The

Mid-Knight News'

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

Fall 2026 issue

CONFERENCE OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN
Mark Smoot
msmoot3@gmail.com

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Altic61@gmail.com

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Lloyd.youel@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL
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Kristin.engle82@gmail.com

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mwrc.safety@gmail.com

EDITOR
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Editor:

At the Fall 2026 Conference which was held in Bellevue, NE the conference elections were held. The new Mid-West Conference Officers are Chairman Mark Smoot,
Vice-Chairman Scott Altic,
Secretary / Treasurer Lloyd Youel,
Doug Casteel remains the International Representative.
Congratulations to all newly elected MWRC Conference Officers.

If you need to contact any or all of your newly elected board their e-mail address is listed under their names to the left of this article. I am sure they will be more than happy to answer any of your questions.

The Spring 2027 Business meeting will be hosted by SD-I and will be in Keystone, SD. The host hotel is Rushmore Express Inn. Information is available on the MWRC webpage. A registration form is attached to this newsletter

The Fall 2027 conference was still open going into the business meeting, MO-III agreed to host the event. A contract has not been signed, so no information is available. I will update everyone in the Winter 2027 Mid-Knight News'.

During the conference, a bid was placed and accepted from our newest Chapter KS-IX for the Spring 2028 Business meeting. KS-III also placed a bid which was also accepted for the Fall 2028 Conference.

If your chapter has not recently placed a bid for a conference, get together and talk about it, and put in a bid.

Hope to see everyone at the Spring Business Meeting next year in Keystone, SD.

Most of the photos in this newsletter are from the Fall 2026 MWRC.

Rick



From the M.W.R.C. Chairman Mark Smoot

Happy Fall, Y'all

Otay, I'm not even sure where to start. Tom Luellen left a huge hole for me to fill. I'm not sure how to even try. So, I'm just gonna be me and if you have suggestions, speak up.

So, kickstands up. Here we go…



It was huge honor for me when Tom asked me to run for Chairman. It was an even bigger honor when y'all elected me. Thank you!!! I will do my best to meet this challenge.

Starting off, I'd like to hear from everyone. This is your club. What direction do you want it to go? If there is something you feel strongly about, I want to hear it. If you don't speak up, no will know how you feel or that you even care.

Next, I want to talk about the other officers of the MWRC. Thank you all for being here with me. Doug Casteel holds our corporate knowledge. He's been doing this a long time. He puts a huge amount of time into representing us with International. I really appreciate him sticking around for another term. Scott Altic has been involved for many years and has several ideas he wants to discuss. I look forward to hearing your thoughts as he presents them. Lloyd Yuell has this enthusiasm that is truly contagious. I love his energy. I know I can count on him to get a project completed. Rick McCrea has done most of the jobs on the board. He keeps us in line and makes sure we keep in touch with you. Scott Grabowski is persistent about our safety and is always looking for ways to be more active at Conferences and get everyone more involved in safety. Kristin Engle is our new Webmaster and has already shown she can make us more visible across the web. With this crew, I know we can be successful. We just need to hear what you want. Talk to us! Let us know what you want and expect from us.



I am looking forward to working with you and leading our region into the future. Let's Ride with Pride and show the world who and what we are.



For now, Kristie and I are travelling the country enjoying a new adventure. We spent a week exploring Kentucky and visiting a few…dozen distilleries. We hit Bardstown, where we were told we had to see the old Talbott Tavern. There, we discovered they have a Jesse James Room. Kristie's maiden name is James. Growing up, her parents told her she was related to Jesse James. She was excited to see his pistol on display and see his room where there were bullet holes in the walls, because Jesse had reportedly gotten drunk and shot the birds on the murals in the room.



We had planned to go to the SRC in Myrtle Beach, but decided to head south to the Gulf of America, instead. We'll be home in late October. Hopefully in time for Bikes and Boos hosted by NE II. We'll head back out next year, but we'll be home in time for the Spring Business Meeting.



Ride With Pride and I'll see you in Keystone!

