

# Minnesota *Resorter* *Resorters Helping Resorters*



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Winter 2022 | Vol. 38 No. 1

**A PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF MINNESOTA RESORTS**



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# Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters



A Community of Minnesota Resorts Publication

Winter 2022

Vol. 38 No. 1

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**REMEMBER!**

**VIRTUAL DAY ON THE HILL**  
**March 8 & 9, 2022**

**YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT!**

"Sometimes you have to let go of the picture of what you thought life would be like and learn to find joy in the story you're living."  
- Clint Mueller

**About the cover:** Photograph submitted by Bernie Connors, Professional Wildlife Photographer

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# FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S PEN



**President Mike Schwieters**  
*Community of Minnesota Resorts*

Change. There is a word that has been prominent in our vocabulary for the past year and a half. We have seen and lived through major changes in every aspect of our daily lives. Social distancing, masks, vaccines, distance learning and Zoom to name just a few. But yet, we as resorters have prevailed and most of us have actually flourished. Although not easy, we found new ways to do things and I'd like to thank the Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) for being a vital source of

information and support through these trying times.

My name is Mike Schwieters, and I have been given the great honor of being voted in as your new CMR Board President on November 2nd. My wife, Ruth and I have operated Boyd Lodge in Crosslake since 2010. I grew up on the resort, as my grandfather, Lynn Boyd, started the resort in 1934, and my parents, Roger and Nancy, took over in the fall of 1966. Ruth, grew up and spent her entire life in Mankato, before going all in on this resort life with me in 2010. I am very excited about what lies ahead for the CMR and the tourism industry in Minnesota.

I would like to express my personal gratitude to our outgoing President, Clint Mueller. Clint guided our organization through what could arguably be the most difficult and challenging times ever in the resorting industry. He did so with a positive attitude and a willingness to help anyone anytime. Clint, thank you! We also have the following outgoing board members that have been wonderful supporters of the CMR and their contributions to the organization's success are greatly appreciated. Thank you Bob Barton, Mike and Linda Schultz, and Bob Schimerowski.

I also would like to welcome the three new members to the CMR Board, Mark Henkel of Fiddlestix RV and Golf Resort, Ammie and Preston Osborn of Lakewood Lodge and Jim Wherley of Sunset Bay Resort.

Another change occurred as Jim Wherley stepped down as the Office Manager in 2021. It would be impossible for me to count how many times Jim sent out information and updates regarding COVID mandates, best practices or pending regulations in addition to all the regular CMR correspondence to our members over the past 2 years. Jim did this all while running his own resort during these unprecedented times. Jim, thank you hardly seems enough, but I and all of the CMR members are better off and better informed as a result of your efforts. I look forward to your participation on the CMR Board as a new board member. Sue Malikowski has been hired as the new Office Manager and I am super excited to have Sue back with the CMR. Sue was a former CMR member and was also previously on the CMR Board. She has already been fully immersed in the new role and thank you for all your efforts at the fall conference, as everything went smoothly. She and Jim have been working together for a couple of months already to assure a smooth transition.

To all the members of the CMR, I am excited for what lies ahead for us. A goal of mine is to further engage our members. Our motto is "Resorters Helping Resorters" and this is the heart of why we exist. Our board is made up of all volunteers that care deeply about our industry and are committed to helping each and every one of our members. Watch your email and our social media for upcoming events and ways to be involved. Our Day on the Hill is scheduled for March 8 & 9 and will be held via Zoom. More information will be forthcoming but please put the dates on your calendar now to attend.

Lastly, please reach out to me anytime as I am available for questions, concerns or to just chat about resorting (or hunting too). Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your newly elected President of the CMR Board.

Mike Schwieters  
Boyd Lodge

## Submit Your Nominations for the Community of Minnesota Resorts 2022 Resorter of the Year



Sign in to the Membership area at [www.minnesota-resorts.com](http://www.minnesota-resorts.com) for information.



# 2022 CMR Spring Workshop

Saturday March 26, 2022

Mark Your  
Calendars!!!!



The date is set for the Community of Minnesota Resorts Spring Workshop. It will be Saturday March 26, 2022! Get set for a day of speakers, learning and interaction with your fellow resorters.

Location and agenda are still being determined, but as soon as those are finalized we will publish them to members on our internal communications platforms, and to non-members on our website at [www.Minnesota-Resorts.com](http://www.Minnesota-Resorts.com). All are welcome to attend!

Because of schedule conflicts which would preclude some from attending, we are looking at the possibility of recording sessions to allow you to view them after the fact. There may be a small fee to this function to offset recording costs.

*We hope to see you there!*

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW COMMUNITY OF MINNESOTA RESORTS' MEMBERS

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome these Resorters and Campgrounds, and Associate Members to the Community of Minnesota Resorts' family! If you have the chance, please get acquainted with them.

Want to become a new CMR member? Contact Sue Malikowski at 320-212-5107 with your questions and to sign up! We look forward to having you as our newest member resort!

