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IRON DOG **TRAIL CLASS** 2018



MARK VAUGHN

AGE: 58 / **FROM:** Anchorage
STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZRRXC
RACE HISTORY: None
BIO: I came to Fairbanks in 1994 with the U.S. Army and started doing all the Alaska things and fell in love with Alaska and Alaskans. After retirement the roots were too deep to leave. Six Alaska grandchildren later—well... I told my son I'd run Iron Dog with him when he did Trail Class thinking the Pro Class bug had him pretty bad and I was safe. One head-on crash later, here I am as part of his rehab program. My adventurous wife, Lynne, is very jealous.
RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed
Personal Sponsors: JMark-AK, Alaska Mechanical Contractors Association/ SMACNA, Lynne



RYAN WILKINS

AGE: 35 / **FROM:** Eagle River
STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR6000XC
RACE HISTORY: None
BIO: Fighter, strong and faithful. These are all words that describe Ryan Wilkins. Ryan is a survivor of brain cancer, 18 months in remission. Ryan worked diligently to provide a fulfilling life for his family, his wife and two young children being the center of his world. Before Ryan was diagnosed his passion for snow machining ran ramped, he found his true happiness when climbing a summit to stare at the sky, with nothing around him, but peace and tranquility. At a young 33 years of age, Ryan was told that his brain was enveloped by cancer, at that time Ryan doubted he would live, let alone snow machine ever again. Throughout months of grueling treatment, relocation and finally a stem cell transplant, Ryan became cured. Now approaching his year and a half anniversary of being diagnosed, he runs this race to commemorate victims of all types of cancer that continue to fight.
Personal Sponsors: Katmai Oncology, Shane and Kate Schenker, BE ALIVE!, Anchorage Chrysler Dodge, AK Starfish, Alaska Sales & Service, Chevy South Anchorage, Shannon Smiley Denali Dental, God, and family

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Sponsors: ***Arctic Cat Inc.***



RYAN BAXTER

AGE: 32 / **FROM:** Eagle River
STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR6000RXC
RACE HISTORY: None
BIO: "Ain't no mountain high enough, Ain''t no river wide enough!" is the motto of this 32-year-old Alaskan who loves to get after it. My beautiful fiancé, Caitlyn, and her children are my world. I am an avid outdoorsman and have been riding snowmachines for over 20 years. I am currently serving in the Alaska Air National Guard and have been for the last 14 years. This will be my first time doing the Iron Dog trail class and look forward to the many challenges and every mile of memory it will bring.
RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed
Personal Sponsor: Arctic Cat

IRON DOG **PRO CLASS** 2018



DAVID STANBERRY

AGE: 34 / **FROM:** Wasilla
STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR6000RXC
RACE HISTORY: None
BIO: I was born and raised in Alaska. I have a beautiful wife, Miranda, and a beautiful 2-year-old daughter, Harbor. I have 15 years of military service with the first six years being in the Navy and the rest Air National Guard. I've been riding snowmachines pretty much since I could walk and racing on and off for several years. I enjoy spending time with family and anything else that has to do with the outdoors. This year I hope to complete the Trail class and move on to the Pro class next year.
RACING EXPERIENCE: 2011 Larry Heal 150 third place; 2012 K-150 fifth place; 2012 Mayor's Cup sixth place
Personal Sponsors: Miranda Stanberry, WADECO, StudBoy, Brad Newton, David & Kathy Stanberry

IRON DOG FACTS

JOHN FAEO AND SCOTT DAVIS are tied for the most Iron Dog wins, with seven each—and they never once raced together. Here is the complete list of champions:

- Scott Davis, 7
- John Faeo, 7
- Dan Zipay, 5
- Dusty Van Meter, 5
- Mark Carr, 4
- Todd Palin, 4
- Marc McKenna, 4
- Bob Gilman, 3
- Nick Olstad, 3
- Todd Minnick, 2
- Evan Booth, 2
- Dwayne Drake, 2
- Tyler Huntington, 2
- Chris Olds, 2
- Eric Quam, 2
- Tracey Brassard, 1
- Gary Eoff, 1
- Rod Frank, 1
- Ken Lee, 1
- Andy George, 1
- Bill Long, 1
- Mark Torkelson, 1
- Scott Faeo, 1
- Tyler Aklestad, 1
- Tyson Johnson, 1
- Cory Davis, 1
- Ryan Simons, 1

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Hatcher Pass Polaris**, Klim, Lead Dog Helmet Light, Fine Line Interiors, Anchorage Sheet Metal*



DENNIS FALLDORF

AGE: 63 / **FROM:** Ketchikan

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Charger

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: The 2018 run to Nome will be my sixth run and fourth with teammate Mark Meuser. The trip to Nome through Alaska is an annual must-do. The five-day focus on the single concept of flow and balance, zero load is mental therapy to the max.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 1971 USSA J-1 State Champion

Personal Sponsors: Curt's Pit Stop, Falldorf;s Snow and Sand Adventures, Blooms Mechanical Enhancements



MARK MEUSER

AGE: 51 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback Adventure

RACE HISTORY: 2012: Finished, 2013: Finished, 2015: Finished, 2016: Finished

BIO: Mark is a 12-year resident of Alaska and is a flight nurse with LifeMed Alaska. Mark and his wife, Deborah Lerner, enjoy traveling and SCUBA diving.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Skookum Logistics, A2D Sledworks, Alaska Snowmobile Salvage, Bob Bloom

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POLARIS

Sponsors: None Listed



RANDY BEDARD

AGE: 55 / **FROM:** Willow

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris 600 Switchback SP

RACE HISTORY: 1989 Finished, 1994 Finished, 1999 Finished, 2015 Finished

BIO: Adventure and snowmachines are my passion. My father and uncle purchased our first Polaris sled in 1971. This is my eighth adventure on the Iron Dog Trail. I have been employed in the snowmobile industry since 1986. I am currently employed at Hatcher Pass Polaris Willow as the store manager.

RACING EXPERIENCE: I raced my first XC race in 1981, first snowcross in 1982. My first Iron Dog Trail Class ride was in 1989. I served as an Iron Dog board member in 1990 and 1991. I participated in the 1994 Iron Dog Snowmobile Congress ride. I raced the 2014 I-500 XC Veteran Vintage on a 1981 Polaris 340 TXL- second place.

Personal Sponsors: Thank you to all the Iron Dog volunteers at the start line, along the trail, and at the finish line. Special thanks to Hatcher Pass Polaris, Bergeron Mechanical, Klim



KIM BERGERON

AGE: 48 / **FROM:** Dublin, New Hampshire

Status: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback SP

RACE HISTORY: 2015: Finished

BIO: I'm a volunteer at Llocal, state and international levels to protect our rights to ride. I'm an avid wheeled enthusiast, races hare scramble and proud to be a future Alaska resident.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Trail Class 2015 finisher, thanks to the support of my team and Dan and Patti Paris!

Personal Sponsors: K.E. Bergeron Mechanical Systems. LLC, Hatcher Pass Polaris

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SKI-DOO

Sponsors: Central Pacific Rebuilders of Alaska, Starters And Alternators (CPR), Klim, Team CC, Stud Boy



ROBERT FITZGERALD

AGE: 54 / **FROM:** United States

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo Renegade Backcountry

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I'm retired military.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: None listed



MIKE FULTON

AGE: 52 / **FROM:** Palmer

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: My wife Genice and I moved to Alaska from Hawaii in 2014 and this is my first time running the trail class Iron Dog. I just started riding snowmachines last year.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None

Personal Sponsors: Central Pacific Rebuilders of Alaska, New and Rebuilt Starters and Alternators.

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ARCTIC CAT

*Sponsors: **Be Alive!**, Motorfist, Vision X, Eagle River Polaris and Arctic Cat, Arctic Cat, Fly Racing, Tequila 61, Stud Boy Traction Products, Palmer City Alehouse, Eagle River Alehouse, Anchorage Alehouse, Katmai Oncology Group, CCA Motorsports, Arctic Cat Racing, Trail Toyz*



MICHAEL OLIVER

AGE: 31 / **FROM:** Nome

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 XC

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I was born and raised in Nome. For the last 12 years I have been working as a diesel mechanic for Chevrolet of South Anchorage. In my free time, I enjoy fishing, hunting, camping and spending time with my friends, family and son, Lincoln. I am running the Iron Dog trail class in honor of mother, Edna Oliver, who recently passed from cancer.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Jerry Oliver, Shea Oliver, Porter and Leslie Karmun, Delbert and Candy Hutchinson, Matt Tomter, Alaska Mechanical Contractors Association/ SMACNA



JERROD VAUGHN

AGE: 34 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR RXC

RACE HISTORY: 2013: Finished, 2014: Finished, 2016: Finished, 2015 and 2017, DNF

BIO: The mission of Be Alive! is amazing and I am excited to be a part of getting Ryan to Nome. Also, excited to finally be riding to Nome with my dad instead of having him meet us there! Big thanks to my wife and kiddos for enduring another year of Iron Dog life!

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Alaska Mechanical Contractors Association/SMACNA, Alaskad, Donald Koontz, Jennifer, Kenna, Austin, Rylee, Mark, & Lynne Vaughn, Darrell & Shelli Koontz, Color Art, Big Dipper Clothing, Geoff Crouse, Micah Huss

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IRON DOG SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



TUESDAY, FEB. 13

Racer Drawing and Hall of Fame Banquet
Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14

Donlin Gold Safety Expo
Cabela's, Anchorage
PAGE 38

FRIDAY, FEB. 16

Trail Class starts
Southport Marina, Big Lake

SATURDAY, FEB. 17

First Flying Iron Freestyle Show
Big Lake
PAGE 22

SUNDAY, FEB. 18

Start of 2018 Iron Dog Race
Big Lake
PAGE 20

Second Flying Iron Freestyle Show
Big Lake

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21

Halfway ceremonies
Nome

Trail Class Riders Finish
Nome

SATURDAY, FEB. 24

Pro Class Finish
Fairbanks
PAGE 28









MAIN PHOTO: MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTO
INSET PHOTOS, TOP THREE: ROGER CLIFFORD; BOTTOM: MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTO

For times and other up-to-date information, visit irondog.org

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Donlin Gold**, Hotel McGrath B&B, Dr. James Hoges, Side Pay Mining, Big Lake Power Sports , Takotna Tribal Council, Takotna Community Association*



BARNEY ANSELMENT

AGE: 42 / **FROM:** Takotna

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris

RACE HISTORY: 2017: Finished.

BIO: I am Alaska born and raised, and live in Takotna with my wife, Misty, and our three kids, Alana, Kaden and Kainoa. I'm the owner and pilot of Magnuson Airways.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2017 Iron Dog

Personal Sponsors: My wife, Misty, and our kids Sabrina, Alana, Kaden and Kainoa, the Nikolai Family



DIETRICH NIKOLAI

AGE: 33 / **FROM:** McGrath

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris XCR Switchback

RACE HISTORY: 2017: Finished.

BIO: I'm Alaskan born and raised. I live in McGrath with my wife, Renae, and three beautiful kids Kierra, Jacob and Alyzabeth. I enjoy hunting fishing and trapping on my time off from working for Knik Construction.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2017 Iron Dog

Personal Sponsors: Renae, Kierra, Jacob, Alyzabeth Egrass, Gary and Rosalie Egrass, the communities of Nikolai, McGrath and Takotna.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Lube Tech**, CP Diecasting, Polaris Racing*



BOB MENNE

AGE: 53 / **FROM:** Tower, Minn.

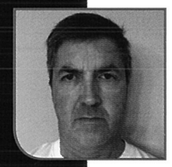
STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I have lived my entire life in Minnesota and currently reside in Tower, on Lake Vermilion. We spend our summers on the lake boating and enjoying the outdoors with the wintertime consumed with snowmobiling either on the trails or at the races. In the late '80s and early '90s I raced professionally in cross-country and ice ovals and competed in events like the Jeep 500 and Eagle River World Championships. I have been married to my wife, Pam, for 27 years, and we have a son Bobby and a daughter Paige. I have owned a plastics manufacturing business for the past 19 years. After following Bobby in the Iron Dog for two years and seeing the race from the inside while flying the trail in 2016 from Nome to Fairbanks I decided I wanted to take on the challenge of the Iron Dog.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Raced Jeep 500 in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, and again in the 1997 ISOC 500 and competed at the Eagle River World Championships in 1991, 1992 and 1993. In 2013 we built a SOO I 500 sled with Bunke Racing and also with the help of Ivan Hanson and Driver Bobby Menne placed third in our rookie run.

Personal Sponsors: Woody's, Klim, Straight Productions, Polaris Ride Command, Vision X, OSMagazine, Walker Evans Shocks, Ride X 365, Bunke Racing, Action Graphics, and family and friends.



STEVE SWENSON

AGE: 52 / **FROM:** Delano, Minn.

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I have lived most of my life in Minnesota and currently reside in Delano, 30 minutes west of Minneapolis-St. Paul. We spend our summers on the lake. Much of my summer free time is spent helping my son compete in the AA class in the (NEPG) National Enduro Promotions Group. I've competed for over 30 years nationally and internationally in off-road motorcycling, earning a Silver medal at the International Six Days Enduro. I also competed multiple times in the I-500 snowmobile race. I have been married to my wife, Darcy, for 22 years, we have two sons, Mitchell and Nicholas, and one daughter, Brooke. I have been employed in the recreation industry my whole career in various sales and marketing roles for OEMs and in the aftermarket. After hearing the tales of the Iron Dog and talking with my teammate's son, Bobby Menne, I had interest. Last winter Bobby's father Bob contacted me (as we have been longtime competitors and friends) and asked If I was interested. I had one condition: that we use the race to raise money for the courage Kenny rehabilitation center. And here we are.

RACING EXPERIENCE: I-500 1989, fourth place

Personal Sponsors: None listed

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Polaris Racing**, Doug's Synthetic Lubricants, FXR Racing, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, Gorilla Fireworks, Diversified Tire, Gates Belts, Fast-Trac Snowmobile Traction Products, Arctic Fox Steel Buildings, Alaska Fireplace & Accessories, Inc., Hatcher Pass Polaris, Woody's Traction Products, Elka Suspension, Vision-X, Greatland Laser, Grip-n-Rip Racing, Special Events of Alaska, Media Lab, Anchorage Well and Pump Service, Law Offices of Christina Passard, P.C., Zugger Shocks, Anchorage Sheetmetal, Diversified Tire, Fine Line Interiors*



KLINTON VANWINGERDEN

AGE: 37 / **FROM:** Big Lake

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2015-2017: Finished

BIO: My life revolves around my beautiful bride, Calli; my daughter, Reese; my son, Miles; family and friends, my job, but most importantly my Savior Jesus Christ. It is my desire to do my best in all I do as if doing it unto my Lord, Jesus Christ. It is a daily battle but I strive to stay focused on what I believe to be the most important matter in life: Remember the life Jesus Christ lived and demonstrated on earth, as documented in the bible, and strive hard to model my life after his example. It is my hope Christ will demonstrate his grace through our efforts and participation in this great race. We have an amazing team supporting us! Thank you to all who've taken an interest in our team and a very special thanks to all that have either supported and/or joined Team Sons of Thunder! www.facebook.com/klint.kris.sot

RACING EXPERIENCE: Fourth Place, 2017 Iron Dog; second place, Larry Heal Memorial

Personal Sponsors: My beautiful wife and best friend, Calli; my children, Reese and Miles for pushing me to be better; and family and friends for your continued prayers and support.



KRIS VANWINGERDEN

AGE: 34 / **FROM:** Big Lake

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2015-2017: Finished

BIO: I am a lifelong Alaskan married to my beautiful wife, Heather. We have daughters Tesa Monroe, Josie Oakley and Ellis Adley, who are my delight. Racing has been a part of the VanWingerden brothers and family lifestyle, and the team name Sons of Thunder embodies that; additionally, it is the nickname Jesus Christ gave to two disciples – James and John – who were also brothers. The "Sons of Thunder" were known for their "impetuosity and zeal" for the Son of God, and more importantly held the gospel of Jesus Christ as The Truth. John 1:12-13 - But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Iron Dog: 2017, fouth place

Personal Sponsors: Heather VanWingerden, Doug VanWingerden, Connie VanWingerden, Mark VanWingerden, Bettye's Bake Sale, Mamsee from McGrath, Eckenweiler's from Unalakleet, Wilson from Nome, Esmailka's from Kaltag, Hornfishers from Galena, Chris from Ruby, TR from McGrath, family and friends for their continued prayers and support

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ARCTIC CAT

*Sponsors: **Arctic Cat**, Anchorage Suzuki Arctic Cat, Country Cat, Motorfist, Vision X, Alaska Boiler & Burner, Norcoast Mechanical, Inc., DHS Grain LTD, Alaska Sheet Metal, 139 Designs, Crossfit Repo, Amy Winter Photography, Sukup Manufacturing Co., Runestone Insurance Agency, Midwest Doors, Vipond Farms, The Winter Spectacular, Terry Anderson/ AFLAC, Winning Edge Graphics, Anderson Oil Company, Spuds small engine and repair*



GEOFF CROUSE

AGE: 34 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 R XC

RACE HISTORY: 2013: Finished, 2016: Finished

BIO: Geoff is 34 years old and was born and raised in Alaska. He has been riding snowmobiles for over 20 years. When Geoff is not riding his snowmobile he enjoys spending time with his family, four-wheeling, fishing, and riding mountain bikes. He is employed by Norcoast Mechanical. Geoff has been married for 10 years to his wife, Jenna, and they have two sons Blake and Eli.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Jenna Crouse, Doc and Laurie Crouse, Lori Lindquist, John and Mitzi Crouse, Mark and Lynne Vaughn, Brad and Trevor Helwig, Donald Koontz, and Wendall Morrison



DIETER STROBEL

AGE: 37 / **FROM:** Barrett, Minn.

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 R XC

RACE HISTORY: 2015-2017: DNF

BIO: I'm married with two children, Brooklyn, 11; and Bennett, 7. I own and have operated a grain-handling sales and installation business for the last nine years. I enjoy working outside and riding snowmobiles in the mountains and now Alaska.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2015-2017 Iron Dog: DNF; 2014 Trail Class finisher with a team of seven.

Personal Sponsors: Thank you to family and friends for all the support. And everyone else who has made this possible especially my wife, Megan, daughter, Brooklyn, and son, Bennett.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **The Delta Dentist**, Delta Powersports, Klim, Woody's Traction Products, Walker Evans Racing, Doyon Utilities, Delta Concrete, Arctic Drilling, IGA Food Cache Delta Junction, Aurora Aviation Services, Inc, Delta Medical Transport, Morely Electric, Delta Building Supply, Debbie Joslin Realty, Builderberg Construction, Buffalo Center Service, Fairbanks Central Labor Council, Delta Meat and Sausage, Perry's Rod and Custom, Fine Line Interiors, Antoinette Lester*



ARRON ADAMS

AGE: 33 / **FROM:** Delta Junction

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback Pro-S

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I was born and raised in Delta Junction, and have been riding sleds since I was little. My wonderful wife, Hilary, and I have three kids, Ethan, Kyrsten and Sadie. We love doing family activities outdoors like side-by-side trips, four-wheeling, boating, fishing, hiking and whatever else comes our way. I personally love to work on trucks, cars, quads, sleds ... pretty much anything with a motor. I currently work as a Utility Fitter Foreman for Doyon Utilities on Fort Greely. This will be my first year running the Iron Dog and cant wait to give it go! We have teamed up with Alaska Center for Resource Families to help bring awareness to kids in need of foster or adoptive care through out our great state of Alaska. If you would like info about foster or adoptive care or would like to see how you can help please go to ACRF.org.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: I would like to thank my top personal sponsor, my wife, Hilary; my kids, Ethan, Kyrsten and Sadie; all the rest of my family for their encouraging support; Butch Brant for a huge help in providing us with air support. Doug and Jackie Fett for their generous personal donation. Ruby Hollembaek of Alaska Interior Game Ranch for her public relations help and fund-raising ideas; stand-up comedian Joe Glass and The Clearwater Lodge for their help in putting together a hilarious team fundraiser; Mike Adams and students of Delta Junction High School for parts design and fabrication; Sam Porter for parts fabrication and welding help; All our current "adopt-a-checkpoint" sponsors: Heather Stossmeister, the Bobo/Hollembaek families, Cliff Coon, Mike and Blenda Croy, Jay Adams and family, Eric and Ariena Jensen and family, Chuck and Toni Lester, Mike and Carol Adams, Alaska Center for Resource Families, Ryan and Melissa Skaw and their kids, Weldin Construction FGA JOC; Mark and Cory Scott, Rita and the crew at Rolling Stove Alaska; and the Delta Lions Club; and the rest of the Delta Junction community for coming out and supporting us through our fundraiser activities.



