

TO: HOUSE OF DELEGATES
FROM: ROB BUTCHER
DATE: AUGUST 27, 2010
RE: U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING 2010 CONVENTION REPORT

In July of this year, we celebrated our one-year anniversary in our USMS headquarters. The establishment of a headquarters has been a significant milestone for USMS. Our headquarters has provided measurable benefits including but not limited to centralization and consolidation of responsibilities, opening up new opportunities for growth and service, building of infrastructure and efficiencies in how we operate to better serve our members, clubs, volunteers and partners, and elevating the USMS brand.

As we look back on the last year, we have achieved many accomplishments that have and will make long lasting difference in how we serve.

People

- USMS is bearing the early stages of fruit with a professional staff. While volunteers do contribute greatly, much of what has been accomplished here is under the direction of a professional staff that wakes up daily and goes to bed each night with accountability.
- We welcomed several new members to our 2010 staff that has allowed us to move forward important priorities for USMS. They new staff additions are:
 - Anna Lea Matysek, Membership Coordinator
 - Anna Lea joined the staff in December of 2009. She bringing 20-years of invaluable experience as a USMS board member, LMSC officer and Finance Committee member. As you will read with IT, the demands from our members and LMSCs for customer support had grown beyond the time capability of Tracy Grilli. While Anna Lea is well versed in all areas of membership support including the online registration platform, it is the LMSCs that might be most benefiting from her service. As an example, several LMSCs had not filed their necessary tax returns and were in jeopardy of losing their non-profit status. Thanks to Anna Lea's diligence, the returns were filed on time with all LMSCs able to maintain their status.
 - Susan Kuhlman, Controller
 - In addition to day-to-day accounting and monthly reporting, Susan played a leadership role in the RFP and selection of our new audit firm; RFP, selection and integration of our new payroll benefits firm; and is intimately involved in the RFP and selection of our investment management firm. Susan additionally brings a wealth of fundraising experience and is participating in the establishment of our Foundation.
 - Ben Christoffel, Project Manager
 - Working with Laura Hamel, Ben has responsibility for gathering content and production of the monthly e-newsletters *STREAMLINES* and *STREAMLINES for Coaches*; video production services including coach/club videos and the daily shows from Nationals; and Ben manages our social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.
 - Susan Ingraham and Lisa Dahl, Coach and Club Development Coordinators

- In addition to their CCD responsibilities, both Susan and Lisa are contributing writers and were presenters at SwimFest, and the ASCA World Clinic where Masters coaches certification was taught.

Coach and Club Development

- Request for Coach and Club Development (CCD) services far exceeded the capabilities of Mel Goldstein. We added three regional CCD coordinators to help with the demand for CCD service this year. Last fall, the coordinators outreached to every USMS club that had not renewed its club registration. Throughout the year, coordinators – upon request – visited with existing USMS programs. They additionally visited locations to incubate new USMS programs, and responded to thousands of communication requests via e-mail and phone. In 2010, we saw an 8% growth in the number of registered clubs compared to 2009.
- Working with the Coaches Committee, a Level 1 and Level 2 Masters coaches certification was developed. The certification was introduced and taught at the 2010 ASCA World Clinic. More than 20-Masters coaches attended. Additional Levels of Masters certification are being developed, and with the Coaches Committee, locations are being identified to teach in 2011.
- The second annual SwimFest was hosted in the San Diego LMSC. SwimFest is our educational and interactive weekend experience for Masters coaches. In 2009, 35-Masters coaches attended. In 2010, more than 70-Masters coaches attended representing more than 10,000-registered USMS members. The SwimFest 2010 video recap is on the USMS YouTube site. We have received several requests from LMSCs and host clubs that are interested in hosting SwimFest 2011.

Membership Enhancement

- While 2010 membership is up nearly 5% from 2009, we continue to experience a non-renewal membership rate of around 35%. To put in perspective, that is nearly 40,000-memberships in 2009 and in 2010 that are non-renewing. Thirty five percent non-renewals should be a significant concern and lead us to question why is non-renewal so high? To help find the answers, we are partnering with Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD). MSCD is developing and will administer three different member surveys. One survey will be targeted to renewing members. A second survey will be targeted to non-renewing members. A third survey will be targeted to Masters coaches. The intent is to uncover what we are doing well and what we need to do to better. We must recognize that membership is a system wide issue, not just a national office challenge. We also should be prepared to seriously look at the survey feedback and where appropriate, implement areas of change.
- In 2010, a Know Your Benefits campaign was implemented with a goal of creating more awareness for the benefits of membership. Know Your Benefits is promoted via usms.org, *SWIMMER* magazine, and the *STREAMLINES* monthly e-newsletter.
- 2010 membership saw an increase in the insurance benefits available to members. New insurance benefits included coverage of teeth including false teeth under the Excess Medical coverage and a disability benefit added.
- In 2009, a member communication survey was conducted. We have made numerous enhancements in the quality presentation of *SWIMMER* as recommended by the survey. Examples of the enhancements include:
 - A revamped Swim Bag dedicated to authentic and original product features. Our product testing is the first of its kind in the swimming industry. It has been hugely popular with readers and has positioned *SWIMMER* as a leading authority in product reviews. Authentic product testing takes a significant commitment of time and is paying dividends in reader satisfaction.