Mark Smoot
641-226-0749
msmoot3@gmail.com



From the M.W.R.C. Vice-Chairman Scott Altic

Well, it is getting that fall feeling in the air. Hello brothers, and sisters, I hope you have all had a full and enjoyable riding season. I know Heidi and I certainly did and had the opportunity to meet new Blue Knights and catch up with friends. We participated in Shamrock Shenanigans in Omaha, went on to Spring Fling in Kansas, Sixers poker run, the MWRC Business Meeting, International Convention, Rye Ride and finally hosting the MWRC Fall Conference. Speaking of Fall Conference, I hope everyone who attended had a great time.

As we move into fall and winter, it is not a time to slow down. We still have many opportunities to get out and socialize with fellow Blue Knights, In my opinion, you don't really get the feel of the Blue Knights until you reach out beyond the Mid-West Conference.

Now down to some Vice Chairman business, it is time for dues and renewals. Please reach out to your chapter members you haven't seen in a while and go have a beverage, lunch etc. and see why they haven't been around and see what you can do to get them back active or at least come to more meetings. Remember in the words of Father Flanagan, "He ain't heavy, he's my brother".

I will work with Mark, and the rest of the board to increase our membership and hopefully chapters in the Mid-West. Looking forward to warmer weather and upcoming events but, have a look at other conference pages and International pages for events. Not everyone hibernates in the winter.



From the M.W.R.C. Secretary / Treasurer Lloyd Youel

Lloyd Youel, your Secretary-Treasurer here. This year is going by quickly!!! I am honored to serve as the Secretary-Treasurer for the MWRC. I will continue to be transparent with the conference funds with every member as I was in the interim role. There are still several chapters that have not paid their dues for 2026. Just a reminder that the dues to the MWRC are $1.00 per member and cap at $25.00 per chapter. If you have questions about your dues, my cell phone number is 316-737-4942 and my email address is lloyd.youel@gmail.com.

Ride with Pride,
Lloyd Youel
Secretary-Treasurer





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

Since our last newsletter, I have represented you at an International Board of Directors (BOD) special meeting and a BOD meeting in September, as well as our Fall Conference meeting in Omaha and the SRC in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Here are the highlights of those meetings:

BOD Special Meeting:

Several ex-members were added to the Persona Non Grata list.

An Appeal of the Mason Dixon Conference's decision not to grant a Charter in Virginia was not approved, with 5 yeas, 12 nays, and no abstentions. I voted nay.

BOD Meeting:

Magazine Committee: They presented the information obtained during their survey and made recommendations for some changes that should be incorporated into the next contract. There was a vote for the committee to continue their work and negotiate a contract with the publisher and bring it back to the BOD for approval. It passed unanimously.

International Webmaster: The website is being updated, and the chapters and conferences need to check their links and content to make sure they are correct. If there are errors, submit the corrections through headquarters. On November 1st the corporate chapter emails will be purged, so if you have anything saved on there, you will need to move it prior to that date.

Headquarters Committee: Are working on finding revenue streams, mostly through sales items. WI XI, who sell stainless-steel BK rings and Pendants, has transferred the sales permit to the Headquarters Committee.

Treasurer: The executive committee approved changing the accounting company due to them not being responsive and making billing mistakes. It was voted to rollover a $150K CD that matures this year and to open a $60K CD with funds in the convention account that currently has approximately $80K in it. Both were approved unanimously.

President Harper: Has been working on making sure our data is secure. The Bylaw Committee continues to work on updates. A contract hasn't been signed yet for the 2028 International Convention in Daytona, but it is tentatively set for June 12th – 16th, 2028.

BOG: Working on cleaning up the BOG Facebook page to remove the people that no longer qualify.

Office Manager: The online renewals will be available on October 17th, but you will not be able to submit and pay until January 1st. Please verify your members' information prior to submitting, as we get a lot of bad addresses, emails, and phone numbers. If your chapter qualifies for 100% retention, send an email to the office also.

New Business: UK&I Persona Non Grata Request was denied with 2 yeas, 15 nays, with me voting nay.