### New CMR Resort Members

Crow Wing Lake Campground, Brainerd  
Phil and Coni Trusty

Fiddlestix RV & Golf Resort, Isle  
Owner: Marilyn Appeldoorn. Manager: Mark Henkel

Jones Bay Cottages on Pelican, Pequot Lakes  
Erin and Steve Herman

### New CMR Associate Members

*Arrow Printing*, Steve Krueger, Bemidji

*Badlands Distribution*, Rita & Robby McCullough, West Fargo, ND

*National Marine Manufacturers Association*, John Ferguson, Minneapolis

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**CONGRATULATIONS!** These are some of the resorts that we sold just out of the north office in the last few months:

- Jessie View Resort
- Island View Resort
- Oak Haven Resort
- Mission Beach Resort
- Oak Island Resort
- Green Valley Resort

[www.MNResortSalesNorth.com](http://www.MNResortSalesNorth.com)

# Resorters of the Year



## History

Mike has been involved in resorting for many years. **His grandparents** (his mother's parents and she was an only child) started the resort. In **1966 his grandparents tragically passed away** in a car accident. So Mike's parents moved to the resort to run it when he was only **3 years old**. His parents were always planning to take over the resort, but it was just a little sooner than expected.

As he grew up his dad told him to **go out and explore the world** to see if resorting is what he really wants to do. So, he did. During that time the **resort was sold**. The new owners made some major changes. The original cabins were taken off and 17 townhomes were built, some of which had fractional ownership. These **owners lost the resort**.

**In 2010**, life for Mike and Ruth Schweiters, our Resorters of the Year, was very different. They moved to the resort and they started reorganizing the resort. They have been buying back as many of the townhomes as possible and have added additional units. As of now there are 24 cabins. They are also looking into adding 8 more units across the road.

- They like many aspects of resorting. **Ruth really loves when the guests keep coming back** year after year and they become like family. They love getting kids outside. It is great when they see kids fishing with their parents, etc. and they love being part of that.
- They both enjoy the **interaction with the guests**. They are active in their lodge and activities. Mike and Ruth are always keeping an eye out for ways to **improve their resort**.
- They know their **guests appreciate their resort** as well. For example, when a long-time guest passes away, they are not surprised at the **number of photos on display** are taken at their resort. It warms their hearts.

## Area/local involvement

- Mike is involved in the Greater Lake Chamber Board,
- He sits on the board of the Crosslake Chamber Board,
- He is vice-president of the Whitefish Area Lodging Association (and will most likely be president in November)
- Mike is on the board of 2 scholarship boards. On one of the boards he was the first recipient oh so many years ago.

**They are both very involved. They work very well as a team. Mike has admitted that without Ruth's full support he wouldn't have been able to be involved with so many great organizations and efforts.**

- **If there is a local event**, they and their resort are a sponsor of the event.
- The group, **Cross Lakers**, hired an outside firm to build a picture

of the community and make suggestions for improvement. The idea of the **new Loon Center** came out of that. Our Resorters of the Year were very involved with the Loon Center creation and completion.

- They often offer their resort for causes. For example, they donated rooms and a boat when researchers were on the chain of lakes **banding loons**. They were involved in a project to put in a swim and boat dock which is scheduled to be competed in 2023-2024.

## CMR Involvement

- Mike and Ruth are also **there for other resort owners**. They talk to other resorters all the time. They especially get a lot of questions about fractional ownership and financing. If any resorter has questions, they are always open to help.
- They **volunteered their facility** one year for the CMR Spring Workshop.
- Mike is on the **CMR board, was a past Vice President** is now **President** as of November 2021.
- When Mike started on the board his interests did not include legislative issues. That was the last thing that he thought he wanted to be involved with. Well, he then became the **Legislative Committee Chairperson** and loved it. He attends the CMR Day on the Hill and has even gone to the capital to testify on issues relating to tourism.

## Value of the CMR

Both agreed that **relationships with other resorters** is key. Being on the board is rewarding and they really like working with other resorters. They are super excited about seeing other resorters at the conferences.

## Challenges

When asked about challenges that they see in the years to come, they thought that **Covid** is front and center. There are still unknowns. They trust that the industry will be in good shape. But you never know what else will come up. As of now, it has been financially stimulating for many resorts.

**Regulations** are always changing and resorters have to keep up and pay attention. That is why he is involved in the CMR Legislative Committee. Legislation and taxes are always constant battles.

They feel we have to be aware of **Vacation Home Rentals** and other rental and vacation options. Our industry needs to adapt and change to meet the changing demands of our customer.

They are ready to be there and help lead in this process.

Let's congratulate our 2021 Resorters of the Year Mike and Ruth Schwieters from Boyd Lodge

## Criteria for Resorters of the Year (ROY) award.

Some of the criteria for this award are:

- CMR member in good standing for previous 3 years.
- Ability to maintain a successful and progressive resort.
- History of helping and mentoring other resort owners.
- Involvement in community activities.

The previous 3 years award winners are on a committee and review the nominations that are submitted. Our committee consisted of Jim and Kristin Wherley; Clint and Patty Mueller and Tim and Karen Senger. It really wasn't an easy decision, but the winners of this year's award certainly are deserving of it. It is hard to limit what to say. Our Resorters of the Year are valued members of the CMR family, their community and the state. They are involved in many aspects of resorting and in their community. Again, they are worthy recipients of this award.





