We are a family-oriented snowmobile club with wide, groomed trails weaving through trees and over the hills of the grazing reserve. The club

has two warm-up cabins—one located on the Main Loop and another on the North Loop—as well as three picnic stops in various spots along the 145 kilometres of trails. The trail system is made up of three loops—the West Loop, the Main Loop and, for those who like a little bit of a longer ride, the North Loop. Each year the Pembi-

na Drift Busters host a poker rally, which is routed through a combination of all the loops. This season is no different, with the poker rally set to happen on February 1, 2014.

In addition to the yearly poker rally, the club also participates in the local "adopt a family" program, which is put on by the Family and Community Support Services organization (FCSS). The club buys gifts and food at Christ-

mastime, which is then given to a family selected by the FCSS.

With the Drift Busters, the fun doesn't stop when the snow leaves, though! Each summer the club has its summer windup, an event hosted by club members, and we welcome any and all club members as well as their friends and families.

For more information on the club and trails, or if you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the club president, Cliff Bromberger, at powerhound@live.com or at 780-305-1022.



Land use on the table

ACCESS TO CROWN LAND IN MOUNTAIN AREAS IS PROBLEMATIC BY BOB JONES, Southern Regional Director

The Alberta Government released the draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) this fall. This plan covers the future of land use in the South Saskatchewan River drainage area of Alberta. That is roughly the area from the U.S. border to a bit north of Calgary and from the B.C. border to the Saskatchewan border. This is an important document that should concern and involve all Albertans. At the time this article was written, the SSRP was a draft plan, subject to a series of public meetings that are scheduled over the next few months and possible revisions following the meetings.

The province of Alberta has been divided into seven land use areas. The first area plan that was developed was the Lower Athabasca Area Plan (LAAP), covering the northeast corner of the province. This was a relatively easy plan to develop since much of the area is undeveloped with a relatively small population. The other five areas do not yet have plans started at this time.

Rules for land use in the SSRP are more complicated than the LAAP since the SSRP area includes a huge amount of agricultural (private) land plus a large portion of the Eastern Slope area of the Rocky Mountains, which has come under ever-increasing pressure from environmentalists and recreation users. The access to Crown land in the mountain areas has been especially contentious throughout the plan development. So how is this of concern to Alberta spowmo

So how is this of concern to Alberta snowmobilers? First of all, the plan will likely place additional restrictions on where we will be able to ride on Crown land in the mountain areas of southwestern Alberta. Also the treatment of motorized recreation in this plan will likely serve as the model for the treatment of motorized recreation in the plans that will be developed for the North Saskatchewan Area, the Upper Athabasca Area and the Upper Peace Area, which all include Eastern Slope areas.

The area plans may be accessed and reviewed at www.landuse.alberta.ca. The ASA has been very active in bringing the concerns of Alberta snowmobilers forward to the government during this planning process. The best way to have your *Continued on page 39 sidebar* ►



► JOEL WASNIDGE Continued from page 37

tion. I am working with a great bunch of very passionate folks, endeavouring to better the sport we all enjoy.

A special thanks to our executive director, Chris Brookes, for all the hard work and effort he put in to make the Alberta snow show in Edmonton a tremendous success. If you had the opportunity to attend, you already know it was the second largest, and growing, show of its kind in Canada. If you didn't get the chance, put it on your calendar for next year as it seems to get bigger and better every year.

From the big four manufacturers to after-market machines, parts, clothing and accessories, demos, seminars, trailers and information—and don't forget the mini doughnuts!—it was a fantastic weekend.

Most of my weekend was spent kibitzing with the vendors, patrons and other board members. Everyone was having a good time and, seemingly, the vendors did well and look forward to next year.

Accolades as well to Peri Price, who worked tirelessly with Chris to make this event an overwhelming success. Congrats to all the volunteers and thanks to all the attendees—we enjoyed your great support.