The next BOD meeting will be on December 9, 2026, at 1000 ET and the agenda items are due no later than November 9, 2026, at 1600 ET.

There will be a Special Budget Meeting on November 18, 2026, at 1000 ET.

If you have questions or need help on something, don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Ride with Pride,

Doug Casteel, MWRC Int'l Rep
mwrc.rep@blueknights.org
(314) 412-4449



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

Hello everyone!

Not much new going on with the new website since the last publication. For those who have not checked it out yet, the new site can be found at: blueknightsmidwest.org

I would like to see more events added to the "upcoming events" page. If your club has something coming up, please email me at blueknightsmwrc@gmail.com to have it added.

I am also toying around with the idea of adding a photo gallery to the current website. I would love to see pictures added from the conference and business meeting each year. Any feedback regarding this, or anything else you would like to see added to the site, send me an email!

Thanks,

Kristin Engle, Webmaster
Blueknightsmwrc@gmail.com





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

Slowing in Traffic or Stopped in Traffic

Whether you are slowing down, coming to a stop, or waiting for the light to change, staying alert and positioning yourself properly can make a significant difference in your safety.

If you are the first motorcycle to stop at a red light, stop at or behind the stop line. This gives you some extra room in case a vehicle turning into your lane cuts the corner. When the light turns green, take a moment to look both ways and make sure cross traffic is stopping before proceeding. Never assume other drivers will obey the traffic signal.

If you are not the first motorcycle in line, avoid stopping directly behind the vehicle ahead of you. Leave approximately one motorcycle length of space and position yourself slightly off-center in the lane. This gives you room to maneuver if you need to move out of harm's way.

As you slow down, keep your feet on the foot pegs until you are ready to stop. Dangling your feet while moving does not improve your balance and takes away your ability to use the rear brake. Relying only on the front brake at low speeds can increase the risk of a tip-over, particularly if your handlebars are turned. There is also a risk of catching a foot under a saddlebag or another part of the motorcycle, potentially causing a serious injury.

Your awareness of surrounding traffic is just as important as your positioning. Keep checking your mirrors and watching vehicles approaching from behind to make sure they are slowing down and stopping. Stay in gear rather than shifting into neutral while waiting at a red light. Keeping the motorcycle in first gear, with the clutch engaged, allows you to react more quickly if a vehicle approaching from behind fails to stop. As you slow down, downshift so you are ready to move when necessary.

Even when traffic around you has come to a complete stop, remain relaxed but alert. Drivers can become distracted, misjudge distances, or move unexpectedly. Keep your attention on the road and put your phone away. No text is worth your safety.



No matter your skill level, the brand of motorcycle you ride, or your riding style, you can take steps to reduce your risk. Staying alert, maintaining a safe position, and being prepared to react can help you avoid mistakes and make every stop a safer one.

RWP, Ride Safe and Practice Often

Scott Grabowski, MN IV
MWRC Safety Officer
mwrc.safety@gmail.com
612-814-1960

Update on the Spring 2027 MWRC

Rushmore Express Keystone



320 Cemetery Road, Keystone, SD 57751, US

ReservationDesk.com: 866-994-8087

HOTEL DESCRIPTION

Enjoy a range of recreational amenities, including an indoor pool, a hot tub, and a fitness center. Additional amenities at this hotel include complimentary wireless internet access, gift shops/newsstands, and a television in a common area.



President's meeting will be held at the Keystone Project on the hill above the Rushmore Express.

2027 Presidents meeting
June 11th – 13th
Host hotel is the Rushmore Express Inn
320 Cemetery Rd
Keystone, South Dakota 57751
1+605-666-4483
Room rates $149.00 + taxes for the rustic standard rooms

Suites for $189.00 – $249.00 These suites are multiple bed combinations

Free breakfast is available at the hotel
67 rooms have been blocked for us
Hospitality room on 2nd floor
Our meeting will be at the Keystone Ministry Learning Center

SPECIAL NOTE: $5.00 OF EVERY REGISTRATION WILL BE DONATED TO THE KEYSTONE MINISTRY LEARNING CENTER

Update on the Fall 2027 MWRC

The Fall 2027 MWRC will be hosted by MO-III. Details have not yet been finalized. I hope to have all information on it for the Winter Mid-Knight News

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 must 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:

Lloyd Youel
M.W.R.C. Secretary / Treasurer
9623 S Broadway St,
Peck, KS, 67120

The following Chapters have not paid their 2026 MWRC dues: MN-II, MN-III, MN-V, MN-VI, MN-VIII and MN-IX; MO-II and MO-IV; ND-I and ND-III; OK-VIII.

