

# No Borders Rally returns to the Falls

BY ERIC MATHEWS  
Staff Intern

The No Borders Rally is set to bring to International Falls Christian motorcyclists from around the United States and Canada July 9-12.

The event is organized by the Christian Motorcyclists Association and is expected to draw from 250-300 members. The CMA Falls Chapter 811, better known as the “Frozen Chozen,” hosted the rally in the Falls in 2008, but the chapter has since dissolved due to lack of member participation.

But local members say they are still excited to help out the Bemidji chapter, Common Bond, which will sponsor rally events this year.

“We had a very positive experience in International

Falls in 2008,” said CMA Minnesota State Director David Adams.

All of the rally’s events are free and open to the public. CMA organizers remind people the event is interdenominational and welcomes people of all faiths.

The Christian Motorcyclists Association uses bikes as a tool to deliver their Christian message. The organization travels to secular bike events such as the Black Hills Motor Classic, commonly called the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota, to minister to those in need of their message, organizers said.

The No Borders Rally rotates biannually around Canadian and American cities. Since the Falls rally in 2008, the event has been held in Brandon, Manitoba, and Kitchener, Ontario.

“We had representatives from every providence of Canada, and every state, except for Hawaii, at the 2008 rally. When people get up here, they see the big, beautiful lake and want to come back. They can’t believe how beautiful it is up here.”

**Bob Secrist**  
Local CMA member

This year marks the first time the rally has been held in a U.S. city in six years.

The No Borders Rally is also good for the community that hosts it, said International Falls CMA member Bob Secrist.

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cept for Hawaii, at the 2008 rally,” said Secrist. “When people get up here, they see the big, beautiful lake and want to come back. They can’t believe how beautiful it is up here.”

## Activities

A ride-in bike show will be offered at 1 p.m. Friday at Dairy Queen, where people will have the opportu-

nity to chat with members while checking out their bikes. At 3 p.m. bike games are planned for at 1300 Riverside Drive. Games will range from skilled to “goofy” activities on motorcycles, say organizers. CMA members encourage spectators to bring lawn chairs, so they can sit and watch the fun.

Also on Friday, a free concert is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Backus Community Center Auditorium and will feature various performers, including a Jeff Foxworthy parodist.

Other events throughout the weekend will be scheduled, including a scenic motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle rides. The CMA not only use bikes to minister, but off-road vehicles and ATV’s as well, organizers noted.

Bikers will camp at Rainy River Community College for the event.

Flooding around Borderland isn’t expected to effect CMA member turnout, said Fort Frances CMA member Roger Williams.

“CMA members are used to riding in all sorts of conditions,” he said.

The organization also holds annual fundraisers to support major international efforts. Chapters conduct annual “Run for the Son” fundraisers to benefit other ministries, such as the Jesus Film Project, which uses film to tell Bible stories to the illiterate across the globe.

More information on the No Borders Rally is available online at [www.cmausa.org](http://www.cmausa.org), where CMA members can preregister for the event.

## KLOBUCHAR

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Lodge to see submerged docks topped with barrels in the bay shared with Rainy Lake Houseboats.

Tom Dougherty, Rainy Lake Houseboats, met Klobuchar as she headed up the stairs at the lodge and implored her to do all she could to return the rule cure to previous levels.

“Since the rule curve was changed in 2000, Rainy Lake has experienced high water levels seven out of 14 years,” he told her.

Klobuchar said she would explore Dougherty’s suggestion to bring water levels on Rainy Lake down as quickly as possible and save some of the season.

Klobuchar has in recent weeks toured other areas of flooding in the state. She was ready for just about any terrain Wednesday changing from high heels into tennis shoes on the ride in the sheriff’s pickup.

“I’ve always believed that it’s important I get some accounts on the front

line, on the ground, because when you go back and push FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration), or to get some extra funding, I have seen it for myself,” she said of the visit.

Klobuchar said it appears the state will meet a federal threshold for funding, with the \$7 million damage threshold met just in Carver County.

“But it’s also the per capita for the county,” she added. “This looks like you’ve also met that threshold in Koochiching County. With that, that means we get 75 percent of public infrastructure paid for federally and it frees up more money for the state to help with more individual things, as well as to supplement the 25 percent that’s not paid federally.”

Klobuchar said the statewide flooding has been a true test of Minnesota and its residents and first responders.

“We haven’t lost anyone yet in these floods, and that’s because people have been careful,” she said.

“Through it all and the difficulty with farming and tourism, we all remember our people on the front lines have done a great job and should be commended. Now it’s time to recover and rebuild and that’s what my visit is all about.”

Dougherty, who has close family ties with the Kettle Falls area and its dam tenders, asked Klobuchar to seek immediate relief for Rainy Lake to allow the businesses to salvage what’s left of the season. He presented her with a three point proposal.

“We need to get to the IJC and ask them to immediately go back to the 1970 rule curve on the Namakan basin for sure, because that might give us a little relief over time, because they continue to dump water on us once they get back into the curve,” he told Klobuchar.

Dougherty told Klobuchar the high level of Rainy Lake will persist for the next three to four weeks before it returns to a more normal level. The lake is different than a river,

which can drop in level quickly, he said.

He asked Klobuchar to seek a return to the 1970 rule curve in the Namakan basin, and target the upper level at 90 percent of the curve. He said once the basin is back in the curve and the outflow is reduced into Rainy Lake it will help reduce lake levels at a faster rate.