The annual awards banquet was very well attended—a virtual sell-out—and a lot of deserving people were recognized for their contributions to the sport. A very good time was had by all present.

Given the chance, make this a must-attend event for next year—it could be your name on one of the prestigious awards!

For Safety's Sake ... never ride alone!







So many rides, so little time

MANY HANDS WILL MAKE LIGHT WORK IN THE COMING SEASON BY JANET RIOPEL, Northwest Regional Director

What a great way to start the sledding season with a sold-out snowmobile and powersports show, along with the Alberta Snowmobile Association's (ASA) semi-annual general meeting and the annual awards banquet. Everyone who attended had a wonderful time and big congratulations to all of the award winners. Thank you for everything that you do for your club—you can never be thanked enough for all that you do for snowmobiling in Alberta.

I hope that everyone is ready to head on out and help your local, or not so local, club on the trails again this year. All help is appreciated. It doesn't matter if it is trail clearing or stocking the paper in the outhouses, many hands make light work, so please get out and enjoy some time with other club members while getting the trails ready to ride. I know that there are clubs that have applied for trail grants from the ASA so there will be over \$30,000 of work done in the Northwest Region this year. That means lots of work on the trails, and also lots of great new trails to ride this year.

So where are we all going to ride this year? With so many club rides and so few weekends, it becomes harder each year to pick where to go. Many of us plan in advance so it is always a great idea to get your club events onto the ASA calendar of events. I have been told that it is easy to do; but if you are like me and have trouble with it, a call to the ASA office will also get your event added to the event calendar.

Speaking of the ASA office, we have a new staff member, Amanda. She is a great gal, lots of fun and is very ready to help, so please welcome Amanda into our snowmobile world—she will be a great asset.

If you would like me to attend any of your functions or rides please drop me an email at mriopel@mcsnet.ca or call me at 780-349-2122.

See you on the trails soon and, until then, ride safe and ride sober.



A peek at the year ahead

SNOWMOBILE AND POWERSPORTS SHOW WAS ANOTHER SELL-OUT **BY CHRIS BROOKES, Executive Director**

Welcome to another season of fine sledding here in beautiful Alberta. The snow came quickly to start the season this year, coming almost exactly at the beginning of November. We'll see if it's rideable by the time this issue reaches you.

The snow held off long enough for us to produce and host the 26th annual Alberta Snowmobile & Powersports Show (www.albertasnow mobileshow.com) held again this year at the Edmonton Expo Centre. The show was a sell-out again this year, with around 150 exhibitors from across western Canada and the U.S. Northwest. With the demise of the Calgary snowmobile show a few years ago, we have been really able to focus on producing one great show, with the excellent work of our show manager, Peri Price. With Peri's show expertise, we have been able to craft our show into the second largest show in Canada. Our event and the Quebec Snowmobile Federation's show in Quebec are second only to the show in Toronto, which is a privately owned and produced event.

We were pleased once again this year to be joined by our manufacturing partners: Ski-Doo/BRP, Arctic Cat, Polaris and Yamaha, and we work to build a high-end, quality show around their four exhibits. ASA members have come to enjoy a very busy weekend, as we have for the last few years also held our association's semi-annual general meeting (SAGM) of all the clubs on the same weekend. We also hold the annual snowmobile Awards of Excellence this same weekend, so there are many events to attend. It was decided a few years ago to hold all these events on the same weekend, as many of our members cannot commit to multiple weekends in Edmonton. Previously, we held the SAGM and awards night in September, but we found that many members would choose to attend that weekend or the show weekend. Many members also were still out working in the fields in September, so that weekend was out as well.

We were very excited to see great participation by the ASA clubs at the show again this year. Clubs from all parts of Alberta were there and enjoyed great trail pass sales this year. A couple of groups—the Golden Triangle and the Central Alberta clubs—banded together in large booths to further their cause. The Golden Triangle clubs *Continued on page 40*



Central Alberta has lots to offer —by Scott Kruk, Central Region Director

There's snow on the ground and the smell of snowmobile exhaust in the air. The Central Alberta clubs had a great response to their booth at the Alberta Snowmobile & Powersports Show back in October and we let a lot of people know we are here and trying to keep safe snowmobiling alive in our neck of the woods.