# APPLY FOR A CMR SCHOLARSHIP!

The scholarship funds are made available to children and grandchildren of CMR members. An eligible member is one who has been a member for at least three consecutive years. Associate Members are not eligible for scholarships. Applicant must be a senior in high school who is planning to attend a four-year college, a community college, or a vocational/technical college or a current college undergraduate or vocational/technical school student.

Specific submittal guidelines are provided on the scholarship application which can be found on the CMR website at <https://minnesota-resorts.com/scholarships/>, or by contacting the CMR office at:

*CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com*  
or 320-212-5107.

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# The 6 Steps of Selling Your Resort

By Karen Senger, CMR Digital Marketing Liaison

At the 2021 CMR Fall Conference, Minnesota Resort Sales did a presentation titled "Preparing for the Future, the Dos and Don'ts of Selling your Resort. Since time was limited because there were so many topics to cover at the conference, we didn't get to the 6 Steps of Selling Your Resort. I thought that I would do a quick overview. Please realize that this is an overview and there will always be variances that will happen with every sale. But also realize that this overview may be helpful for you.

## 1. Think about selling

- When is it too early or too late to think about selling? NEVER. You can start thinking about selling even before you close on the resort. It can start by how you set up your company.
- Make a business plan with short-term and long-term goals.
- Be prepared for when the time comes to sell your resort.

## 2. List your resort

- Work with a professional that you trust will do a good job.
- We generally use a 1-year agreement. Depending on the market it may take longer. Be prepared.
- Commission is paid by the seller.
- Portfolio- we put together a detailed portfolio that helps sell your resort. (Photos, occupancy, rates, cabins info, owner's home, lake, shoreland, expansion, equipment list....)
- Your resort is advertised for sale (we use websites, buyer network, email campaigns, sport shows and more)

## 3. Buyers look at your resort

- Buyers are interested in your resort. We have conversations with them, vet them and then email the portfolio.
- Buyer's research your resort: Resort website, on-line reviews, resort lay out, income streams, Lake/Fishing/Recreation, other resorts in the area, area attractions, school.
- Then, if interested, we bring them to the resort and work with you to show your resort. If you agree, we prefer to have you with as the buyer sees your resort. You have the answers to questions they have.
- They think about it and do more research. Some request a second showing.

## 4. Buyer does their due diligence, makes an offer that you accept

- If the buyers are interested after the showing(s) they then spend more time with their due diligence. They may work with the county to confirm that if they want to do expansions it is allowed. They may start working with their bank on financing. They may work with their CPA, lawyers and other professionals. We like to have buyers as prepared as possible prior to any Purchase Agreement is presented to you.
- They may also dig into more details on your taxes, occupancy, rates, policies, social media, advertising plans, etc.
- When the buyers are ready a Purchase Agreement (PA) is created and we present it to you.
- We use a standard 3-page commercial PA. In addition to that we have an addendum that details items that are specific to resorting and contingencies for the sale. If you agree to them, then you sign it and the work for Step 5 continues or starts. If you counter-offer then we bring that counter offer to the potential buyers. This continues until you both agree. If you don't agree then the PA is null and void.

## 5. All the contingencies are worked through

Contracts have contingencies. This means that these items must be addressed or the contract is null and void. Some contingencies are easy and some are complicated. These contingencies are there to protect both the buyer and the seller. They may include:

- Sale of buyer's home- Many buyer's need to sell their house in order to afford the resort.

- Finance approvals: Buyers- The buyer's work with a bank or other professional to secure financing. The bank will generally order an appraisal, get resort financials, work with buyer's financial history.
- Small Business Administration (SBA) approvals- If the buyers are choosing to have part of their financing through the SBA there may be additional approval processes.
- Phase 1 environmental study- There may be reasons that the SBA or bank requires an EPA Phase 1 Environmental Study. One main reason is if you have a gas tank on the property. It is inspected to make sure that there aren't any environmental issues. If there are issues or if you have (or ever have had) an in-ground tank then a Phase 2a and/or 3 may be required.
- Septic System- most counties and/or purchase agreements require that the septic system is inspected to confirm current compliances.
- Licenses: Buyers will work to get required licenses and permits: Department of Health Resort and/or Campground License, Bait Handling License, Liquor License, Lake Service Provider Permit, Pool Handling License, etc.
- Detailed inspections- usually within 30 days of the PA the buyer will want to come through your resort and take another detailed look. They shouldn't poke holes in the walls. But, they should/will look under, above, around everything. They can take a look under the cabins to know what is there. They will look in the back rooms etc.

## 6. Closing

Once all the contingencies are set, the bank will set the closing date. At the closing generally the closing company will handle the following.

- Buyers and Sellers will get closing statements. This statement basically makes sure all the finances are on the same page. The pay-offs, seller and buyer responsibilities, loan amounts, fees, etc. are all correct prior to the closing date.
- Your loans balances will be paid off. Funds will be transferred to your account, titles will be signed.
- Money will be put in escrow for any outstanding work that is required or agreed upon to be done: i.e. septic compliance, unfinished construction, EPA cleanup.
- Prorate appropriate expenses (property tax etc.)

