

The

Mid-Knight News

A quarterly publication of the Mid-West Regional Conference of the Blue Knights® International

Fall 2024 issue



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m-smoot3@gmail.com

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EDITOR

Rick McCrea

rickandtic@icloud.com

Editor:

To start I would like to say thank you! to SD-I, as they did an outstanding job hosting the Fall 2024 MWRC. It was great weather and a great area to visit and ride.

Second, I would like to congratulate and welcome our newly elected or re-elected Mid-West Board.

Tom Luellen remains as the Chairman

Mark Smoot is the newly elected Vice-Chairman

Duane Potter remains the Secretary / Treasurer

And Doug Casteel was re-elected as the International Representative.

If you have a reason to contact any or all of Conference Officers their e-mail addresses are listed under their names to the left of this article. They will all be more than willing to answer any of your questions.

The Spring 2025 Business Meeting will be hosted by KS-III. They are still in the process of finalizing the arrangements, hopefully by the Winter Mid-Knight News, all the details will be worked out. The Fall 2025 Mid-West Regional Conference will be somewhere in southern MN and will be hosted by several chapters. More information on when and where when that information becomes available.

At the Spring 2025 Business meeting, bids for the Spring 2026 Business Meeting, as well as the Fall 2026 Conference and the Spring 2027 Business Meeting will all be accepted. A couple of chapters have been talking about placing a bid for the 2026 Business Meeting, as well as the Fall 2026 Conference. But I have not heard of anyone interested in either 2027 meeting.

If your chapter has not hosted a Conference for a while, or ever talk to your chapter about hosting a Conference or a business meeting. If you place a bid for a meeting, you don't have to worry about Chairman Luellen strong-arming you in to hosting one.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the first ever MWRC business meeting in June in KS.

Rick



**From the M.W.R.C.
Chairman
Tom Luellen**

Greetings sisters and brothers of the MWRC. Trees are changing color. Daily high temperatures are getting lower by the week. It must be fall. Although it means the end of daily motorcycle riding, it's still a favorite time of year. Unfortunately, it also means it's time to think about doing whatever amount of

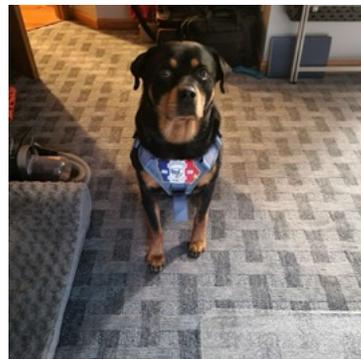
winterizing you do. For me, it means a battery tender and dust cover. For some, it is much more involved. However, winterizing looks to you, don't forget to get it done. Your bike will thank you in the spring.

The Spearfish Conference has come and gone, and I must say Job Well Done to SD-I. Whoever ordered that beautiful weather deserves a libation or two. While in Spearfish, I got to hang out a bit with Kimber, Dave Eyman's Rottweiler, a very pretty and well-behaved dog. Admittedly a little off hand, I made a remark that the MWRC could have a mascot. Well Dave took me up on that and ordered a new blue harness for her and outfitted it with some BK colors. You may have seen the post on IA-I's Facebook page where the chapter adopted her as their mascot, so I must now keep my word. I'm happy to announce the appointment of Kimber Eyman as the MWRC mascot! I look forward to seeing her at future events.



Also in Spearfish, we had a little changing of the guard. Congratulations to Mark Smoot of IA-VI on his election to MWRC Vice Chair! I'm looking forward to this next edition of the Mid Knight News to see his first article in his new post. Thanks to Bobby Clark for his tenure in that position, I appreciate you stepping up when the Conference needed someone. Thanks also to Duane Potter and Doug Casteel for running again for their respective posts. I'm looking forward to these next two years with this board.

On a less happy note, if you weren't aware, former MWRC Int'l Rep John Gericke passed away a few weeks ago. John and his wife Pat were some of the first Knights I met outside of my chapter, and were always friendly and welcoming. RWP in Heaven I, John.



