



54th Annual International Snowmobile Congress

Saturday, June 11, 2022 | Grand River Center | Dubuque, IA



ISMA's Ed Klim visits with Polaris' Pat Adrian and Cathie Tidball following his Friday morning Keynote Address.

Focusing on Avalanche Safety, Awareness & Instruction

Avalanche safety became a recurring topic at ISC 2022 Friday. ISMA's Ed Klim shared what they're doing to promote it at breakfast. North Dakota's Keri Vammer discussed her training efforts in a morning seminar, and two separate slots on the schedule were reserved for experienced instructors.

The second avalanche session Friday included a panel discussion on 'Modern Avalanche Education', featuring Jeff Hambelton from the Northwest Avalanche Center in Washington, Mark Staples from the Utah Avalanche Center, Mike Duffy from Avalanche1 in Colorado and Matt Entz from Mountain Skillz in Colorado.

Each panelist brought more than 10 years of instruction experience to the table as they took turns responding to questions and discussing ways to improve their image, marketing and outreach. Their common goal was to provide accessible courses, so everyone has an opportunity for training before they head up the mountain.

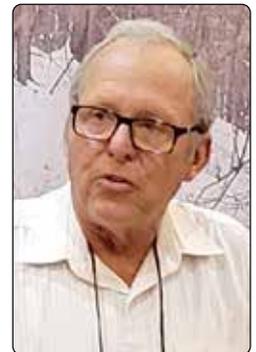
"I think there's a misconception out there of

Turn to page 2

New Snowmobile Sales Down from Previous Season

Quebec led the way last season in new snowmobile sales with 19,582 units sold, accounting for nearly 40 percent of Canada's overall sales and outpacing all of Scandinavia, according to figures released by ISMA Friday morning.

"Quebec has a very strong market for the snowmobile business," ISMA President Ed Klim said during his annual 'State of Snowmobiling' address at ISC. "Snowmobiling is really part of the culture in Canada, and I think they're doing an excellent job up there."



ISMA's Ed Klim

Last winter, Canadians purchased 50,943 new snowmobiles, and those figures have remained fairly steady over the last 20 years. In the U.S., 53,821 new snowmobiles were sold last year, down from 59,234 the year prior. "The numbers have fallen in the U.S. quite a bit," Klim noted.

Minnesota led all states in new snowmobile sales with 6,330 units followed by Wisconsin, New York and Michigan. Worldwide sales of new machines last season topped out at 130,644, a decrease of 3,000 units from the previous winter.

In Europe, Sweden, Norway and Finland combined for 15,934 new sleds, and Russia contributed another 7,299. Strongly opposed to the current strife in

Turn to page 4



Utah's Mark Staples (right) talks shop with Gilles Valade (left) and Brent Strand from Avalanche Canada ahead of Friday's panel discussion.



From left, Mark Staples, Mike Duffy, Jeff Hambelton and Matt Entz.



Community Development Specialist Jane Nolan Goeken from Iowa State University Extension offered tips on applying for grants Friday.

Avalanche

From page 1

what an avalanche course is...that it's going to be this painful classroom experience," Entz said. "But what it is actually is a good time riding out on the snow, so that by the time they complete a course, they are jacked up about riding safe.

"One thing we often hear from mountain riders is they can't believe they took so long to actually take a course, saying they should have taken a course a long time ago," Entz continued. "Most say they can't believe what they've learned. People don't realize what they are missing out on."

Duffy said he has observed when riders first attend a class, their "perceived" knowledge of avalanche awareness and education is much higher than their "actual" knowledge. They are typically humbled by the training experience and walk away with a newfound respect for the mountains.

"It's well worth your time to take the classes," Duffy said. "We've increased our exposure tremendously in this sport, and the education has to match the exposure. We're seeing more Midwest riders travelling out West to take classes, and it's making a huge difference."

The biggest motivation for this shift in attitude can be found in the accident statistics. Duffy has researched avalanche fatalities over the past seven years, and he has found that 90 percent of the snowmobilers killed in avalanches have never taken an on-snow course.

"We can look at these accidents and can see exactly what went wrong," he said. "Taking these classes makes a huge difference. The education is out there, but you have to choose to go to the classes. That should be the standard."



Officer Brad Comer with the Manchester (IA) Police Department led a Friday morning Breakout Session on emergency management.

Trespass Information Sought

If your club has lost trail access due to trespassing, please reach out to John Prusak from *SnowGoer* for an upcoming magazine article on the issue.

Seminar Looks at Women in Snowmobiling

One statistic from the survey results shared by ISMA Friday morning on the demographics in snowmobiling certainly caught the attention of a few female panelists at a later seminar on women in snowmobiling.

