



**MINNESOTA
SWIMMING**

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Welcome to all of you attending this year's House of Delegates or reading this message online. Since a year ago, I am pleased to write about progress and improvement in several strategic areas.

We Are MNswim

Our Local Swimming Committee (LSC) is a very passionate organization. I am always amazed at the spirit of our members to constantly improve and get better. But when things change so fast it is sometimes easier to resist or get swept into the weeds and forget about the bigger picture -- mission, identity, and what we stand for.

We have completed a full year of the *We Are MNswim* initiative. Undeniably, the core values of our mission are far more visible and known than a year ago. Every image or story published that illustrates how our members exhibit these values is a reminder of the bigger picture and what is really important. I know it keeps me centered and calm when things get a little zany and busy.

If it has been awhile since you looked at *MNswim*, I invite you to check out the online summary. Read the description that illustrates each core value and think about the impact for you and what you do in this sport. Remember, together *We Are MNswim. Integrity. Sportsmanship. Excellence. and We Are All In!*

Pools

We continue to serve as a point of contact -- a clearinghouse for those in our region interested in renovating or building pools. We represent the interests of our members at the planning table to see that competitive swimming needs are considered for the largest number of swimmers possible. When asked, we also represent our members interests at public hearings, support efforts to have voters contact their legislators, or link individuals looking for pool expertise to professional providers.

We continue to learn the difference between conceptual and real projects. This is good for our members who want to see genuine progress to improve pools. And while the LSC cannot build or renovate a pool, the Pool Facility Development Grant Program continues to seed" projects that have a major funding source engaged. I am happy to report that over \$161,000 in "seeds" have been approved since the program's inception. And with the recent approval of a grant to the Rochester Rec Center Aquatic Center it is exciting that our members will have more options for both the short and long course championships because of this program.

Let me advise once more -- competition pools remain a big challenge everywhere -- not just our LSC. USA Swimming told us in 2013 it would take \$1.4 billion dollars to solve the current renovations challenge for just 70 national championship-capable facilities in the country. Whatever that amount is for smaller facilities, it is even greater. That means resources well beyond USA Swimming, the LSC, and swim clubs. Nonetheless, we will keep working in ways we can to make a difference for pools in our region.

Communications and Marketing

We are adding value for our members with the creation of a professional Communications and Marketing Coordinator role. Sandra Hibbard is moving into this position to develop and implement a plan to establish the LSC as the point of contact for competitive swimming in our region. The result will be telling the story (year

round) about all the positive things connected to the sport, and to drive interest and enhance retention. This is especially important for when we see the surge in competitive swimming following the Olympics. Furthermore, the addition of this role may never be more timely as we look into the future for college swimming and the changing landscape for scholarship Olympic sports in major college programs.

As Sandra's role changes I want to welcome Aleta Kolan as our new Webmaster & Social Media Specialist. In addition to coordinating the website she will lead our presence on social media. She brings a varied background in swimming to the job as a successful swimmer and coach at all levels, as well as her work as a nonprofit communications and data professional engaging youth in Greater Minnesota.

Bottom-line, I am really excited about the dedicated communications team who will be working to regularly tell the swimming story to spur interest and help retention....stay tuned.

Board Leadership

When I first started as Executive Director four years ago and now looking at today, the change in this LSC has been tremendous. While the staff is responsible for day-to-day operations the Board has governed and set our strategic direction.

Their record is a good one. They have kept the LSC on firm financial ground while returning dollars back to the clubs, and reducing undesignated reserves though planned reinvestment in the sport. And the programming changes in four years with our competition schedule, time standards, championship formats, Team Minnesota events, and official and coach development opportunities have been numerous but never easy ---- and certainly were less possible without sound volunteer leadership.

I have worked with or been part of many nonprofit boards. I can say the leadership of our volunteer board members is terrific. I am not delusional that every matter or problem has been solved, or that every decision and strategy was perfect. But, as a whole, members of this LSC have been served by insightful professional board leaders who understand the complexity of the challenges and their duty to mission. We have not reached all our goals but the prospects are good because of the strong volunteer culture.

Thanks

In closing 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 our LSC. 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, Becky, and Tracy for their hard work. I see the little things they do to help members and I hope you join me in thanking them too.

It continues to be a privilege to serve as Executive Director. I share a passion for nonprofit work and this sport, which makes it satisfying 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 be of help, and I will look forward to seeing you on deck.

Bob Crumstedt