

ATV Minnesota

"Your Voice For ATV Recreation in Minnesota"

Member Newsletter

November 4, 2026

-A Special Post-Election Report-

What the Election Means for ATV Minnesota

and the 2027 Legislative Session

A Special Report From Jeff Anderson, ATV Minnesota Lobbyist

With Election Day behind us and the 2027 Minnesota Legislative Session approaching, we wanted to provide ATV Minnesota with an update on Tuesday's election results and what they could mean for our organization, our members, and the future of ATV recreation in Minnesota.



Tuesday's election brought significant changes to state government, including a new Governor, changes in control of the Minnesota House, and a larger DFL majority in the Minnesota Senate.

These changes will have implications for ATV Minnesota as we continue advocating for responsible trail development, improved connectivity, rider safety, adequate funding, and policies that support motorized recreation throughout our state.

While the results remain unofficial, here is our initial assessment.

A New Governor and Administration

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar defeated Republican House Speaker Lisa Demuth in Minnesota's open gubernatorial election, becoming the first woman elected Governor in Minnesota state history.

Klobuchar will succeed Governor Tim Walz and will bring a new administration to St. Paul, including changes in leadership at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

For ATV Minnesota, this transition presents an important opportunity.

The DNR plays a central role in trail planning, permitting, funding, management, and the development of policies affecting ATV riders. We believe ATV Minnesota should have a voice in discussions about the future direction of the department and the selection of its leadership.

We will work to ensure that the incoming administration understands the importance of motorized recreation to Minnesota's outdoor economy, particularly in Greater Minnesota, and recognizes the contributions of local ATV clubs that build, maintain, and support trails across the state.

Governor-elect Klobuchar is immediately moving to build her administration by naming a transition team that will guide her selection of state commissioners, political appointees, and the development of the state's next two-year budget. Significantly, Klobuchar has announced that she will begin comprehensive audits of every state agency, which will no doubt mean a tightening of spending, staff changes, and new initiatives. Our recommendation is for ATV Minnesota to engage with the transition team and advocate for leadership that is aware and respectful of ATV use in Minnesota and our needs to keep developing a safe, sound, and vibrant statewide ATV trail system with fair regulations and licensing.

Individuals interested in serving in the Klobuchar Administration as Commissioners, staff, or on board and commissions, you can visit the transition office website at **www.govklobuchar.com** .

Significant Changes in the Minnesota Legislature

The election also produced major changes in the Minnesota House and Senate.

Minnesota House of Representatives

After two years of an evenly divided 67–67 House, Democrats are leading in 77 districts, compared with 57 for Republicans.

If these results hold, the DFL will control the House during the 2027–2028 biennium.

That means new House leadership, changes in committee membership, and potentially new committee chairs.

Minnesota Senate

Democrats are also positioned to expand their majority in the Minnesota Senate, with unofficial results showing the DFL leading in 39 districts and Republicans in 28.

The Senate entered Election Day with a narrow 34–33 DFL majority.

With numerous retirements and newly elected legislators, the Senate will also see significant changes in committee membership and leadership.

Environment and Natural Resources Committees: Changes Ahead

For ATV Minnesota, one of the most important developments will be the organization of the House and Senate environment and natural resources committees.

These committees play a central role in legislation affecting ATV access, trail development, natural resources funding, and DNR policy.

With the change in House control and turnover in both legislative chambers, we expect changes in committee membership. Committee chairs may also change, although those decisions have not yet been made. Both political parties in the House and Senate will meet privately soon to select their leadership, decide on committee chairs and membership, and begin to lay out their priorities for the next session.

Some legislators who have been supportive of ATV Minnesota's priorities will return, while others will be leaving the Legislature. Newly elected members will bring different backgrounds and perspectives on outdoor recreation, environmental policy, and trail development.

This creates both opportunities and challenges.

We will have an opportunity to introduce ATV Minnesota to new legislators, educate committee members about the benefits of ATV recreation, and build

relationships with individuals who may be unfamiliar with our organization or the work of our local clubs.

At the same time, we should expect continued scrutiny of motorized recreation, particularly regarding trail development, environmental review, access to public lands, and the balance between motorized and nonmotorized recreation.

Our approach will remain bipartisan, focused on education, relationship-building, and practical solutions while fighting off unfair and uneducated assaults on recreation opportunities for Minnesotans who love their ATVs.

Updates on Closely Watched Races

Several closely watched legislative races took place in Northeast Minnesota, a region that is especially important to ATV recreation and trail development.

Senator Grant Hauschild (DFL) won reelection in Senate District 3, defeating Republican Andrea Zupancich. Hauschild has been an important ATV advocate in discussions involving trail development and outdoor recreation in Northeast Minnesota as a member of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee.

Representative Roger Skraba (R) of Ely won reelection in House District 3A. Skraba represents a large geographic district with significant ATV trail systems and recreational opportunities. He has been a consistent advocate for our issues, as has Senator Farnsworth below.

Senator Rob Farnsworth (R) of Hibbing won reelection in Senate District 7, which includes much of the central Iron Range.

Representative Natalie Zeleznikar (R) was defeated by DFL challenger Aaron Schweiger in House District 3B, which includes Two Harbors, Hermantown, Proctor, and surrounding communities.

Representative Jeff Dotseth (R) was defeated by DFL challenger Chris Swanson in House District 11A, which includes portions of Carlton and Pine counties.

