

2009-2010
DIVISION DIRECTOR REPORT
Ed Gassman

It continues to be both an honor and challenge to be one of NSP's elected leaders. The honor is great to be involved with such a unique group of people. People who in time of family and economic crisis still find time to give so much to help others. People from all walks of life who work hard to maintain medical skills. People who combine unique rescue skills with their medical skills. People who thrive in the harshest of conditions. People with a contagious camaraderie. Where does NSP get such People?

The challenge for NSP leadership is to respect, encourage and support the needs of these uncommon people. NSP exists to support its members. As NSP moves forward into the 21st century, it is time for leadership to seek outside funding to support its extraordinary members. It is not fair nor will it be ultimately productive for NSP to continue to rely on increased taxation of members so that those very members can train to donate even more time to help others.

It is my goal that we find public and/or corporate support to help fund training within RMD and training of the public by RMD. A group of us are also encouraging the National leadership to adopt the same goal for NSP. Because of the uncommon generosity of NSP members, NSP leadership has never had to seek outside funding as other Non-Profits do. The time has come for NSP leadership to seriously tackle that challenge.

With the growth in ski area visits, terrain parks, summer mountain biking, the potential for terrorist's attacks like 9-11 and natural disasters, like Katrina, the need for the NSP is greater than ever. The NSP is the largest single group of individuals with both medical and rescue training. We have camaraderie, national standards for both medical and rescue and an incredibly well versed and talented membership. In conversations with NSP members, Michael Berry (Executive Director for NSAA), Supreme Court Justices, and government leaders, it is clear NSP can play important safety, legal and patriotic roles.

The NSP must support our members, support our ski areas, and support our country, while working with patrollers around the world to improve safety and medical treatment. These are synergistic goals. For example, being on task forces to help our country integrate federal, state and local rescue personnel gives NSP prestige, and opens the door to federal grants. This in turn brings respect for the ski areas we support, and enables safety and legal changes that reduce injuries and litigation.

Along this line and consistent with our charter, the Rocky Mountain Division focus on safety has had some new and exciting opportunities. We have been asked to participate in the development and test of a GPS locator system that will be used by search and rescue personal as well as anyone using the backcountry. Due to remoteness and mountainous terrain cell phone coverage in the backcountry is limited. This system is the size of a cell phone but operates totally on satellites. In testing no locations were found where signal was lost. It can transmit your location to search headquarters or your spouse's computer. If you encounter an emergency with the press of a button it can transmit to the National Command

Center initializing a rescue effort. The RMD is also working with manufactures to incorporate RECCO (avalanche beacons) chips into clothing. The device is so small it is not even noticed. We have increased the classes we teach for REI, Forest Service, Park Departments, colleges, etc. on avalanche awareness and smart backcountry travel. RMD has been active this year in working with state, county and local agencies on command and control exercises, helping teach some seminars and participating in others. Finally, RMD continues to participate in international seminars on Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM).

Paid patrollers and volunteers from all walks of life do what they do because of a love of the outdoors and a strong desire to help people. Certainly paid patrollers could make more money in other jobs and volunteers could do other things with their free time. Our job as leaders is to find better ways to support and recognize both paid and volunteer members.

In conclusion, I would like to focus this next year on this one concept of seeking outside funding sources. We have submitted several grants this year and will continue to work on it. If anyone has ideas, please contact me. Let me put this single concept into focus:

THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION TREASURER REPORTED THAT IT HAD RECEIVED \$51,000,000 CONTAINING 125 FEDERAL GRANTS. NSP, THE PREMIER OUTDOOR RESCUE ORGANIZATION, WHO'S PATRIOTIC MEMBERS FORMED THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION, RECEIVED \$0 FROM FEDERAL GRANTS.

This is totally unacceptable! I solicit the support and involvement of all RMD leaders to help rectify this situation. Thank you all for your dedication, selflessness and professionalism. Without you there is no NSP.

Ed Gassman