MWRC State Representatives Contact Information

Iowa:	Dave Eyman	BKIARep@gmail.com
Kansas:	Jim Miller	jimmiller@jim-san.com
Minnesota:	Larry Klink	luvnit1800@comcast.net
Missouri:	Don Tyes	bigdude@stjoelive.com
Nebraska:	Frank Bergmark	bikerbergs@charter.net
North Dakota:	Mark Ellingson	mellingson26@hotmail.com
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. This quarter, I had five of the eight representatives respond.

Iowa Representative Dave Eyman

Nothing to report

Kansas Representative Jim Miller

No report

Minnesota Representative Larry Klink

The fall colors have peaked and gone. Leaves are falling and hopefully we haven't seen any snow yet. Except for a few that travel south with their rides, it's time to put them away for a long winter's nap.
As you all know the Fall Conference was held in Bellevue, Nebraska in September and we have to thank NE-II for their great hospitality, food, and rides. 16 members from Minnesota attended representing chapters I, IV and V. The guided ride to the Twisted Tail Steakhouse and Saloon in Logan, IA. was well attended. The ride leaders did a great job of keeping us all safe. The Friday Night BBQ was outstanding with ribs, brisket and all the fixings. Loess Hills Harley-Davidson put on a hotdog lunch at their dealership on Saturday. The weather was good until we parted on Sunday and headed north with some scattered showers. A memorial service was held for Duane Potter, former Secretary / Treasurer who passed to Heaven-I earlier this year. Thank you again to NE-II. I would encourage anyone who hasn't been to a conference or even a longer ride, to look up the MWRC website: blueknightsmidwest.org for future events. If you are interested in looking to expand your horizons, feel free to reach out to me and I will tell you all about it.

Some Minnesota chapters got together in Brainerd, MN for lunch recently. It was time for a fall color ride, so four of us from Chapter IV and one from Chapter II, headed north from the metro and Little Falls area to meet with MN-VI. Lori Clarine, Chapter VI President, made the reservations at the Side Track Bar and Restaurant and we were treated like royalty. It was good to see new faces ,find out what they have been doing in their chapter. It was a pleasure to meet them as I had not met anyone from their chapter. We talked about what was happening in the club and MWRC, as well as rides we had been on.

Please keep Kathy and Gary Johnson from MN-I in your thoughts and prayers. They recently purchased a new, to them, 2016 Goldwing trike. It is their first trike and out on the maiden voyage just 7 miles from their home and went into the ditch and rolled over. Kathy sustained two broken hips, had surgery and will require many weeks before she can put weight on them and is in rehab and Gary

received a double break in his collar bone and will require surgery also. Both need time to heal. Gary said that they don't remember what caused the accident but will be looking into it.

Let's keep in touch here in Minnesota and try to get together occasionally. I still need to reach out to the southern MN chapters.

Ride with Pride,
Larry Klink, MN State Representative

Missouri Representative Don Tyes

Members from KC Metro (KS I), Kansas III, Kansas V. Kansas IX and Nebraska II, joined Missouri X for the 14th Annual Fallen Officer's Memorial Ride on October 2, 2026, in St, Joseph, Missouri. Approximately 38 riders and 50 people participated in the event including members from the Patriot Guard Riders, VFW Riders and the American Legion Riders. Thank you to all the members who helped make this event successful for another year.

As the season begins to change and farmers start harvesting crops,watch out for wildlife and farm equiptment crossing the roadways. Implements take up large portions of the roadways and often encroach into the lane of oncoming traffic. While riding bikes and trikes, especially during fall harvest season, we must stay accutely aware of the added dangers. Enjoy the ride but arrive alive.

