

## From the President

### Your Vote Counts

By Rob Dingman

Elections matter at the AMA, and that's why your vote is so important as we chart the future of the Association.

That fact was never more apparent than at the annual Corporate Members meeting, and the subsequent AMA Board of Directors meeting, on Saturday, Feb. 13, in Indianapolis. That's when the corporate members approved—and the board members ratified—changes to the Association's code of regulations that assure that the majority power on the AMA Board of Directors rests with the board members elected from our Regions.

The proposal to make the change came from the 12-member board itself. In July of last year, the board unanimously passed a motion to reduce the number of corporate-elected members from six to four, and add two at-large positions. The total number of board members remained at 12, and individual, regionally elected members retained half of those seats with six positions.

AMA Board of Directors Vice Chairman Jim Williams, who represents corporate member Kawasaki USA, said it best when presenting the proposal to the corporate members, whose approval was required by our bylaws: "Allowing a relatively small number of corporate members to control 50 percent of the board was simply not in the best interests of the 240,000 individual members of the AMA. The corporate-elected members continue to provide input, guidance and expertise to the oversight of the AMA, but we believe greater representation by the directors selected by the individual members more clearly reflects the AMA membership."

It's a momentous change, so how did we get here? Considering that the AMA was created in 1924 with substantial support from the motorcycle industry, it's understandable that we started out with six member-elected and six corporate-elected members. But today, the membership is certainly capable of charting the course of the AMA, and our corporate members agree.

With the reduction in the number of corporate members, the Board of Directors also believed it was wise to add two new at-large positions that can be filled by individuals who will bring outside expertise to the board. For example, a good candidate for an at-large board position would be an individual who has experience growing a national advocacy association to several million members. The persons who fill the two at-large positions must be reviewed and recommended by the board's nominating committee, approved by the Board of Directors, and elected by the membership—demonstrating again that your vote counts.

The importance of each AMA member's vote cannot be overemphasized. With the seating of new AMA board



Photo: Grogan Studios

member Jim Viverito, who won his election in the North Central Region in January, we crossed an important threshold. Viverito is the first board member elected using a secure online voting process. VoteNet.com, a leading online vote tabulating company, verified the election results, and the returns were independently audited and certified by the accounting firm of Plante & Moran PLC.

Using the same secure online election technology, AMA-chartered organizers were able to elect the 2009 AMA Congress without having to travel to annual District meetings as they have in the past. In so doing, we allowed a wider group—including more AMA members who host sanctioned events—to help choose those who make competition rules.

With greater timeliness and integrity of our elections also comes greater transparency. And so I must report to you that only 0.5 percent of the North Central Region's eligible AMA members voted in the regional election. This disturbing trend is not unique to this region. Judging from the e-mails and letters I receive, many of you care deeply about the AMA, but do you care enough to vote? Our job is to make sure each of you knows about upcoming elections and candidates, and so I am committing the AMA to doing a better job of publicizing our board elections. In return, I ask each of you to read the statements from your candidates and take the time to vote—a process made far easier because it is online, although we still provide paper ballots to those who request them.

The future of the AMA now rests firmly in the hands of the board members elected by the individual members, and we, in turn, must fulfill this responsibility at the AMA ballot box.