

**TO: U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS
U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING STAFF
LMSC LEADERS**

FROM: ROB BUTCHER

COPY: OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2010

SUBJECT: YEAR END BUSINESS REPORT AND THE YEAR AHEAD

In preparation for our February board meeting, please find enclosed the 2009 year-end business report for U.S. Masters Swimming, an update on 2010 initiatives, and a look at the big picture ideas in progress.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS

As of December 31, 2009, we had 52,751 registered members. The 52,751 members represent an all time high for USMS and an 11% growth from 2008. Despite this being a non-Olympics year and in the midst of a recession, we can attribute our success to several key factors:

- 1) Support from our extraordinary volunteers for the organization's Action Plan.
Together, volunteers and staff alike, we share a common and passionate bond for the mission of USMS. Our commitment to our mission brings with it a shared value system of service and a striving for excellence. It is through this process that we are honest with ourselves, we are transparent in our communication, we uphold accountability, we take thought-out risks, and we make decisions that are in the best interest of the mission we serve. These are core values that run deep through our organization and permeate our culture.

2) Online membership registration: 2009 was our first full year of online membership registration. Two statistics jump out when reviewing our registration success:

A) 71% of our 2009 registrations were online

B) 64% was our 2009 membership retention, a 2% increase from 2008 but more importantly, illustrates the need and opportunity for us to develop and implement a retention program

When USMS decided in 2007 that it would offer an online registration system, it was a bold yet wise move. Unlike other pre-programmed membership software programs, USMS choose a path of customization where our online membership system would be built from the ground up. Every element within our online registration system is specifically designed and programmed for our needs. Our online registration platform is not static but vibrant. We are learning each day seeking input and searching for ways we can improve the process, functionality and customer service. In 2008, the only person with behind the scenes access to the online registration program was Tracy Grilli in our national office. That has evolved with log-in access available to all 52 LMSC registrars so they may update member information, generate reports and use the communication tools. Our membership database is now used to support many member functions. As an example, we can to instantly verify online event registrations. In 2009, we've added the capability for clubs to renew their registration, thus providing efficiency to our more than 650 USMS registered clubs.

3) Club and Coach Development: Our Coach and Club Development (CCD) program is a grassroots outreach support service. Our club development coordinators assist USMS programs and coaches in problem solving; they make site visits to offer encouragement and training; they identify and target facilities/geographies for Masters program expansion; they identify facilities that could host events; they provide mentorship to Masters coaches; and they promote and distribute our marketing resources. We incubated the CCD program in Fall 2008 and continued the first half of 2009 with Mel Goldstein as our sole CCD dedicated staff representative. As the year progressed, and the time demand for CCD services was growing, we

sought to regionalize the program with additional CCD coordinators. Mel continues to lead our CCD program with Jim Halstead serving the Dixie and Colonies Zones, Susan Ingraham serving South Central Zone and Southwest Zone, and Lisa Dahl serving the Northwest Zone and Oceana Zone. In 2009, our CCD Coordinators participated in Coaches Committee meetings, ensuring collaboration between volunteers and staff, have outreached to many LMSC leader, and communicated with more than 200 USMS programs. We have logged hundreds of phone hours assisting LMSC leaders and Masters coaches. We documented thousands of e-mail communications. We have made more than 30 visits to clubs that requested assistance. Our club development program can best be described as grassroots with lots of interaction. The number registered clubs was up 7% in 2009.

- 4) Marketing: The Board of Directors approved our new USMS logo and brand style guide in February of 2009. We received our certificate of registration from the U.S. Patent and Trademark office for our new logo in January of 2010. We have volunteers that have canvassed the Internet encouraging LMSCs, zones, club and affiliated USMS sites to replace the old USMS logo with the new USMS logo, put the Join/Renew USMS icon on their site, and have an active link to usms.org. As of January 1, and having surveyed 315 Masters related websites, the findings are showing progress yet we still have a long way to go:

- 28% or 88 sites have placed the Join/Renew USMS icon on their site
- 29% or 92 sites have the new USMS logo on their site
- 49% or 154 sites have a link to usms.org on their site
- 12% or 37 sites have the old USMS logo on their site

Our new marketing resources available for free to LMSCs, clubs and USMS event hosts have been a real hit. Since being introduced in August of 2009, our staff has fulfilled and shipped more than 150 individual orders. We have distributed more than 24,000 brochures, 12,000 USMS branded caps, 5,000 USMS bag tags, and 5,000 USMS stickers. We have traveled to events distributing promotional items to participants along with USMS banners. Our staff and club development coordinators

additionally walk the deck of events talking to coaches and officials distributing USMS branded apparel. While this type of marketing is labor intensive, it is planting the seeds of goodwill with our constituency. It also helps our staff learn more about how the benefits of Masters are delivered in markets across the country.

