

Director's Notes. . .

Since taking over as Director August 1st "Wow - what a year for District MO-01" is the thing that keeps popping into my mind as I sit down and write this to the members. My mind swims in all the struggles and yes, accomplishments too, that this district has made on the road to where it is right now. Our district has a lot to be thankful for and proud of as we look back, and we truly should be excited about the future road we are heading down. I am very excited, very proud and yes, might as well say it, a little scared to be the new Director. Please keep those words in your mind as you continue to read. I hope it will help you better understand my thoughts as I write them down.

Taking over a district mid-way thru a year is challenging and very hard for several reasons – things have to be reviewed from the beginning of the season to the point of new leadership coming in to decide what things can stay in place, what things can be tweaked, and finally what things will be changed. That being said, it is a struggle to work through all of those things and try to find the best solution in transitioning into a new leadership role. I have tried to really take things in and not jump too soon into a response on how I thought things should be handled.

During the past 3 months I have spoken with many of the members about questions, concerns and frustrations about the district. I sent out a survey early on to get some ideas of members' thoughts and to get to know members better. This did help, but not as many returned the surveys as I would have liked to have seen. [You are still welcome to complete it and return it to me if you like, just ask for a blank survey.] As I read the ones I did get back, these are the things that came across loud and clear:

1. The first and biggest thing that was stated clearly is we have a GREAT group of members.
2. The communication needed to be worked on.
3. A clear schedule needs to be out there and updates need to be done regularly.

I was, and am in TOTAL agreement with all those things. Now there were more things noted than just those three, but those were the things that came up over and over again, and I wanted to share that with each of you.

My goal was not to come in and totally overhaul the district. We have too many good things about our district and we need to build upon those things and grow together. I hope you have already seen that in me with what I have done to date with the website, emails, text, point and show updates, scheduling and how the shows are running. I want to say that I feel like it is only going to get better as we all work together. The atmosphere at the shows needs to be positive and fun for us all – we need to work together and keep in mind we do this for fun and enjoyment because of our love of the sport.

Now to address some questions and concerns:

Tie Breakers –

1st tie breaker will be whoever attended the most shows for the season

2nd tie breaker who placed at the most shows in the D in which they are tied for an award

3rd tie breaker most number of highest placings in the D in which they are tied for an award

4th and final tie breaker will be a coin toss

This is on the website – our races are close this year in many divisions for many of the places so be sure to understand how a tie will be handled if needed.

Work Credits for yearend awards – I have truly struggled with this one the most because even though I see the reasoning behind the 6 show work rule and do agree with it to a degree there are things that really continue to concern me with this matter and how I can be totally fair to everyone due to the transition into my position part way thru a year. I am not a 100% sure that I have an accurate list of work done at shows. This

is no one's fault--- just part of a transition of information. Also, I believe that we all need to work for our district in some way to make it grow and to make sure it runs smoothly. Many of you have heard me say this and I hope you truly understand why and how this affects my decision on this matter – we must have barrel setters and gate people: that is a given to make sure a show runs smoothly. There are more than those workers necessary to help a district survive and continue to reach its goals – securing sponsorships, working the office, helping advertise and promote our district, serving on committees, donating to concession when needed, helping load and unload equipment at shows, helping set up and tear down at shows, membership recruitment, and the list goes on. . . keeping all those things in mind I feel like unless there is someone that has blatantly NOT helped at all (which I have not seen this year) I will not and do not feel like I can take away someone's year end award at this point in the year due to my transitioning into this position. I want to be fair to everyone, please know that! I also don't want to start out by pulling someone's award and not feel 100% that is the right thing to do. I truly hope you read and see my reasoning behind this decision. I cannot afford to lose any of the help I have already received with the district to date and the help I am trying to recruit in the future by setting new goals for our district. This matter will be discussed during the General Membership meeting at the banquet to determine what will be put into place next season.

Year End Awards – in the past it has been very typical for directors to run over into the next year's money to cover the cost of year end awards for the previous year causing several issues: postponing the awards banquet until much later in the spring of the following year, creating a budgeting situation with the current year's awards making it fall into and continue down the same path year after year. I can honestly say I see how a new director taking over feels trapped and forced into having to stay on that same path of paying for awards. Believe me, I truly understand how this feels and taking that road sounds good and would be much easier in many ways. Please keep in mind there are factors sometimes behind the scenes that not everyone sees making it even harder to deal with and address the budget and prize issue on a timeline. It has been a hard year for us financially, but the good news is we have made some money at some of our fall shows and if the show was smaller we did not lose money, so all positive things and all things to learn from for the future. What we have at the end of this year's season is what we will spend on awards – the cycle ends here. Hang on and please stick with me. We are still going to have nice awards, but just know our budget is very tight. Next year from January 1 on whatever we earn in 2012 will go to 2012 year end awards and we are going to do it up right and should be so proud of what we accomplish!

For 2012 I know we can pull together as a team, put on some awesome point shows, fundraising shows, promote our district, work on a membership drive, work on fundraising projects and have a great time along the way. We have a lot of support within our communities and our own district to get this done! **Our 2011 Year End Awards Banquet is tentatively scheduled for January 29, 2012 – 2 pm – State Fair Community College – *more details to come soon!*** At the banquet we will be having a General Membership meeting to discuss where we are at, where we want to be and things that the membership would like to see in place.

Things to remember. . .

We do have a great group of members and we all want this district to grow and flourish. I promise that I will work my butt off and do my best to help achieve this for MO-01 all I ask is if you do have a concern or a complaint you talk to me and give me a chance to listen, talk it over and then think over the situation or give me a chance to explain why something is the way it is – attacking me helps no one in the situation. I know I don't have all the answers, nor do I claim to but I will try to work in finding the best solution for the situation at hand for the district as a whole! I think we are heading down the right trail!!!

Happy Trails,

Connie Dove

MO-01 District Director