JON BRANT

AGE: 38 / **FROM:** Delta Junction

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris PRO-S Switchback

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I was born and raised in interior Alaska, and am an IBEW journeyman lineman of 15 years with four previous years in the U.S. Marine Corps. I enjoy spending time with my family, my beautiful wife, Jen, of 19 years, daughter Trinity and son Tanner. My hobbies include boating, flying, coaching youth hockey and spending time at my cabin on the Goodpasture River.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Jennifer Brant, Trinity Brant, Tanner Brant and Butch Brant.

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **LJ's Store**, Wilderness Skidoo*



CHRISTOPHER COLLINS

AGE: 36 / **FROM:** Kotzebue

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo Renegade

RACE HISTORY: 2013: Finished, 2016: Finished

BIO: I have lived in Kotzebue all of my life. I feel that living in the Bush is the only way for me to truly enjoy my life. I am able to hunt, commercial fish, build remote cabins and keep myself busy with day-to-day activities. I have been on snowmachines since 1995 and racing Ski-Doo sleds in the northwest region since 2001. The Iron Dog is an adventure that I must be on, so here I go again.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2006 Nome-Golovin fan class first, 2006 AF/WG open class third; 2007 Nome-Golovin fan class fifth, 2007 AF/WG fan class fifth; 2008 Nome-Golovin fan class fifth, 2008 AF/WG 600 class seventh; 2009 Nome-Golovin fan class first, 2009 AF/WG fan class fifth; 2010 Nome-Golovin open class first, 2010 AF/WG open class third; 2011 Nome-Golovin open class fifth, 2012 Nome-Golovin 600 class second, 2013 AF/WG 600 class third

Personal Sponsors: Jana Collins, Vern & Tami, Lawrence Jones, Bruce Nelson, Bahnke family, Howard & Freda Beasley, DeeDee Carlo, Pongy Carlo, Susan Collins, Jesse Crumbley, CJ, Brianna & Sarah Crumbley, Dicki Moto



LAWRENCE JONES

AGE: 43 / **FROM:** Ambler

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ

RACE HISTORY: 2014: DNF

BIO: Lawrence is married to wife, Gladys, with five children (Brent, Amanda, Bradley, Katherine and Lawrence Jr.) and one granddaughter, Hailie. He is employed by Maniilaq Association as an IT tech and has served on the regional School Board for six years (NWABSD), the first year for the local ASC Ambler school and is a first-year board member for (AASB). His family owns LJ's Store in Ambler. He volunteers his time for both Ambler Fire Department and Search & Rescue Department. He enjoys the outdoor life, hunting, fishing, camping, boating, traveling and most of all spending time with his family.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: My wife, Gladys, and family , LJ's store and all the support on the trail.



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LONG. TOUGH. ALASKAN.



JIM WILKE
PRESIDENT, IRON DOG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THIS YEAR MARKS the 35th anniversary of the Iron Dog, which we all know is "the world's longest and toughest snowmobile race." That is very much true and we often don't stop and think about what a uniquely Alaskan event this is.

Longest? Yes, and by a wide margin. There are a couple of 500-mile races in the Midwest so the Iron Dog is four times the length of those. Yes, there is a long event in Canada but that is more of an expedition while the Iron Dog is a race from start to finish.

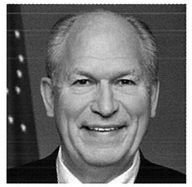
Toughest? No question. Iron Dog racers travel at very high speeds over two mountain ranges, up and down the Yukon River and across the Bering Sea ice. They race across barren tundra and through snow that is neck deep. Temperatures can range from 40 degrees above F and rain, down to minus-50 with windchills off the chart.

Another factor about the Iron Dog that gets overlooked is that it is a team race and time does not stop until both members of the team cross the line. On at least three occasions, the first machine to finish was not part of the winning team; by the time his partner crossed, both members of another team had finished.

This year, racers will leave Big Lake and head for the Bering Sea coast and then on to Fairbanks. For six days they will battle the elements and each other as family and fans cheer from the sidelines and from their computers. Some will be defeated by the elements, some will have mechanical issues, others will be outridden. One team will be the winners, the winners of the world's longest and toughest snowmobile race. The Iron Dog.

— Jim Wilke

A VERY ALASKAN RACE



BILL WALKER
GOVERNOR OF ALASKA

WELCOME TO THE 35TH annual Iron Dog Race! The Iron Dog is the world's longest and hardest snowmobile race. This world-class event crosses some of the most rugged and remote terrain in Alaska while participants endure harsh winter conditions and subzero temperatures each February. We appreciate the event supporters, volunteers, phenomenal racing teams, and all the communities along more than 2,000 miles of the race route.

The Iron Dog brings out the best participants in the sport, from Alaska and the Lower 48, and continues to highlight and support the snowmobile sports community through promoting snowmobile sports, safety, outdoor education, and community participation. I offer my best wishes to all participants for a safe, enjoyable, and successful race!

—Gov. Bill Walker

WELCOME TO THE FAIRBANKS FINISH



JIM MATHERLY
MAYOR OF FAIRBANKS

WELCOME TO FAIRBANKS, the Golden Heart City of Alaska and the official finish for the Iron Dog race. The Iron Dog brings out some of the best competitive spirit in Alaska, and we are happy that the race has finished in downtown Fairbanks for the last eight years.

This is the third year that the race will finish behind the Morris Thompson Cultural And Visitor Center, and we hope that you will come and enjoy the finish of the race while checking out all the vendors. Teams will be arriving mid-morning and throughout the afternoon and then heading into the Morris Thompson Center to warm up. There will be a live feed for those who cannot attend in person; it can be found at irondog.org/live.

Good luck to all racers, and we hope to see a lot of fans at the finish line!

—Jim Matherly

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POLARIS

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IVAR CARLSON

AGE: 35 / **FROM:** Fairbanks

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris XCR 600 Switchback

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I was born and raised in Fairbanks and currently live in Anchorage, where I have started my own family and work for Weona Corporation, a local welding and fabrication shop as a lead welder / fabricator. When I'm not working there, I am still working it seems, always trying to be innovative, thinking and coming up with new ideas for custom fabrication whether it be for custom sleds or an improvement on a truck or just a local welder for hire for doing side jobs. When I am fed up with working and wrenching I enjoy hanging out with my beautiful girlfriend, Susan, and my pain in the butt 3-year-old daughter Winter Rose, whom I love to the moon and back. I grew up doing what every kid did in the 90s – skateboarding, snowboarding and BMX freestyle. All that was short-lived once I got into riding a piece of equipment that made you go fast and elevated you off the ground. It was then that I found myself doing freestyle and racing snocross, making a name for myself being known to taking sleds to a whole new level. I have since never looked back as that is what my life revolves around. It is more of a passion than anything and is always on my mind it seems.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2004: three years placed in pro ppen Arctic Tire snocross; 2005: King Rules Snow Circus tour in Finland; 2012: second place, 800 open Arctic Man Hillcross; 2013: third place 800 open Arctic Man Hillcross; 2013: first place Alyeska Motor Madness Hillcross; 2013: seventh place Big Lake to Skwentna cross country; 2013: first place Willow Festival Highway race; 2015: first place 800 open Arctic Man hillcross; 2015: first place 800 King of Kings class Arctic Man hillcross; 2016: eighth place 800 open Valdez hillclimbs; 2016: ninth place 800 modified Valdez hillclimbs; 2017: third place Cross Country team race Alyeska Motor Madness.

Personal Sponsors: I'd like to thank all my friends and family who support my expensive habit and that have stuck with me along my ups and downs life has thrown at me. Bikeman Performance , ZBROZ Racing, TKI CNC, Weona Corporation, TOBE, Conam Construction, INDY Specialty, Innovative Designs LLC, Polaris Outpost, Different Strokes of Alaska, Advanced Powder Coating, A2D Motorsports, Southside Strength and Fitness, Zollinger Racing Products



ROBERT MASSON

AGE: 38 / **FROM:** Fairbanks

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris 2018 XCR Switch Back

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I am a lifelong Alaskan born in raised in Fairbanks. I grew up riding snowmobiles every weekend throughout the winters with my family and have been addicted to it ever since.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Arctic Man: 1994, DNF; 1995, 29th place; 1996, DNF; 1997 Pro Class, third place; 1998, sixth place; 1999, 15th place; 2000, seventh place; 2002 fifth place; 2003, seventh place; 2004, fifth place; 2005, fourth place; 2007, fourth place; 2013, 14th place; 2015, 14th place. Hay 100: 1995, fourth place. K400: 1998, DNF. Birch Lake 250: 2001, second place 600 stock, second place 800 open. FRLC snow cross: 2001, first place (points) 600 stock, second place (points) 800 open; 2002, first place points 600 stock, first place (points) 800 open; 2003, second place (points) 600 stock, second place (points) 800 open. Arctic Man Hill Cross: 2007, second place pro class.

Personal Sponsors: Rodney Masson, my children, Lisa Bishop, my friends and family.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Alaska Spine Institute**, Klim, Northern Solutions, Hatcher Pass Polaris, Spernak and Sons, White Spruce Trailers, Complete Concepts Automotive, Woody's Traction Products, Grip and Rip Racing Products*



DAVE HAUSBECK

AGE: 55 / **FROM:** Reese, Mich.

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris XCR Switchback

RACE HISTORY: 2017: Finished; Rookie 2016, Finished 14th 2017

BIO: I've lived in Michigan my whole life and enjoyed snowmobiling in the Upper Peninsula and Ontario, logging in 5,000 to 6,000 miles per year. I love adventures, challenges, outdoor activities and all different forms of racing. The prestigious Iron Dog race seemed like a perfect fit. Did not finish my first year but came back the second year to finish the race in 14th place. Earned the award for the team that went through the most adversity; we overcame and were excited to be able to finish the race. Looking forward to a great ride with the famous Larry Levine in 2018.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Randal Moss, Jason Alward, Jerry Alward, Weiss Equipment and Rob Cleary



LARRY LEVINE

AGE: 56 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR SC Select

RACE HISTORY: 2016: Finished

BIO: I was born and raised in Anchorage and am practicing medicine in Alaska following training beginning in 1995. Started riding snowmachines to keep up with my friends and daughter.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2013-2017 Arctic Man

Personal Sponsors: Want to thank all my family, friends and supporters – Karen Levine, Mathew Spernak, Jerry Alward and Stan English

IRON DOG FACTS

THE MOST COMMON sled modification is focused on suspension. Iron Dog is a long race and conditions can be brutal. Add to the fact that racers are required to take certain gear, the added weight only adds to the abuse on the suspension. Second to suspension is the need for additional fuel, so nearly every Pro Class snowmachine will have some kind of auxiliary fuel tank system to compensate for speed, distance and conditions that impact fuel consumption. As Chris Olds is known for saying, "a slow ride beats a fast walk every time."

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ARCTIC CAT

*Sponsors: **Valor Corporation**, Eagle River Polaris and Arctic Cat, Klim, Woody's Traction Products, EVS Sports*



DALE BENNETT

AGE: 37 / **FROM:** Big Lake

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR600XC

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: Born and raised in Alaska. I enjoy the outdoors during all seasons with my wife and four kids. I've been racing snowmachines since 2001.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Big Lake Ice Classic 500, first place, 2012; DNF 2015

Personal Sponsors: Nicole Bennett, Gina Jorgenson, Valley General Construction



CASEY PERKINS

AGE: 36 / **FROM:** Nome

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR6000RXC

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I grew up in Nome and currently live in Anchorage. I love living in Alaska and getting to do all the fun stuff our state has to offer. I have followed the Iron Dog since I was a small child and have always wanted to participate. My better half Jacqueline and I raise three crazy boys, Kedrick, Colby and Dax.

RACING EXPERIENCE: I have competed in both the junior and pro classes. I have a few trophies, but nothing compares to the Iron Dog. Hoping for a clean run and lots of fun.

Personal Sponsors: Rural Energy Enterprise, Valley General Construction, Alaska Omega Ordinance, KP Custom Designs, Roscoe's Catfish and Barbeque, Matsu Softball Association, Sno Flo Alaska, Tundra Toyo, Fat Bikes AK, Matanuska Valley Sportsmen Inc., DB Woodworks, Integrity Home Solutions, Local Solutions, Jammin Ave Designs, Sammy T Photography, Kivliq, Kids Kupboard, American Legion Post 28 & 35, Jen Coy's Awesome Cornhole Bags, 907 Alehouse, Wes and Terrie Perkins, Louie Schick and all our awesome friends and family who made this possible.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Polaris**, R&R Hunting & Outdoor Adventure LLC, Hesperus Air Service LLC, KLIM, Eagle River Polaris Arctic Cat, Coffman Engineers, Wild Alaska Taxidermy, AK eXpeditions, TrailToyz, Vision X, Maverick Charters - Homer, Alaska, Kanady Chiropractic Center, Cabela's Anchorage, Fine Line Interiors, RJC Photography, Grip-N-Rip Racing Products, Ostby Family Dental, Local 302, Earth X Batteries*



RACHEL KIDWELL

AGE: 30 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris AXYS Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2015 Iron Dog Pro Class DNF

BIO: I was born and raised in Bullhead City, Ariz., and came to Alaska in 2007. I am an alumni of the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Engineering and Varsity Volleyball Team. I currently work as a Corrosion Engineer for Coffman Engineers. I have an adventurous spirit and an intense passion for the sport of snowmobiling. When I'm not playing in the snow, I am fishing, camping, hunting, hiking, biking – pretty much anything active and outdoors.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 1st in the 2017 Arctic Man Women's Snowmobile/Snowboard Division, 1st in Women's Pro and 7th in Men's Semi Pro in the 2017 Mayor's Cup Snowmobile Race. Finished 2nd overall in the 2014 AMMC Women's Pro Class Division.

Personal Sponsors: Jay and Dalynn Kidwell, Larry and Jill Endline, Cory Loos, Busters Upholstery



ASHLEY WOOD

AGE: 29 / **FROM:** Soldotna

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2015 Iron Dog Pro Class DNF

BIO: I was born and raised in Alaska and work as an operating engineer for QAP. With multiple cross-country wins, I'm excited for the adventure and challenge of making it to Fairbanks. In my spare time I enjoy hunting, mountain biking, hiking, powder riding, shooting, laughing and cooking.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2015 Iron dog rookie, 2013 Mayors cup cross country Men's semi-pro 7th, 2013 K-150 cross country Women's Pro 1st, 2011 Alyeska cross country Women's Pro 1st, 2011 mayors cup women's pro 1st, 2011 K-150 cross country Women's 1st, 2010 Arctic Man Hill-X men's semi Pro 2nd, 2010 Arctic Man Hill-X women's pro 1st

Personal Sponsors: Edge Fitness, Rick & Laurie Wood, Ted & Elaina Spraker

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **Academy Mortgage**, Alaska Foot & Ankle Specialists, Klim, Wilderness Ski-Doo, Alaska Mining & Diving Supply (AMDS), Grip-N-Rip Racing Products, Big Kid Racing*



STAN JAMES

AGE: 41 / **FROM:** Palmer

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: Born in Alaska and lived here most of my life. I enjoy hunting, snowmachine riding and hanging out with friends and family. I'm married to my beautiful wife, Pamela, and we have four daughters Olivia, Kaydynce, Jadrian and Aurora. Running the Iron Dog has always been a dream for me and a lot of people have helped get me here.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Iron Dog trail class finisher, WSA Terrain X high points champion

Personal Sponsors: Big thanks to my wife and family, Matt and Stacey and the great sponsors I have,

Klim, Stud Boy, Grip N Rip, Valley Imaging Center, CC Ski-Doo



PAUL SINDORF

AGE: 54 / **FROM:** Palmer

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 1998: Finished, 2000-2002: Finished, 2004: Finished, 2006: Finished, 2009: Finished, 2015-2016: Finished

BIO: I am a lifelong Alaskan who enjoys living and playing in the outdoors. I enjoy hiking, mountain bike riding, skiing and motorsports of all types. I am looking forward to a very successful 14th Iron Dog!

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Mary Sindorf, Leon McKean, David Harris, Roy Bloodworth, Katherine Devine, Paul & Vivian Sindorf, Heather & Josh Morrow, Melanie Sindorf, Kristofer Sindorf, Steve McKean, Diane & James Pankowski, JT Hughes, Ed Paulus, Jonathan Sindorf, Peach Morrow and Rimi Morrow

IRON DOG FACTS

IN 1987, the first woman to enter the race, noncompetitively, was Melinda Lyman who raced alongside her husband, Doug.

IN 1990, Bill and Doreen Long were the first husband and wife team to race competitively.

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR CONTINGENCY PRIZE SPONSORS, SUPPORTING CITIES AND TO EVERY ONE OF OUR GREAT IRON DOG COMMUNITIES, CHECKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS.

HALFWAY THERE



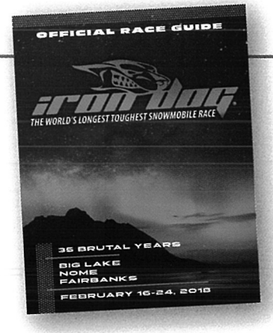
RICHARD BENEVILLE
MAYOR OF NOME

WELCOME TO NOME! As Mayor of Nome, it is my pleasure to welcome you to "The Gold Rush City." The Iron Dog has been coming to Nome for many years, and there is always a special excitement that comes with your visit. The sound of your snowmachines fills the air, and the energy of this race seems to infect everyone.

The Iron Dog, "World's Longest Toughest Snowmobile Race," captures the imaginations of kids. You are their heroes! They love the machines you drive and admire the effort and expertise you put into the race. Many of them hope one day too they will be one of you, a noble ambition.

Your families, friends and of course the crews are welcome as well. Enjoy our restaurants and taverns. Visit the new Richard Foster building. It houses the Carrie McClain Museum, the Kitirvik Cultural Center and the Kegoaya Library.