5) Membership benefits enhanced: This past year we made a commitment to improve a variety of member benefits.

- In January of 2009, we launched our very first member e-newsletter “Member News from Behind the Blocks”
- Two weeks later, we introduced our inaugural Masters Coaches e-newsletter “News From the Deck”
- Both e-newsletters were quite successful with an e-mail open rate just under 40% and thousands of stories within clicked and read on usms.org
- In May, we conducted a survey designed to measure member expectations related to our e-newsletters, *SWIMMER* magazine and usms.org. In summary, members told us:
 - Be sensitive with how often we send e-mail information
 - Once a month e-newsletters is appropriate
 - *SWIMMER* needed a shot of energy
 - usms.org has lots of information but it can be difficult to navigate
- Go The Distance (GTD), our fastest growing program went online via the fitness logs (FLOGs). The web-based program was developed and is maintained in-house. Members can now track and see their training activity (including swimming and other forms of activity) daily and monthly, while being able to compare their overall results within their age group and gender.
- As of February 19th, we have 1,138 members tracking their workouts via our FLOGs. All total, our members have made over 143,000 entries in their FLOGs.
- Registration for the 3000/6000 and 5K and 10K Postal Swims went online.

- 6) Opening of U.S. Masters Swimming headquarters and adding of key staff: To implement our Action Plan, it was vital we establish a headquarters. Our headquarters opened in July of 2009. Shortly thereafter we were able to relocate existing staff, and hire new staff and contractors into positions in membership services, marketing, accounting, club development and business/event operations.

WHAT IS AHEAD FOR 2010

During our 2009 Convention, Jeff Moxie was elected as our new Board president. Jeff has shared and challenged the staff to help him meet three key objectives during his presidency. We are excited by the opportunity and look forward to working with Jeff, our Board of Directors and volunteers. The three objectives are:

- I) As staff is charged with carrying out the Action Plan and taking on more of the day-to-day responsibilities for USMS, while continuing to engage our passionate volunteer base with meaningful volunteer experiences
- II) Increase membership to 100,000
- III) Define a legacy purpose for our Endowment Fund and grow it

The following are projects we are implementing in 2010 in support of these objectives:

- During the 2010 convention, more educational workshops for volunteers are being added to the schedule. The workshops will highlight volunteer opportunities and how the volunteer experience can be enhanced. Some of the workshop titles are:
 - How to operate and promote a USMS Open Water event
 - How to operate and promote a USMS pool event
 - How to use the Internet and social media to grow your USMS program
 - Understanding USMS insurance
 - How to develop a USMS program at a YMCA, University, City/County facility or high school
 - Qualities of a successful Masters coach

- How to find and recognize LMSC volunteers
 - LMSC registrar training
- We are offering one-on-one LMSC training at the national office. To date, we have hosted several LMSC leaders who came to Sarasota for education and support. If you know of LMSC volunteers who are responsible for registration, sanctioning, communication or other have other needs, our staff is available to speak with them by phone, e-mail and we'd be pleased to have them visit the headquarters for one-on-one training.
- Making good on our pledge to add more insurance benefits to membership, we were successful in adding dental coverage under the secondary accident policy and we added short-term disability. USMS secondary insurance is available to members who are injured when participating in a USMS practice or sanctioned activity.
- The last time Masters coaching certification was updated was more than 10-years ago. Our club development team, working with the Coaches Committee, is reinventing Masters coaching certification. There will be five levels of certification, with Level 1 curriculum and testing to be launched at the ASCA 2010 World Clinic in September.
 - Levels 1 & 2 focus on the basics of strokes; serving our entire member base: fitness, competitive, triathletes, and open water
 - Levels 3 & 4 focus on the business skills of being a Masters coach: finance, marketing, risk management, and the like
 - Level 5 focus is for Masters coaches that, in essence, are CEOs of their programs
- We will be creating and distributing video content to share the many stories of USMS. Our goal is to produce a minimum of 50 different video stories in 2010. We will additionally be producing a daily highlight video from Atlanta Nationals and Puerto Rico Nationals, as well as some open water events. Video content will be available via usms.org and distributed to other swimming media outlets.