Outside of closing we will help facilitate the following between you and the buyer. You will:

- Write a check to the sellers for the balance of the un-used deposits
- Sign over titles and keys
- Give complete reservation information
- Give passwords, list of vendors, complete customer list, advertising materials
- Contracts that are part of the business
- We cannot forget after the sale. You have put a lot of effort into your resort and you want the new owners of "your" resort to be successful. They will be making "your" resort "their" resort. But, they may also need assistance from you. Generally, be there for them so they can ask you questions. Show them or talk through how to close down the cabins in the fall or open them up in the spring. Most new resort owners want this advice to begin with and once they are up and running, they like to figure many things out for themselves. But, be there when they need you.

The process may be complex. But it is manageable. We feel it is important to use professionals. Even if you sell your resort yourself (which obviously we don't recommend, but it is done), please make sure to use professionals during the process such as lawyers, CPAs, closing companies etc.

Good luck in the sale of your resort. Remember that in general you will only buy one resort in your lifetime and will only sell one resort in your lifetime. It is important to be prepared and to get it right.



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# Congratulations to Three Additional CMR Scholarship Award Recipients!

For 2021 there were four scholarships to award at \$750 each to the children or grandchildren of eligible member resorts, and only two qualified applicants were chosen. The Board, at its discretion, and with the agreement of the sponsors of the scholarships, CMR made available the funds from the other two scholarships to three employees of eligible member resorts and awarded them \$500 each.

Pine Insurance Agency and Minnesota Resort Sales each sponsored \$750 in scholarship funds, and the below employees as nominated by their resort have each been awarded \$500 of those sponsor funds to further their academic endeavors.

## Carol Kirchner Memorial Scholarship Recipient

### Brenna Behrens

*Working at Two Inlets Resort | She is currently attending College of Saint Benedict studying Nursing.*

Working at Two Inlets Resort has taught me many things and has helped me to determine my future plans. It has helped me discover what my strengths and weaknesses are. I'm good at organization, working efficiently, and buckling down to get tasks completed. These are skills that have been necessary at the resort to get all the cabins cleaned in time, but they have also helped me in other aspects of my life. Being organized means I have never missed an assignment. Knowing how to work quickly has helped me balance school, work, and my activities. Having the drive to complete tasks helps me to break the dangerous cycle of procrastination. With the strengths, I have also learned some weaknesses, like I'm terrible at going with the flow or diverting from the original plan, and I don't do well with people who aren't putting in the same amount of effort that I am. Discovering these traits helped me determine that I want to major in Nursing, eventually becoming a Physician Assistant specializing in Dermatology. I believe what I have learned as a cabin cleaner has shaped who I am and will help me achieve the future I want.



## Community of Minnesota Resorts Scholarship Recipient

### Morgan Mudgett

*Working at Black Pine Beach Resort | She is currently attending Minnesota State University, Mankato studying Marketing.*

When I started my first job working at Black Pine Beach Resort as a weekend cleaner, I was a little middle school girl who had no idea what she wanted to do with her life after high school. As I grew, my job at the resort grew with me. I slowly started to work more hours and take on more responsibilities. I learned how complex running a business is and how many details go into making a business successful. By my senior year of high school, it was clear to me that I wanted to pursue a career in the business world. I give the resort credit for helping me to discover my passion for business and more specifically, marketing. All of the summer projects I was given at the resort helped me to find the part of business that I enjoyed and was good at! I am now going into my junior year of college working towards my Bachelors of Science in Marketing and a minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The things I learned at the resort have already helped me in my business courses and I will continue to take those lessons with me as I prepare to graduate college and start my marketing career!



## Community of Minnesota Resorts Scholarship Recipient

### Chandler Niemeyer

*Working at Niemeyer's Rugged River Resort | She is currently attending North Dakota State University studying Interior Design.*

**How the resort has shaped my life.** I have lived at the resort my entire life. It is hard to say that my life would be like without the resort. It is the only life I know. I have learned to talk to all kinds of people and handle many issues that come up including rescuing people on the river when their boat motor quits working and killing bees. I have learned to be responsible for following through with promises made, and for getting cabins cleaned on time. I have also learned patience and to go with the flow, when our family dinners and gatherings are delayed or interrupted by guests. Working in the office has helped me talk to people in person and on the phone. I enjoy helping plan resort activities and fixing up and decorating the cabins. The whole experience has overall helped me to have the confidence I need to make calls, meet people, and find my own jobs outside the resort. Overall, I think living and working at our resort has shaped my life in ways I have not even realized yet. The best thing about being born and raised on the resort must be just meeting new people and being able to connect with them.



**Congratulations to all of our scholarship recipients!**





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When on the page, click on the “Join the CMR” icon to fill out an application, or print an application to complete and mail in. (Are you a vendor offering products or services resorts would be interested in? Find a CMR Associate Member Application on our membership page also.)

Send printed applications to:  
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*Questions regarding Membership?  
Contact the CMR office at  
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or 320-212-5107*

## What **RESORTERS** Are Saying About **THE CMR**

I have had the opportunity to go to the annual CMR Day on the Hill. Our presence does make an impact. Little did I know then that our business would greatly benefit from these contacts. We encourage participation in CMR Day on the Hill; you never know when you might need a helping hand!