If you ride around central Alberta, check out the Alberta Snowmobile Association's (ASA) website to find out the contact people in the area to show you what we have to offer. Even if you ride anywhere in Alberta check out the website as there is a lot of useful information to help in making your ride a success. The clubs have lots to offer and want to show you what they have—the hidden gems of trails, delicious little restaurants and some wonderful warm-up shelters they maintain for your riding enjoyment.

Keep a close eye on the ASA website for upcoming events happening around the province because there is always something going on and that is an easy way to find a day or weekend of good riding. So to sum it up—ride Alberta—we have a lot to offer. Check us out at www.altasnowmobile. ab.ca.

BOB JONES Continued from page 38

concerns heard is to get actively involved in your local snowmobiling club. You may also want to consider attending one of the public meetings if you get the opportunity.

Just remember, if you want your kids and grandkids to be able to ride on Crown land in the future, now is the time to get involved.



Alberta Snowmobile Association • www.altasnowmobile.ab.ca

CHRIS BROOKES Continued from page 39

handed out white foam snowballs that were awesome. Many of the ASA board and staff were pelted with them at the ASA booth across the carpet. We might have to stock up on those for next year!

The awards night went off very well

this year, being pretty much sold out. Held at the show host hotel this year, the supper was awesome and the awards program, emceed by the ever funny and charming England Ladies, was very well received. We were also entertained by local Edmonton celebrity and comedian Andrew Grose, who had us all laughing so hard. I've included some of the award photos in this issue.

At the SAGM on the Sunday morning, after much coffee was consumed, the clubs and the board got to business. We were given an update from Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) staffer Carole Savage and from Dennis Burns, executive director of our national association, the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO). Both brought us a national perspective to the goings-on in the snowmobile and avalanche safety worlds. If you slept in this day, you missed some good information and a good discussion by the clubs on our trail pass pricing and the jamborees. It's always great to see emotional discussions on ASA issues. One piece of new business that arose from the meeting was a change to our trail pass pricing. Starting next season (2014-2015), our early pass will be \$70 and the

if, the provincial legislation comes to be, we will have to re-address our pricing anyway.

Coming this spring will be the second year of the ASA running the manufacturers' spring "sneak peek" at the coming year's models. The ASA produced the Sneak Peek show last year and increased attendance

> over previous years, so we were judged to be a good fit to run this show. Our many years of expertise in running shows no doubt helps us a lot. Last year's venue, the Hangar on Kingsway in Edmonton, was the only thing our partners wanted to see changed. Previously, this show was held at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton in the trade centre, but with the hotel closed and the trade facility demolished, we had to scramble last year to quickly find a suitable venue. We were given this show to produce with only a couple of months lead time so our options were very limited. The Hangar was a suitable size and good location, but the parking and lighting caused concerns for some.

> > This coming season we have booked space at the new-ish Servus Place in St. Albert (www.servus place.ca), a bright, clean spacious facility located just off of Anthony Henday Drive in Northwest Edmonton. We will hold the show this year on Friday, April 11, and Saturday, April 12, returning to the two-day show that was held previously. Last year we were given one week day to hold the show, so we know we can improve upon the attendance again this year. Mark your calendars!

Speaking of your calendar, here are a few upcom-

ing events—the ASA jamboree, being hosted and run by the Athabasca River Runners this year, will be held February 21 and 22 in Athabasca. Registration forms and information are located on the ASA website calendar (click on Events). *Continued on sidebar* ►



CHRIS BROOKES Continued from left

Don't forget to check there often and remember to send in your events as well. We are also already planning for the spring AGM in Edmonton, tentatively planned for April 26, 2014.