Dougherty asked Klobuchar to make an emergency request to Canada’s Ministry of Natural Resources to reduce inflows from upper and lower Manitou. The dam is now at 50 percent and levels are high there at 3 feet, he said. A reduction would help reduce flow to Rainy Lake.

“We are not asking to flood them, but simply hold water and give some much needed relief here on Rainy Lake,” he urged in the proposal.

He also encouraged Klobuchar to seek funding in the form of low-interest loans to help repair infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the flood waters.

“I want to see what I

can do to help,” she told Dougherty.

As she stepped on to the dock at Thunderbird Lodge, Klobuchar was in obvious awe of the scene. “Wow,” she said, taking in the view between the two businesses.

“This is the most remarkable (damage) for one business I’ve seen so far across the state,” she said on the deck. “You’ve got a marina that looks closed down, you’ve got sandbags on the deck and this just shows the effect on tourism and business. We’re hoping it’s cresting now, but it’s already taken a chunk out of people’s livelihoods. That’s why we’ve got to push for every kind of state and federal funding we can get.”

Ron Haanen, Thunderbird Lodge owner, described the round-the-clock manning of a pump for nearly two weeks to compensate for pressure in a crawl space below the lodge. He said the effort has been exhausting, and he pointed to the submerged road that connects the houseboat business and lodge.

Dougherty pointed to docks and gas pumps at the houseboat business that have had to be relocated. He estimated 1,000 pounds of weight, seven layers of pallets of cement blocks, are holding down an important part of a dock. Docks, electrical, sewer and water lines may need to be replaced, he said, and damage is already at about \$30,000.

Meanwhile, the change in the rule curve in 2000 has benefited Kabetogama and Namakan lakes more than Rainy, Ecklund said. Anderson also supports pursuit of reverting the rule curves back to the 1970 version.

Anderson suggested putting logs in at the Kettle Falls dam now to start to slow the flow into Rainy Lake. He said Namakan Lake level had been coming down. Docks have been lost in that part of the basin, but business have not been impacted to the extent on Rainy, Dougherty said.

“Somebody’s got to step up and make some decisions on the IJC,” Dougherty said.

## GROVER

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The experience prepared him for his new job, but Grover admits when he first started in education, he never imagined sitting in the top seat.

“I love teaching...I truly still enjoy it,” he said. “I miss being in the classroom. Contact with students is different in this position.”

As a former math teacher, he said he feels his love of numbers can only be a benefit to the superintendent duties.

“It’ll definitely help when it comes to doing the budget and things like that,” he said. “And we have our annual audit right away in September, so I’m busy preparing for that.”

## District goals

Coming in to a new position, Grover said he doesn’t have major plans that will

result in extreme changes, but he said he does have specific goals in mind. Toward the top of his priority list sits improving communication between everyone district wide.

“I think that’s where we’ve dropped the ball on certain things,” he said. “It’s not that we don’t communicate, but we need to improve.”

Going forward, Grover said he feels any changes and transitions that will be brought out in the district will run smoother if information is communicated better. One example, he said, is moving fifth-grade classrooms from West End Elementary back to Falls Elementary.

“It wasn’t communicated very well,” he said, noting he supports the action approved by the board in May. “Communication, however, would have been better to allow for input...We need to be open to suggestions.”

Depending on situations that arise, Grover said one of his ideas to help widen the doorway of communication is weekly letters to school board members to keep them abreast on happenings within the school.

“It’s not going to be a 10-page dialogue, but just a summary of what happens over the last week,” he said of the plan. “It’ll keep them informed, that way if someone approaches them or gives them a call, they’ll be aware of what’s going on.”

He added administration is also working to improve the school’s presence on social media as another avenue to keep the community and other school staff members informed.

“If we’re going to make a change or something is happening within the school, we need to be up front and honest about it,” he said. “Facebook can help that communication piece.”

And then there’s student enrollment.

Coming off a year that saw a sharp decline in student numbers, Grover knows it’ll be a challenge to continue addressing the issue.

“I don’t know if we’ve seen the end of it,” he said. “We don’t have a real thumb on how many more students we will and could lose. We are trying to assess why people are leaving – is it something we did or was it beyond our control – we’re trying to get better at doing what we’re doing.”

On the positive side, the superintendent said he is confident changes happening at both the high school and elementary levels will help the district retain students as well as bring back some they may have been lost to neighboring districts.

Offering concurrent enrollment classes, or college in the school, will be a big drive, he hopes, to keep juniors and

seniors in desks at Falls High School instead of enrolling in the Post Secondary Enrollment Option program at Rainy River Community College or elsewhere.

“It’s going to be an exciting year,” he said. “We hope to build the Bronco pride back up through having more of the student body here.”

Addressing issues at the elementary level, he said, is more of a challenge, however, making it the best possible place it can be is a top priority.

“We are going to promote

a better environment and keep up with technology,” he said. “We also will continue the push to have lower class sizes, which I think is really important.”


Bottom line – Grover is confident the district is heading in the right direction and he said he looks forward to the year ahead.

“The door is open – stop in, call, or email, that’s why I’m here,” he said. “And that’s the way it should be. We’re here to serve the public. This is a public school and we want it to be as viable as possible.”

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