— Richard Beneville



IRON DOG OFFICIAL GUIDE

ALASKA ADVENTURE MEDIA

9138 Arlon Street, Suite A3 #432
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

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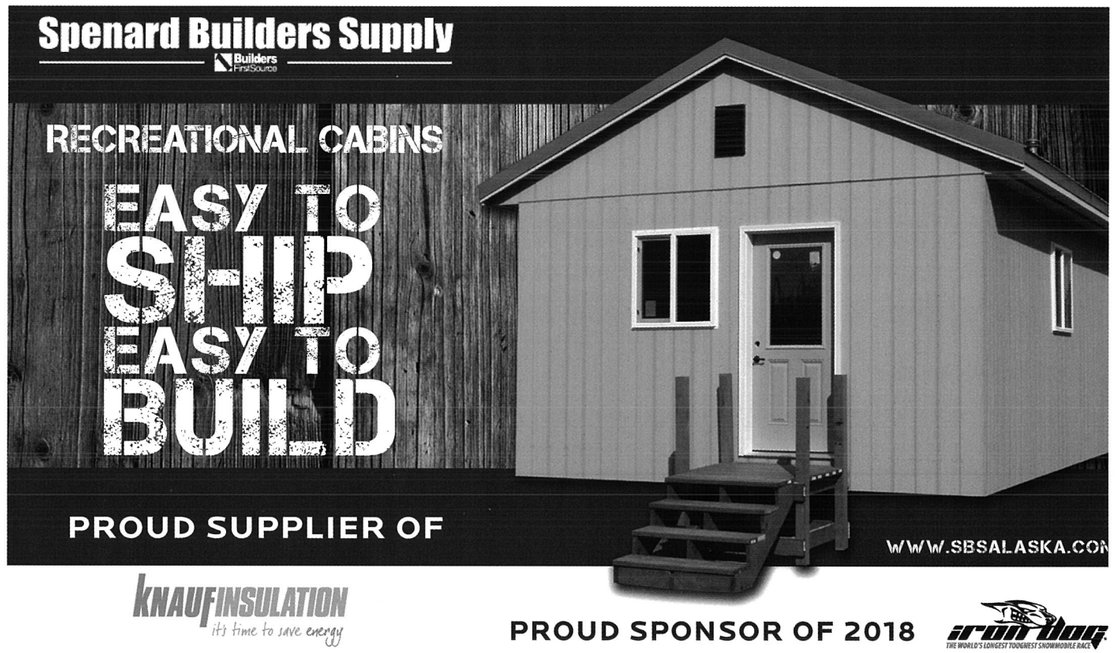
john@alaskaadventuremedia.com

Phone: (907) 677-2900

Fax: (907) 677-2901

Project manager: Melissa DeVaughn

Designer: Dean Potter



RACING EXPERIENCE: Larry Heal Memorial: 2015, first place; multiple Alaska cross-country racing participant, pro class champion in 2015; Arctic Man cross-country 2015, third place; AMMC cross-country 2015 pro class champion; Big Lake 150 semi pro 2013, first place; K-150 semi pro 2013 second place; Larry Heal Memorial semi pro 2013, first place

Personal Sponsors: Blackstar Motorsports, Panco Construction, Team CC, Klim, Woody's Traction, SCS Racing, Gates Belts, Orien Construction, all my friends and family



ANDREW ZWINK

AGE: 28 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ XRS

RACE HISTORY: 2011-2013: Finished, 2015: Finished

BIO: Andrew is no stranger to the hard work and dedication needed to race the Iron Dog. Racing in his 10th, he has experienced success and hardship on the trail. His dedication and hard work extends off the trail as well. As a decorated Eagle Scout he enjoys exploring. Taking time to adventure to third world countries just to get a selfie and tracking through the backwoods of Alaska. When Andrew isn't out having fun he works vigorously in the excavation field. With all his work and play, he finds the best time to relax with his family and close circle of friends. And for the third year in a row is the most eligible bachelor in the state of Alaska!

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Lynnette Carrier, David Zwink, Ian Zwink, Ben Zwink Sara Zwink and my close friends who all keep me focused. All the families that help us each year along the trail especially Tracey Buie and Brad Gater, Heidi and Herb Ivanoff.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Big Lake Powersports**, Alaska Artisan Coffee, Blood Bank of Alaska, The Toyo Guy, Alpine General Services, Inc., Walker Evans Racing, Motorfist, Ice Age Performance, Tom Kobza Industries TKI, Woody's Traction Products, Northern Solutions LLC, IBEW Local 1547, Hotwire LLC, Full Throttle Power, Skwentna Roadhouse, Carney & Associates, LLC, Dan Bush - Pilot, Ray's Aircraft Service, Alaska Safety Inc., Anchorage Sheet Metal, Western Construction & Equipment*



PAT DANIELS

AGE: 48 / **FROM:** Big Lake

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback PRO-S

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: Pat lives in Big Lake and owns both Alpine General Services, a general contractor builder and trail grooming company, and The Toyo Guy, a Toyo stove service and repair company. Pat loves extreme sports and has spent over 18 years of racing cross-country style events on both dirt and snow. Pat enjoys spending quality time with his wife of 18 years, Jenny, and their six golden retrievers. He is an avid NASCAR fan, volunteers in the community, loves boating, hunting, fishing, flying, ATVs, scuba diving, paragliding and jet skiing.

racing experience: AMMC X-Country Vet Champion 2013, Larry Heal Memorial first place Vet & second place Semi-Pro 2016, 2015 Triple Crown Ice-X Series second place Vet, Iron Dog 2016 fastest rookie team to Skwentna, 2013 AK Moto Tech Scramble first place Vet, 2013 Alyeska Moto Madness first place Vet."



AUSTIN GOODRICH

AGE: 30 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback PRO-S

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: Austin was born and raised in Anchorage. He enjoys spending his time at the cabin with his two daughters Kira and Ryden. Austin has raced numerous XC events and is an Iron Dog trail class finisher in 2013. He has spent most of his life riding and honing his skills on and off the track. Austin is excited to fulfill a lifelong dream of building an established race team with a great partner. Together they make up an impressive team and they are looking forward for their Iron Dog debut.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: None listed

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **Team CC Ski Doo,** IBEW 1547, New Horizons Telecom Inc, Motorfist, Fox Shox, Swanson Steel, Stud Boy Traction Products, Summit Farms, Canyon Lake Lodge , Greer Tank, Perfect Start Espresso, International Aviation Services, Imm's Inn, Alaska Spine Institute, Cindi Heal Allstate Insurance, Karen Hutton Allstate , Dean's Automotive*



SCOTT FAEO

AGE: 33 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ-XRS

RACE HISTORY: 2013-2014: Finished, 2015: first place

BIO: I am a born and raised Alaskan. Iron Dog has been a part of me since I was born in 1984. This was also the first running of the Iron Dog, which was then won by my father, John Faeo. My family has been there since Day 1 with support unlike any other. This could not all be possible without support. Sponsors are a major factor to make dreams come to reality. When not racing, I enjoy taking some time off at the cabin with my honey, Rebecca McNeal. In the summer, I like to play golf and hang out on the water. I am super excited to be partnering with my lifelong buddy in Chad Gueco. Together, I believe we have the talent and support to bring home the victory.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2015 Iron Dog first place; 2014 Larry Heal 150 second place; 2013 Larry Heal Memorial 150 first place; 2012 Big Lake 150 first place.

Personal Sponsors: My parents John and Vicki, and brother John Faeo; also my amazing girlfriend, Rebecca; Marc and Deanne Hamblen.



CHAD GUECO

AGE: 33 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2012: Finished, 2015-2016: Finished

BIO: I am a lifelong Alaskan who loves everything our state has to offer. I spend every chance I get traveling, riding, hunting, fishing and anything that involves a good time! I am a father of three children: Allie, 10; Ella, 7; and Haiden, 4; with my beautiful wife, Jayme Gueco. This will be my seventh Iron Dog that will be nothing short of another great experience.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2015 Iron Dog sixth place finish; 2013 Alyeska Motor Madness XC, first place; 2013 Valdez Mayor's Cup XC, third place; 2012 Eureka 100 XC, first place; 2012 Iron Dog, sixth place; 2011 Valdez Mayor's Cup, first place; 2011 Eureka 100 XC, second place; 2009 Ada, MN 100 XC, sixth place; 2009 Red Lake 500 MN XC, sixth place; 2008 Valdez Mayors' Cup, third place; 2008 Big Lake 500 Grand Prix, first place; 2008 Thunder Bay 200 Enduro MI, first place; 2008 Alpena 300 Enduro MI, first place; 2004-2010 Soo I-500 MI, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and 12th; 2007 Eagle River World Championship, first place.

Personal Sponsors: Caelus Energy LLC. Team, Alaska Spine Institute, Bills Distributing, Projekt 907, Motorfist, Fox Shox, Trail Tank, Well Solutions Inc., StudBoy Traction, Gueco Racing, Rip N Grip, my family, FineLine Interiors, Alaska Comprehensive Dental, Body Renew,AK LED Industries, a special thanks to Korey Cronquist, Tony Webster and a big shout out to my father Danny Gueco – it would not be possible without any of you.

IRON DOG FACTS

THE FOUR MAJOR MANUFACTURERS, Polaris, Arctic Cat, Yamaha and Ski-Doo, are generally represented each year, and all manufacturers have enjoyed victories. Here is the breakdown of past brand wins:

- 15 wins on Polaris
- 11 wins on Arctic Cat
- 4 wins on Ski-Doo
- 3 wins on Yamaha

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **Team Ski-Doo Racing**, Stud Boy Traction Products, Motorfist, Team CC*



CASEY BOYLAN

AGE: 23 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ-XRS

RACE HISTORY: 2017: Finished

BIO: Casey was born and raised in Anchorage and has been racing snomachines for 13 years, five of them out of state at a national level.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2010 ISOC national sport super stock first-, second- and third place; 2011 podiumed every national after returning from a knee injury; 2012 pro lite ISOC regional champion; 2012 pro lite ISOC national multiple Top 5 finishes; 2013 pro stock ISOC regional champion; 2013 pro lite ISOC national multiple Top 5 finishes & Top 10 year-end points; 2014 pro lite ISOC national heat race wins, Top 5 main event finishes; 2014 Arctic Man men's snowboard win; 2015 Mayor's Cup cross country pro class win; 2017 Iron Dog sixth-place finish rookie year; 2017 Mayor's Cup third-place pro class; 2017 Skwetena 200 second place

Personal Sponsors: Team CC Ski-Doo, A2D Sledworks, Jon McDonald, Alaska LED, ROX Speedfx, Bill Bishop, Boylan Boyz Racing, Leslie Racing, Alaska Snomobile Salvage, Fly Racing, Western Powersports, Alaska House of Yamaha, Hair Addiction, Cody Woodworth, Arctic Glass, Big Dream Transport, Baileys Rental



BRYAN LESLIE

AGE: 24 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ XRS

RACE HISTORY: 2017: Finished

BIO: I love to ride or be in anything with a motor. I have raced quads and dirt bike and have won multiple state and city championships. I also enjoy being with family, fishing, camping and really anything to do with the outdoors.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2015 AMMC semi-pro champ; 2015 Larry Heal first place; 2015 Arctic Man Ice-X, first place; 2017 Iron Dog, sixth place

Personal Sponsors: Statewide Door and Glass, STR Alaska, A2D Sledworks, Alaska Snowmobile Salvage, Alaska LED, Alaska House of Yamaha, Hair Addiction, JJ's Lounge, NPC Energy Services, Boylan Boyz Racing, Leslie Racing, Jon McDonald, Bill Bishop, Cody Woodworth, friends and family

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **Tri-State Disposal***



JACOB EVANS

AGE: 29 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo Renegade

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I started racing snowmobiles in 2004 and was addicted right away. In the summer months I enjoy driving the riverboat to go fishing and hunting at the Yentna River Lodge with my beautiful girlfriend, Stephanie, and family.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2010 AMMC snowcross, first, overall points; 2013 Islander 150, third; 2013 Arctic Man ski-pull, 13th

Personal Sponsors: Alaska Mining and Diving Supply, KB designs and photo, BG customs, STR alaska, HMK



TOMMY GERMANY

AGE: 59 / **FROM:** Riverdale, Mich.

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo Renegade

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: I have been an avid snowmobiler since I was 13 years old. Through the years, I have ridden them all. I enjoy several 400- to 600-mile cross-country snowmobiling trips in the upper peninsula of Michigan every year. In 2014, I rode my Harley from Chicago to Fairbanks and fell in love with Alaska. When I heard about the Iron Dog Race I was fascinated by it and feel fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in it this year.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Tri-state Disposal, Alaska Mining and Diving

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Polaris Industries**, Big Dipper Construction, Udelhoven Oilfield System Services, Inc., Perk Up Espresso, Mountain Dew Kickstart, VFW Post 9365, Edge Fitness, Hatcher Pass Polaris, LaCrosse & Associates, Grip-N-Rip Racing Products, Klim, North Star Performance , Quam Tech, Palma Tech, Anchorage Sheet Metal, Alaska LED Industries, Glacier Autoworks, B Original Signs, Walker Evans Racing, Blu Skye Design, Polaris Engineered Lubricants, A-1 Pawn, JJ's Pawn, Maidls Brothers Concrete, QSI Pile Driving, Woody's Traction Products*



TODD MINNICK

AGE: 38 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2002: Finished, 2004-2008: Finished, 2009: first place, 2010-2013: Finished, 2014: first place, 2015-2017: Finished

BIO: Todd was born and raised in Alaska. Todd is a foreman at Big Dipper Construction. He has been racing snowmachines most of his life. Todd has a beautiful wife named Sharilyn and has two children, Emma and Canyon, who are the light of his life. Todd enjoys adventuring at the cabin, hunting, fishing and exploring with his family.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Sharilyn Minnick, Emma and Canyon Minnick, Paul and Diane Minnick, Eric Quam, Ken Lee, Rod and Arden Miller, Mike Dropik, Mike and Jayne Koskovich, Gilbert Perez, Al Palma, Sam and Nita Towarek, Hazel Esmailka, Justin Esmailka



NICK OLSTAD

AGE: 35 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2005: first place, 2009: first place, 2011: Finished, 2014: first place, 2016-2017: Finished

BIO: Nick is a longtime Alaskan who enjoys the outdoors. When not working as a project manager for Udelhoven Oilfield System Services, Inc., he's spending time with wife, Brianne, daughter Kaia and son Jackson. Nick loves to be out riding his Ranger in the summer, and snowmachines until the snow is gone. This will be Nick's 14th time racing Iron Dog.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Mayor's Cup 2005 and 2006: first place; 2011: third place; K-150 2005 and 2006: first place

Personal Sponsors: Brianne, Kaia and Jackson Olstad

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **Blackstar Motorsports**, Panco Construction, Team CC, Klim, Woody's Traction Products, Scs Racing , Gates Belts, Orien Construction, Vision X, Head Qu*



ERIC WATSON

AGE: 36 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ XRS

RACE HISTORY: 2011: Finished

BIO: Father of two great kids, husband to a beautiful wife of 20 years. This is my fourth time racing Iron Dog. I'm a commercial journeyman electrician by trade. I enjoy everything Alaska has to offer, especially spending time with friends and family. In the off-season, mountain biking and old muscle cars take up most of any down time. Racing is a huge passion in my life and has opened the door to meet some really great people, but would not be possible without the support of all my friends and family.



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POLARIS

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SHANE BARBER

AGE: 43 / **FROM:** Willow

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Assault

RACE HISTORY: 2000: Finished, 2004: Finished, 2006-2007: Finished, 2009: Finished, 2014-2015: Finished

BIO: I am a born and raised Alaskan. I live in Willow Alaska where my wife, Tammy, and I have raised a family and learned to enjoy many aspects of what life has to offer. I enjoy the outdoors and spending time with my family and friends. I truly have been blessed and try not to take that for granted. I thank God for these things.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Alaska Air Taxi, Klim, Walker Evans racing shocks, Aurora Drilling and Consulting, J.A Spain and Sons, Carter Technologies



TODD PALIN

AGE: 53 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback Assault

RACE HISTORY: 1993: Finished, 1995: 1st Place, 1997: Finished, 1998: Finished, 2000: 1st Place, 2001: Finished, 2002: 1st Place, 2004: Finished, 2005: Finished, 2006: Finished, 2007: 1st Place, 2008: Finished, 2009: Finished, 2011: Finished, 2012: Finished, 2013: Finished, 2015: Finished

BIO: Todd is a lifelong Alaskan, self-employed as a commercial fisherman. Todd is married to Sarah and they have five children, Track, Bristol, Willow, Piper, and Trig; and five grandchildren, Kyla, Tripp, Sailor, Atlee and Charlie. Todd and his family enjoy outdoor time in Alaska fishing, hunting, flying, Baja Razor riding, riding snowmobiles and commercial fishing in Bristol Bay.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Iron Dog finishes: 2007, 2002, 2000 and 1995, first place; 2011, 2006, 2005 and 2004, second place; 2008 and 1997, fourth place; 2013 and 2012, fifth place; and 2009, sixth place.

Personal Sponsors: My wife, Sarah, and family.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Northern Powerline Constructors, Inc.,** Taylor Fire Protection Services, Robinson Millwork, Law Offices Royce and Brain, CF and Hope Baird, Electric Power Constructors (EPC), DuClos Orthodontics, Valley Auto Body, Hatcher Pass Polaris, Motorfist, Venom Products, Woody's Traction Products, Leatt Protectives, Renton Coil Springs, B-Original Signs and SCOTT goggles*



KENNETH KLEEWEIN

AGE: 27 / **FROM:** Willow

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris XCR

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: Kenneth (Kenny) Kleewein II is a lifelong Alaskan, raised in Willow. Kenny has spent most of his life riding anything with a motor. Racing has been a huge part of his life growing up racing four-wheelers and then racing snowmobiles with Alaska Motor Mushers Club (AMMC). He is a second-generation racer after his dad, Kenny Kleewein. When not riding Kenny enjoys spending time with his beautiful wife, Kirsten, and his son, Kenneth Kleewein III.

RACING EXPERIENCE: AMMC semi-pro Triple Crown: 2015, first place; AMMC pro class Champion: 2016; AMMC Big Lake 500: 2017, third place

Personal Sponsors: My amazing wife, Kirsten, for supporting me in this race; my mom; my dad for not only being very supportive, but also providing his wealth of knowledge of the Iron Dog.



KRUZ KLEEWEIN

AGE: 22 / **FROM:** Willow

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris XCR

BIO: Kruz is a born and raised Alaskan from Willow. He has always shared a love for anything with a motor such as snowmobiles, stand-up jet skis, dirt bikes and four-wheelers. He's a big fan of any kind of racing and loves being outdoors, going fishing, playing basketball, hockey and golf.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Big Lake 150: 2013, first place semi pro; AMMC championship: 2016, third overall Pro Class; Big Lake 500: 2017, third place

Personal Sponsors: My mom and dad for all their support; the whole Taylor family for everything they do; and my girlfriend, Amanda, for all her love and support.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Polaris Outpost Alaska***



GEORGE MOUNTAIN

AGE: 29 / **FROM:** Nulato

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: My name is George, and I'm from Nulato. I've been a fan of Iron Dog as long as I could remember and have always dreamt of racing it one day, now I'm here. I love time with my kids, working and riding.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Kelly, Jenna and Randy K, and all of our supporters and supporters of the Iron Dog race.



KELLY SOMMER

AGE: 30 / **FROM:** Galena/Nulato

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback

RACE HISTORY: 2012: Finished

BIO: I've always been a fan of the Iron Dog and I'm a fan of Polaris sleds. I grew up watching Polaris and Arctic Cats win a lot, which was pretty cool. I work in construction as a dump-truck driver. I enjoy spending time with my friends and with my lady. I like to fly and ride sleds.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2012 Iron Dog

Personal Sponsors: Galena and Nulato and Fairbanks and thanks to Jenna, Brad, and Randy K and The Outpost, Earl and Joyce Sommer, and all the supporters of this race.

IRON DOG FACTS

RACERS ARE REQUIRED to bring stoves, fire-making materials and a way to melt snow into drinking water. While it may seem odd that today with GPS tracking there would be any need for real survival gear, the fact remains that the Iron Dog trail is remote enough that a team could get stranded for days if the weather became severe and impassable. It's rare, but as the saying goes, "It's better to have and not need, than to need and not have."

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **Ski-Doo**, Team CC, Global Fuel, H&K Sheetmetal Fabricators, Inc., Klim, Specialty Truck & Auto, Stud Boy Traction Products, IBEW Local 1547, Gates Belts, SCS Unlimited, MTA, AK LED Industries, Cruz Companies, Alaska Line Builders, Northwoods Lodge, B&B Automatic Transmission, Grip-N-Rip Racing Products, RPM Composites, Fine Line Interiors, OFT Racing, Northern Chiropractic*



TYLER AKLESTAD

AGE: 32 / **FROM:** Palmer

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2007: Finished, 2009: Finished, 2012: Finished, 2013: Finished, 2016: first place

BIO: Born and raised in Alaska and love the outdoors. Enjoy flying, fishing, hunting and dirt biking. Spending time with my amazing wife, Erin, and sons Liam and Finn. Work for MTA as an IBEW journeyman cable splicer.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Arctic Man 2014, first place; 2013, first place; 2012, first place; 2011, first place; 2008, first place.