It's snowing as I'm writing this so my thoughts are of the trails, and the volunteers out there right now working hard to get them cleared of debris, the woodpiles stocked and the cabins cleaned and ready. If there's one thing we never get enough of, it's volunteers. It's great that you bought a trail pass (really great, actually!), but the volunteers who maintain that trail you are riding on can use your help. Any little bit you can do or small amount of time you may have, makes the job that much easier. It's as simple as emailing or calling someone from your local club and seeing what you can do to help. If you have a few hours to spare one Saturday or Sunday, please contact your club to see what you can do. It might be as simple as bringing coffee for the trail crew or making some phone calls for the executive. There is no job too small!

ASA CASINO Cont'd. from pq. 37 sidebar

berta schools and community groups. The costs of providing a free school program to over 10,000 students a year can be daunting, but with the assistance of our corporate sponsors and casino funds, we are able to pull this off successfully every year.

Any ASA club, properly registered with the province as a not-for-profit group, can also apply to work a casino with club volunteers. The time commitment is not that big, requiring about 20 people over a **Cont'd. on pg. 41 sidebar**







Ralph's Motorsports, located in Calgary, Alberta, is ASA Dealership of the Year.



after January 1 price will be \$80. Some wanted a greater price and others wanted it to remain the same. Some of the hesitation is the pending outcome of the proposed provincial DAO legislation, which seems to be on-again, off-again. In the end, democracy prevailed and the majority of delegates voted for the small increase. When, and



pairs and lighting checks that should be done on

your sled trailers. Trucks need to be checked

over and sled decks loaded. Being a backcountry

Safety: put it on your to-do list BY VINCE KIRKHAM, Mighty Peace Regional Director

Winter is here. People have worked on their sleds and gotten them ready for their first ride. But safety training should also be on your list of things to do before that first big sled trip.

Maybe it's time to take an avalanche course or do a review. Do you remember what the lee side is, windward side, surface hoar or a multitude of technical terms that are covered in an avalanche course.

Then there is backcountry survival that needs to be considered, from getting all the little backcountry survival gear items back into your sled or backpack, to checking for beacons and

sledder takes some getting ready for, as safety is a con-The Stairway to Heaven near Kakwa, B.C., offers

complex mountain riding terrain.

add some new equipment, possibly an inReach or satellite phone or even an avalanche airbag. There are club meetings and work bees to volunteer for, cabin and warm-up shelters to get ready, club rides, family rides and mountain trips to prepare for. Besides all

cern. Maybe it's time to

that sledding, we still have jobs, family and friends. Let it snow-what a way to spend your spare time. Have a safe and fun sledding year.



Supporting Tracks on the Snow

The ASA has many partners/ sponsors that support the overall goals and objectives of the association and assist in delivering many of our important programs and services. The sponsorship program has been developed to provide information outlining the opportunities for sponsors and partners to assist us in our mission and duly recognize the sponsors for their efforts.

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The Alberta Snowmobile Association further thanks our Safe Riders partners:

Alberta Transportation Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association

► ASA CASINO

Cont'd. from pg. 40 sidebar two-day period. Depending upon where your casino is held (and this depends upon where your club is registered in Alberta), you can expect to bring back many thousands of dollars that you can use for administration, trail work, education and safety programs, some equipment costs and much much more. Contact Alberta Gaming at aglc.ca today to get your clubs registered for your own casino!

packing probes, shovels and saws. There are re-**Throttle Decisions: eye-opening**

Throttle Decisions is a fast-paced video series aimed at encouraging mountain sledders to become better trained in avalanche safety. Its eight short components move through the Avalanche Skills Training (AST) course, tackling topics such as terrain, companion rescue, mountain weather and how to read the avalanche bulletin, as well as one focused on youth education.

The Alberta Snowmobile Association (ASA) has long been an active participant with the Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) and we have again been involved with this project from day 1. Funding for the series came from a federal grant from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat in Ottawa, but the materials came from AST courses with input from the CAC's Sledcom advisory panel. We at the ASA have been a contributing member of the Sledcom group right from the start, always pushing for ways to get avalanche safety messaging out to all snowmobilers, not just our club members.