Besides showing the average age of a snowmobiler continues to climb, the survey illustrated the disproportionate gap in gender participation in the sport, where 89 percent of respondents were male.

"When you look at the 11 percent that they say are women riders, we definitely need to grow that," said Lyric Murphy, a freestyle backcountry rider from southwest Wyoming.

Murphy was one of six women invited to participate in 'Ride Like a Girl', a panel discussion focusing on females in the sport. Fielding questions from the audience, they talked about what it will take to increase participation from women.

The other five female panelists included Minnesota's Taven Woodie, Wisconsin's Kate Boeger, Ontario's MJ Thompson, Michigan's Michelle Vallier Labadie and North Dakota's Keri Vammer.

All six shared their introduction to the sport and how it has shaped their lives to this point. All were influenced by their families growing up, and they plan to return the favor by introducing others to the sport, either through community outreach, training or education.

"I have probably met some of the most amazing people through snowmobiling," Murphy said. "I love teaching people how to ride. I make it a goal of mine every year to take out a kid—usually a less fortunate kid—who I want to show that there is a better life out there for them.

"We need to make sure the experience is outstanding for them," she continued. "I have seen too many times where people will show up and not bring the right gear for riding. That will likely translate into them not having a great experience, so they won't be too encouraged to go back out again."



Keri Vammer follows up with Nebraska's Kate Stutheit after Friday's Women in Snowmobiling seminar.

Thompson, a Ski-Doo ambassador who collects vintage snowmobiles and operates a snowmobile parts business, said education is the key to recruiting new women to the sport.

"One of the biggest obstacles for women in snowmobiling is that they get into the sport but don't realize what their options are...their options for apparel, their options for sled set-up and even just their transportation options," she said.

"Women need to learn how to drive a truck and trailer and load up their own sleds and go places," Thompson continued. "I think we need to broaden the scope for women and make them realize they don't have to ride their boyfriend's broken-down, hand-me-down sled that's set up completely wrong for them."

From left, Michelle Vallier Labadie, Kate Boeger Lyric Murphy, Taven Woodie, MJ Thompson and Keri Vammer.



ISMA

From page 1

eastern Europe, Klim addressed the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia and how it will likely stall snowmobile growth there.

"I don't know how many units we will sell there in the future, but we do know people are pulling out of the country," he said. "We will see what happens."

Besides the war overseas, Klim indicated other contributing factors may have an impact on snowmobile sales moving forward, including the residual impact of the pandemic, rising inflation, higher gas prices and a full-court press legislatively on climate change in the U.S.

"These are challenging times right now," acknowledged Klim, who has served as the industry's chief lobbyist since 1995. "We are going through some issues that we haven't gone through before. I'm a school-trained economist. I'm not a fortune teller. We do know what drives the economy pretty well, and we are all going to work through this and will make it out fine. But it might not be easy."

According to Klim, population migration has also had an impact on snowmobile sales in the U.S. As jobs move away and residents leave the Snow Belt, they take their buying power with them. Workers who once purchased snowmobiles in the north are now buying ATVs in the south.

"ATVs are seemingly becoming a substitute to snowmobiles, and we didn't see that type of competition in the early 1990s," said Klim, who lives in Michigan, where new snowmobile sales have dropped from 33,000 units annually 30 years ago to 4,358 sleds last season.

Population shifts and changing tastes are just some of the "determinants" Klim said ISMA tracks when identifying and anticipating consumer trends. As personal wealth fluctuates with the economy, Klim pointed to the stiff competition for disposable income in outdoor recreation.

"What do we like to spend our money on?" Klim asked. "Do we want to buy a sports car? Do we want to buy a boat? Do we want to buy a snowmobile?"

One area of growth for the manufacturers that Klim started to track recently involves OEM sales of parts, garments and accessories (PG&A). Last winter, snowmobilers purchased \$444 million worth of goods in these categories. That number was up 30 percent year-over-year.

"That is big business," said Klim. "For whatever reason, people bought a few more helmets, a few more coats and some more parts for their snowmobiles. You guys spent a lot of money on the PG&A."



Several Iowa distillers were on hand Friday to pass out free samples to ISC 2022 attendees who paid the \$25 entry fee to the Iowa Spirits Tasting room.



Friday Night Highlights

Friday at ISC 2022 came to a close with the Groomer Reception in the Exhibit Hall and the Illinois Hospitality Room with food, beverages and tandem ski racing. The Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs hosts 2023 ISC June 7-10 in Moline.