Looking ahead, 2025 will bring some changes to our biannual meetings. The Spring event will be our first Business Meeting, without all the usual fanfare we're used to. I'm looking forward to seeing what KS-III does with this event as I'm sure it will set the standard for future meetings. I know the renewal packets will be coming out soon. I'm sure your presidents will remind you, but please take a moment to log on to the Members Only portion of the Int'l website and make sure your personal information is correct. Next spring, we will have elections for the Int'l Executive Board. Your ballot will come to the email address they have

listed for you.

My virtual door is always open, so please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, comments, or concerns. We'll see you on the other side of winter.

Tom Luellen
MWRC Chairman
spd846ret@hotmail.com
417-860-2633



**From the M.W.R.C.
Vice-Chairman
Mark Smoot**

Happy Fall y'all. I know it's a sad time, because the warm riding season is pretty much over for many of us. However, that doesn't have to mean the Brotherhood season is over. Just because the cool weather and snow make it less enjoyable to go outside, doesn't have to mean we become anti-social (well, more than we already are 😊).

I'm new at this Vice Chairman thing, so I need your help. As I understand, my primary job (besides making the Chairman look good) is to manage our region's recruiting and retention. As we all know, this has been a major issue for the past several years. I'm not gonna claim to have the perfect answer. I don't think there is a perfect answer. Each of us has our own reason for being a member of this great organization. Blue Knights International is as diverse as the careers we represent. This also means each prospective member has their own reason for considering us. We need to understand this reason when we talk to them.



Now is a good time to do a little recruiting. I challenge you to invite non-member LEO riders to your winter gatherings and get to know them in the off season. I know you don't want to hear it, but we aren't getting any younger. We need younger blood to keep our organization alive. There's never a bad time to recruit.

I want to hear what has, and has not, worked with your recruitment plans. If you have an idea, share it. Maybe someone else is looking for fresh ideas and your idea is just what they need.

We can't just focus on recruitment, either. This brings me to chapter retention. How do we retain the valuable members we have? We need to keep our current members to lead new members into the future. Tell me, as a chapter leader, what do you do that keeps your members involved? As a charter member, what's important to you and what would you like your chapter to do to keep you involved? As the season changes, make an effort to keep in touch with your fellow chapter brothers and sisters. Plan get-togethers and outings to keep connected. That way, when the riding season returns, we're all set to get back in the saddle and ride together. We shouldn't need to get reacquainted first.

I really want to hear from you! Feel free to call, text, or email me with your thoughts.

Ride With Pride
Mark Smoot
Blue Knights
MWRC Vice Chairman
641-226-0749





**From the M.W.R.C.
Secretary / Treasurer
Duane Potter**

\$25.00 Dues can be mailed to the MWRC at P.O. Box 73, Goddard, KS 67052.

Boy, where has 2024 gone? It seems like we just got home from Spearfish, but the calendar doesn't agree. As the year is winding down, that means it's time to submit your dues to the MWRC. Chapter dues are \$1.00 per member with a cap of

On a brighter note, a letter was received from John Bull, the International Treasurer. The letter thanked the MWRC for supporting the 50th anniversary by contributing to help offset costs associated with the International Convention at the Sugarloaf Mountain Resort. John reported that all financial obligations have been met without needing to use our \$1,000.00 A check for \$1,000.00 was included with the letter.

I look forward to seeing everyone in June 2025 at our Spring Business Meeting. Kansas III will be announcing more details as to the when and where. Until then, Ride with Pride

Duane Potter, Secretary/Treasurer
MWRC
PO Box 73
Goddard, KS 67052



**From the M.W.R.C.
International Representative
Doug Casteel**

and the Blue Knights® International Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom. I would like to thank everyone that had the confidence in me to represent you for two more years. I would also like to welcome Mark Smoot as our new Vice-Chairman.