An item of importance for us in this series was a youth component, as youth safety education is one of our key mandates at the ASA, and we are always looking for new tools and materials to help Alberta's youth learn to ride safely in all conditions.

Filmmaker Francois Desrosiers of FD Productions shot the video footage in 2012-13 with a host of riders across B.C. and Alberta, capturing not only some great action but also some straight-shooting commentary from avalanche

experts, brand-name riders and even some avalanche survivors. Alberta's own Lori and Randy Zacaruk (Zac's Tracs) are shown in some of the modules, discussing their experiences and demonstrating AST techniques.

The series is anchored by CAC forecaster Joe Lammers, a man equally at home on sled and skis. The series is available on Vimeo, a website which hosts videos, where they can be viewed, shared or downloaded to your mobile device to watch at your leisure. This was important as the younger generation today exists more so on mobile devices than fixed computers. You can find the videos at: vimeo.com/canadianavalanche centre/videos.

Even if you only visit the mountains once or twice, the importance of understanding the terrain and essential gear needed cannot be understated. Riding in avalanche terrain requires a very different set of tools and knowledge than other areas. The modules are entitled Gear, Forecast, Safe Travel, Weather, Snowpack, Terrain, Evaluating Hazards and Rescue. These eight components, along with a youth module, the outreach video and other CAC videos, are all free to the public so there is no reason for you not to watch and learn. While nothing can ever replace the value of actually attending an AST course (available across Alberta and B.C.-check the ASA calendar or the CAC website to find one close to you), these videos will open your eyes to the world of avalanche.



contacts

ASA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Lyle Birnie • ljbirnie@telus.net Vice-President

- Denise England plasticandpowder@hotmail.com
- Secretary
- George Deputat deputat@telusplanet.net
- Mighty Peace Regional Director Vince Kirkham • vincek@pro-west.ca
- Central Alberta Regional Director Scott Kruk • sskruk@xplornet.com
- Northwest Regional Director Janet Riopel • mriopel@mcsnet.ca

Northeast Regional Director

- Darrell Scheers d.scheers@shaw.ca
- Southern Alberta Regional Director Bob Jones • bobbyjones1@me.com
- Director at Large
- Addam Saruk asaruk@telus.net Joel Wasnidge • wasnidge@shaw.ca
- ASA Office:
- Executive Director: Chris Brookes chrisbrookes@altasnowmobile.ab.ca Marketing & Program Co-ordinator: Amanda Niblett • 780-427-2695 amanda@altasnowmobile.ab.ca or Information: info@altasnowmobile.ab.ca

ASA CLUB MEMBERS

Snowmobile clubs are an integral part of this popular sport with activities including development of trail networks and staging areas, competitive events, trail rides, picnic/bonfire rides, safety clinics, fundraising for charity, camping trips, search and rescue and maintenance dinics. Club activities are often family oriented, so all ages join in the fun and also the work to make the fun possible. Check out the list of member clubs. Is your club a member? The ASA can help you form a club if there isn't one in your area. Call us at our office (780) 427-2695 or visit www. altasnowmobile. ab.ca.