- A Both Sides of the Lane Lines segment was introduced. This reader driven initiative allows two members to argue two opposing sides on an issue. This provocative segment of *SWIMMER* has become one of the most popular reads.
- In the January/February issue of *SWIMMER*, a pullout poster calendar was inserted. Readers very much enjoyed this benefit and a pullout poster will be included for 2011.
- With online automation of the Fitness Logs, administrative support for Go The Distance (GTD) – our fastest growing member program – has been reduced for staff and the Fitness Committee.
- Nike, with support from dealer All American Swim Supply, signed on as title sponsor of GTD. Nike purchased six full pages in *SWIMMER* magazine and dedicated each page to promoting GTD. In addition, Nike and All American made available more than \$10,000 in branded GTD prizes sent for free to participants as they hit various GTD milestones.
- In 2009, GTD participation was at 1,200. In 2010, GTD participation has grown to nearly 2,000-members.

IT

- One of the most significant tasks we undertook was the installation of new servers. A server failure experienced in late 2009 shined a light on some of our IT risks. With our new servers in place, significant capability and safeguards have been put in place.
- As shared, new programming that automated the Fitness Logs and the Go The Distance Program has been added.
- New programming enhancements towards End-to-End Event Management continue to be implemented.
- In the fall of 2010, a new accounting software program is being implemented. As both our revenues and expenses increase, the new accounting software will allow us to better report and present the financials of the organization.
- At the July 2009 board meeting, it was recognized that USMS is still at significant risk related to IT. As it stands, Jim Matysek is our sole IT professional dedicated to both IT customer support and programming requests. The demand for IT has grown considerably over the years and we have maxed the hours in the day for one person to do both support and programming. Additionally, USMS is significantly exposed without a safeguard plan in the event something happened to Jim. The board therefore passed a resolution “that increased investment in Information Technology is a high priority for USMS to effectively support member services and programs.” As such, USMS is asking for the addition of one-full time programmer in 2011.

Events

- With a headquarters and resources of a professional staff, the national office became more active in providing personnel support, product support, and promotional support to national events such as the Spring Nationals in Atlanta and H2Open Water events. Such examples of increased support include the ability to sell event merchandise during event registration, development of event logos and event collateral, product giveaways from sponsors, and production and broadcast of the events.
- The national office took full responsibility for operation of the Summer Nationals in Puerto Rico. With 1,976-participants, the Spring Nationals in Atlanta was the biggest attended Nationals in the past 10-years. Understandably therefore, the Summer Nationals with 635-participants was one of the lowest ever attended Nationals. Nonetheless, the national office was able to financially manage the event to a net positive, and by nearly all accounts the Summer Nationals were a huge hit and established a template of service that USMS may provide to future nationals hosts as well as setting the stage for USMS to operate the 2012 Summer Nationals.

Marketing and Promotion

- Offering of USMS branded swim caps, brochures, bag tags and other collateral have continued to be very popular with USMS clubs and coaches.
- In 2010, our video and social media initiatives expanded. Introduced were broadcast of video via usms.org, a branded USMS Twitter page, a branded USMS YouTube channel, a branded USMS Facebook page, and various websites syndicating our content. The appetite for USMS video and social content has been enormous. Consider since launching in Spring the following results:
 - The USMS YouTube video channel has received more than 50,000-views
 - The USMS Facebook page has more than 5,000-fans
 - The USMS Twitter page has 1,500-followers
 - The USMS LinkedIn page has 1,000-members
 - We have installed Google analytics to usms.org and are seeing an increase in usms.org site traffic
- New sponsor signings include Hammer Nutrition, All American Swim Supply, Fitness Nutrition, Colorado Timing Systems, and TriSwim Shampoo. A priority has been made to visit our sponsors in their headquarters. This type of commitment to our sponsors allows us to learn what is important to them and identify programs, such as the Nike Go The Distance program, that are of value to our sponsors and can be of benefit to our members.

Foundation

- Board President Jeff Moxie has made defining and raising money for our Foundation a signature priority of his administration.
- Nearly 3,000-members each year make a contribution to the USMS Endowment during online registration. In the past, those members would receive an automated acknowledgement receipt. In 2010, the national office mailed a thank you letter and USMS window decal to every contributor. The thank you letter highlighted projects the Endowment Fund has supported and directed members to usms.org/giving for more information.
- The USMS Foundation Task Force is making the recommendation that the “U.S. Masters Swimming Foundation be a nationally recognized charitable organization that focuses its resources on the vital lifesaving and lifetime benefits of swimming. The U.S. Masters Swimming Foundation provides needed funding to reduce drowning rates in the United States and to lead a nation-wide curative fitness and well-being initiative that is swimming central.”
- The USMS Foundation Task Force is recommending an allocation of financial resources towards growing our Foundation.

On behalf of all our staff,

Respectfully submitted,



Rob Butcher
Executive Director