Since the last newsletter, I have represented you at the Mid-West Regional Fall Conference in Spearfish, SD

My suggestion is to get involved in this club and ride. You will only get out of this what you put into it. If you have never attended a conference or international meeting, do it! The worst thing that can happen is you might get hooked and want to attend them all. I have seen places and met people that I never would have if it had not been for this club.

Here are the highlights of the International Board of Directors Meeting:

Election Committee – Bob Awtrey: Next year is an election year for the International Executive Committee. Make sure you have a good personal email on file with the International, as that is how you will receive your ballot. Corporate, business or government emails will not work. If you intend to run for the International Executive Committee, the application process opens on November 1st.

VPNA – Cal Ennals: when chapters get their renewal packets online, they need to read all the documents and if you have 100% Retention or Recruiter Awards, those forms need to be completed and submitted no later than May 28th. Several Chapters fell through the cracks this year because they failed to submit the forms.

President – DJ Alvarez: advised that the wrongful death lawsuit in Florida is still going on and we have already spent around \$30,000 trying to get dismissed from it. We also put the plaintiff on notice that we will be seeking attorney fees if we prevail.

Proposal 2024-0005 – changing the bylaws and constitution reducing the number of members required to have an honorary member from 10 to 8. The current verbiage says 10 regular, associate, and life members and the new verbiage said 8 regular members, thus excluding associate and life members. The proposal was tabled, so it could be reworked.



The next Board of Directors meeting will be on Sunday, December 1st, 2024, at 1000 hours ET. The deadline for agenda items is November 1st, 2024, at 1600 hours ET.

As always, if you have any questions or I can help with something, I am available via the contact information listed below.

Ride with Pride,

Doug Casteel, International Representative
Mid-West Regional Conference
Mwrc.rep@blueknights.org
+1 (314) 412-4449



From the M.W.R.C. Web-Master Wayne Schwartz

for next season's riding destinations. As for the website, there isn't much new since the last issue of this newsletter. This is the quiet time of year. Information on the Spring Business Meeting will be posted as soon as KS-III gets it to me. Likewise with info for the Fall Conference. If your chapter has any events coming up and would like to have them posted on the MWRC website just get me the information and I will get it posted. Get out there and plan your Halloween costumes and have some fun! Until next time, stay safe, stay warm, and as always,

Ride with Pride,

Wayne Schwartz
MWRC Webmaster
wayneschwartz@comcast.net



From the M.W.R.C. Safety Officer Scott Grabowski

The Psychology of Safe Motorcycle Riding

Riding a motorcycle demands more mental acuity than physical strength. Safe riding hinges on a sound psychological approach that emphasizes constant concentration, situational awareness, and quick decision-making. Overconfidence, such as the belief that years of experience eliminate the need for vigilance, and complacency are significant threats to safety.

Pre-Ride Preparation:

Before embarking on a ride, mentally prepare by relaxing and visualizing your route. This sets a focused mindset for the journey ahead.

During the Ride:

While riding, don't focus solely on the road ahead. Utilize the 2-4-12 second rule for safe riding, but also remember to frequently scan your surroundings—left, right, and behind. Look for changing weather conditions, traffic (especially distracted drivers), and potential road hazards like debris and potholes. Identify possible escape routes proactively; it's safer to act before a situation escalates than to react in the moment.

Understanding Crashes:

Most motorcycle crashes result from multiple factors, including speed, distraction, poor maintenance, and mindset. Eliminating even one of these factors can often prevent an accident. Crash investigators assert that every crash is avoidable. Because motorcycles lack the protective structure of cars, even minor incidents can have serious consequences.

Minimizing Distractions:

Limit distractions while riding by avoiding loud music and phone usage. While loud pipes can increase your visibility to others, ensure you can still hear your surroundings. Riding while tired or stressed can impair reaction times and decision-making; studies suggest that 18 hours without sleep can impair reflexes similarly to a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.10.