- Alberta Beach Snowmobile Club Alberta Beach Marlene Eckert • 780-967-3091 Box 329, Alberta Beach, AB TOE 0A0 marlene2@xplornet.com Athabasca River Runners - Athabasca Dave & Jean Bilsky • 780-675-3229 Box 1162, Athabasca, AB T95 2A9
- bil3229@telus.net Bassano Snowpunchers - Bassano Kay Schaffer • 403-641-3799 Box 148, Bassano, AB TOJ OBO willyswheels@hotmail.com
- Bonnyville Snowdusters Bonnyville Glen Smith - 780-826-7119 Box 7675, Bonnyville, AB T9N 2H9 g51smith@telus.net
- Brazeau Snowmobile Club Drayton Valley Lorne Standish Box 6698, Drayton Valley, AB T7A 1S1
- lorne@lornessmallengine.ca Calgary Snowmobile Club - Calgary Randall Callan • 403-829-2886
- Box 6982, Stn D, Calgary, AB T2P 2G2 president@calgarysnowmobileclub.net Caroline Snowmobile Club - Caroline
- James Brady 403-848-0706 323 Coventry Close NE, Calgary, AB T3K 4C5
- jdbrady@telusplanet.net Cold Lake Snowmobile Club - Cold Lake
- Dean Dube, Box 447, Cold Lake, AB T9M 1P1 deandube@worldpost.ca Crow Snow Riders - Blairmore
- Doug Cox, Box 732, Blairmore, AB TOK OEO dougcox6@telus.net David Thompson Snow Riders - Rocky Mountain House
- Clint Bromling 403-392-3424 crbromling@gmail.com

Edson Snow Seekers - Edson

Norm Giroux, Box 5155, Edson, AB T7E 1T4 780-723-5236 • ngiroux@talisman-energy.com Elk Point Trail Riders - *Elk Point*

- Molly Kulczycki 780-549-9552 Box 675, Elk Point, AB TOA 1A0 molly.kulczycki@hotmail.com
- Fort Saskatchewan Snow Angels Fort Saskatchewan Brad Hooks • 780-445-9588 • 101 Bremna Drive, Unit 5, Sherwood Park, AB T8H 0M7
- bhooks@shaw.ca La Crete Polar Cats - La Crete Brent Holick, Box 1323, La Crete, AB TOH 2HO 780-928-3088 - brent.holick@ufa.com Lakeland Breakers Outdoor Society - Two Hills Allen Zaparniuk - 780-657-2485 kohlman6@telus.net
- Lakeland Breakers Outdoor Society, General Delivery, Two Hills, AB TOB 4K0 Lamont River Rats - Lamont Miles Melnyk, RR 1, Star, AB TOB 4E0
- 780-478-3597 miles.melnyk@edmonton.ca McMurray Sno-Drifters - Fort McMurray
- McMurray Sno-Dritters Fort McMurray David Janes • 780-598-3160 213 Sitka Drive, Fort McMurray, AB T9H 3C1 mcmurray.snodrifters@hotmail.com
- Northern Lights Snowmobile Club Barrhead Alan Breitkreitz • 780-674-7770 Box 4003, Barrhead, AB T7N 1A1
- block 4005, Barriead, AB 17N 17 bhdelec@telusplanet.net Northland Sno-Goers - Fox Creek
- Rod North 780-622-9373 Box 476, Fox Creek, AB TOH 1P0
- (RNORTH10@telus.net) Olds Snowmobile Club - Olds President Lyle Statham • 403-556-7297 Box 17, Site1, RR 4, Olds, AB T4H 1T8
- Box 17, Site 1, KK 4, Olds, AB 14H 118 Istatham@oldscollege.ca Peace Valley Snowmobile Club - Peace River
- Troy Lorencz 780-618-6649 hammer@wispernet.ca Pembina Drift Busters - Westlock
- Cliff Bromberger 780-674-5789 Box 5861, Westlock, AB T7P 2P6 powerhound@live.com River Ridge Riders - Myrnam
- Addam Saruk 780-366-2506 Box 214, Myrnam, AB T08 3K0 SFL@telus.net Smoky Lake Trail Twisters - Smoky Lake
- Vern Billey, Box 1004, Smoky Lake, AB TOA 3C0 780-656-4142 • dketsa@cciwireless.ca St. Paul Trailblazers - St. Paul
- Danny Smyl 780-645-3607 4410-45B Street, St Paul, AB TOA 3A3 dsmyl@telusplanet.net
- Swan City Snowmobile Club Grande Prairie Rick Bennett • 780-539-9277 Box 1332, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 4Z1
- rbennett60@hotmail.com Swan Hills Snow Goers - Swan Hills Kevin Callihoo • 780-333-5801 sharoncallihoo_49@hotmail.com
- Tail Creek Snowbirds Alix Monte Turre • 403-741-4001 tailcreeksnowbirds@gmail.com
- tailcreeksnowbirds@gmail.com **Fir County Snowmobile Club** - *Leduc* Brian Beebe - 780-437-4706 374 Twin Brooks Drive, Edmonton, AB T6J 6T2 brianbeebe@shaw.ca **Vermilion Ridge Riders** - *Vermilion* Jim Zadorzup - 780-853-0914
- Jim Zadorozny 780-853-0914 6007-52 Ave, Vermilion, AB T9X 1X3 jimzad@telus.net
- Watt Mountain Wanderers High Level Barry Toker • bts@telusplanet.net Wembley Snowmobile Club - Wembley Dody Fedun • 780-882-7427
 - Box 728, Wembley, AB TOH 3S0 dody@profitbookkeeping.com