Personal Sponsors: My wife, Erin; Korey and Barbara Cronquist, Chris McDowell, Eric and Shan Johnson.



TYSON JOHNSON

AGE: 37 / **FROM:** Eagle River

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 1997: Finished, 1999-2002: Finished, 2007: Finished, 2009: Finished, 2012-2013: Finished, 2016: first place, 2017: Finished

BIO: I have been racing Iron Dog since I was 17 years old with this year's race being my 20th entry. I work for H&K Sheetmetal Fabricators as a journeyman sheet metal fabricator. I enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, welding, hanging out with my wife, Alexis, and son Rowan, and pretty much anything that involves the outdoors.

RACING EXPERIENCE: I have many Top 5 Iron Dog finishess, including three, second-place finishes and my first win in 2016. I have seven Arctic Man wins (five in ski, two in snowboard) and many cross-country race wins. Mayor's Cup, three wins; K150, four wins; and many other wins and Top 3s in all venues of sled racing.

Personal Sponsors: Special thanks to my wife, Alexis, and son Rowan, Korey and Barb Cronquist, Body Renew, Eric and Shan Johnson, our pilot Keith Mantenach and crew chief Steve Spence, and all of our other friends and family who help support us.

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SKI-DOO

*Sponsors: **Team CC**, Skidoo, Klim, Plumbline LLC, S&P Auto Care, Coutts Bros., Alaska Hand-Elbow-Shoulder Surgical Specialists, Alaska Fracture Orthopedic Clinic, Alaska Frontier Services, ReMax of Eagle River- Team Mason, Chris Manion, Craig Taylor Equipment, Frawner Corporation , Finishing Edge Concrete, Door Systems of Alaska, Get Plowed Snow Removal, Alaska Air Service, Rigid Industries, Fox Racing Shox, SCS Unlimited, Stud Boy Traction Products, RPM Composites, Gates Belts, XPS lubricants, North Country Stoves, Fine Line Interiors*



JOSHUA PLUMB

AGE: 25 / **FROM:** Eagle River

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2014: Finished, 2016-2017: Finished

BIO: Joshua is a lifelong Alaskan from Eagle River. He is a devoted husband and father, and works as a heavy equipment operator. When Josh is not working he enjoys spending time with his family and friends, taking trips to the cabin, snowmobiling and traveling. Josh and his wife, Kateland, have a 3-year-old daughter named Elodie and a 1-year-old boy named Joshua.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None listed

Personal Sponsors: Kurt Mentzer, Chris Manion, Dennis Coutts, our pilot Tim Bloom, Korey and Barbara Cronquist, John Fields, my wife, Kateland, and all our family and friends who support us.

IRON DOG **PRO CLASS** 2018



JORDAN STARR

AGE: 26 / **FROM:** Eagle River

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2014: Finished, 2016: Finished

BIO: Jordan moved to Alaska when he was 4. He works as an A&P aircraft mechanic and has his pilot's license. Jordan enjoys everything that Alaska has to offer – flying, camping, snowmachining, hunting, fishing and spending time with friends and family.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 14th place, 2014 Iron Dog; DNF, 2015 Iron Dog; seventh place, 2016 Iron Dog

Personal Sponsors: Mom and Dad, Kurt Mentzer, Tracy and Linda Vrem, Mike McNamara, Rick Farrell, Burt and Linda Myers, my girlfriend, Ellicia, as well as all of our friends, family, and relatives for supporting us.

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POLARIS

*Sponsors: **Polaris Industries**, Klim, Walker Evans Racing, Eagle River Polaris and Arctic Cat, Northern Powerline Constructors, Q-Trucking, Northern Air Cargo, Polaris Engineered Lubricants, Gates Belts, Total Truck & Accessories, Alaska Industrial X-Ray, Anchorage Sheet Metal, Bering Air, Fine Line Interiors, Stud Boy Traction Products, Anchorage Drag Bike, United Rentals, ARC Welding, Arctic FX Graphics, Starting Line Products, UA Local 367 Plumbers & Pipefitters Union, Jernstrom Engineering, Aero Twin Inc., Aurora Health Care Clinic, Morgan Enterprises, Alwayz Graphyk, Able Body Shop, Northern Solutions LLC, Emmons Mechanical, Stan Morgan, Christy Hedrick, Jeremy Hanson , Ginny Emmons, Micah Straughn, Christine Olds*



MIKE MORGAN

AGE: 32 / **FROM:** Nome

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2009: Finished, 2012-2016: Finished

BIO: I was born and raised in Nome and currently reside in Anchorage, having spent all of my 32 years in Alaska. I enjoy hiking, hunting, fishing, traveling, biking, riding and racing snowmobiles and hanging out with friends and family. I work construction as a welder out of the UA Local 367 Plumbers & Pipefitters Union. This will be my ninth Iron Dog race and seventh with current teammate Chris Olds.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2002 Kotz-Kiana race, second; 2006 Nome-Golovin 200, first; 2007 I-150, first; 2008 Nome-Golovin 200, first; 2009 Kotzebue race, first; 2009 Arctic Man, first; 2010 Nome-Golovin 200, first; 2014 Kotzebue race, first; 2015 Nome-Golovin 200, second; 2016 Kotzebue race, first; 2017 Kotz race, first; 2017 Nome-Golovin 200, second; 2017 Alyeska XC, first; Placed in Top 5 in every Iron Dog race finished except 2017.

Personal Sponsors: None listed



CHRIS OLDS

AGE: 45 / **FROM:** Eagle River

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: 2000-2002: Finished, 2006-2009: Finished, 2010-2011: first place, 2012-2016: Finished

BIO: I am a 34-year Alaskan married to Christine with two children, Haley and Mya. I work for UIC Construction as a project manager. I enjoy hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, dirt bikes, mountain bikes and hanging with family. I have been racing snowmobiles since 1998.

RACING EXPERIENCE: first place K-400; numerous Top 3 finishes in Hillclimb, Hillcross, Cross Country and Snowcross. 12 Top 10 and 10 Top 5 finishes in the Iron Dog.

Personal Sponsors: None listed

IRON DOG FACTS

THE IRON DOG COURSE is roughly the distance from New York City to Phoenix.

VALDEZ WINTER EVENTS 2018

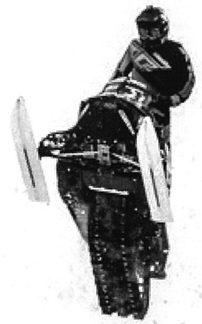
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35 YEARS STRONG





Iron Dog's growth continues as racers fine tune a world-class event

THIS YEAR'S IRON DOG RACE contains many of the same ingredients that make it a nail-bitingly exciting event for spectators and an Alaska favorite of which to be proud. To complete this race – much less be at the front of the pack – is a feat worthy of recognition. At the starting line will be supporters, racers, sled manufacturers (Ski-Doo, Arctic Cat and Polaris are represented), and all the accompanying gear. There will be sponsors galore, all so critical in making the race happen.

Still, the question remains about the most important ingredient: Will the snow show up?

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POLARIS

Sponsors: Three Bears Alaska, Inc., Central Illinois Dragway, Crowley Fuels, Mountain View Trucking, Prism Design & Construction, American Fast Freight, Hatcher Pass Polaris, Amsoil Inc., Klim, Stud Boy Traction Products, Spain Excavating, Lone Pine Fabrication



ANDY GOCKE

AGE: 24 / **FROM:** Willow

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: Andy is a born and raised Alaskan. As a kid he spent every moment he could in the woods and mountains, hiking, hunting, fishing or just exploring on any recreational vehicle he could build or get his hands on. Since then, not much has changed. Andy and his wife, Charissa, had their first child, Aizlynn, in March of 2017. "It will be a toss-up whether she gets a 120 snowmobile from me or a pony from her mom first when she comes of age," he says. Andy works as a technician/operator with Alaska Directional through the IBEW, and plans on joining the fire department as a volunteer on the side.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2013 Big Lake Calcutta semi-pro, first place; 2013 Mayor's Cup semi-pro, first place; 2014 Mayor's Cup pro-class, third place; 2015 Willow Carnival doubles open, first place; 2015 Arctic Man Men's Ski, seventh place.

Personal Sponsors: My wife, Charissa; mom and dad; Gene, friends and family who have made this possible.



ZACK WEISZ

AGE: 24 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Polaris Switchback XCR

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: Zack is a lifelong Alaskan living in Wasilla. He works for Three Bears Alaska and is a third-generation worker. Zack enjoys the vast outdoors Alaska has to offer. You can find him having fun with friends or enjoying time with family.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2017 Big Lake 500 first place; 2017 Alyeska Motor Madness XC, second place; 2015 AMMC, second place season points; 2015 Arctic Man XC, first place; 2014 Mayor's Cup, first place semi-pro; 2014 Alyeska Motor Madness XC, first place.

Personal Sponsors: Three Bears Alaska Inc., Fly Racing, Hatcher Pass Polaris, Polaris Racing, Long Investment LLC, Alaska Directional, and I would like to give a big thanks to my parents and all my friends and family.

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SKI-DOO

Sponsors: None listed



BRAD GEORGE

AGE: 23 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2013-2016: Finished

BIO: I was born and raised in Wasilla, and I love hunting, fishing, boating and spending time with my girlfriend, Chelsea. I currently work as a heavy equipment operator for Western Construction and Equipment, along with being a co-owner of Mr. Lube. If I'm not working on my toys, I'm working on keeping up with Robby.

RACING EXPERIENCE: K-150, 2013-2014, first place; Larry Heel, 2012-13, second place; 2014, first place, Nome-Golovin 2013, first place; 2014, fourth place; Mayor's Cup 2015, second place; Ice Cross 2015, second place.

Personal Sponsors: Korey Conquist, Hank Swan, Zugger Shocks, Unch Racing,Vision-X, Blue Sky Design, AK Goldstar, Nite Shift Janitorial, Dan Trotter, Hilltop Recycling, B-Original Signs, Alaska Cab Valley, Tommy Kriska, Chris Kuhn, Steve Becker, Wasilla Arctic Cat, Tre West, Board of Trade Saloon, Design Graphics, Skwentna Road House, Alaska Frontier Fabrication, Six Roblees, Kenny Hughes, Weld Air, Extream Fun Center, American Dream Construction, Alaska DTS/Dave Kane, Yentna Station, Alaskan Auto Inc., TCI, Inlet Petroleum, Criterion, Roadside Inn, Wasilla Dental Center, Alaska Pacific Rentals, E-Z Rents, Larson Chiropractics, Lucas Chiropractics, Alaska Spine Institute, AK Nails, Oakley, Motorfist, Snap-On, Tom Simpson, Ski-Doo, ACLS, Pacific Plumbing,

Spenard Builder's Supply, Kibe Lucas, Dry Out Systems, Black Ice Graphics, Floyd Hernandez, Yukon Equipment, Hard Rock Plumbing and Heating, Alaska Fast Cash, Howdie, Q.A.P, Advanced Family Dentistry, SafeLite Autoglass, Better Health Chiropractic, Enderson Concrete, Jackovich, Wolf Eye Center, Play It Again Sports, Kevin Keene, Brett Keene, Tasha's Techniques, Team Schachle, Roger McCarty Sr. Hillside Highcrops, KGB investment, Western Construction and Equipment, Paul light, Alex Fuller



ROBBY SCHACHLE

AGE: 30 / **FROM:** Big Lake

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2016: Finished.

BIO: I have an amazing wife and son who I love sharing the outdoors with. I've been racing competitively for 12 years. I currently work for Alaska Line Builders as an IBEW power lineman.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Won open class I500, Larry Heel win; Soo I500 Finish; Ice enduro first K150 wins Mayor's Cup Top 3 finishes; ice cross wins, many snowcross wins.

Personal Sponsors: Korey and Barb Cronquist, Hank Swan, Mr. Lube, Andy George, Penn Jersey Drilling, Tasha's Techniques, Sign Works, CF and Hope, Workman Motorsports, Criterion, Alaska Pacific Rental, Road Side, Prism, Alaska Line Builders, Spenard Builders Supply, Wasilla Dental, Easy Rent, Alaska Spine Institute, AK Nails, Steve Foster, Napa, Inlet Petroleum, Team CC Ski-Doo, Hilltop Recycling, ACLS, Alaska Gold Star, Alaska Sales, IBEW local 1547, A1 Signs The Schachle family, Chepos, 907 Diesel, Western Construction and Equipment, Blue Sky Design, Alaska Cab, Weld Air, John Icher (Lone Pine Fab), Projekt, Wesco, Enderson Concrete, Alaska Fast Cash

7

SKI-DOO

Sponsors: Team CC Ski Doo, Ski-Doo, XPS Oil, Criterion General, Knik Construction, Ryan Air, Alaska LED Industries, BC Excavating LLC, Gates Belts, Anchorage Fracture and Orthopedics, Trail Tank, Golden North Van Lines



AARON BARTEL

AGE: 27 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo MXZ X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2009: Finished, 2011: Finished, 2013: Finished, 2015: Finished

BIO: Born and raised in Alaska, enjoys hunting, fishing and anything outside.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Competed for the last 10 years in AMMC races and Iron Dog.

Personal Sponsors: Korey and Barbara Cronquist, Gordon and Susan Bartel, Nathan and Kaleen Haines, Delene Bartel, Mike Tope, Al Palma, Scott Davis, Janelle Huntington, Anchorage Fracture and Orthopedic Clinic



TRE WEST

AGE: 32 / **FROM:** Nome

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Ski-Doo X-RS

RACE HISTORY: 2008-09: Finished, 2012: Finished

BIO: Born and raised in Nome, work for Board of Trade as a crusher operator. I enjoy hunting, fishing, camping and spending time with the family, Raenelle, Kiyler and Chanel.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Four overall Nome-Golovin wins; 2012 Iron Dog, second place.

Personal Sponsors: Board of Trade Inc., Lynden, M-W Drilling, Wilderness Ski-Doo, Team CC, Stang Dental, Pro-West Leasing, Vitus Marine, Stud Boy, Grip and Rip Racing

IRON DOG FACTS

THE FIRST IRON DOG was known as the Iditarod Iron Dog Classic, ended in Nome, and was won by John Faeo and Rod Frank riding Polaris with a time of 23 hours and 50 minutes.

2

ARCTIC CAT

Sponsors: Team Arctic Alaska, Neeser Construction, Big State Mechanical, Klim, Vision X, Helpline Towing, Fine Line Interiors, Arctic Cat, Inc., Evans Coolant, Overland Alaska, Interstate Batteries of Alaska, Independent Lift Truck, Projekt 907, Fox Racing Shox, Renton Coil Springs, Zugger Shocks, Thunder Products, Woody's Traction Products, Gu Sports, Elete Electrolytes, Greatland Welding and Machine, Gates Belts, Trail Tank, Larson Racing, Wasilla Arctic Cat, Nome Arctic Cat, RV Sports, Anchorage Drag Bike, Advanced Powder Coating, Synthetics Alaska, Nome Machine Works



RYAN SOTTOSANTI

AGE: 40 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 R XC

RACE HISTORY: 2010-2015: Finished; 2017, finished third place.

BIO: I have lived in Alaska for over 20 years. I am married to my beautiful wife, Heather, and have a 9-year-old daughter named Faith. I really enjoy the vast variety of everything Alaska has to offer. Rewards come one-tenth of a second at a time and only when I focus, train and truly strive can they be achieved.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2010 Iron Dog top rookie, sixth place; 2008 Mayor's Cup, third place; 2009 Mayor's Cup, second place; Trapper Creek 200, second place; K150, second, third and fifth place; Alyeska Cross Country, first and fourth place; 2012 Arctic Man, fifth place; 2014 Arctic Man, seventh place. Finished the Iron Dog in the top 10 five years in a row and my best finish was third place.

Personal Sponsors: Heather Sottosanti, Al Sottosanti, Faith Sottosanti, James Spikes, Kelland Bjerke, Curt Christnison.



MICAH HUSS

AGE: 42 / **FROM:** Willow

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 XC

RACE HISTORY: Third place, 2017 Iron Dog.

BIO: I've been racing cross-country snowmachines for the past 25 years, winning numerous races throughout the years. I'm manager/owner of Team Arctic Alaska race team for Arctic Cat in Alaska. I'm also operations manager and boat captain for Discovery Channel's television show, "Bering Sea Gold" and National Geographic's "Man vs. Wild: The Raft." I enjoy all powersports, working on engines, helping others, being outdoors, working out and spending time with family and friends.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Many first- through third-place finishes in Kotzebue-region races throughout the years. Raced the I-500 in 2010 and 2011. Raced the Nome-Golovin race seven times as well as Arctic Man.

Personal Sponsors: Howard Gregg and family; Judy, Ronnie, Ayden and Kaitlin Huss; Tony and Lisa Haugen; Smith Goggles; George Greene and family; Leon Shellabarger; Cindy Kottke; and Sarah and David Forbes.

IRON DOG FACTS

FORTUNATELY, Iron Dog has not experienced a fatality directly related to the Iron Dog race. There have been several close calls and traumatic injuries over the years, but everyone survived and recovered. In the last couple of years there've been a few wrecks with lacerated spleens, punctured livers, broken wrists and ankles ... and the most common injury of severe frostbite.

3

ARCTIC CAT

Sponsors: Arctic Cat, Anchorage Suzuki Arctic Cat, Team Arctic Alaska, Fine Line Interiors, Donlin Gold, Specialty Truck & Auto, Prop Shop, Inc., Klim, Northern Powerline Constructors, Ditch Witch, Efficiency Consulting



STEVEN BONEY

AGE: 37 / **FROM:** Bethel

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 R XC

RACE HISTORY: 2012-15: Finished, 2016: DNF

BIO: I was born and raised in Bethel and have been a Yamaha snowmobile mechanic for 21 years. I've been a private pilot for 10 years. I have a loving and supportive wife, Dolly, and three awesome girls, Brittney, 19; Payton, 12; and Riley, 8. I enjoy being with my family, jet boating, flying and hunting, and riding snowmachines. My father and I own and operate the Prop Shop, a full-line powersports dealer.

RACING EXPERIENCE: 2012 Iron Dog, 16th place; 2013 Iron Dog, 15th place; 2014 Iron Dog, 14th place; 2015 Iron Dog, 11th place; 2016 Iron Dog, DNF.

Personal Sponsors: Wife, Dolly; and kids, Brittney, Payton, Riley; my father, Craig; Oliver Unruh, Blaine Elliot, Ozzie, Doug Dixon, Keith Manternach, Steve Spence, Andrew Smith, and all the others who help along the way.



OLIVER UNRUH

AGE: 48 / **FROM:** Anchorage

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000

RACE HISTORY: None

BIO: After helping some friends with this race for a couple of years, I jumped at the opportunity to actually participate. I have raced motorcycles a bit, but relatively new to sled racing.

RACING EXPERIENCE: None

Personal Sponsors: Anchorage Suzuki/Arctic Cat, Doug and the crew at Fineline, Steve Spence, Bill Buck, Repairs Unlimited LLC, and of course my wife, Shelly.

