



**MINNESOTA  
SWIMMING**

**Robert J. Crunstedt, CAE**  
Minnesota Swimming Inc.  
1001 Highway #7, Room 250  
Hopkins, MN  
55305-4723

[bcrunstedt@mns swim.org](mailto:bcrunstedt@mns swim.org)

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952.988.4185 o  
952.988.4183 f  
612.910.1616 m

Welcome to all of you attending this year's House of Delegates or reading this message online. I want to cover a few items in this year's report to give you some insight on how I have been working for our members.

### ***Big Picture – Athlete Centered***

For decades the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act has been the Federal law governing our sport. Among many things it stipulates is 20% athlete representation in the governance of USA Swimming as our National Governing Body.

There have been numerous changes over the years to implement athlete representation in both the high and mid-level governance of USA Swimming, but there is even greater momentum to do more -- to shape swimming's culture to be more athlete-centric in all levels.

So what is the "big picture" here? Athletes are members of their swim clubs, our Local Swimming Committee (LSC, MNswim ), the Central Zone, and USA Swimming. This will require a coordinated effort to benefit athletes regardless of skill and programming level. We should anticipate new initiatives for all levels of swimming to be focused and collaborative on how planning, programming, and governance can be more athlete-centered.

The good news is MNswim is absolutely a leader, nationwide, for being on this path. We have a history of strong athlete leaders who have not only left a legacy for the next generation of MNswim athletes, but they are doing the same at the national level too. At the same time, it is recognized there can be uncertainty with so many varied clubs and thousands of busy non-athlete and athlete leaders involved. So anticipate some definition and tools to set things up for success, on all levels, to be as athlete-centered as we can into the future. It may not be a snap everywhere, but we are certainly on a good foundation in this LSC.

### ***Pools***

We continue to serve as a point of contact 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 greatest 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. And we pass along information about USA Swimming's "Build A Pool" conferences when they are offered in our area.

We continue to learn the difference between conceptual and real projects. People tell us this is good because they want to see genuine progress on viable pool plans that (once again) benefit members throughout MNswim. And while the LSC cannot build or renovate a pool on its own, the Pool Facility Development Grant Program continues to seed" projects that have a major funding source engaged. Over \$161,000 in "seeds" have been approved since the program's inception.

We know there are conceptual efforts going on in several locales within our LSC. These are concepts with engaged sources who have the wherewithal to build and operate a competition pool. While the details cannot be shared I can report that the interests of competitive swimming are being represented. And if only one of these efforts comes to fruition it will be tremendous for our members.

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

I want to close comments about pools with some good news about indoor 50-meter facilities in nearby LSCs. Both Sioux Falls, SD (fall 2016) and West Fargo, ND (summer 2017) are bringing new facilities into the picture. Who would not want to have these within in our LSC? Nevertheless, we know these locations will interest MNswim members looking for affordable travel meets just over the border.

### *State Legislature*

We continue to monitor state legislation that could have an impact on competitive swimming and pools. I participated on the Minnesota Dept. of Education (MDE) stakeholder work group to implement swimming instruction in all public schools. The next step is a recently introduced bill to create a swimming and water-safety instruction specialist role in the MDE. This individual will be the point person to develop a model for the districts to implement instruction.

We also are monitoring tax & finance legislation that includes capital funding to construct or renovate competitive pools in community centers and public land. And, again, when we are told our involvement would be helpful we move through a series options to do that. In the end, we are connecting the dots between policy-makers and other sources to benefit pools in our swimming community.

### *Financial*

We now develop 4-year models that look out into the financial future for members of MNswim. They consider a number of factors: member registration, meet participation, programming, pool development, overhead, investments and inflation. So as financial legislation is proposed we are doing so with a broader scan into the future. And that would include developing other revenue streams such as corporate sponsorships.

We are piloting our first MNswim corporate sponsorship with Pure Spring Pools at this House of Delegates. They are sponsoring hospitality for the HoD and as well as the Athlete Awards Ceremony, and will take a few minutes to describe their water-filtration system during the meeting. They will also be available to meet with clubs before and after the meeting and can be reached via links through our website. We are hoping to not only provide a new opportunity for our clubs but also learn more about our corporate sponsor potential. This is also an example for the clubs to expand revenue streams beyond the sale of ads and banners for meets -- to seek more valuable win-win-win opportunities that benefit sponsors, sponsees, and their members/attendees.

### *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 MNswim. Well done!

I want to welcome the new and continuing members of the MNswim 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, Aleta, 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, so thank you for the opportunity to serve you. As always, I invite you to let me know when things are going well or how we can improve next time. I will look forward to seeing you on deck.

*Bob Crumstedt*