Our resort is located on Big Sand Lake in Park Rapids. There is only one public access, which means our guests continually use it. The DNR had made plans to renovate this sole public access, which forecast a closing of the access for 6-8 weeks in the middle of summer. Our resort's lakeshore cannot have a boat launch for pontoons or large boats. The closure of this public access would greatly affect our guests and our business. Once we heard about these plans, we talked with DNR about the impact on our business. No changes were indicated. Then we asked for help from our Senators and Representatives, which helped to get a constructive conversation going with the DNR. The final push came from our very own lobbyist, Joel Carlson, who I contacted and asked for help. He connected with Bob Meier, who is the MN DNR Assistant Commissioner. Through these contacts, our voice was heard. The DNR has announced that they will do the project in different phases – keeping the access open in the summer – and only closing the ramp for short periods in the late Fall and early Summer 2022. We are so happy that the DNR came to a creative solution that is good for businesses and lake residents alike!

I am so grateful for the CMR, our presence at the Capitol, and Joel Carlson as our lobbyist.

*Bonnie and Jeff Brand, Pine Cone Lodge*



# SEE WHAT THE CMR CAN DO FOR YOU!

## EDUCATION

- Fall Conference, Spring Workshop, Resort Tour, and School of Resorting Classes throughout the year
- Groups.io Chatline and Facebook Group – resorters sharing resort experiences
- Members ONLY online resources on CMR website (templates for boat/motor contracts, AIS Guide lines, Employee Forms, Photo Waivers, etc.)



## MARKETING

- New fully redesigned and mobile responsive website
- New branding campaign and billboard advertising – pooled and co-op advertising dollars go further with the CMR
- Flash Ads, Banner Ads, TV commercials and Pay-Per-Clicks in pooled advertising opportunities on our [www.Minnesota-Resorts.com](http://www.Minnesota-Resorts.com) website

## LEGISLATION

- Full-time lobbyist working specifically for/on the interests of RESORTS
- Join fellow resorters for a Day on the Hill and meet legislators to get our issues heard
- Get real time updates all year long on legislative issues which affect resorts



# Online Booking Software Systems

By Brian Schmitz and Dave Olson, Banter Software

## So, what is an online booking system? And why even use one?

An online booking system is an automated software solution that allows your guests to book and pay for a reservation through your website. In addition, it should give you the best tools to run and scale your resort, all in one place.

If your resort has gotten this far without any such system, you might be thinking to yourself: do I even need one? I'm getting enough reservations already; my calendar is already booked for 2022. Why would I bother taking on that extra expense?

Well, let us ask you this: is your email inbox overwhelming at times? Are you tied to your desk all day? Does your phone ever stop ringing? Are you drowning in post-it notes, waivers, and booking forms? Are your Excel documents getting harder to understand with in-depth formulas and messy mistakes? How much manual work are you putting into the same tasks every day/week/month? Your time is valuable and if you find yourself doing the same task over and over, it might be a good time to look at automating these things with software.

Let's look at just a few of the things an online booking system can do to help make your life a little easier.

### 1. Always available for reservations.

Having an online booking system means your resort is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Allow your guests to make reservations on their schedule, not yours. Allowing potential guests more flexibility to book on their terms, and with greater ease, results in increased revenue for your resort.

### 2. Offers more security and flexibility.

A web-based booking system, while it may seem strange, is a far more secure solution as your information is not just confined to a desktop computer. Your business can now follow you! Just like your guests, who can book on the go, you can run your resort on the go. A web-based booking platform enables you to use your mobile phone/tablet to manage reservations and any other resort-based activity you are tracking within your platform.

### 3. Reduces your workload.

Your time is valuable! Manually entering data takes more time than you anticipate. You should not have to be chained to your desk or tied to your phone as a resort owner. An online reservation system can help you save time by tackling dull, repetitive tasks - whether it's sending emails, creating reports, or updating current availability. Everything is kept up to date in real time allowing your staff to focus on more important things — like your guests and having a healthy work-life balance.

### 4. Creates a more enjoyable guest experience.

The right reservation software speeds everything up, from booking to check-out. In just a few steps guests can book, pay, and sign any required documents while getting a confirmation email in their inbox right away. All of this being done ahead of time helps

create a smoother overall experience for your guests while they are at your resort. Automated emails allow guests to keep up to date with your latest resort news or deals!

### 5. Provides important insights into your resort.

Let the program automatically create reports for you, in real time! Since a quality booking software should keep track of every reservation and all the information included in it, you can easily see reports when you would like without having to manually create them. You can see what units and boats are making you the most money. Better understand your total sales and guest details. A quality booking software should be able to create any type of report your resort relies upon to operate effectively.

### I already have reservation software; how do I know if I should switch?

There are some clear red-flags and markers to watch for when trying to determine if your current reservation software is right for you.