4

ARCTIC CAT

Sponsors: Northern Asphalt, Fine Line Interiors, Vulcan Towing, AAA Fence, Motorfist, Creech Motor Sports, Snap On (Stan Marshall), Alaska Hydraulics, High Performance Auto, Danny's Auto Body, Creative Audio and Security, Action Sign & Graphics, Alaska Safety, Inc., L and M Supply, Wasilla Arctic Cat



AL PALMA

AGE: 31 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Rookie / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 R XC

BIO: I am a proud Alaskan, born and raised in this great state. I love sharing with my family everything Alaska has to offer including hunting, fishing and riding. I spend time during the summer commercial fishing out of Bristol Bay and the winter riding. I've been racing from a young age; first with sled dogs and then later with snowmobiles. I am the proud father of four amazing kids: Camryn, 13; Khloe, 5; Hailey, 3-1/2; and Brody, 7 months; and the lucky husband to a beautiful, supportive wife.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Eagle River World Championship Ice Race Wisconsin, Big Lake Ice Races 2007-2014.



WAYNE WOLD

AGE: 43 / **FROM:** Wasilla

STATUS: Veteran / **RIDING:** Arctic Cat ZR 6000 RXC

RACE HISTORY: I'm a six-year veteran to this race, with two finishes (2008 and 2013).

BIO: I live in Wasilla with my wife, Shawna, and three children, Haakon, Aubrey and Jordyn.

RACING EXPERIENCE: Iron Dog finisher, 2008 and 2013.

Personal Sponsors: Northern Asphalt, Fine Line Interiors, Vulcan Towing, AAA fence, Motor Fist, Creech Motor Sports, Snap On (Stan Marshall), Alaska Hydraulics, High Performance Auto, Danny's Auto Body, Creative Audio and Security, Action Sign And Graphics, Alaska Safety, L and M Supply



LEFT: *Charlie Potter and Alex Schwochert (Team 15) underway near the race restart in Big Lake in 2017.*
FAR LEFT: *A member of Team 14 (Casey Boylan and Bryan Leslie) on Big Lake during the 2017 Iron Dog.*
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTO

"As always, the number one topic will be snow and trail conditions," said Iron Dog Board of Directors president Jim Wilke. "After a couple of very poor snow years, last year saw a return to what many called a 'real Alaskan winter,' but this year's snowfall is off to a slow start, particularly in the Southcentral area on the south side of the Alaska Range."

By race day, the scenario could be a whole different story. As Alaskans are well aware, the weather here can change in minutes, and one big snowfall could save the day. So meanwhile, preparations continue for this world-class event that includes 29 race teams, seven past champions, an all-women's team and 2,031 miles of wilderness between the start and finish lines.

This year marks the 35th annual Iron Dog race, and the field of racers is fierce. Many veterans are returning for more punishment, yet there are 24 rookies entered—fresh blood for an evermore competitive race. There's also an all-female team—Alaskans Rachel Kidwell from Anchorage and Ashley Wood of Soldotna are pairing up to give the boys a run for their money. Kidwell and Wood attempted the race in 2015 but didn't finish, so here's hoping this is their year to shine and they can enter their names into the revered "veteran" category.

Defending champions Cory Davis and Ryan Simons won't be on the roster—"Simons continues to recover from an injury suffered after last year's race," Wilke said. Davis has said he will be focusing on his X-Games performances in the meantime and plans to return for the 2019 race.

"Second, for the first time in over 20 years, five-time champion Dusty Van Meter did not enter," Wilke added. "On the other hand, we do have seven champions entered."

Those names include Tyler Aklestad, Tyson Johnson, Todd Palin, Chris Olds, Todd Minnick, Nick Olstad and Scott Faeo.

Last year's race also featured the largest field of Outside competitors in the race's history. Sixteen racers entered the 2017 race, but this year that number has shrunken to only five racers hailing from Michigan and Minnesota. Only one of them, Dave Hausbeck of Reese, Mich., is a veteran, after he and his partner placed a respectable 14th in last year's race. Three of these Lower 48 riders are paired with Alaskans, while only one team, Team 48's Bob Menne and Steve Swenson, are representing Minnesota. Menne is father of Bobby Menne, another Minnesota racer who has raced Iron Dog and done quite well in the past. As Bob Menne said, "After

following Bobby in the Iron Dog for two years and seeing the race from the inside while flying the trail in 2016 from Nome to Fairbanks I decided I wanted to take on the challenge of the Iron Dog."

While Iron Dog can always have its share of surprises, still, all eyes will likely be on the well-known names as top contenders for the 2018 title.

"Any team that has a former champion as a member is a contender," Wilke said. "Also predicted to be front runners are Nome's Tre West teamed with Aaron Bartel; last year's third-place finishers Micah Huss and Ryan Sottosanti; and last year's rookies of the year, Casey Boylan and Bryan Leslie."

As far as changes go, the race will be run much the same as in past years, Wilke said, with just a few rules changes.

"After listening to racer input, race officials made some changes and clarifications to layover and fueling options on the southbound route, particularly between Ruby and Fairbanks," he said.

Also different from last year but bringing back a tradition, is the return of the Trail Class, an event that did not happen in 2017 due to lack of participation, and in 2016 was conducted under the name "recreational ride." This category allows for teams of riders to band together and ride the first half of the race, from Big Lake to Nome, to get a feel for the conditions. It often is the stepping-stone for future racers and an event that does not include prize money or awards, rather valuable experience and camaraderie among riders. Wilke said the Board made the decision to change the name of the event back to Trail Class after considering the reality of what it takes to actually travel this far by snowmachine.

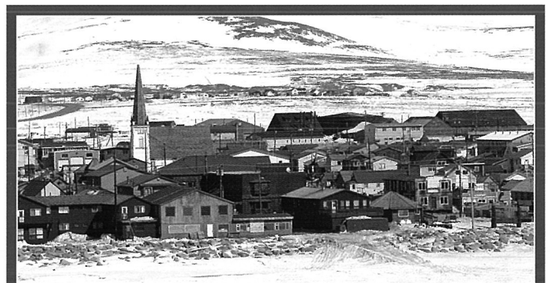
We returned to the name Trail Class since, as one rider said, 'There's nothing recreational about it.'

"Last year, we had to drop the Trail Class due to lack of entries," he said. "This year, we were happy to bring it back since we received 12 entries, more than enough to make it viable and safe. We returned to the name Trail Class since, as one rider said, 'There's nothing recreational about it.' "

As with past years, Wilke said this year's race will be easy to follow thanks to technology. Iron Dog's GPS tracking and minute-by-minute coverage of the racing keeps the event exciting even for those sitting on their couches at home. Visit www.irondog.org/live to get the best up-to-date coverage no matter where you happen to be.

As for the trails, in mid-December and with two months still left for Mother Nature to deliver her winter landscape, Wilke said he remained optimistic, yet realistic.

"The trail on this side of Rainy Pass is not great right now," he said. "We still need a lot more snow. On the other side of the Pass, conditions are much more favorable. As always, we could use more snow."



The Nome Convention and Visitors Bureau would like to welcome the Iron Dog staff, volunteers and racers to Nome, Alaska!

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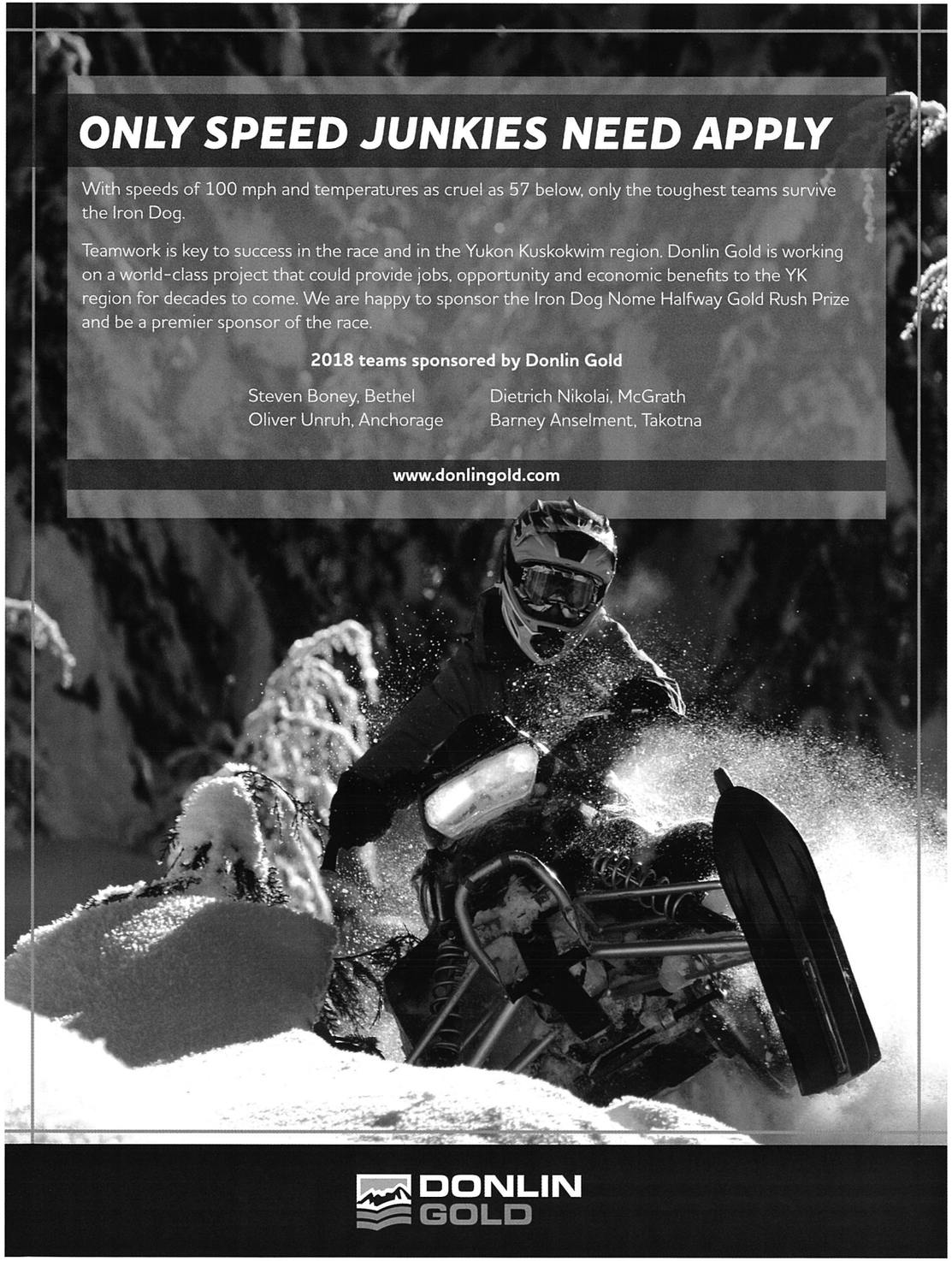
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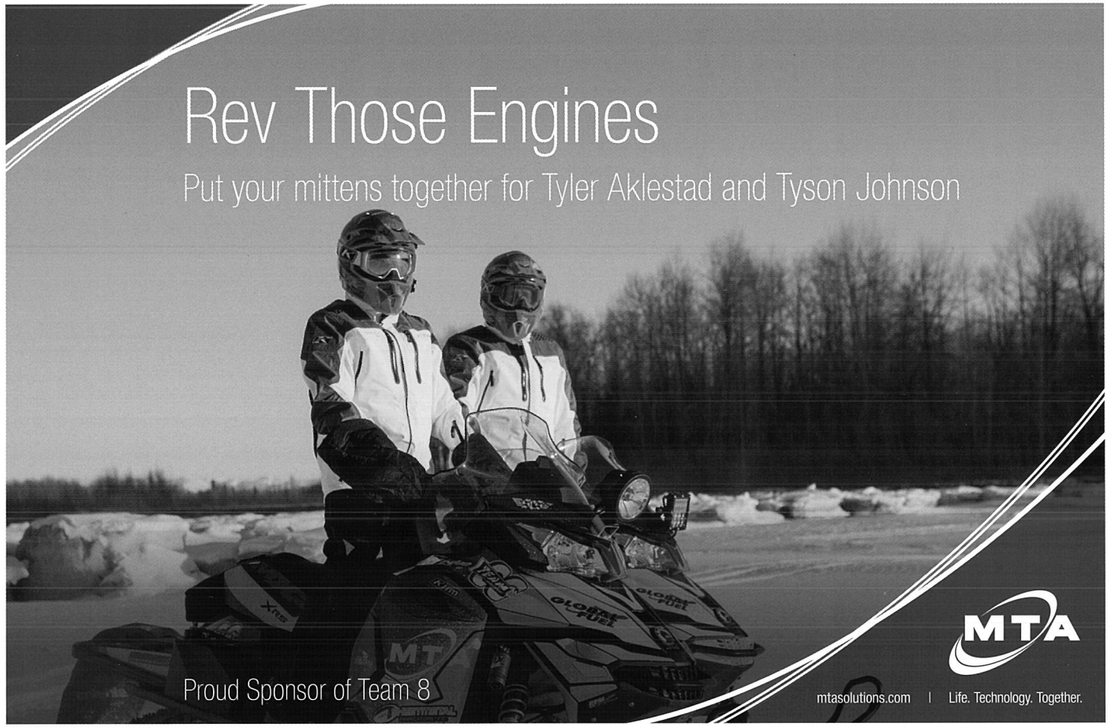
PRIZE DETAILS	CATEGORY	SPONSOR	AMOUNT
First-place Pro Class Team certificates for $250 each. Certificates.	All Pro Class	AMSOIL	$500
First Place All-Rookie Team on Arctic Cat to Finish in Fairbanks. Cash.	Rookies	Anchorage Suzuki/ Arctic Cat	$500
"Wrench Master Award" for the fastest All Rookie work time in the Nome garage. (Must actually work on sleds to qualify) $500 certificate in services.	All Pro Class	Quality Tune Auto Repair*	$500
2 Fastest All-Rookie Team into Galena Southbound. Gift Cards.	Rookies	Holiday Stationstores	$400
All-Rookie Team that has never run the Iron Dog before, with the Fastest time to Skwentna. Credit at Roadhouse.	Rookies	Skwentna Roadhouse	$500
The Perseverance Award to any Pro Class team that Finishes in Fairbanks and overcame the most adversity. Voted by ballot at the Finish Awards by 2015 Pro Class racers. Credit at Roadhouse.	All Pro Class	Skwentna Roadhouse	$500
"SBS Handyman Award" Fastest All-Rookie Team into Poorman. Two powertools from SBS. Product.	Rookies	Spenard Builders Supply*	$500
Two $200 Woody's Product Certificates and two Woody's Sled Hats to the 2nd Fastest All-Rookie Team into Fairbanks. Product.	Rookies	Woody's Traction Products* (Official Traction Supplier)	$430
Two $200 Woody's Product Certificates to the 2nd Fastest All-Rookie Team into Nome. Product.	Rookies	Woody's Traction Products* (Official Traction Supplier)	$400
Fastest All-Rookie Team into Koyuk Northbound. Product certificate.	Rookies	Lake Otis Medical Supply*	$250
First Pro Team into Fairbanks, LEAD-DOG helmet lights. Product Certificate	All Pro Class	LEAD-DOG Helmet Lights	$230
Two Woody's Gear Bags and two Woody's Sled Hats to the 3rd Fastest All-Rookie Team into Fairbanks. Product.	Rookies	Woody's Traction Products*	$132
Two Woody's Gear Bags to the 3rd Fastest All-Rookie Team into Nome. Product.	Rookies	Woody's Traction Products*	$102
		Total Contingency Prizes for 2018	**$108,396**

*denotes product or service value/ not cash. Award Details will be received by Race Participants prior to the Race Event Start.
**certificate is based on the individual, is non-transferable and only valid for the 2018 event. All other entry requirements and deadlines still apply.
Not all dollar amounts represent a cash prize. Visit www.irondog.org/prizes for details on these contingency awards. Note: Cancellation from Sponsor does not bind Iron Dog, Inc. for award payout. Iron Dog reserves the right to cancel or alter program at any time.

2018 CONTINGENCY PRIZES

PRIZE DETAILS	CATEGORY	SPONSOR	AMOUNT
The "Brush Cutter Award" presented by Alaska Specialty Equipment for the Fastest team between McGrath and Ruby (Northbound). Product and certificate.	All Pro Class	Bailey's Rent-All*	$2,600
Vision X "High Intensity Award" to the 1st Place Finish overall (Fairbanks). Product Certificate	All Pro Class	Vision X*	$1,000
Fastest All-Rookie Team to Fairbanks – Two $550 Woody's Product Certificates and two Woody's Pit Coats	Rookies	Woody's Traction Products*	$1,850
Fastest All-Rookie Team into "Checkpoint KLIM" in McGrath. $750 Product Certificate for each racer. Product certificate.	Rookies	Klim USA*	$1,500
$1,500 in store credit to 1st Place Finish in Fairbanks on Polaris snowmobiles. Product certificate.	All Pro Class	Big Lake Power Sports*	$1,500
Fastest All-Rookie Team Nome – Two $550 Woody's Product Certificates and two Woody's Gear Bags	Rookies	Woody's Traction Products*	$1,202
Monster Energy prize package for the fastest five teams to finish in Fairbanks. Prize package includes Monster gear. ($240 product value for each team)	All Pro Class	Monster Energy Drink - Distributed by Coca-Cola of Alaska*	$1,200
"Relax and Recover" for 6th Place Finishing Team in Fairbanks	All Pro Class	Anchorage Fracture and Orthopedic Clinic	$1,000
"Eighth is Great Award", for the 8th Place team to Finish in Fairbanks. Gift cards for each racer valued at $500 each. Product certificate.	All Pro Class	Alaska Industrial Hardware*	$1,000
TrailToyz "Intensity Award" to the fastest All-Rookie Team to Nome and to the fastest All-Rookie Team to Fairbanks. Product valued at $500 for each award.	Rookies	TrailToyz Offroad*	$1,000
First Place Finish in Fairbanks on Polaris snowmobiles by an All-Rookie Team. Cash.	Rookies	Big Lake Power Sports	$1,000
"Red Lantern Award" to the last team that makes it into Fairbanks - $1,000 worth of Iron Dog specific goods ($500 from each sponsor). Product certificate.	All Pro Class	Fine Line Interiors* and Anchorage Sheetmetal and Custom Fabricators*	$1,000
$1000 in the form of two $500 Shell gift cards awarded to the Fastest Rookie Team to the Crowley Checkpoint at North Pole	Rookies	Crowley Fuels	$1,000
"Make Traxxas Award" by Monster Energy for the 5th Place overall finish for an All-Rookie team. (One Monster Energy Traxxas RC car per racer, $300 value each)	All Pro Class	Monster Energy Drink - Distributed by Coca-Cola of Alaska*	$600





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IRON DOG 2018 CONTINGENCY PRIZES



Top finishers of the 2017 Iron Dog display their trophies on the podium in Fairbanks. There are many more ways for riders throughout the pack to get their hands on some great prizes.
MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTOGRAPHY

PRIZE DETAILS	CATEGORY	SPONSOR	AMOUNT
All-Rookie Team winners. First Place Finish $15,000, Second Place Finish $7,000, Third Place Finish $3,000. Both riders must be first-time rookies. Cash.	Rookies	Rookies Finish Line Challenge	$25,000
Donlin Gold's, Gold Rush Prize awarded to the 1st Fastest team to arrive in Nome. Gold Coins	All Pro Class	Donlin Gold	$10,000
First Place $10,000 overall, Second Place $5,000 overall, Third Place $3,000 overall on an Arctic Cat snowmobile. Cash.	All Pro Class	Arctic Cat	$18,000
First Place overall Finish on Polaris snowmobile.	All Pro Class	Polaris Industries	$10,000
Fastest team from White Mountain to Nome (Northbound). Cash.	All Pro Class	Bering Sea Lions Club in Nome	$8,000
First Place overall $10,000 ($5,000 each racer) on Ski-Doo snowmobiles.	All Pro Class	BRP/Ski-Doo	$10,000
$3,000 for the Second Fastest team and $2,000 for the Third Fastest team to Nome. Cash	All Pro Class	City of Nome	$5,000

promote Be Alive! in the pro racing, but it always seemed to not work out," Vaughn said. "Riding Trail Class, we can slow down, spread the message and really recognize it."