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Coast to Coast by Dennis Burns

Ideas to attract young volunteers

How do we get more youth involved? This seems to be a very common question these days at club meetings all across the country. All good leaders are looking longer term for the new volunteers of tomorrow to keep the snowmobile trails magically appearing each and every year.

The Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) has a great youth program in place. At the International Snowmobile

Congress last June, Kids and Adults on Sleds (KAOS) entertained the crowd and did a presentation at breakfast to over 400 members. KAOS has been very busy travelling to a number of state and provincial club and association meetings to explain how to launch a simi-

lar program. For more information go to www.awsc.org and click on Youth Information on the left-hand sidebar.

Many schools are offering credit for volunteer work and some even have mandatory hours that are required to graduate. Some pre-work is required to complete the application process. Projects or trail work programs must be pre-approved by the local school board in order to be recognized toward a school credit. Community work or volunteering with a snowmobile club can be a great way to work with these new faces and it's a win-win-they get the credits they need to graduate and the local clubs have the opportunity to recruit a new generation of snowmobilers and potential volunteers. Try to make the day fun and a positive experience. Ensure that your leaders

are the best ambassadors for your snowmobile club and remember to say thank you.

One idea is to purchase a camera and allow the kids to create videos of what they are doing on the trails and then post them on Facebook. Some will be posting photos on Instagram or tweeting to their friends. If these terms are not fa-

miliar to you, then you should appreciate the importance of getting this new generation to alert your members about a trail work day or organizing a "flash mob" of volunteers ready to install some signs!

Then remember that as leaders you still need to appoint someone at the club to be your volunteer co-ordinator. Remember the 3 Rs-reward the volunteers you have today, retain them by

Dennis Burns

YAMAHA

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voice of organized snowmobiling!



▶ showing your appreciation for their choice to share their free time with the club, and **recruit** volunteers for work projects and programs, letting them know that you are willing to listen to their ideas and will greatly appreciate their help.

I was at a meeting one day and a new volunteer raised his hand and said, "Why don't we have a pancake breakfast at the Legion?" Then, almost on cue, one of the executive members said, "We tried that and no one showed up." The poor "newbie" quickly sat down and did not return to another meeting until he was coaxed back with promises that his opinion was very much appreciated and he would be given time to be heard.

The Prince Edward Island Snowmobile Association tackled its shortage of volunteers from another angle. It went looking for new directors for its provincial board. Up to four new directors could be added providing they were less than 24 years old. The rest of the board committed to listening to their new ideas, including ways to attract the younger generation to the sport. We all know the mathwith one comes his or her buddy and with them his or her buddies. Each new volunteer that is recruited gets two, three or more involved.

In theory, the 3 Rs-reward, retain and recruit-seem easy enough to put into action but it takes a dedicated leadership team to become normal business practice. It is always easier to keep a volunteer that is already donating his or her time. Finally, the fun factor should always score high on the "how we do things" scale.

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