

Hi All,

Just got my PGI bulletin and it contained some very distressing news. Iowa – as a state – in total since August of 2009, has lost 121 people to drop to an all-time low of 166 members.

This represents an almost 50 percent decrease in Iowan/PGI members and a loss of more members than of any other state in the nation. Even in Illinois, where they have no ‘hobbyists’ anymore at all, gained 9 people to post about 220 members and beat out Iowa for the total to claim second behind Wisconsin which has 412 members now (up 94 people since last year).

This is not now, nor has it ever been a ‘contest’ however almost 50% – really? Had we even just retained those 121 people, we would easily come in behind Wisconsin with like 287 people (adding 94, they now have 412 members).

As it is – Iowa does lead the nation – in losses of the number of members – woo hoo. This accounts for almost half of the total number of losses to the PGI – nation-wide. Minnesota was second to us losing 63 members. This means that dividing half of the losses by every other State in the Union – Nation-wide – it only averages only 1.3 lost people.

This is NOT the time to abandon hopes of being a hobbyist and it is certainly not a time to take a ‘stand’ of some kind by standing with one vendor over the other if that’s what it is. All a ‘vendor war’ could possibly hope to do is divide the hobbyist contingent. It can do absolutely nothing to help our causes. If someone you know ‘was told’ that being a PGI member was a “bad” or “unneeded” thing – they are dead wrong – make no mistake about it.

Contrary to the slop they shovel – the hobbyist accounts for most of their business and if the hobbyist goes away, many of them will too. They are loathe to hear that, but it’s the reality of things. We hobbyists are a form of ‘addict’ and the vendors act as our ‘dealers’. We have to have a ‘fix’ and they are there to sell it to us. If full-time insurance and full-time people (actual employees), are mandated by law – what happens to the casual shooter – they “go away” that’s what happens to them.

With less of a “pool” to select from – what happens to the smaller shows – many given by local volunteer fire departments – that’s right – they “go away” too. With more small-town shows gone – what happens to those that remain? They will inevitably cost more to put on as vendor’s try to equalize their “bottom-line” somewhat.

Talk about your shooting yourself in the foot!

If you are 1 of those 121 people who ‘used to be’ a member, maybe you should rethink that. If Lawmakers see declining numbers of hobbyist participation, the case may be made that this is a view of things to come nation-wide. If it is successful – you – as a hobbyist shooter may indeed “go away” sometime very soon. There is indeed “safety in numbers” and staying away just makes things harder for the hobbyists.

If you are an active IPA/PGI member – good on you – you should be actively seeking new people to join – not telling people to stay away. If we – as IPA members can all just get one person to join PGI too, we can easily negate and turn these figures around the other way. So, if you are an active IPA Member, I urge you to try to talk to at least one person either in the IPA now or one who should be, about joining PGI too, or if you - yourself do not belong to PGI, I urge you to become and remain, an active member.

That’s how I see it anyway.

- Mark Woodburn, IPA Safety Education Chair