As part of the four-man team making up the Be Alive! group, Wilkins is living proof that tenacity pays off, that life is fleeting and that "being alive" means living it to the fullest. This will be the first major physical effort he's undertaken since his recovery.

"No matter what happens to you, you can get through it," said Wilkins, now 35. "You just have to stay strong, have faith in God and stay positive. You've got to be happy. The Be Alive! program ... to me, to be alive? Just the statement there is amazing."

Casey Randall, founder of the Anchorage-based Be Alive! nonprofit, said the message is simple: Receiving a diagnosis such as cancer—she herself is a cancer survivor and now five years clean of the disease—changes one's life. And how you respond plays a big part in the recovery process.

"All of a sudden this cancer interrupts life," she said of her 2011 diagnosis. "My daughter was 2 and my son was 6 months old. I just wanted to be Mom. I loved life before cancer and I just wanted to be here for my kids."

Organizing the Be Alive! Trail Class team is a story in itself, with lots of twists that make it seem an effort that was meant to be. Jerrod Vaughn, who works with Randall's husband (the two families are friends), approached her with the idea of really spreading the Be Alive! mission. Since he is not recovered enough yet for the grueling demands of a 2,000 mile race, what about putting together a Trail Class team and inviting a survivor of a life-threatening illness to come along? That way, the team can slow down, spread the word about Be Alive! and celebrate the very reason that the nonprofit exists – to relish and appreciate every, single day.

"It's so neat because it was really fun to connect (Wilkins and Vaughn) when I reached out to the Anchorage Young Cancer Coalition," said Randall, who posted to the local support group's Facebook page in search of someone willing to tackle a snowmachine adventure.

The connection, she said, made the entire undertaking meant to be. It turns out Wilkins and Vaughn knew each other. Back in high school—they both graduated from Chugiak High more than 15 years ago—they were riding buddies, both taking off on snowmachine for many a teen outing. But, time passed, they both got married, Vaughn moved out of state to pursue a professional riding career, and the two lost touch. Riding as part of Be Alive's Team 87 brings them back together.

"We're going to keep each other in check," Jerrod Vaughn said. Mark Vaughn, Jerrod's father, is a 24-year Army veteran with combat field experience so is well prepared to help in case of any medical emergencies—whether keeping close tabs on Ryan's tendency to lose feeling in his feet due to his cancer treatment, to his son's sore wrist, which is still recovering from the several surgeries required to repair it after his accident.

"He's been kind of our lead support guy," Wilkins said. "He knows what to look out for."

While the team is racing, Randall said she hopes to fly along the trail, delivering the Be Alive! message to the many villages through which the race trails passes.

"We are pairing up with the suicide prevention coalition, and stopping in the villages and spreading the message of Be Alive," she said. "It just keeps getting better and better and we want to show support along the way."

For Wilkins, who has been told the cancer cells are gone but who lives in fear that they could come back, the Be Alive! message speaks loud and clear to him. That's why he didn't hesitate for a second to don his riding gear and get outside.

Cancer, he said, is the "worst thing that's ever happened to me in my life, and one of the best things. It changed a lot of things for us, it really did. It makes me appreciate everything, every day."

Mark Vaughn, Ryan Wilkins, Jerrod Vaughn and Michael Oliver work on their sleds in preparation for the 2018 Iron Dog trail class event. They are Team 87 Be Alive!, riding in support of those overcoming serious illness. Ryan Wilkins was diagnosed with cancer in 2015 and is in remission. PHOTO COURTESY JERROD VAUGHN



"No matter what happens to you, you can get through it. You just have to stay strong, have faith in God and stay positive. You've got to be happy. The Be Alive! program ... to me, to be alive? Just the statement there is amazing."

— RYAN WILKINS





Iron Dog start kicks off week of racing excitement

WHILE THE IRON DOG ceremonial start in Anchorage was a festive event for the past three years, the 2018 Iron Dog Race returns to its roots with the start moving back to Big Lake.

The move, says, Iron Dog Board of Directors president Jim Wilke, was not easy to make. Bringing the ceremonial start to the state's largest city gave racers and sponsors a chance to meet more people, draw in more interest and celebrate all things snowmachining.

But the event also proved to be too costly in an economy where sponsorship is hard to find.

"Basically, the Downtown start was always an exhibition type of event," Wilke said. "This was just a chance for the racers and sponsors to interact with the public and reach a larger audience. We really liked having it, but we found it was really, really costly. The assistance we needed just never materialized.

"We gave it a good solid effort, but we felt it was necessary for the health of the race to drop this aspect of the race."

The flip side, though, is that moving the start back to Big Lake returns snowmachining to its roots. The Valley has long been considered the heart of snowmachining in

PHOTOS COURTESY ROGER CLIFFORD



Team Be Alive! Trail Class riders Ryan Wilkins, Jerrod Vaughn, Michael Oliver and Mark Vaughn are riding in support of the nonprofit. Wilkins is a brain cancer survivor, and Jerrod Vaughn is a Pro Class rider injured in last year's Iron Dog Race.

CELEBRATING LIFE

Trail Class team spreads Be Alive! message for survivors of serious illness

A LITTLE MORE than two years ago, Ryan Wilkins was 32 years old and working long hours at an Anchorage dealership service department. Married with small children, he would leave work in the evenings determined to have energy left for the family. Yet, once home, he'd change out of his dirty clothes, clean up a little and try his best to muster some energy, to no avail. The bone-numbing exhaustion prevailed.

"I would feel like I was going to pass out," he said. "I even felt like I was going to pass out just driving home."

Finally Wilkins went to see his doctor. Yes, he worked long hours and had small children at home—the demands were high. But surely this level of exhaustion was not OK.

He was right.

"They sent me in for an MRI, and after, they sat me down and they said, 'you need to go to the ER right now,' " Wilkins said.

It was cancer. It was Sept. 17, 2015. Wilkins, at the prime of his life and with two small children and a wife at home depending on him, would spend the next two years trying to get his life back. Doctors would drain fluid from his brain, where the cancer had struck, and they would put him through chemotherapy and a stem-cell transplant. But, ultimately, he would be OK.

On Feb. 16, Wilkins and his three teammates will ride in honor of "Be Alive!," a nonprofit group dedicated to helping survivors of serious illnesses reclaim their lives and embrace their "second chances." Wilkins, Jerrod Vaughn, Mark Vaughn and Michael Oliver will leave the Big Lake starting line for the Trail Class portion of the Iron Dog, each with their own acknowledgement of the ways in which cancer has touched their lives. Oliver's sled will be wrapped in dark blue, in honor of his mother, who died last year from colon cancer. Mark Vaughn's sled will be light blue, which represents prostate cancer, and Jerrod Vaughn's will be purple, for pancreatic cancer – in honor of Jerrod's Vaughn's maternal grandfather, who suffered from both forms of cancer.

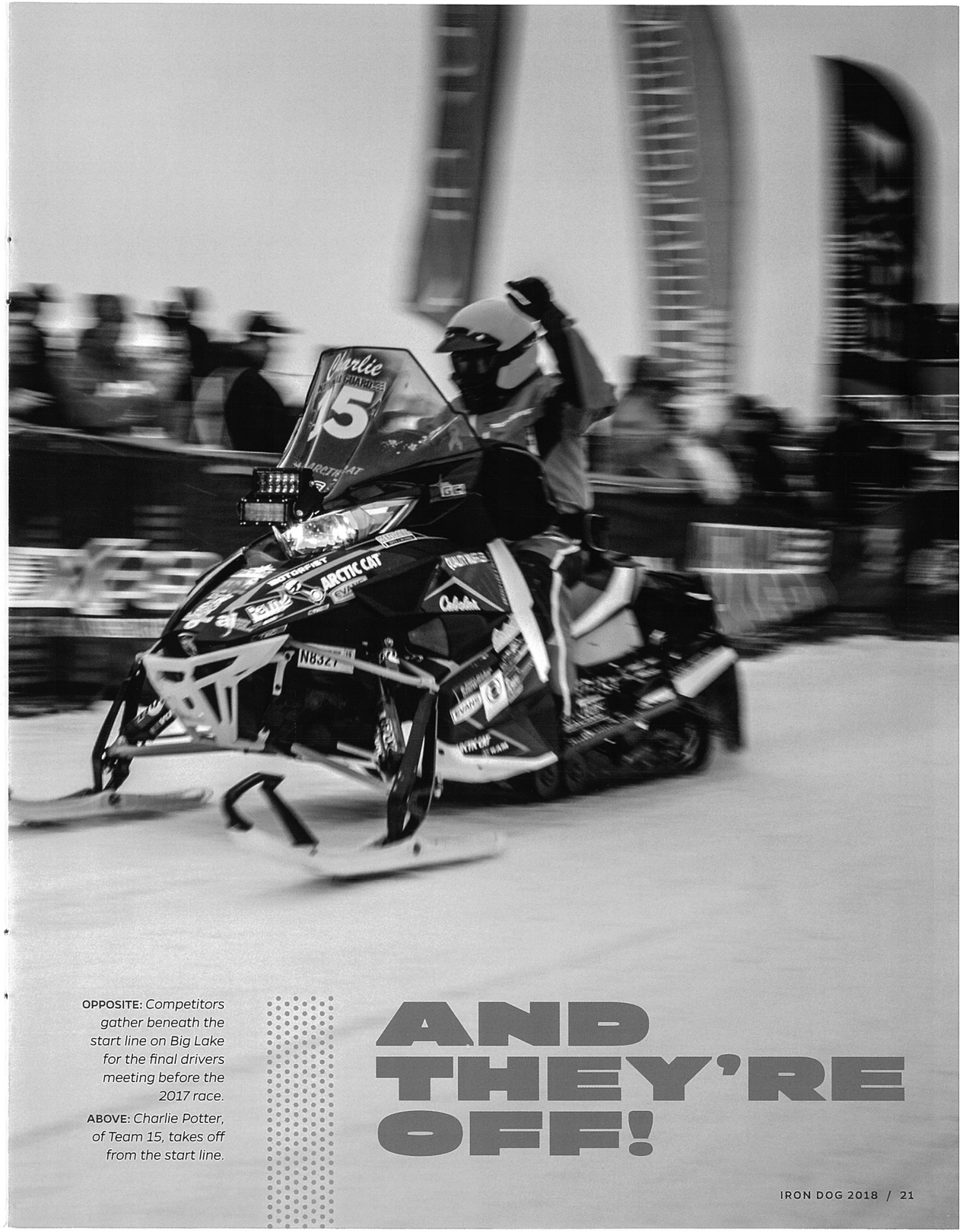
Jerrod Vaughn is a Pro-Class racer who was seriously injured in last year's Iron Dog after a head-on collision coming out of the Poorman checkpoint. Riding the Trail Class, and bringing attention to the Be Alive! program, is a way for him to pay it forward after an agonizing year of recovery.

"I had always wanted to do more to

A Legacy of Iron Dog Champions

2017	Cory Davis & Ryan Simons	Arctic Cat	40:58:01
2016	Tyson Johnson & Tyler Aklestad	Ski-Doo	35:35:22
2015	Scott Faeo & Eric Quam	Polaris	41:46:52
2014	Todd Minnick & Nick Olstad	Polaris	36:58:37
2013	Marc McKenna & Dusty VanMeter	Ski-Doo	36:58:54
2012	Marc McKenna & Dusty VanMeter	Ski-Doo	35:39:56
2011	Chris Olds & Tyler Huntington	Polaris	37:38:09
2010	Chris Olds & Tyler Huntington	Polaris	41:04:09
2009	Todd Minnick & Nick Olstad	Polaris	37:19:08
2008	Eric Quam & Marc McKenna	Arctic Cat	42:33
2007	Scott Davis & Todd Palin	Arctic Cat	38:07
2006	Dwayne Drake & Andy George	Arctic Cat	35:48
2005	Marc McKenna & Nick Olstad	Arctic Cat	52:59
2004	Mark Carr & Dusty VanMeter	Ski-Doo	39:03
2003	RACE CANCELLED		
2002	Todd Palin & Dusty Van Meter	Arctic Cat	38:41
2001	Tracey Brassard & Ken Lee	Polaris	38:44
2000	Todd Palin & Dusty Van Meter	Arctic Cat	41:10
1999	Scott Davis & Mark Carr	Arctic Cat	38:30
1998	Scott Davis & Mark Carr	Arctic Cat	44:47
1997	Scott Davis & Mark Carr	Arctic Cat	61:08
1996	John Faeo & Bob Gilman	Polaris	38:44
1995	Todd Palin & Dwayne Drake	Polaris	58:24
1994	Dan Zipay & Evan Booth	Polaris	71:38
1993	Scott Davis & Bill Long	Arctic Cat	58:36
1992	Dan Zipay & Evan Booth	Polaris	29:58
1991	John Faeo & Bob Gilman	Polaris	30:10
1990	John Faeo & Bob Gilman	Yamaha	40:12
1989	Scott Davis & Mark Torkelson	Yamaha	40:12
1988	John Faeo & Dan Zipay	Polaris	??
1987	John Faeo & Dan Zipay	Polaris	51:00
1986	John Faeo & Dan Zipay	Polaris	47:00
1985	Scott Davis & Gary Eoff	Yamaha	38:00
1984	John Faeo & Rod Frank	Polaris	23:50

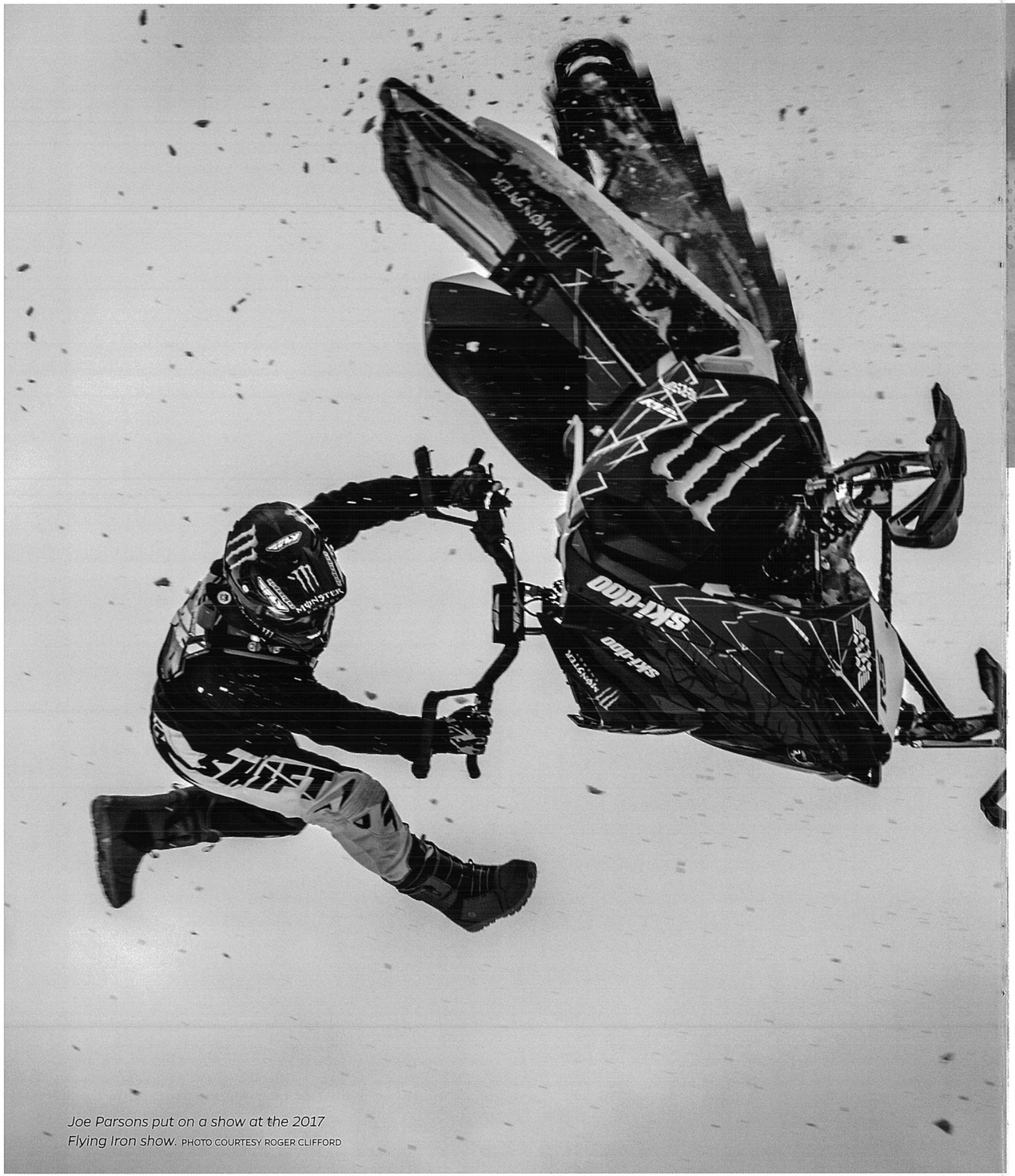




OPPOSITE: *Competitors gather beneath the start line on Big Lake for the final drivers meeting before the 2017 race.*

ABOVE: *Charlie Potter, of Team 15, takes off from the start line.*

AND THEY'RE OFF!



Joe Parsons put on a show at the 2017 Flying Iron show. PHOTO COURTESY ROGER CLIFFORD

In Fairbanks another festive, downtown experience can be had as the crowd gathers behind the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center, where the race ends. Racers can be seen cruising up the river, making way for the finish. Cheer them on from the sidelines or as they roar into the Fairbanks finish chute. If you get cold, duck into a downtown restaurant or café for something hot to eat, into the cultural center, or check with Iron Dog sponsors for their offerings.

OUT OF SIGHT BUT ON YOUR DEVICE

WHILE RACERS ARE HUNDREDS of miles into the backcountry, you'll need to rely on technology to stay abreast of the action. Watch news coverage on KTUU Channel 2, listen on the radio, or surf the Iron Dog website and Facebook page. Expect news coverage and prerace information from KTUU before and during the race.

The South Anchorage High School Media Team will be providing live streaming coverage from the start line in Big Lake, all the way to the finish line in Fairbanks. As well as updates along the route. Find the most current live stream online at www.irondog.org/live as well as find previous live streams.

For those who prefer web-based and mobile viewing information and near-real-time GPS tracking, the place to be is the Iron Dog website, www.irondog.org. Look for Race Tracking, where you can follow your favorite team at www.irondog.org/gps-tracking/. You can find team information, checkpoints and live GPS tracking. Watch as the team move across Alaska from checkpoint to checkpoint, over mountains and down rivers. GPS tracking provides custom features so you can follow along exactly the way you want and filter out any unwanted information.

CROWLEY FUELS
ADVENTURE

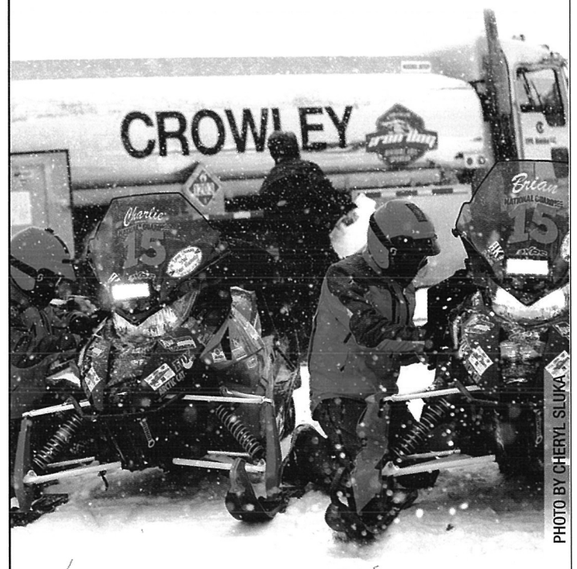


PHOTO BY CHERYL SLUKA

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PHOTO COURTESY JOHN WOODBURY

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YOUTUBE
youtube.com/user/IronDogRace/videos

SNAPCHAT
@irondograce

HASHTAG
Follow the hashtag #irondog2018 for updates all along the route.