Next up is the MWRC Spring Business Meeting, hosted by South Dakota I, June 11th, – 13th, 2027, at the Rushmore Express, 320 Cemetery Road, Keystone, South Dakota.

Ride with Pride,
Donald Tyes, President MO X
Missouri State Representative

Nebraska Representative Frank Bergmark

I had a good time at the Fall Conference and thanks for NE II for hosting. Riding season in Nebraska is winding down. On a sad note, NE-I lost a twenty plus year member, Roger Schleicher. Health issues forced Roger to stop riding a few years back, but he still was proud of being a Blue Knight. I would imagine he has connected with everyone in Heaven-I and they are riding curvy hilly scenic roads that have recently been repaved.

Frank Bergmark
Nebraska State Representative

North Dakota Representative

Nothing

Oklahoma Representative Tom Ashing

Greetings from Oklahoma and OK II.

Kudos to NE-II for hosting the Fall Conference. It is always good to come together with old friends and make new ones. Oklahoma had a smattering showing with members from OK-II being the only ones able to make the trip. Seems like Oklahoma is having the same trouble as other chapters in recruiting new members and a lot of our members are not medically able to ride that distance any longer.

Some of the news at the Conference was a little disappointing, such as the passing of members, and the loss of members in general. What does the future hold for us with our declining membership?

Not much news to report from the state of Oklahoma. We continue to trudge along, finally getting some relief from this almost unbearable triple digit heat wave for triple digit days. It was to the point we were expecting the asphalt to begin to melt. Fortunately, we do not have any serious illness or deaths to report, so I guess we are ahead of the game.

The hills and roads of the Dakota's are calling our names for the spring business meeting for 27. I have always enjoyed my travels to the area and it never disappoints with its scenic beauty and great roads to ride.

May we rejoice in our past memories and continue to make new ones and never forget to
"Ride with Pride,".

Tom Ashing,
Oklahoma State Representative

South Dakota Representative Dave Thorsgaard

Greetings from South Dakota!

The weather here has turned cooler with temperatures at or slightly above average for fall. Due to this some have continued to put on some miles but that may change as it is going to get even cooler.

We are working on the Spring Presidents Meeting. Our annual winter blahs party but most importantly we are getting things ready for our charitable donations to the community, Monument Health's Drug and Mental rehab center for juvenile's, Feeding south Dakota's Backpack program, the Salvation Army's Christmas meal basket delivery and Meals on Wheels Blizzard bag delivery. It will be a busy couple of months for us.

Stay safe and always Ride With Pride.
Dave Thorsgaard
MWRC State Rep.
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

REGISTRATION FORM 2027

Blue Knights Mid-West Presidents Meeting

Rushmore Express Inn
320 Cemetery RD
Keystone, SD
(605) - 540-1745

June 11-13, 2027

Hotel reservations ask for “BLUE KNIGHTS."

Room rates are 149.00 + Taxes USD / Night Standard room

$189- $249 + Taxes USD / Night Suites

Block will be held until May 16, 2027

PRINT CLEARLY – We do not want to mess up your information!

NAME (1) _____PHONE_____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____
STATE_____ ZIP_____

EMAIL _____
NAME (2) _____PHONE_____

ADDRESS _____ CITY_____

STATE_____ ZIP_____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____
PHONE_____ CHAPTER # _____

Your Direct Riding Distance to Keystone, SD_____

REGISTRATION: Number of Adults #_____x $45.00= _____

Registration after May 16, 2027 increases to $50.00

NOTE! $5 from each registration will be used as a donation to the Keystone Learning Center, a non- profit where we will hold our meeting on Saturday June12, 2027

CHECK #_____ Amount Enclosed/ Total = $_____

Send Check Payable to: Blue Knights SD II with Registration Form to:

Blue Knights SD I
PO Box 3294
Rapid City, SD 57709
Point of contact Dave Thorsgaard
sd1@blueknights.org
DG17Thor@midco.net