1. **Is it desktop based?** – This means, does it live on your computer in any fashion. This is not ideal since if anything happens to your computer, your data is gone. A web-based solution is reliable, scalable, transferrable, and mobile.
2. **Is this primarily hotel software?** If so, you will constantly be trying to fit your unique resort needs into their hotel specific product (round hole square peg!). This may even have you starting to change the way you run your resort to fit your software platform (not good!).
3. **Does your reservation software company work with you?** Who knows better about what is needed in a resort reservation system than you, the resort owner? Therefore, your opinion on what is needed should matter. Many systems do not take feedback, or even worse, do not have good support.
4. **Does it keep you in contact with your guests?** Your platform should have the ability to send out emails or text messages based on certain criteria that you can set up. For example, a deposit is due email sent 20 days before they book with a web link for them to pay with.
5. **Is the product scalable?** This can be hard to determine. Basically, this means, is the product evolving with the ever-changing technology landscape? A product that seemed great 3 years ago, can quickly become outdated. If your product seems unchanged and/or they are not taking your feedback, you may find yourself looking for a new product within 1-3 years. Find a product that is focused on the small-to-medium sized resort space that will grow with you!

Of course, any new software is going to take some time to set up and there is always a learning curve involved for you and your staff. But the best software companies should provide you with all of the support you need to make the transition as easy and as smooth as possible. With an estimated 700 million people expected to make an online booking by 2023, and 83% of U.S. adults wanting to book their trips online, the time spent incorporating a reservation software that makes the most sense for your resort will be time well spent.

Brian & Dave - Banter Software



**Have a great recipe?**  
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# Marketing Report

By Kim Bowen, CMR Marketing Committee Chair

CMR has a new website! Because of a one-time Explore Minnesota Tourism grant in which we applied and gained approval, we were able to pay for the development of this in totality. Our non-profit group's general funds did not need to be dipped into. This was a great boon, as we did not have normal income in 2020 (due to offering free membership to all resorts in the state for a year during Covid adjustment periods.) This grant not only paid for the website, but we had enough left over to put into effect several digital marketing campaigns to drive interest to the new site. (Facebook ads, Google Search & Display as well as streaming ads on Spotify, iHeartRadio and more.)

The new WordPress website is based on the old site in terms of layout, but it is now updated (the old site had numerous infrastructure issues which caused frequent challenges.) A new exciting feature is the map of Minnesota on the main/home page, with all member resorts and campgrounds marked in "push pins" on the map. A potential guest can hover a cursor over a push pin and view a snapshot of that resort (and also click through to that particular resort or campground listing.) An advanced search filter bar is located directly below the map. Tutorials (both in print and video clips) for members to check and update their website listing are being created (or possibly up and running by the time this article is published) and can be found under Membership menu item at the top of any page (then click on "marketing"). We will be nudging members to update their listings to make sure everything is correct. The new webhost team experienced a few glitches in transferring data and painstakingly went through each and every member listing, but you will want to double and triple check that your information and links are working properly, and update your photos.

The Last Minute Opening feature is also another marketing element we wanted to keep from the old website to help members fill their vacancies. For a VERY small fee (\$5/listing) you can advertise any last minute openings you may have (within three weeks of arrival.) We will post a tutorial and more info on the Groups.io chatline and our CMR Facebook page soon. Many members have expressed success in using this feature the last few years on the old website.

All members (resorts and campgrounds, retired resorters and associate members) can easily renew their membership on-line now (or if they'd prefer to save 3% from Paypal fees, they can print out the corresponding PDF application and mail as normal to the CMR office manager.) Ten years of Resorter Reporter magazines can be found under the education pages, along with full videos of zoom crackerbarrels, education materials & links, upcoming events, and many more resources. The legislative page includes a link to find your own legislators, upcoming bills of interest to our group, and past successes at the capitol.

We are looking forward to monthly website traffic reports from our new hosts, Pinnacle Marketing Group. We will pass along the stats periodically throughout the year to our membership. Over the last few years we have significantly reduced the marketing budget (not just during Covid.) This has been in response to member input requesting interest in more education and hands-on training to help us market our own resorts vs. monies funneled to a "resort directory." We welcome feedback and suggestions, as always! This is YOUR group, members. Tell us what we can do to help you maintain and improve your own business.

## Blogging: This winter is a great time to Blog

By Karen Senger, CMR Digital Marketing Liaison

### **Blog for the CMR and/or your own resort**

As a retired resorter of 17 years I realize that most of you do not have time in the summer to blog. But, as I look outside, I see that there is snow on the ground. There usually isn't as much to do in the winter (I do realize that some resorts are pretty busy in the winter too!). So, this is a great time to blog. You can write blogs for the whole year and then not worry about them when you are busier.

Why blog?

**Increases Organic Search Ranking:** What does that mean? It means that when your someone searches "Resorts in Minnesota with water trampolines" or "Minnesota Crappie fishing" or maybe "MN Resorts with yoga classes," if you have something on your website that addresses that, the likelihood of your resort (and in this case the CMR) being higher on the list goes up.

**Your current and future guests enjoy them:** You can use them for educational purposes as well. When you write about your resort you can tell your guests stories about your resort. Maybe how different guests experience your resort. Why vacationing in the fall is a great thing. Winter ice fishing is rewarding. Progress on a remodeling project you are doing. Oh, the topics can go on and on.

**You can get paid and your name/resort will be credited:**

If you write a blog for the CMR the CMR will pay you \$25 per blog. There are many topics that could work as a CMR blog. If you, your mother, father, daughter, son, friend, etc. would like to write a blog for the CMR, we could use your help. You don't have to commit to writing five blogs. Start with one and see where it goes.