THE 2018 IRON DOG racers will pass through more than 20 communities on their way to the finish line. This race is one of the most exciting times of the year for many of these remote villages and towns, who often see few visitors. So, it's safe to say that there are plenty of people who will be able to watch live.

Still, Iron Dog knows there are thousands of fans out there who may not have such front-row seats for the races. So they decided to bring the race to you. Thanks to ever-improving technology, as well as plenty of before-the-race activities, you can get a sneak peek, bringing the sounds of the sleds and the cheers from the fans right into your own living room.

Those new to the sport of snowmachinine racing have many opportunities leading up to and after the Iron Dog race to meet teams, ask questions and determine if they have what it takes to become a future Iron Dog champion. Drop in on the Donlin Gold Safety Expo anytime between 4 and 8 p.m. Feb. 14 at Cabela's in South Anchorage. This is where teams are inspected before given approval to race. Fans can talk to racers, see the packing list of gear spread out, inspect the snowmachines, and enjoy some extra family fun and excitement.

On Feb. 17, Big Lake begins hosting events that lead up to the start of Iron Dog. Catch the first Flying Iron show and other family friendly events on Saturday. Then, on Sunday, Feb. 18, the race officially starts near Big Lake Power Sports & Marina off South Big Lake Road. See the serious side of Iron Dog as teams get focused and nerves tense in anticipation to get underway. Teams are released in two-minute intervals and can be seen speeding off across the lake.

If you splurge on a ticket to Nome, or live there already, you'll get a unique perspective on how hard teams are racing, the toll it takes on them and their machines, the halfway awards banquet and the release for the second leg of the course to Fairbanks. It's also the finish line for Trail Class riders and a chance to hear their tales from the trail.



Team 23, Chris Kruse and Paul Sindorf, prepare to take off out of Big Lake at the restart of the 2017 Iron Dog.

PHOTO COURTESY ROGER CLIFFORD

Big Lake Start Events Schedule

SATURDAY, FEB. 17

7 p.m.
Flying Iron: First Show on Trailer Row, in front of Big Lake Powersports

SUNDAY, FEB. 18 RACE DAY

8:30 a.m.
Teams must be parked on the ice and start unloading. (Don't be late!)

9:30 a.m.
Race teams must be positioned at the start in the race pit.

10:45 a.m.
Color Guard, National Anthem and announcements.

11 a.m.
First Green Flag drops and continues in two-minute intervals.

Noon
Flying Iron: Second Show on Trailer Row, in front of Big Lake Powersports

Alaska. In fact, the largest percentage of racers in this year's race (44 percent) comes from this region.

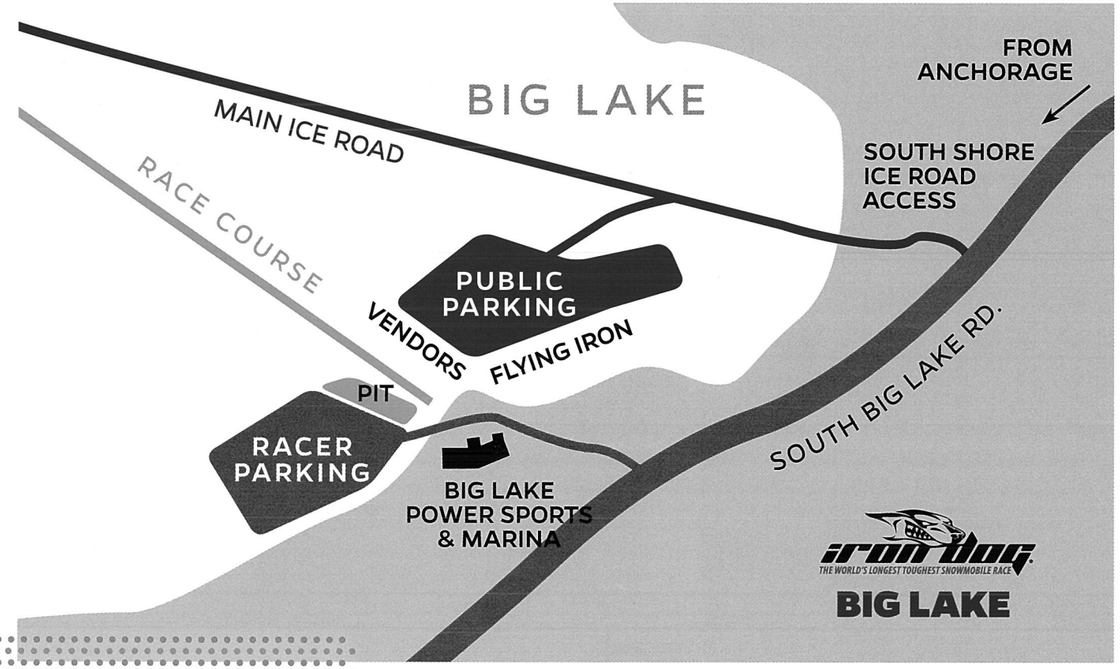
"We've started at Big Lake or at least in the Valley since Day 1," Wilke said. "We've had multiple locations out there. The bulk of our racers are from the Valley, and even those who are not are typically riding and training out of Big Lake. It is the heart and hub of Alaska snowmobiling."

"Big Lake is the heart and hub of Alaska snowmobiling."

The racing action all begins Sunday, Feb. 18 – although there are plenty of chances to celebrate the spirit of the race, such as at the Safety Expo on Wednesday, Feb. 14, at Cabela's in Anchorage, and the Flying Iron shows Saturday, Feb. 17, (and again on Feb. 18) at Southport on Trailer Row in front of Big Lake Powersports.

This year's field includes 29 Pro teams, including 34 veterans and 24 rookies, as well as one all-female team and only one team whose racers are both from outside of Alaska. They represent most of the manufacturing field, with the largest percentage racing Polaris, followed by Ski-Doo, then Arctic Cat.

Beagle Jarvis, who runs Big Lake Powersports and is helping to organize the Flying Iron events, said he is happy to see the race return to Big Lake. From a logistics standpoint, it's much easier on spectators to experience all things Iron Dog in



The Big Lake start offers lots of opportunities for kids, from jumping their sleds during Flying Iron to checking out all the sponsors have to offer.
MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTO



one venue, and a relief to the racers, who can get an extra night of much-needed rest before the real racing begins, he said.

"As far as a racer's point of view, it's really hard on the families and the riders to go down to Anchorage the day before the race, and go through the streets of Anchorage. After that, they usually have to restud, the top teams take their practice skis off and put their race skis on. For a lot of them, it's 10:30 p.m. before they start to even kiss their woman good night."

Jarvis said he is particularly happy about the opportunities for family-friendly events for the kids as well. With all of the Iron Dog events clustered in one location, the kids can do everything from jump their own ramps on their sleds during Flying Iron to taking part in kids snowmachine races on Saturday, Feb. 17, and riding down the Iron Dog race chute on race day.

"It gives kids a chance to get up close to the pros like Cory Davis and Joe Parsons who will be at Flying Iron and a chance to feel the excitement," he said. "It's a great feeling to be a little grommet and get to ride down the Iron Dog chute."



2,047 MILES

NORTHBOUND TO NOME

Big Lake to Skwentna	89
Skwentna to Shell Lake	17
Shell Lake to Puntilla	55
Puntilla to Rohn	75
Rohn to Nikolai	74
Nikolai to McGrath	52
McGrath to Ophir	63
Ophir to Poorman	99
Poorman to Ruby	72
Ruby to Galena	52
Galena to Kaltag	98
Kaltag to Unalakleet	95
Unalakleet to Shaktoolik	41
Shaktoolik to Koyuk	57
Koyuk to White Mountain	94
White Mtn to Nome	75
Northbound Mileage	**1,092**

SOUTHBOUND TO FAIRBANKS

Nome to White Mountain	75
White Mtn to Koyuk	94
Koyuk to Shaktoolik	57
Shaktoolik to Unalakleet	41
Unalakleet to Kaltag	95
Kaltag to Galena	98
Galena to Ruby	52
Ruby to Tanana	120
Tanana to Manley	69
Manley to Nenana	110
Nenana to North Pole	77
North Pole to Fairbanks	35
Southbound Mileage	**923**
TOTAL MILEAGE	**2,031**



HISTORIC PAST

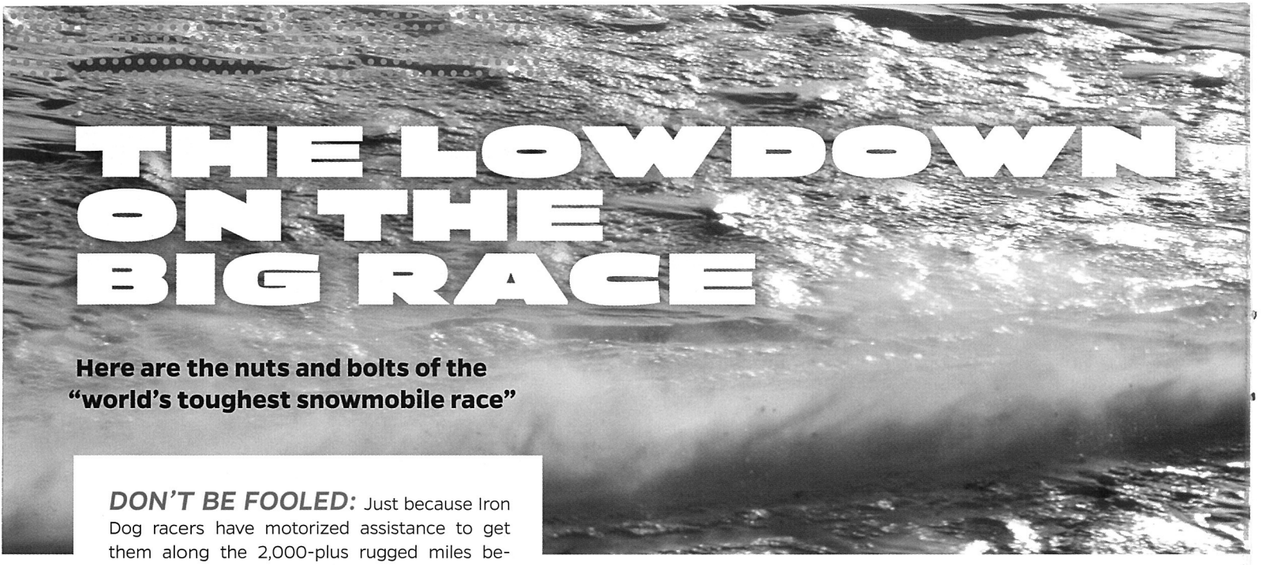
The first Iron Dog event started in 1984, in Big Lake following the northern route of the Historic Iditarod Trail to Nome. The event began as the "Iron Dog Iditarod," but the name was quickly changed the next year to the "Gold Rush Classic," to also honor the state's Gold Rush past. In 1990 the race was organized as the "Iron Dog Gold Rush Classic" and that name stuck for a decade until Tesoro Corp. became a title sponsor. In 2008, the Alaska National Guard became a top sponsor. The 2018 Iron Dog enjoys a strong presence in awareness, attendance and participation by more than 20 communities across Alaska.



2015 Iron Dog winners Eric Quam and Scott Faeo flank Walker Evans as they celebrate their victory.
PHOTO COURTESY MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTOGRAPHY

PAST CHAMPS

Over the 35-year history of the Iron Dog, 27 different riders have won the event—15 have multiple titles, 12 have won only once. There are now two second-generation family names with a championship title; Scott Faeo won the race with Eric Quam in 2015. Scott's father John Faeo and Scott Davis are tied with the most victories. And in 2017 Cory Davis won with Ryan Simons. Simons is the only non-Alaskan to win. No all-rookie team has won since the first race when all racers were rookies. Nick Olstad, three-time champion, and Gary Eoff are the only rookies to cross the finish line in first place. Olstad won in 2005 with Marc McKenna. Eoff won with Scott Davis in 1985 and never raced again. Only one all-ladies team has finished, Jackie Page and Missy McClurg in 2001. The third woman to complete the Pro Class, finishing in downtown Fairbanks, was Jana Pevan-Peterson in 2012.



THE LOWDOWN ON THE BIG RACE

Here are the nuts and bolts of the "world's toughest snowmobile race"

DON'T BE FOOLED: Just because Iron Dog racers have motorized assistance to get them along the 2,000-plus rugged miles between Big Lake, Nome and Fairbanks, don't think they aren't whipped along the way. This race is about as physically demanding as they come. Dubbed the "world's longest, toughest snowmobile race," racers must battle the elements, the teeth-jarring speeds and the demands of every twist and turn along the way. Racers cross the finish line battered, bruised, sleep-deprived and aching—yet triumphant. The trail passes through major cities, remote villages and lots of wilderness in between. And ever since its humble beginnings in 1984, snowmachine-loving Alaskans across the state have embraced it, appreciating the strength it takes to complete such a feat.

"There is no other race quite like Iron Dog," said Iron Dog Board of Directors president Jim Wilke. "It has earned the title of the 'world's longest, toughest snowmobile race' for a reason." Some of the challenges faced by racers are rough sections of trail, changing weather, mechanical breakdowns and subzero temperatures. Those same challenges can be what makes or breaks a team's ability to become champions and veterans.

Over seven days, racers will pass through more than 20 remote communities, giving the residents there a thrill to behold, brightening their winter days and adding excitement to the season. There are 29 Pro Class teams entered and 12 riders in the Trail Class. Look for them along the way, and don't forget to cheer them on.

"As every veteran racer will tell you, each year is different and trying to compare them is impossible," Wilke said. "This constant challenge is what keeps many of them returning year after year."

This truly is the toughest snowmachine race on the planet. And here's what you need to know about it.



Racers check their sleds in the Nome city garage.

THIS PHOTO AND ABOVE COURTESY JOHN WOODBURY

PLAY BY THE RULES

The most important and often misunderstood rule Iron Dog teams must abide by is that racers are not allowed to accept parts or assistance from bystanders outside of checkpoints. Racers are not allowed to have anyone touch their snowmachines, except when in Nome, where under the watchful eye of race marshals they may have two others assist during work time in the Nome city garage.

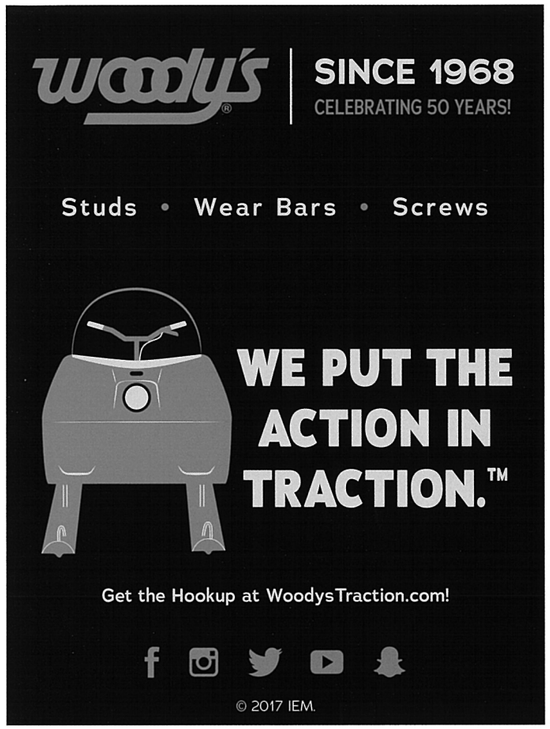
The reason is simple: To level the playing field for teams that cannot afford to have their own chase aircraft or similar advantages dictated by a larger budget.

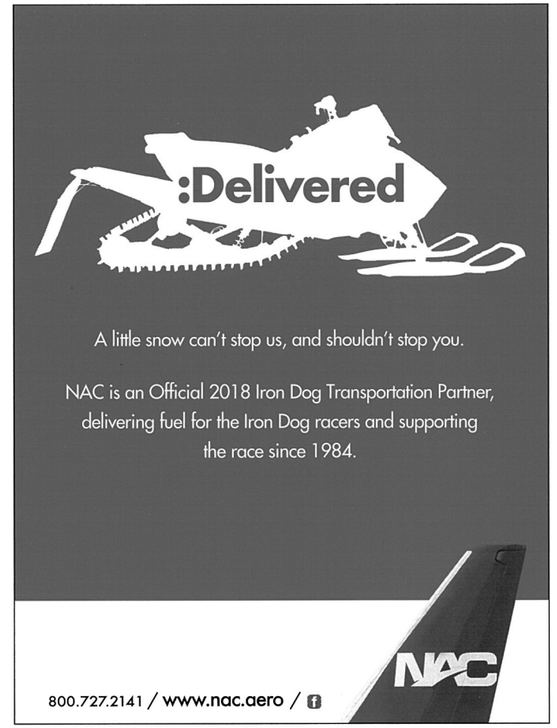
Another rule, added in 2015, requires all riders to refuel using only fuel provided by Iron Dog at specific checkpoints. This keeps well-funded teams from setting up their own fueling stations to avoid having to stop in the official checkpoints in an effort to shave time off their stops.

For 2018, there are no new significant rules, but they have been reviewed and clarified.

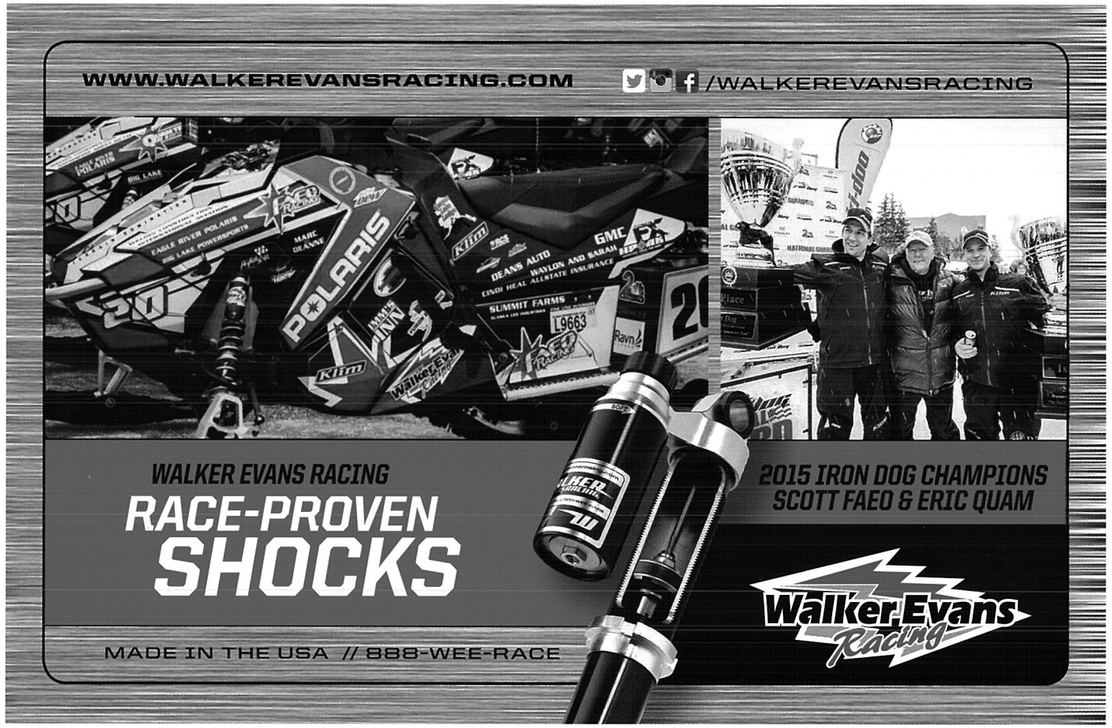
"A rules committee, including 17 racers, took a detailed look at the rules and this resulted in multiple revisions and updates," Wilke said. "While the fundamentals of the race rules have remained unchanged there has been clarity brought to certain sections."

