



Newsletter

NATIONAL SKI & SNOWBOARD RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Please join us at the NSSRA Annual Meeting, which will take place at **5:30 p.m. Friday, January 27, 2012**, the **second** day of the SIA Snow Show, in the Colorado Convention Center. We will be meeting in **Room 205**. Meeting Rooms are **on the Street Level**. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. Enter the date, time and location in your planner and be part of the dialog on the issues important to our success in the snow sports industry. If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting, stop by and **visit us at Booth #4577**, in Alpine hardgoods toward the front of the hall.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Why NSSRA?

Prior to the formation of the NSSRA, issues that affected retailers were handled on an individual basis between a retailer and another party. Regardless of how big the retailer may have been, they were still a single retailer with a single voice. It was difficult for the vendor community to have a dialogue over issues that affected retailers because there was not a single point of contact for this dialogue to happen.

When the binding indemnification issue began over 20 years ago the ASTM committee on snow sports began developing shop practices that would affect retailers. Realizing that these practices were being created without the input of the shops that would have to implement them, a small group of retailers banded together to create the Association to offer input from a retailer's perspective on the function testing procedures that today we all know as the norm.

For more than two decades NSSRA has advocated on behalf of the specialty snow sport retailers. Some of the issues we've worked on *this year alone* include:

- **The ASTM** Committee on Snow Skiing-binding testing and shop practices;
- **Proforms**: continuing to advocate the importance of specialty retailers in the distribution and fulfillment of vendor proforms;
- **E-commerce**: worked with vendors to develop a next-generation retailer friendly e-commerce model;
- **Growing Snowsports**: represented retailers in industry meetings on growing snow sports; and
- **Advocacy**: represented individual retailer's positions with regard to industry business practices.

All of this work is being done by a volunteer group of specialty retailers who work on behalf of the more than 1,400 specialty ski and board shops in the country. The issues we're facing seem to be growing and the opportunities we have to do more for retail-

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ers are growing. But we can't do it alone, we need your help.

The positions that NSSRA takes are formed by the input of our Board of Directors, which meets formally once a year at the SIA show. We meet via conference calls several times a year as issues warrant, and we exchange e-mail communications as necessary. Our Board is made up of some excellent retailers and industry experts.

Having a chance to work with retailers that are outside your sphere of influence is a great way to learn what trends might be happening in other parts of the country and hear the thoughts and concerns of other retailers (usually they're not that much different than your own). We can use help at that level and would love to have new bodies help us carry the load. Consider adding your voice to that group.

Secondly, if you see something in the snow sports world that doesn't feel right or is detrimental to the health and viability of snow sports specialty retailers, throw the flag and let us know about it. Send us an e-mail or phone one of the Directors listed on the NSSRA website. If it's an issue that affects some of us, it is likely an issue that affects all of us.

NSSRA is supported by dues paying member retailers; SMC and SSL buying groups; SIA and 22 vendor partners. Without this support our group would not exist.

NSSRA'S VENDOR PARTNERS

3M CENTER, ALPINA ELAN SPORTS, AMER SPORTS, BOA TECHNOLOGY, INC., CROWN ENTERPRISES, INC., DALBELLO SPORTS LLC, DESCENTE NORTH AMERICA, INC., DRYGUY LLC, ELAVON, FISCHER SKIS US, HORIZON AGENCY, INC., HOTRONIC USA, INC., K2 SPORTS, LEISURE TRENDS GROUP, M MILLER LUXURY OUTERWEAR, NILS, INC., NORDICA USA, PolarMAX, SHOPATRON, SMITH OPTICS, SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES AMERICA (SIA), TECNICA GROUP USA, TURTLE FUR GROUP

Directly or indirectly, NSSRA's efforts over the last 24 years have affected every retailer in the industry. We keep all retailers, members or not, informed on all the initiatives and issues we're working on. Thank you to the dealers who support the group's efforts with their financial contributions, which also entitles them to the NSSRA Cost of Doing Business Survey, each year's new Combined Indemnified Bindings List, shipping discounts with FedEx and UPS Freight through PartnerShip, business insurance through Emery & Webb, consumer financing programs through GE Capital, and much more that can be found on NSSRA's website, www.nssra.com.

Our ability to do more for the retail community is only limited by our resources. If you have not renewed your membership or joined the organization please do so today. Our dues start at \$135 per year.

Sincerely,

Brad Nelson, NSSRA Chairman

SNOW SPORTS SALES OFF TO A HEALTHY START FOR 2011/2012

SIA and The Leisure Trends Group have released the first set of RetailTRAK™ Data (August-October 2011) for the 2011/2012 snow sports season. The data reveals that snow sports retail sales are off to a strong start this season and equipment is leading the charge.

Overall, snow sports retail receipts are up 14% in dollars and 7% in units August through October. Total snow sports pre-season sales rose from \$565 million through October 2010 to \$644 million through October 2011.

Consumers are looking for snow sports gear in every sales channel and all three retail channels measured experienced growth in the early season. Online sales are up 12% in units sold and 19% in dollars, while chain store sales are up 10% in units and 10% dollars sold.

However, specialty retail continues to dominate the snow sports market with 70% of all retail equipment sales and almost 50% of all retail sales overall. Specialty shop sales reached \$319 million, a new record for the August to October time frame, driven by big gains in equipment sales.