We have had some people submit blogs in the past. But, lately they have all been ones that I have written. I think there are many of you out there that could write blogs for the CMR. Do you have an idea for a blog? Great, contact me and I we can talk about it. Don't have ideas? That is OK too. Contact me, I have some suggestions to get you started. Or look on the bottom of the CMR Home Page to read past blogs.

We do have some general criteria that should be followed:

- At least 400 words
- At least 1 photo or diagram (with approval and credit to photo owner(s))
- On External link (to website other than CMR)
- One internal link (to page within CMR website)
- Use keywords (words that potential guests would use when searching the internet)

Blogging is a good thing for the CMR and it can be a fun thing for you to spend some time on this winter.

**Interested in writing a blog post?**

**Contact Karen Senger,**

**CMR Digital Marketing Liaison**

**218-256-2288 or ksenger56657@gmail.com**



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## Your CMR Board Members Enjoying the Fall Conference in Duluth!



**Back row:** Casey Jones (CB); Preston Osborne (NB); Mike Boldt (CB); Bob Shimerowski (OB); Jim Wherley, Vice-President (NB); Kayla Daigle (CB); James Daigle (CB); Marc Bloomquist (CB); Mike Schwieters, President (CB); Mike Schultz (OB); Aimee Osborne (NB); Tom Marnik, Treasurer (CB); Mark Henkel (NB)

**Front row:** Clint Mueller, Past President (CB); Sue Malikowski, Office Manager; Linda Schultz (OB)

**Missing:** Timberly Christenson, Secretary (CB); Erica and Adam Nagel (CB); Kim Bowen (CB); Patty Mueller (CB), Adam Olsen (CB), Kyle Walter (CB), Bob Barton (OB)

**\*\* Current Board Member (CB), New Board Member (NB), Outgoing Board Member (OB) \*\***

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Board Members for their hard work and dedication these past two years as they navigated the CMR and resorts throughout the state through the uncertain times of the COVID pandemic. Through their efforts, and the efforts of you as members, we hope that resorts throughout the state have evolved and become stronger and better equipped to face any industry challenges which lie ahead.

**The Community of Minnesota Resorts Fall Conference was a great time to gather, learn and have fun!**



## Silent Auction

By Patty Mueller, Balsam Beach Resort

Boy oh Boy did you miss out on the silent auction items!!! As you can see the silent auction was a huge success this year! Everyone chipped in with great items from pictures and wall decorations that were homemade (everyone is so talented!). We also had buckets of items, wine baskets, dolly carts, grill, advertising deals and YES we can't forget about the moon shine basket! There was just so much that we can't even mention them all!!! All thanks to our generous members!!!! All the money raised goes to fund our Day on the Hill, so don't forget to participate in our mission for the day on the hill! Between the silent auction and the live auction we had a record year!! Thanks to all!!





# 2021 CMR FALL CONFERENCE VENDORS

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# THANK YOU! A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THE CONFERENCE VENDORS!

# 2022 Session Will be (Remotely) Interesting

By Joel Carlson, Community of Minnesota Resorts Lobbyist

“The hyper-partisan mood of the country has filtered into Minnesota’s Capitol – making progress slow and messy.”

The 2022 legislative session of the Minnesota legislature will be the third session with lawmakers operating under some restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman has announced that the House will be operating remotely for committee work and the State Office Building will be closed to public visitors. The Minnesota Senate will be conducting some in-person meetings with remote options available if requested according to new Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller. Both Chambers will be holding floor sessions in

person, but access to the Capitol for large crowds will be restricted.

In addition to public health concerns over the lingering pandemic legislative leaders are also being cautious about fully opening the Capitol complex over safety concerns. The Capitol has been fenced off on more than one occasion in the past 20 months. The multiple access points to these buildings make them difficult to secure and plans are being developed to provide greater security for legislators, staff, and the public.

Whatever format the session takes it will go fast and cover a lot of ground. Virginia will join Minnesota as the only two states with a divided legislature. The 2021 off-year election flipped the Virginia House of Delegates to the Republicans, an outcome some are predicting will happen in several more states in 2022.

Cooperation continues to be limited in Minnesota government. The Republican Senate and DFL House spent a long summer arguing about bonus pay for frontline workers, the job performance of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm, and a host of other issues like drought relief for farmers. A special session was anticipated in September to approve the \$250 million bonus pay package, but agreement was not to be found until much later. The hyper-partisan mood of the country has filtered into Minnesota’s Capitol – making progress slow and messy.

The regular session is set to kick in on January 31st and the agenda will be lengthy – although progress could be limited. The state budget is awash in money, there is long list of capital improvement projects to consider, and there are many policy proposals that may get attention.

## Redistricting Maps Released In February

The legislative deck is getting shuffled in mid-February as Minnesota works to adopt new legislative district boundaries based on population shifts and growth in the past 10 years. Legislators will likely have to make some hard decisions about running for reelection, moving into new districts, or facing off with members of their own parties in the newly re-drawn district maps.

The state’s metropolitan areas grew faster than the balance of the state and some rural areas of Minnesota lost population. The seven counties comprising the twin cities grew by over 300,000 people in the past 10 years, which is about the size of 3 State Senate districts. Some areas in greater Minnesota experienced growth, including

regional centers like Moorhead and Willmar. Some smaller counties, like Koochiching in the state’s Arrowhead region, lost between 5 and 10 percent of their population.