Ongoing Training:

Participating in annual rider training classes is vital, as skills can diminish over time, especially after a break.

Motorcycling can be a form of "wind therapy," offering relaxation and a unique perspective on the countryside. By prioritizing safety, you can enjoy your journey from point A to point B.

Until the Spring Meeting, RWP, Ride Safe and Practice Often.

Scott Grabowski MN IV
MWRC Safety Officer



Update on the Spring 2025 Conference

The MWRC Spring 2025 Business Meeting will be hosted by Kansas-III in Lawrence, KS Friday, June 13th through Sunday, June 15th, 2025. The Business Meeting will be at 9:00 am on Saturday, June 14th, 2025. The DoubleTree by Hilton for the Spring 2024 Conference was perfect for us because of their amenities. More important was their willingness to work with us. They reserved us a block of rooms but did not make us guarantee any. The absence of the risk to have to pay for unused rooms is huge.

Since we only need a meeting space this time, we are looking at other options to try to keep the room cost to our members as affordable as we can. We will charge a small registration fee to pay for the meeting room. I have appointed a committee to work on this. If they cannot come up with another option, we will be doing it at The DoubleTree by Hilton again.

As soon as the committee comes up with a location and has the registration form ready, that information will be posted on the MWRC webpage. Thank you for your patience.

“Ride With Pride”

Jim Miller
Kansas State Rep
Kansas III President

Update on the Fall 2025 Conference

The 2025 MWRC Conference, formally known as the Fall Conference, is in the planning stages. Minnesota - IV has taken the lead on it and with the help of Minnesota - I and Minnesota - II we will look forward to having the conference ready to go in September. Don't hold it to us, but we are looking at riding friendly locations in the southern part of the state so that you southern boys and girls don't have to travel too far past Iowa.

Our timelines are to have a venue no later than the middle of November and to get registrations on the MWRC website by the first of the year. We are looking at the first or second weekend after Labor Day. Fall is a great time in Minnesota with the leaves starting to change and the cool (hopefully not cold) weather is upon us. Although the September and October weather this year has been quite warm.

I have to thank SD-I for having an incredible Fall Conference in 2024 and it's going to be hard to beat riding in the Black Hills, but we will try to make it up in other areas.



Mark your calendars and look forward to another great conference.

Larry Klink

Mid-Knight News Requirements

The Mid-Knight News is published quarterly. The deadlines are January 15th, April 15th, July 15th, October 15th, with the projected publication being February 1st, May 1st, August 1st, and November 1st.

Any member of the Blue Knights MWRC can submit an article for publication. However, the article must be sent from the Chapter Corporate e-mail. This ensures chapter approval of the article and its contents.

Articles should be submitted in MS "WORD" in Arial 12 - point with justified left and right margins. Please try to limit your article to one page. Photos may also be submitted, but please send them in a "jpeg" format.

CHAPTER DUES ARE DUE

In order for a chapter to remain in good standing with the Conference, each chapter must pay dues of one dollar per member with a maximum of twenty-five to the Conference on an annual basis.

The dues must be paid before the chapter will be allowed to vote at the MWRC business meeting.

You can mail your dues to:

Mid-West Regional Conference
P.O. Box 73
Goddard, KS 6705

MWRC State Representatives Contact Information

Iowa:	Dave Eyman	BKIARep@gmail.com
Kansas:	Jim Miller	jimmiller@jim-san.com
Manitoba:	Peter Savinkoff	tundrapjs@shaw.ca
Minnesota:	Chris Boerner	cboerner9@aol.com
Missouri:	Don Tyes	bigdude@stjoelive.com
Nebraska:	Frank Bergmark	bikerbergs@charter.net
North Dakota:	VACANT	
Oklahoma:	Tom Ashing	tomashing@cox.net
South Dakota:	Dave Thorsgaard	dg17thor@midco.net

STATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Before each newsletter, I send out a request to each of the State Representatives asking them to send me an article for the Mid-Knight News.

