

Snowmobile Recreation Council
Law Enforcement Committee

Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 22, 2006
Wausau DNR, Wausau Wisconsin

Call to order by Rick Steimel at 10:00 a.m.

Members present: Tom Chwala, Jon Schweitzer, Rick Steimel, and SRC chair Mike Cerny and Vice-chair Bev Dittmar. **Guests:** Bill Pfaff, AWSC President.

Department liaison: Gary Eddy, Wisconsin Snowmobile/ATV administrator.

Approve minutes of previous meeting: Motion by Bev D. and seconded by Tom C. to accept the December 8, 2005 minutes of the previous LE committee meeting, held in Hurley. No discussion or additions; motion stands.

Chair report: Rick S. reviewed the snowmobile fatality reports from the 2005-2006 season and completed his analysis of the data and handed summary reports out to everyone. Six reports are still shown as "pending" for BAC levels of fatality victims. Rick highlighted the following information:

- 26 victims were residents.
- 21 victims hadn't completed snowmobile safety. (This year those ages 12-20 were required to complete snowmobile safety.)
- Time of crash. 23 after dark, 2 at dusk and 10 during 10. In 2007 daylight savings time starts March 11th.
- 19 hit an object
- 8 occurred on a lake/ice related. (Some of these could be included with hitting an object as they hit the shoreline or something else.)
- 17 were speed **and** alcohol related, and a total of 30 were speed **and/or** alcohol related.

Department report: Gary Eddy reported on the following:

* Recap of 2005-2006 Season/Specialty enforcement teams-funding. Gary E. went through a Power Point presentation about the Snowmobile Accident Reduction team and last season's fatalities. The teams received overwhelmingly positive comments from the public. The public enjoyed the additional LE presence on the trails, slowing people down. Mike C. asked about funding for the team next year. Bill Pfaff stated that the Co-Chair of the Joint Finance Committee will pursue funding for the team for next season. There was considerable discussion and questions on hours of patrol by wardens (accident reduction teams and others) and county patrols, and on numbers of citations and warnings issued. This data is still being compiled.

* 55 mph dusk-dawn speed limit - This passed the legislature, however the sunset was reduced to one year from two and the additional funding for the special snowmobile enforcement teams was deleted. Wardens have speed detection equipment and will be enforcing the speed limit in areas where violators can be safely contacted such as on lakes and fields, and safe sections of trails. Mike C. asked if speeds could be enforced on routes. Gary stated that they are currently being enforced. Rick S. added that the 55 mph speed limit is statewide and includes all areas open to the public for snowmobiling. Bev D. asked if the special enforcement teams would be enforcing this law and Gary stated that they would.

* The stationary sound test passed the legislature and will be enforced.

* Trail Ambassador program. AWSC Safety Committee chair is working on this and was put into contact with Jeff Dauterman, DNR Recreational Safety Warden from Antigo. Jeff will provide Steve with any assistance/information he needs. Bev D. commented that this should be a locally funded effort. Clubs currently volunteer and secure funding for trail patrol needs through local donations. No snowmobile program money should be used for this, funding should go to L.E. Gary commented that he didn't know what the AWSC Safety Committee was working on and that if they came out with some consistent statewide guidelines for all patrols to follow that would be a step in the right direction. Tom C. stated he talked with the Safety Committee chair and hadn't heard much on this project.

* Billboards, PSA's, ads. Bev. D. asked if any comments had been received about the billboards from this season. Gary stated that people commented that they had seen them up around the state and that they were just one more thing to make people think about snowmobile safety. Bev D. asked if Tourism would provide funding for billboards this year and Gary hadn't inquired about that with them. There will be a television and radio public service announcement (PSA) with Blair Morgan who is a sno-cross racer. Gary was able to do some taping with Blair after racing at Lambeau Field in Green Bay. The theme was to keep racing on the track and not on the trail.

* Update on out-of-state youth certifications. Rick enquired if there was any feedback from wardens or others about availability issues for courses for out-of-state youths. Gary stated that there were a handful of calls from concerned parents where their children couldn't take the CD Rom course because of the 16 year old age limit. Bev D. stated that this was a minority of the overall number of children certified in the snowmobile safety course. Rick and Bev stated that the CD Rom was still a very good learning tool and could be used as a supplement.

* Check point stops/OWI-DL Tie in. Secretary Hassett stated at the last AWSC Conference that he would see what effect the 55 mph speed limit had on fatalities. If it didn't have the desired effect he was going to look at check point stops and/or OWI tie-in with driver's licenses to try and get the number of fatalities down. Mike C. suggested looking at revocation of privileges like a motorcycling endorsement. Drunks are on a trail, not a road. He thought that an endorsement system would work because it's an existing system as with snowmobiles. People could get the endorsement after completing snowmobile

safety. Mike would rather come up with something that works, rather than have something forced on everyone that they don't like. Mike wants to prepare for this ahead of time. Rick S. stated that there were a lot of red flags for an endorsement system and that you could see endorsements being created for everything then like ATVs and boats. Rick thought that OWI tie in would greatly affect insurance and could be a great factor based on that alone. Tom C. felt that this could potentially take away a person's ability to drive to work, if their DL was revoked for OWI and that was not right. Getting a permit to drive to work is a long process. Tom doesn't like the idea and thought the cost to administer this change would be too great. Bev D. didn't think this would be effective and that people would find a way around it. Bev wanted to know how Minnesota and Michigan administered their OWI tie in programs and where the funding came from. She wondered if this was part of the court costs and no money came from the snowmobile program. Rick S. will look into how MI and MN works OWI tie-in with driver's licenses. Tom C. wants to make sure that we're not jumping into anything. He wants all the information and to think this through first. Mike C. agreed and stated this will take 2-3 years to implement anyway. He hopes that the 55 mph speed limit works. Bev D. added that it will take time to crunch the numbers from enforcement of the 55 mph nighttime speed limit next season. Jon S. added that it takes time for the effects of any new law to be seen. Rick S. added that in 2000 when the emergency 50 mph rule was in effect that the deaths dropped from 39 to 26 and then 15 the following year. Rick also agrees that if something happens with OWI tie-in with driver's licenses that it should come from us.

Action on chair and Department reports: None

Items for next meeting: Rick S. will report back with any information gathered about Michigan and Minnesota's OWI tie-in with driver's licenses for snowmobile OWI offenses.

Member items:

* Jon S. asked Gary E. about the different "born on" dates for the various safety certifications. The cut-off date for people's birth dates requiring them to complete a DNR safety course are different for boat, snow and ATV. Why can't all the dates be the same. Gary E. explained that the dates were dependant upon when the laws were passed. Each law was passed at a different time and therefore the dates are different.

* Rick S. wondered if there should be information available at events such as the Snow Show about avalanche safety, primarily intended for Wisconsin or other mid-western snowmobilers who ride in the mountain areas of the west. Rick stated that there are many deaths out west due to avalanches. Bev D. stated that avalanches are covered in the snowmobile safety manual. Tom C. stated that other states/dept.s put brochures out and that we could get some from them.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Bev D., seconded by Tom C. Motion passed and meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.