



**MINNESOTA
SWIMMING**

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To: Minnesota Swimming House of Delegates

Subj: Executive Director's Report

Welcome to all attending this year's House of Delegates or reading this message online. Since our last House of Delegates there has been good progress in the strategic improvement of Minnesota Swimming. In June 2013 an updated strategic plan was adopted and this is a summary of key parts.

Cultural Identity

The strategic plan's first priority is to define and publicize the cultural identity of the organization. This focuses on the three core values of our mission: *Integrity. Sportsmanship. Excellence.*

Publication of the identity was launched during the 2014 short course championships using the theme "We Are MNswim." Colorful images of our local swimmers were featured on banners, ads, our website, social media, and the Aquatic Center scoreboard. They were depicted above the three core values with their call to action, "We're in. Are you?" More details were linked in the website.

Undeniably, we were striving to present something that stood out from the customary information seen from the LSC. Feedback collected was positive and promising. We are now moving forward with some of the concepts introduced, as well as some new ideas to embed and sustain the cultural identity message among our members and fans using the MNswim theme.

Club Development

The strategic plan calls for more interaction with clubs and their boards. To explain how they are part of a bigger picture of USA Swimming and identify gaps and resources to surmount challenges.

The process has gone well as many face-to-face conversations have really helped to connect busy volunteer club leaders and coaches -- to let them know they are supported and they do not have to reinvent the wheel.

We also launched the "Go Team" program to train volunteers within clubs who are interested in hosting a swim meet but need some mentoring to gain experience and confidence. The pilot went well and we now hope to work with more clubs who have not previously run meets, or are at point where they have a big gap in experience to overcome.

Pools

The strategic plan calls for the LSC to serve as a point of contact -- a clearinghouse for those in our region interested in renovating or building pools.

We continue to represent the interests of our members at the planning table. While we cannot build or renovate pools we do want to see that each project's plan considers the interests of competitive swimming for the largest number of our members possible.

Almost \$29,000 has been awarded via the pool grant program. In addition, we have represented competitive swimming at public hearings, supported efforts to have voters contact their legislators, and linked those in the community looking for expertise to professional providers in the industry. Every inquiry, every request, we learn more about projects that are conceptual and those that are real -- and that is good for our members who want to see genuine progress to improve pools.

Please understand -- this remains a big challenge, everywhere, not just Minnesota. USA Swimming has told us it would take \$1.4 billion dollars to solve the current renovations challenge for just 70 or so championship-capable facilities in the country. Whatever that amount is for smaller facilities it is even greater, which will require resources well beyond USA Swimming, LSC's, and swim clubs. Nonetheless, we will keep working in ways we can to make a difference for pools in our region.

Marketing

The plan calls for the development of a marketing and business plan for the LSC.

Two points to mention from the past year. We formed an ad hoc group of pros in our swimming community who have marketing and public relations experience. As we develop ways to grow the sport for clubs and our members this group will be terrific resource to get solid advice to improve.

What I am equally excited about is the launch of *Swim Today* from USA Swimming. Those of you attending the House of Delegates will hear from USA Swimming's Marketing Director, Jim Fox. This initiative is aimed at more than 2 million kids (nationwide) involved with learn-to-swim programs to bridge them into competitive swimming. It launches May 1, 2015 and its tagline, "Swimming: The Funnest Sport Ever" will use professional themes, visuals, and a variety of media to attract those outside the sport, in a fun way, to give competitive swimming a try.

USA Swimming clubs will be part of an online database that people can look over using their zip code. That means great publicity for competitive swimming and driving interest to your swim club.

Thanks

I want to thank the hundreds of volunteers involved with running swim meets, our officials, meet directors, and those serving on club boards and various committees for everything you are doing for members of Minnesota Swimming. Well done!

I want to welcome the new and continuing members of the MSI Board, and recognize those who are stepping down from active board involvement. To all of you -- it is not easy to be a volunteer, but I want you to know I see the gift you provide to our members – your time and service. Thank you.

Lastly, I want to publicly thank the staff -- Cassy, Sheryl, Sandra, and Becky for their hard work. I see so many little things they do to help our members and hope you join me in thanking them.

It continues to be a privilege to serve as Executive Director. I share a passion for my work and this sport that makes it rewarding even when things are chaotic; but especially when we solve problems. So in that spirit, I invite you to let me know when things are going well or how we can improve another time.

As always, please contact me or a member of the staff when we can help and I will look forward to seeing you on deck.