Iowa Representative Dave Eyman

Blue Knights from Iowa were in attendance for the 2024 Spring Midwest Regional Conference hosted by Kansas III in Lawrence, KS. The event was well planned and there were some adjustments made at the business meeting to our annual conference schedule. From here out there will be one conference annually, it will remain in the fall of the year and the spring conference is being replaced with a business meeting. The itinerary for the business meeting will reduce the amount of planning and preparation required by its host, thus reduce the cost to the individual attendee to participate. One difference is that there will not be a banquet dinner. Look for more details to be shared by our MWRC Board. Kansas III agreed to host the initial event in the spring of 2025.

Bobby Clark NE-II does not wish to continue as our MWRC Vice Chairman due to many conflicts with his work and life schedule. Mark Smoot, the President from Iowa VI has been nominated for that seat. The remainder of the Board expressed their desire to continue. The Chapter Presidents will vote on the Board members at the September MWRC conference taking place in Spearfish, SD. Good luck to Mark!!

Iowa I:

The week of May 12th this year was Police Week nationally with Police Memorial Day being on May 15th. This year Iowa-I riders visited the burial sites of several of its local members to honor those who have transferred to Heaven-I. The weather did not cooperate at all, a few rides had to be postponed.

Additionally in May, two Iowa I riders traveled east to participate in the 2024 Blue Knight Multi-Chapter Tail of the Dragon ride. Iowa-I's former Vice-President Bill Hall, now a GA-XXII member, joined us for a couple of days of riding and fellowship. The event was organized by members from FL-XXX and GA-XI. The ride is a well-known and well attended motorcycle destination. The routes and activities were self-guided and absolutely amazing. Portions of the Tail of the Dragon roadway was being resurfaced. While it caused a couple of delays, the crews were well organized and the experience remained very rewarding. The areas and rides surrounding the Tail of the Dragon (Deals Gap) were equally amazing. We'd highly recommend that riders put this destination on their bucket list.

In June, Iowa I members hosted their 3rd annual Camporee fellowship event. Three families gathered at the Scott County Park near Eldridge, Iowa for 4 days of RV camping. The weather was very cooperative the first 3 days. Beautiful partly cloudy days and tolerable temperatures prevailed. There was firepit time nightly and we shared wonderful fellowship together. The Eyman's daughter and grandkids made daily visits to enjoy the fun.

3 Iowa I members attended the 2024 Spring Midwest Regional conference hosted by KS-III



Kansas Representative Jim Miller

I was unable to attend the MWRC in Spearfish, SD. That was disappointing because that was the first time in 12 years that I have missed.

I regret to report that the MWRC bear was kidnapped while in the possession of the Kansas III members in attendance at Spearfish. I recently received a ransom letter confirming the abduction and making demands. The letter was signed "Ted.E.Nappers". It was postmarked September 30th, 2024 and was mailed in Indianapolis, IN. I have included a copy of the letter. If anyone has information regarding the kidnapping of the MWRC bear, please contact the FBI Kansas City Field Office.

"Ride With Pride"
Jim Miller
Kansas State Rep
Kansas III President

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Manitoba Representative Peter Savinkoff

No report

Minnesota Representative Chris Boerner

No response

Missouri Representative Don Tyes

Thanks to South Dakota I, for a well-planned conference in the Black Hills. Members attending the conference had time to tour the historic cities of Deadwood, Spearfish, Sturgis, Keystone, Walls, Hill City and many others. Members also visited the historic sites of Mount Rushmore, Devils Tower, Wall Drug Store, Custer State Park, and The Corn Palace, just to name a few. The food was good and old friends shared a laugh and a smile. Great job South Dakota Blue Knights.

On September 28th, Missouri X held the 12th Annual Fallen Officers Memorial Ride in St. Joseph, Missouri. Blue Knights from Nebraska II, Minnesota IV, KC Metro (Kansas I), Kansas III, assisted with the ride. Everyone had a good time at the event. A donation will be made to the Concerns of Police Survivors with the proceeds from the event.

