

**TO: U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING STAFF  
LMSC LEADERS  
HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

**FROM: ROB BUTCHER**

**COPY: OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES**

**DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2009**

**SUBJECT: THIRD QUARTER, 2009 BUSINESS REPORT**

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This third quarter business update for U.S. Masters Swimming includes a look back at 2009 and the accomplishments recognized by U.S. Masters Swimming. This report also includes a look forward into 2010 and update to our Action Plan.

## **Recap**

As a brief recap, the highlights of our 2009 action plan called for the following:

- I. **Centralization** – establish a headquarters where we could consolidate national priorities for the organization, develop the necessary infrastructure to allow for efficiency, increase productivity, foster staff communication, identify opportunities and create accountability.
- II. **People** – continue our transition at the national level from a nearly all volunteer-operated organization to a professionally managed organization.
- III. **IT** – continue to see progress in our IT investments that would benefit our membership and the image of U.S. Masters Swimming.
- IV. **Marketing and Promotion** – rebrand the image of U.S. Masters Swimming and begin to better promote our image through internal resources as well as external partnerships.

I'm pleased to share that we made progress in all four areas with these milestones:

## **Centralization**

- After a six-month national search, the Board of Directors selected Sarasota as our headquarters.
- In May we entered into a long-term lease agreement with the City of Sarasota for the 2,000-square-foot historic Pagoda building to serve as our national headquarters. Our lease is public knowledge with monthly rent of \$1,066 a month with an annual 3 percent escalator.
- In June we renovated the building, adding new flooring, a conference room, semiprivate cubicles and a phone system. We continue to make improvements.
- In July we opened our doors.
- Our headquarters can permanently house 10 employees with an option to add seating for up to two more employees as we grow.

## People

- The controller position was elevated to full-time status with additional human resources responsibilities.
- The editor position was elevated to full-time editor-in-chief status with content management responsibility for *SWIMMER* magazine, usms.org and our new e-newsletters. Laura Hamel was hired as our editor-in-chief.
- A director of business operations position was created with responsibility for membership services, club and coach services and our expanding event initiatives. Mark Gill was hired as our director of business operations.
- An account executive position was created to serve our national sponsors as well as grow our sponsor partnerships. Kyle Deery was hired as our account executive.
- A second membership coordinator position was created to serve our growing membership needs as well as be a resource to our LMSCs. This position will serve additional administrative functions and will now be performed in the headquarters. Anna Lea Matysek will be assuming this role in the winter.
- Tracy Grilli has moved full-time into membership services as well as being the support person for our convention and national events.
- Jim Matysek, our IT director and Webmaster, is in the process of relocating from Kansas City to Sarasota.
- Mel Goldstein continues to lead our club development initiatives.
- I relocated from Charlotte to Sarasota in June.

## IT

- My USMS is now a member exclusive-content area. In My USMS, members will find our coached workouts and have the opportunity to posts photos and blogs.
- Our fastest growing program is Go the Distance. With more than 1,000 members participating, GTD was managed entirely by e-mail and Excel. With our new USMS fitness logs, GTD is now automated.
- We continue to add enhancements and functionality to online membership registration. In 2009, 70 percent of our membership registered online.
- Clubs are now able to renew their annual membership online. This is an important technology step as we desire to auto-populate Places to Swim.
- Our 5K, 10K, 3,000 yard and 6,000 yard Postal Championships were offered online for the first time, serving as a positive test for the administration of future postal events to move online.
- usms.org is undergoing a strategic redesign.

## Marketing and Promotion

- We introduced a new USMS logo and accompanying style guide.
- We introduced a monthly member e-newsletter and monthly coaches e-newsletter. Both have been very popular, with open rates near 50 percent.
- We introduced new marketing resources available for free to any LMSC or USMS club, including:
  - ✓ USMS brochures
  - ✓ USMS bag tags

- ✓ USMS stickers
- ✓ USMS “Adult Swimming Offered Here” facility stickers
- ✓ USMS swim caps
- To date, more than 130 clubs have ordered these items signifying a large appetite for USMS support at the local level.
- This fall and through the winter we are introducing an online USMS brand awareness campaign designed to promote the mission of USMS during our peak membership registration period.
- Our brand and Masters stories have been featured in such publications as the L.A. Times, Washington Post, St. Petersburg Times, Indianapolis Star, Men’s Health and Sports Business Journal.

## **Moving Forward**

In 2010, we will continue to build on these four pillars while taking additional action with the initiatives outlined below. All initiatives support our purpose, “to promote health, wellness, fitness and competition through aquatics.”

### **Club Development**

- In 2009, USMS staff visited more than 10 states. Our goal was to meet with coaches, promote the value of USMS, encourage membership and incubate new USMS programs. We visited Florida, California, South Carolina, Arizona, Missouri, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Illinois, Indiana, Idaho, Massachusetts and Oregon. In part because of our club development efforts, USMS has added 46 new registered clubs in 2009 for a total of 626, or an 8 percent growth rate from 2008.
- Under Mel Goldstein’s leadership of our club services program, we have added the following regional club development coordinators:
  - ✓ Jim Halstead – Jim is a coach with Curl Burke Masters. He will be responsible for Dixie Zone and Colonies Zone.
  - ✓ Susan Ingraham – Susan is head coach of Masters of Southwest Texas. Susan will be responsible for South Central Zone, Southwest Zone and the SPMA LMSC
  - ✓ Lisa Dahl – Lisa is Vice President of the Pacific Northwest LMSC. Lisa will be responsible for the Northwest Zone and the Pacific LMSC.
- With the help of The Woodlands Masters Swim Team, we hosted our first ever Masters coaches experiential weekend. More than 35 Masters coaches attended the inaugural SwimFest, sharing best practices from the dry side of coaching as well as learning from each other in both the pool and open water environment. SwimFest 2010 is planned for San Diego.

### **Events**

- USMS will serve as the host for the 2010 Summer Nationals in Puerto Rico. Mark Gill will serve as our event director, with all of the USMS staff providing support. Our goal is to create a truly rewarding experience for our members, sponsors and the swimming community.
- Our open water task force has recommended the creation of the H<sub>2</sub>Open Series, an open water series under the U.S. Masters Swimming banner. The idea for H<sub>2</sub>Open is to use the

national reach of U.S. Masters Swimming to provide national exposure, promotion and event enhancement for key open water events that are part of the series. We have included some seed capital in the 2010 budget to secure clinicians and for branding at the venues.

- The 2010 YMCA Masters Nationals will become a U.S. Masters Swimming sanctioned event.

### **Membership Enhancement**

- We are reviewing our insurance offerings to members to see what new benefits we can add that would increase the value of membership.
- We are supportive and are encouraging LMSC sanctioning of even more events. Our new membership coordinator will be a resource to LMSCs in this initiative.
- *SWIMMER* magazine is getting a shot of energy with new features and departments, more letters from members, more authentic photos and product reviews.
- Beginning in 2011, the national office staff has been charged with operation and promotion of our Postal events. We will be crafting and implementing a strategy that allows for additional participation from both fitness and competitive swimmers.

### **Marketing and Promotion**

- The January/February issue of *SWIMMER* magazine will include a pullout, high-energy event promotion poster and accompanying feature article on USMS's 2010 event lineup.
- We are adding more marketing tools that can be available to LMSCs and clubs.
- We will seek additional publicity from the media and continue to grow promotional partnerships with organizations that share our values.

On behalf of all our staff,

Respectfully submitted,



Rob Butcher