The legislature has the responsibility of redrawing the district maps, but there is little chance of that occurring in 2022. The Minnesota Supreme Court has established a redistricting panel that has been working on the process for months. The Court will be ready to release its district maps by February 15th and then the fun will begin.

Legislative plans released to date can be found here: <https://gis.lcc.mn.gov/redist2020/plans.html>

A dozen legislators have already announced they will not be seeking reelection to their current positions in 2022 – several of them are seeking other elected offices. Senators Paul Gazelka and Michelle Benson will not be returning to the Senate and instead are taking a run for Governor Tim Walz’s job. House Majority Leader Ryan Winkler has announced he will be running for Hennepin County Attorney. House members John Poston and Tou Xiong have announced plans to run for the State Senate. The turnover of legislative seats after redistricting can easily hit 50 of the 201 members.

Here’s a running link to legislative retirements: <https://www.lrl.mn.gov/history/retire>

## COVID Funds And Budget Surplus

Bipartisanship may be in short supply in 2022, but money will not. The State of Minnesota is awash in money from the Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) and a budget surplus that surprisingly developed during the pandemic. Legislators and Governor Walz could have in excess of \$3 billion to allocate to tax relief, onetime spending on programs, or invest in capital projects. There is, of course, the very real possibility that compromise isn’t possible and that the surplus will roll over to 2023.

Several groups like CMR and the Minnesota Tourism Growth Coalition are advocating for investments in tourism promotion and marketing grants to continue the economic recovery in the hospitality industry. Small investments in these programs yield great benefits to local communities. Legislators know that making these funds available to promote local events are smart uses of state funds.

Unemployment rates are dropping in Minnesota and across the country, but employees are still in short supply in many sectors. Many employers are having difficulty filling open positions and are offering incentives to encourage jobseekers to sign-up.

Housing also continues to be a barrier for employment in several areas of the state. Legislators are looking to invest some of the surplus money in housing to promote job growth.

Making headway on any of these issues will require cooperation between the parties and Governor Walz, which is anyone’s guess at this point.

“Voters may have to decide which party they dislike the least when voting in 2022.”



## Bonding Bill In 2022

The House and Senate Capital Investment Committees have been busy touring projects across the state totaling billions of dollars of investment in public projects. Governor Walz has also been reviewing proposals in person as well.

The goal of these efforts is to assemble a bipartisan bill that can pass and be signed by the Governor. Some Republican legislators have been reluctant to commit to a large borrowing package in 2022 and may be more inclined to spend some of the budget surplus on projects instead of going into debt. In addition to making a decision about cash vs. borrowing trying to find the right combination of state and local projects will be a challenge. The Minneapolis and St. Paul delegation of legislators will be pushing for investments in their communities to address racial disparities and damages from civil unrest – not always popular topics with some legislators.

## Election 2022 Is Already Here.....

Making the session even more difficult – the 2022 election. Historical facts and election patterns matter – and they do not trend well for the party that owns the White House. How stiff will the headwinds be for President Biden's Democratic party for his mid-term election is still being determined - but the history is not positive. There have been 40 mid-term elections in the United States since the Civil War, and the party that controls the White House has suffered losses in 37 of those contests. Ouch.

President Biden and congressional democrats are not enjoying high approval ratings, and the ongoing pandemic and resulting supply chain and inflation issues are taking a heavy toll. The stars could be aligning for heavy losses come November.

Republicans in Minnesota are starting to measure up the drapes for the offices they hope to gain in 2022 – but all is not particularly well within their ranks either. The party has not won a state-wide election since 2006 and have been unable to overcome the lopsided losses they suffer in the metropolitan area. The Republican Party has been facing its own turmoil over its leadership and finances after a close donor of former Party Chair Jennifer Carnahan and several candidates was charged with sex trafficking of minors.

Voters may have to decide which party they dislike the least when voting in 2022.

Legislators will have to navigate this uncharted water during the session, which will not be an easy task.

## CMR's Virtual Day On the Hill March 8 and 9

CMR will be holding its Day on the Hill remotely again in 2022 on March 8th and 9th.. This is an important opportunity for CMR members to connect with legislators on issues like wake board regulations, tourism funding, taxes and more.

We will be sending details about how you can participate via zoom and the issues we plan to address. Last year, we had many resorser's check in with our legislators and it worked. We brought several issues to legislators' attention, like supporting our members in the Northwest Angle, and they took action.

Even though we can't get on the bus....we need you on the zoom!

*Joel Carlson owns a Legal Research and Government Affairs Business in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has represented CMR at the Capitol since 1997. He can be reached at [jdcreserch@aol.com](mailto:jdcreserch@aol.com)*

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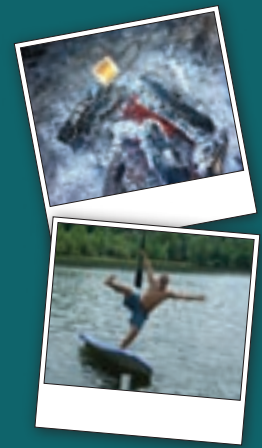
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*If you would like to be active on the Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) Board, or participate as a committee member, feel free to contact any board member with questions.*

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