Next up is the Spring business meeting in Lawrence, Kansas In June 2025. Kansas III will host the meeting. The location is yet to be determined.

Lastly, I offer congratulations to our new MWRC Board and a thank you to those who previously served.

“RWP”

Donald R. Tyes, President, MO X
Missouri State Representative

Nebraska Representative Frank Bergmark

Nebraska I reports that Past President John Gericke passed at his home. John was a very active member of Blue Knights until health issues forced him to cut back. John was also a former International Representative for the Mid-West Regional Conference and was Chapter President of NE I for 24 of the first 25 years.

John’s final services were attended by members of NE I and NE II which also provided an escort to the cemetery. Special thanks to NE II for the flag bearing motorcycle.

John will be greatly missed. Please keep John’s family especially his wife Pat in your prayers as they cope with John’s passing.

Frank Bergmark president NE I

North Dakota Representative VACANT

Representative wanted
If interested, contact
MWRC Chairman Tom Luellen

Oklahoma Representative Tom Ashing

No response

South Dakota Representative Dave Thorsgaard

I want to start out by thanking everyone that was able to make our 40th Anniversary Fall Conference in Spearfish, South Dakota. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed having all of you here. We put in a special order with Mother Nature for some cooler weather and she came through for us. Rides through the hills was very pleasant, little wind and lots of wonderful scenery. Thanks again for making it special for us.

We have been busy since the conference getting caught up on some riding of our own and starting our volunteer season. The first full week of October some of our members helped the Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota deliver blizzard boxes. Each box contained 5 days' worth of nutrition for each household delivered in case volunteers could not make a delivery of a hot meal due to the weather. Being part of Black Hills Area Bikers, we help with the shopping and wrapping of gifts for the Forgotten Elderly in local care center in the Black Hills area. We have the annual Salvation Army / Meals on Wheels delivery of Christmas food baskets in December as well as our own charities of gifts for the children in Monument Health's West unit during the Christmas season, and the Feeding South Dakota Back Pack program.

We are in the planning stages of our annual Winter Blah's party, our Big Horns Run and the luncheon during the Sturgis rally in August. Keep an eye on the MWRC Events calendar for more details as they develop.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in Kansas in June. Until then enjoy the seasonal weather and always Ride With Pride!

Dave Thorsgaard
MWRC State Representative
BK SD I

STANDING RULES FOR THE MWRC



1. Carrying firearms at MWRC events after consuming alcoholic beverages is prohibited. Event hosts are required to provide secure storage for firearms if requested by any attendee.

2. All members are entitled to make motions and participate in discussions during Conference meetings. However, only the President (or Regular Member appointed by the President) of each MWRC Chapter in good standing will be allowed to vote on items of business and candidates for office at Conference meetings. Any Chapter which has not paid its annual dues shall not be considered in good standing.



3. MWRC officers shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, and International Representative. The officers shall serve two (2) year terms and shall be elected at the Fall Conference meeting during even numbered years. Candidates must declare (in writing) the office they seek to the MWRC Secretary / Treasurer prior to the adjournment of the Spring meeting of the election year. No later than August 1st of the election year the MWRC Secretary / Treasurer will provide the President of each MWRC Chapter with a list of the candidates for each office. This is meant to allow the Chapter President to confer with his membership prior to the voting.



4. Each Chapter in the MWRC shall pay annual dues to the Conference in the amount of \$1.00 (US) per chapter member, up to a maximum of \$25.00 (US) per year.



5. Bids to host MWRC conferences may be accepted up to two (2) years in advance.

6. All participants in parades or group rides, at any Blue Knights® Midwest Regional Conference event, must wear an approved motorcycle helmet.



7. The MWRC board will notify any active chapter within 50 miles prior to authorizing a charter to any new chapter, however final determination and approval will reside with the board