Elsewhere in Northeast Minnesota, Representatives Spencer Igo, Cal Warwas, Ben Davis, and Josh Heintzeman, along with Senator Keri Heintzeman, won

reelection. These experienced legislators know the importance of our ATV issues, and we are thankful they will return to the legislature.

These results will bring both continuity and change to the legislative delegation representing some of Minnesota's most active ATV riding regions.

Maintaining relationships with returning legislators while developing relationships with newly elected members will be an important part of our work in the coming months.

ATV Minnesota's Legislative Priorities Remain Important

Regardless of which party controls the Legislature, ATV Minnesota will continue advancing policies that support safe, responsible, and sustainable ATV recreation.

Among the issues we expect to focus on in 2027 are:

ATV Trail Funding: Ensuring that ATV registration fees and dedicated funding sources are adequate to support the growing demands on Minnesota's trail system, including maintenance, development, and long-term sustainability.

Trail Connectivity and Access: Supporting legislation and policies that improve connections between existing trail systems, communities, businesses, and recreational destinations.

ATV Definitions and Equipment: Continuing efforts to modernize Minnesota's statutory ATV definition, including discussions about increasing the allowable machine weight and addressing tire-related provisions to reflect changes in equipment manufactured and used today.

Trail Planning and Environmental Review: Working to ensure that Minnesota maintains a fair, predictable, and practical trail planning process that protects natural resources while allowing responsible, motorized trail development.

Safety and Education: Supporting rider education, safety initiatives, responsible trail use, and partnerships with local clubs and communities.

Support for Local ATV Clubs: Recognizing the tremendous work performed by local ATV clubs and exploring additional opportunities to support club-led

projects that improve trails, enhance safety, and strengthen the future of ATV recreation.

We know that some of these priorities will face challenges in the new Legislature. However, we also believe there will be opportunities to build bipartisan support around the economic benefits of ATV recreation, the importance of safe and well-maintained trails, and the contributions of ATV riders to communities throughout Minnesota.

Looking Ahead to 2027

The next several months will be particularly important.

We will be watching the selection of House and Senate leadership, the organization of the environment and natural resources committees, and appointments within the incoming Klobuchar administration, including the Department of Natural Resources.

We will also begin outreach to newly elected legislators and continue conversations with returning members from both parties.

ATV Minnesota has developed a strong presence at the State Capitol through our legislative advocacy, Lobby Day, the President's Ride, and the relationships we have built with legislators over the years.

Those efforts will be particularly valuable as we enter a new legislative biennium.

There is opportunity ahead, but there will also be challenges. Our job will be to make sure legislators understand that ATV Minnesota and its member clubs are committed to responsible recreation, protecting access, improving safety, and helping communities benefit from Minnesota's growing ATV trail network.

We look forward to continuing that work together.

Thank you, and please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or thoughts as we prepare for the 2027 session.

Jeff Anderson, Dave Lislegard & Gary Cerkvenik

***ATV Minnesota Legislative Summit**, December 5, 2026, 8 a.m. to noon, at the Tulibee Tavern, 235 Main Street, Wahkon, MN 56342 (320-495-3318)*

Be sure and register to attend, to learn more from Jeff Anderson and the ATV MN executive board, and work together to form an action plan for our 2027 legislative initiatives. Registration is required, at atvmn.org, tap the Events tab.

Club presidents and representatives: watch for the meeting agenda and resolution forms, being sent to all clubs this week.



ATV MINNESOTA

"Your Voice To Ride"

(And Have Fun!)

Seventy-three dedicated ATV clubs and their volunteers, building and maintaining fun, sustainable ATV trails for the riding public (and bridges, boardwalks, kiosks, parking, selfie stations and more).

Invite friends and family to join today.

Gift memberships available!



See the mailing label on your Minnesota Wheelin magazine for your membership renewal date. Be sure to include your email address on the renewal form we send you to receive our twice-monthly newsletter. Send renewals to ATV MN, PO Box 300, Stacy, MN 55079. You can also join/renew at atvmn.org.

Belonging to ATV Minnesota, you join thousands of riders throughout the state, have fun, and help create a positive future for ATV recreation in Minnesota.



As a family or individual member, for $30, you receive:

-A subscription to Minnesota Wheelin magazine (published times 6 a year).

-Twice-monthly newsletter by email with the latest news.

-Membership card and ATV MN logo sticker for your ATV.

-Invitations to events, including our Legislative Summit, Vision Conference, "Ride & Roast" in spring, and State Convention "Ride & Rally" in the fall, as well as membership meetings.

-A full-time lobbyist at the State Capitol, helping create pro-ATV legislation, and moving forward bills to provide funding for new trail systems.

As a business member, for $90 you receive:

All of the above, plus:

-Your business name and contact information listed in our Minnesota Wheelin magazine and on the ATV Minnesota website.

-Discounts on advertising in Minnesota Wheelin. For details on rates and deadlines, send an email to Creston Dorothy at Pro Print in Duluth: cdorothy@proprintus.com.

-Opportunities to reach more customers by sponsoring or donating to our events.

To join, contact **ATVAM** or call (800) 442-8826.

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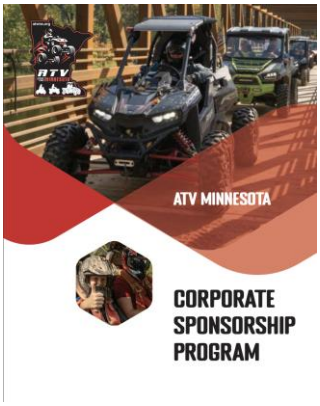
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