Equipment sales in specialty shops increased 12% in units and 19% in dollars. Chain stores sell about 25% of all snow sports apparel and accessories but just 6% of all equipment. It's very clear that core snow sports participants, particularly those that purchase equipment enjoy the distinctive expertise that snow sports specialty shops offer to savvy consumers.

Pre-season sales in the snow sports market traditionally serve as opportunities for consumers to get discounts on items left in inventories over the summer, but this year consumers were buying snow sports gear at full price at the Labor Day and Columbus Day sales. This phenomenon is most apparent in alpine equipment where robust sales led the pre-season market. Apparel and accessories sales also gained over last season and strong prices seen at the end of the 2010/2011 season continued into the early 2011/2012 season.

Trends To Watch This Season

Reverse and mixed camber ski sales doubled compared to pre-season sales a year ago to 32,000 pairs.

The fatter, the better - flat skis with waist widths 95mm-110mm are up 60% in units sold to more than 20,000 units in the first months of 2011/2012.

Rocker/Reverse camber snowboard sales continue to rise; now 70% of all boards sold are rocker.

Bargain hunters will notice that snowboard apparel average prices are down 4% from August - October 2010.

Helmets sales continue to grow, unit sales are up 12.5% so far this season.

Sales of beacons, probes and shovels, necessities for the backcountry experience, are up 19% in units sold.

The market data presented in this report comes from the Snow Sports RetailTRAK™ produced for SIA by the Leisure Trends Group. The Leisure Trends Group gathers RetailTRAK™ data directly from the Point of Sale systems of more than 1,200 snow sports retailers.

For more information please contact Kelly Davis, SIA's Director of Research at KDavis@snowsports.org.

SIGN UP FOR NSSRA NETWORKING GROUPS ON LINKEDIN

Last August, we announced the re-launch of NSSRA's website, containing fresh content and something new for NSSRA, networking groups for its retail members.

The groups are hosted on LinkedIn, so all you need to do is set up a LinkedIn account (if you don't already have one) and ask to join these groups:

NSSRA Snow Sports Retailers Network

NSSRA Buy, Sell, Swap Network

NSSRA membership status will be confirmed prior to admission to the groups. ***This is a special benefit exclusively for NSSRA retail members.*** For more information, please contact NSSRA President Larry Weindruch, lweindruch@nssra.com.

FEDEX AND UPS TO RAISE SMALL PACKAGE RATES FOR 2012

The NSSRA Shipping Program, managed by PartnerShip, announced that FedEx Corp. and UPS will increase envelope and small package shipping rates for 2012.

Effective January 2, 2012, the cost to ship an overnight envelope with Memphis-based FedEx Express will increase by a net average of 3.9%. The full average rate increase of 5.9% will be partially offset by adjusting the fuel price threshold at which the fuel surcharge begins, reducing the fuel surcharge by 2%. Air packages shipped with Atlanta-based UPS will increase by a net average 4.9% beginning January 2, 2012. The rate increase for UPS air and international shipments is based on a 6.9% increase in the base rate, less a 2% reduction to the index-based air and international fuel surcharge.

Effective January 2, 2012, the cost to ship with FedEx Ground will increase by a net average of 4.9%. The full average rate increase of 5.9% will be partially offset by adjusting the fuel price threshold at which the fuel surcharge begins, reducing the fuel surcharge by 1%. UPS ground shipping will also increase by a net average 4.9% for U.S. domestic services, achieved through a 5.9% increase in the base rate, less a 1% reduction to the index-based ground fuel surcharge.

Additionally, UPS Next Day Air Freight and UPS 2nd Day Air Freight rates for shipments within and between the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico will increase 5.9%. UPS 3 Day Freight rates will remain unchanged.

For more information or to enroll in the NSSRA Shipping Program to save on every shipment you send and receive, please visit: www.partnership.com/14NSSRA.

LEARN TO SKI & SNOWBOARD MONTH IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

January is Learn To Ski & Snowboard Month, and if traffic on the LSSM website is any indication, interest in this month-long initiative to grow snow sports participation is nearly double what it was last year at this time, according to LSSM Director Mary Jo Tarallo.

The survey on the LSSM Web site shows that "Family or Friends" accounted for nearly 80% of the votes that answered the question "How Did You Get Interested in Skiing or Snowboarding"?

With that in mind, why not craft a "Bring a Friend" LSSM program and use the new Bring a Friend art that is in the LSSM Partner Tool Kit?

If you have a January LSSM offer of your own or in partnership with a venue or other industry associate, here are five suggestions that can help in reaching the public:

- **Send** a press release of your LSSM offer to your local news outlets and to Mary Jo at lifes2shortmjt@gmail.com. Include the URL to your learning/offer page. It will be posted PROMPTLY on the LSSM Web site with several links to it (FREE).
- **Use** the LSSM logo on the home page of your web site with a link to your offer. Or, consider using the new Bring a Friend logo (Ski or SB version).
- **Post** the LSSM logo on your Web site. Link back to www.skiandsnowboardmonth.org if you don't have a specific offer of your own. Consider the Learn and Improve page of the national LSSM site. It is intended to help beginners with basic info.
- **Organize** a Bring a Friend Newcomers Night. Use your current customer list for e-invites.
- **Partner** with a local resort venue that is involved with LSSM.

Consider the "Added Value" Option. It's \$50 per storefront for retailers. Contact Mary Jo at lifes2shortmjt.org for details. Also, consider selecting a "local ambassador" to help you promote your programs. Contact MJ at lifes2shortmjt@gmail.com for details on ambassadors.