- Beginning in January of 2010, all our e-newsletters have been rebranded as *STREAMLINES*. We now offer three e-newsletters for the membership that are all filled with original Masters themed content:
 - *STREAMLINES*; a monthly publication
 - *STREAMLINES* for Coaches; a monthly publication
 - *STREAMLINES* for Volunteers; a quarterly publication
- In addition to financial support, our sponsors are activating and helping us grow programs, creating recognition and pride in USMS. We continue to develop activation opportunities for our partners to become more involved. Two examples worth sharing are;
 - Nike Swim has become title sponsor of our Go The Distance (GTD) fitness program. Nike Swim is using their pages in *SWIMMER* magazine to promote GTD participation. Nike Swim, with fulfillment support from USMS licensee and retail partner All American Swim Supply, is providing free product to GTD members as they achieve GTD milestones. In 2009, GTD participation was at 1,100 members. As of February 19th, we set a new participation record with 1,417 members going the distance.
 - Colorado Time Systems digital pace clocks are terrific training tools and will be provided at each of our pool championships and key open water events. The pace clocks will then be given away at the end of each event.
- SwimFest, the ultimate Masters coaching experience, will be June 4-6 weekend in San Diego. Several LMSCs have committed to providing significant scholarship and travel support to send their coaches. Promotion and online registration for SwimFest will begin with the March/April issue of *SWIMMER* magazine.
- With a regionalized Coach and Club Development program, we are better able to offer even more timely support and make more visits to LMSCs and USMS programs.
- Our support of USMS clubs and events will continue as we distribute more USMS branded items such as swim caps, banners, brochures, stickers and apparel. This type of marketing is grassroots and a significant time investment for the USMS

staff. The efforts continue to be much appreciated by our coaches and clubs, and generate goodwill.

- USMS Endowment Fund contributors are receiving a mailed thank-you letter. We are also adding a Giving information section to usms.org. This section will highlight projects the Endowment Fund has supported and how members may apply for Endowment grants. Additionally, we expect to add an online giving mechanism in 2010.
- Our new open water concept, branded the H₂Open Series, launches in 2010 with four established USMS sanctioned open water events. For 2010, we are working with the event promoters to offer national promotion, product support from our sponsors and we will be creating video highlights. This is our learning year as we work with the event promoters and discover ways we can help each of them grow their events.

BIG PICTURE IDEAS IN PROCESS

There are several big picture ideas in process and at various stages of exploration. All are exciting and could lead to even more opportunity to impact the way we serve our members and fulfill our mission. The ideas are:

- A Membership Task Force, which includes volunteers and staff has been assembled to develop a strategy for how we can better retain members, grow membership and offer consistency of service. The task force is diligently doing its work with a recommended course of action expected later in 2010.
- An End-to-End Event Management Task force, which includes volunteers and staff, has been assembled to develop a strategy for how we sanction events, input events into our events calendar, and how we compile and publish event results. The genesis of this opportunity starts with our sanctioning process and what resources and technology we can offer to best serve our current and potential event hosts. This task force is also diligently doing its work with a recommended course of action expected later in 2010.

- We are considering an opportunity for USMS to host our 2012 Summer Nationals in Omaha immediately following the Olympic Trials. In addition to the “once in a lifetime” experience for members to compete in the Olympic Trials atmosphere, USMS presence would demonstrate visible support for our Olympic athletes and the signature event in aquatics, along with support for our partners at USA Swimming and the USA Swimming Foundation.
- Our Action Plan calls for continued investment in serving our members and promoting our mission. Our current headquarters space is fixed at 2,000 square feet with no room for expansion. The headquarters office is adequate for today’s need, but as we grow and take on more responsibility it is inevitable we will need more space. We have entered into a feasibility study with the Sarasota Family YMCA to consider expanding the current Selby Aquatic Center and add office space. It is our hope that the feasibility study will be completed later in 2010, providing both the Sarasota Family YMCA and USMS the necessary information to consider the merits of this opportunity.

From all of the USMS employees, I thank you for your continued passion, support and enthusiasm. Please feel free to share any comments, questions or suggestions you might have with me.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rob Butcher
Executive Director,
U.S. Masters Swimming