The complete rules can be found at irondog.org.











Smaller Communities and Checkpoints

SKWENTNA, population 38 (as of July 2015), is located on mostly flat land in Southcentral Alaska on the Skwentna River. It is 89 miles from the start.

PUNTILLA, population two, is located on a Puntilla Lake near a breathtaking mountain pass. Puntilla is 161 miles from the start.

ROHN, population zero (as of 2012), is located at a small roadhouse where two rivers join, and is 236 miles from the start.

NIKOLAI, population 96, is 310 miles from the start on the south fork of the Kuskokwim River.

MCGRATH, population 354, located on the Innoko River, is 362 miles from the start.

OPHIR, population zero, is 425 miles from the start located on the Innoko River.

POORMAN, population zero, located in a flatland region and the last checkpoint before Ruby, is 524 miles from the start.

RUBY, population 170, is on the Yukon River and marks the turning point to Nome. Pro racers pass through Ruby twice – first 596 miles from the start on the way to Nome and again at mile 1,620 on the return route to Fairbanks.

GALENA, population 479, is an Athabascan village in the Interior, 648 miles from the start on the way to Nome and 1,568 miles from the start on the return route to Fairbanks.

KALTAG, population 194, located near the windy coast of Norton Sound, is 746 miles from the start on the way to Nome and 1,470 miles from the start on the return route to Fairbanks.

UNALAKLEET, population 712, on the coast of Norton Sound north of the Unalakleet River, is 841 miles from the start on the way to Nome and is 1,375 miles from the start on the return route to Fairbanks.

SHAKTOOLIK, population 260, is on a point jutting into Norton Sound, 882 miles from the start and 1,334 miles from the start on the return route to Fairbanks.

KOYUK, population 344, located on the coast, is 939 miles from the start on the way to Nome and is 1,277 miles from the start on the return route to Fairbanks.

WHITE MOUNTAIN, population 197, located in the mountains on the Fish River, is 1,033 miles from the start on the way to Nome and is 1,183 miles from the start on the return route to Fairbanks.

TANANA, population 251, located on the Yukon River, is 1,740 miles from the start.

MANLEY HOT SPRINGS, population 89 (as of 2010), is 1,812 miles from the start.

NENANA, population 386, located on Mile 305 of the George Parks Highway, is 1,917 miles from the start.

NORTH POLE, population 2,214, is located on the Richardson Highway, just south of Fairbanks. North Pole was added to the racecourse to facilitate a new finish location in Fairbanks, and increased the course distance.

Population stastistics as of 2013 unless noted. Population and location descriptions based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates and the Iditarod Trail Committee.



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COMMUNITIES AND CHECKPOINTS

Iron Dog racers refuel in Skwentna, population 38, during the 2016 race. PHOTO COURTESY JOHN WOODBURY

Iron Dog's Larger Communities

BIG LAKE
OFFICIAL START OF 2018 RACE

For years, Big Lake has hosted the start of the race with direct access to the Iditarod Trail and is the perfect setting for spectators to watch race teams speed off to their long expedition. Annual ice roads are plowed on the ice, allowing for vehicle access to all areas of the lake, and the starting line, also positioned on the ice, provides a flat field for teams to gather and prepare before taking off. The community of Big Lake is home to 3,000 people spread over 131.9 square miles. Big Lake is a longtime vacation and recreation area, though more and more permanent residents are moving there.

NOME

Until 1994, Nome was officially the race finish, tying Iron Dog to the Gold Rush history of Alaska, hence the earlier race name, Gold Rush Classic. In 1998 the race finish was moved to Fairbanks. Nome remains heavily involved in the race as a halfway point, perhaps involved more than ever before. Instead of hosting the ending of the long journey, Nome now facilitates the Trail Class finish, numerous support efforts and crews, lodging and banquets for Trail Class and Pro Racers. Nome is in western Alaska on the coast of the Bering Sea, and the surrounding area is some of the most challenging on the course, due to ice shelves and open-water conditions.

FAIRBANKS

Since 1998, Fairbanks has been the official finish of the race. Fairbanks facilitates the final rallying of Pro Class racers who completed the entire 2,031-mile journey. Fairbanks is home to the final banquet and awards ceremony. Since 2011, the racers finish near Downtown after traveling along the Chena River from the east through North Pole. Fairbanks is Alaska's second largest city and home to more than 50,000. It is known as the home of University of Alaska Fairbanks, the popular Chena Hot Springs Resort and the World Ice Art Championships.

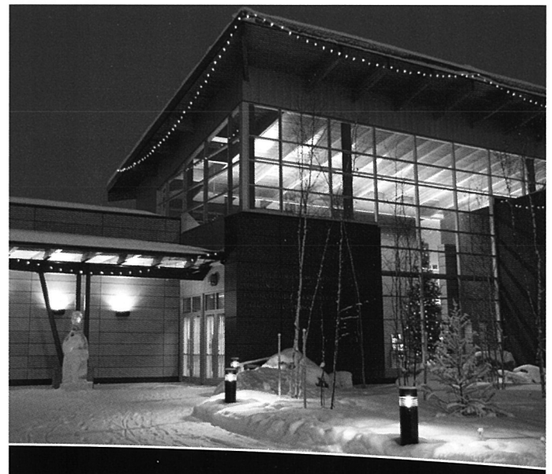


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Fairbanks Finish Events Schedule

SATURDAY, FEB. 24

9 a.m.
Iron Dog Setup complete.

9:30 a.m.
Enjoy vendors booths as you wait for first-place teams.

10 a.m.
Announcements and preparing for the first-place team to arrive.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Cheer on your favorites as the teams arrive.

3 p.m.
Iron Dog merchandise tent closes, so act fast earlier to get your gear.

4 p.m.
Last teams to arrive.

6:30 p.m.
Meet and Greet and cocktails at the Westmark Gold Room Ballroom.

7-9 p.m.
Awards Ceremonies



the YMCA
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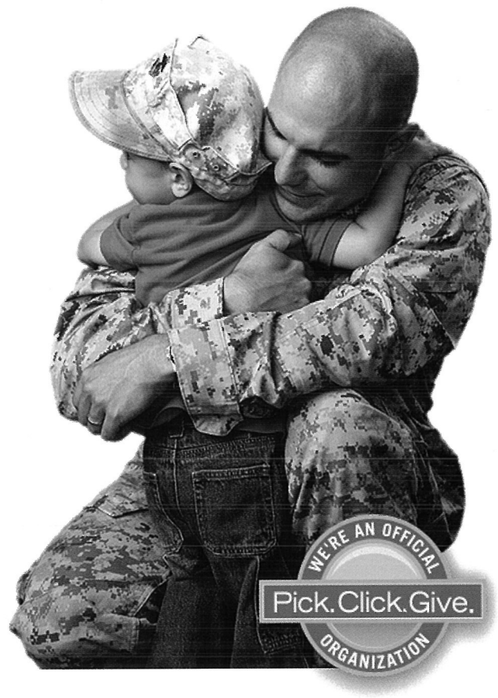
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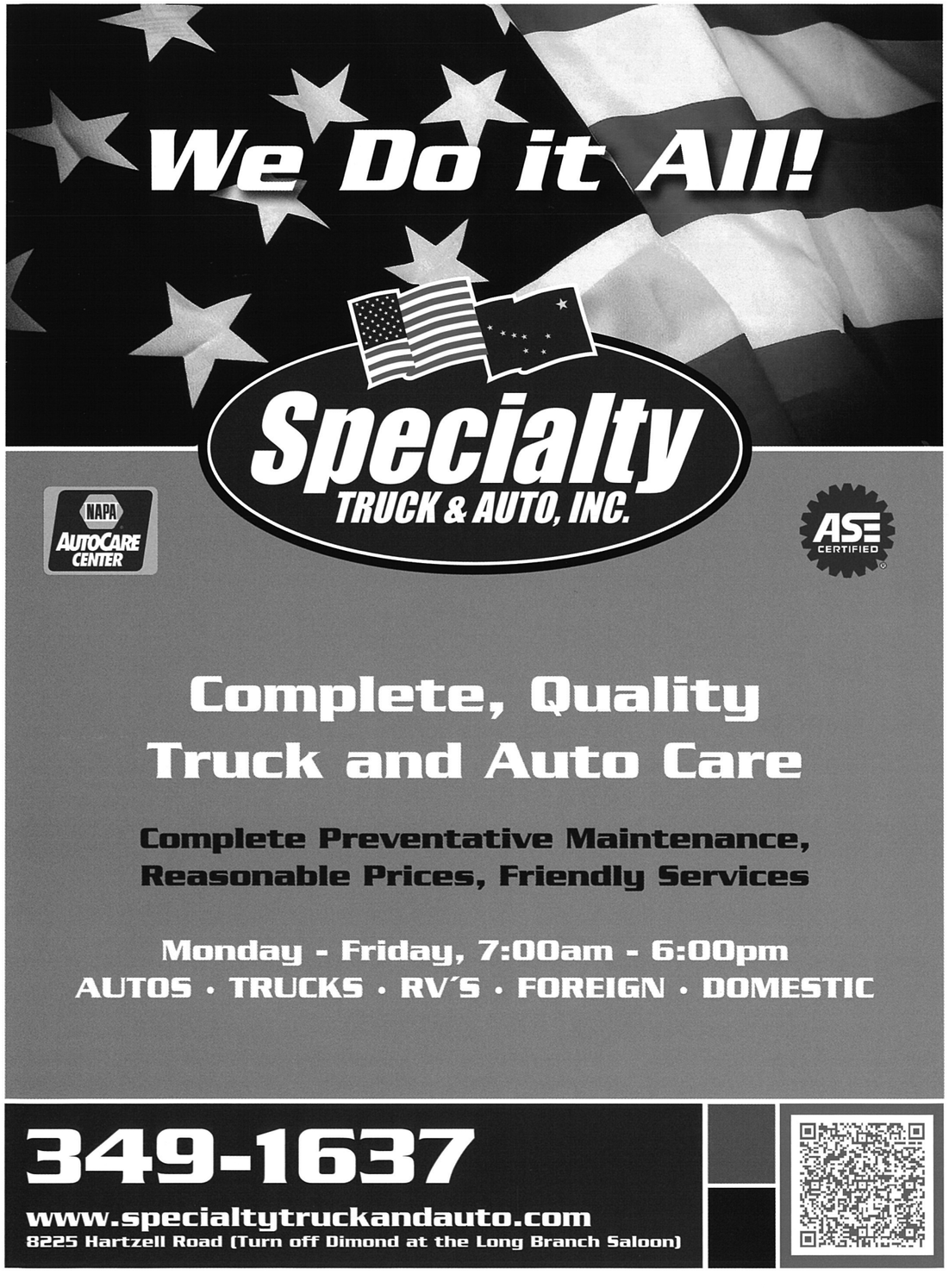
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FINISHING FAST IN FAIRBANKS

Off the throttle, racers can now celebrate the accomplishment

AFTER DAYS OF RACING through wilderness without a soul in sight, the views along the Chena River and the cheers of the crowd serve as a last final adrenaline burst to get racers across the finish line. By having the race start in South-central Alaska (the state's largest population center) and end in the state's second-largest city, masses of spectators are able to better enjoy the race and show support. The real racing battle is done in the wilderness, where viewing options—unless you have your own personal plane to follow overhead—are quite limited. In fact, bringing the Iron Dog finish to Fairbanks was a monumental move that continues to gather energy each year.

From Fairbanks, crowds will be able to line the finish chute, cheering their riders across the finish line so they can celebrate the end to the brutal and impressive challenge that is Iron Dog. Racers are expected to start showing up in Fairbanks sometime on Saturday, Feb. 24.

"Community involvement has continually grown over the course of finishing in Downtown Fairbanks," said Iron Dog Board of Directors president Jim Wilke. "We rely on local volunteers to help mark the trail, man the race headquarters and cheer on our racers as they cross the finish line. There is always a great deal of excitement around the finish. It is always a challenge to truly know who will become champions until they cross under the checkered flag. The uncertainty of the race is what fuels the excitement of all those anxiously awaiting their friends, family and favorite racers."



Indeed, having the finish in Fairbanks affords fans one last opportunity to watch the racers—albeit they are a little more haggard, a little less chipper yet in celebratory mode after their long race is over. The route veers south of Fairbanks through the Fort Wainwright Recreational Area toward North Pole and Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project. Racers drive north through the Flood Project and onto the Chena River heading back toward downtown Fairbanks, ending at the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center. Iron Dog says special thanks go to John Johnston, Jody Nolan, Jeff Dyer, Dennis Falldorf, Roger Brown, Compeaus, Northern Power Sports, Fort Wainwright and the U.S.



ABOVE: *Northern Air Cargo has been providing continuous support to Iron Dog since the beginning. That's now 35-plus years of service.*
OPPOSITE TOP: *2017 Iron Dog champions Ryan Simons, left, and Cory Davis (Team 41) celebrate at the finish. Davis is the son of Scott Davis, a former Iron Dog champion, and Simons is the first non-Alaskan to win the race.*
OPPOSITE BOTTOM: *2017 Iron Dog third-place finishers Ryan Sottosanti and Micah Huss (Team 2) arrive across the finish line amid cheers from the crowd.*
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTO

Army Corps of Engineers for all the effort keeping the route safe and well marked.

Now is the time that the racers can finally relax and enjoy the fact that they have survived the coined "longest, toughest snowmobile race in the world."

As has been the case with the previous few years, spectators and family members wishing to usher racers across the finish line can expect a fun time. The city of Fairbanks rolls out the "what-to-do" list for those who want to stay a few days and see a side of the city that the summer tourists never get to enjoy.

"The Iron Dog events all happen near the Morris Thompson (Visitors and Cultural) Center," said Amy Geiger with Explore Fairbanks. "There are activities planned in that area and the Westmark serves as a headquarters."

Wilke said Fairbanks has continually supported the race and its participants.

"From allowing us to host our finish in the heart of the city, to choosing Iron Dog as a recipient of the bed tax grant, Fairbanks has welcomed us with open arms," he said. "We look forward to seeing how the finish can engage the community more and more over the coming years."

Sponsors play a large role in the race's success as well, he said.

"The Westmark hosts our Official Race Headquarters, volunteers and staff," he said. "The Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitor Center is the host of our race finish, providing a unique look into the history of the area as well as a great place to warm up. Monster and the Odom Corp. provide a shuttle from the Westmark to the finish line as well giving away finish line goodies."

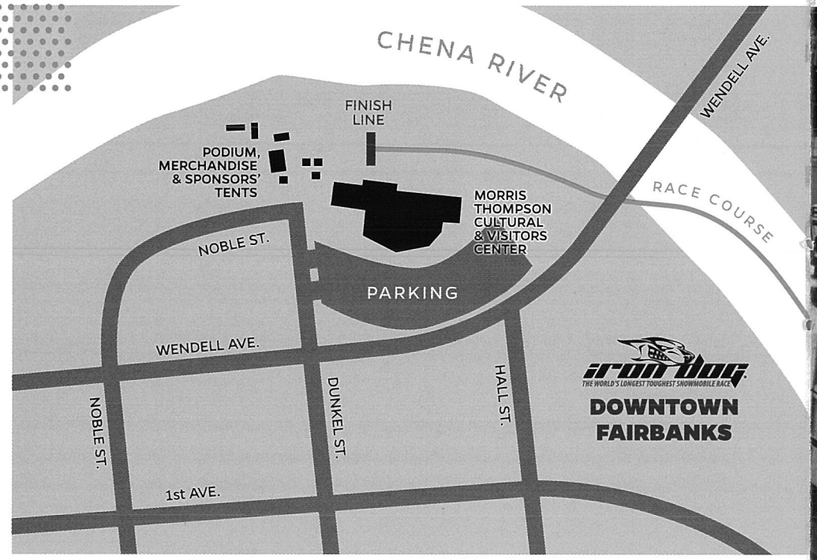
Between watching the racers come in, there are plenty of other things to check out in Fairbanks. February is one of the best months for viewing ice sculptures, taking in the northern lights or exploring the many museums, restaurants and shops that offer a warm respite amid the cold.

"Aurora viewing is a big thing in Fairbanks, probably the centerpiece of our winter," Geiger said. "We're one of the best places in the world to see the aurora because we're under the aurora oval," a band of activity that manifests itself in a huge ring around the earth's geomagnetic north pole. Go just a bit further south or north, and that activity fades exponentially—but Fairbanks is the bull's-eye.

"In so far as actually brick and mortar things you can do in town, we have two extremely good museums," Geiger explained: the ever-popular Museum of the North, located on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus (see listings on next pages for details); as well as an unlikely antique auto museum that rivals those of any in the Lower 48.

"The car museum has a spectacular collection of cars that you really can't see anywhere else," she said. See the listing for this attraction on page 34.

For those staying for the awards reception, the fun begins just after most of the remaining racers have arrived. The reception will celebrate the racers' efforts, give awards to finishers and, of course, reveal the lucky raffle winners. The reception will be held at the official Iron Dog hotel, Westmark Hotel, at 813 Noble St., in Fairbanks.





The top three teams stand on the podium in Fairbanks after the finish of the 2017 Iron Dog. From left: second-place finishers Chad Gueco and Dusty VanMeter; winners Ryan Simons and Cory Davis; and third-place finishers Micah Huss and Ryan Sottosanti.
PHOTO COURTESY MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTO



PHOTO COURTESY JENNY DANIELS



Donlin Gold Safety Expo

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14

WHEN: 4-8 p.m.

WHERE: Cabela's of Anchorage, 155 W. 104th Ave., Anchorage

WHO: This is a free, public event hosted by Iron Dog and sponsored by Donlin Gold with vendors and race teams included.

RAFFLE TICKETS: Raffle tickets are $60 and the proceeds benefit the USO of Alaska. Call 907-351-9140 for tickets or go to www.irondog.org/2018-schedule-of-events/raffle/ for ticket locations near you. Visit USO of Alaska at alaska.uso.org.

SAFETY FIRST

"There are no major changes, however, racers may see improvements, such as designated fueling and oiling areas and redirected trail."

PRIZES AND PROCEEDS

While safety is the overriding theme of the Expo – it also is meant to be a prerace celebration of the days to come. There also will be giveaways from race sponsors, as well as special deals on gear and accessories.

Iron Dog Raffle tickets (drawings to be held Feb. 24 at the end of the awards banquet in Fairbanks) will be on sale, too. Win the grand prize of a 2017 Toyota Tundra 4x4 SR Double Cab from Kendall Toyota. Or maybe that raffle ticket is worth the second-place prize – a 2017 Polaris PRO-S 600 from Hatcher Pass Polaris, paired with a 10-foot Aluma Tilt trailer from White Spruce Trailer Sales. Those and the other prizes will be on display at the Expo. Raffle tickets are $60, and up to half of the proceeds will go to the USO Alaska, the chosen beneficiary of Iron Dog's 2018 race. Last year, Iron Dog bestowed USO Alaska with $23,520 in proceeds, which benefited Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and Eielson Air Force Base.

"Iron Dog has donated over $200,000 to local Alaska charities, including Alaska Healing Hearts, The Armed Services YMCA, The Alaska Veterans Museum, and now the USO Alaska," said Iron Dog Director of Operations Laurel Hickel.

"This year, we hope to share half of our proceeds with (USO)."

Throughout all of this, fans can talk to teams and wish them luck, inspect their sleds, see the required gear spread out and partake in event highlights. Stop in at Cabela's café for snacks, chat with the racers and become part of the fun.

Hite, with ASSA, said the Expo is a must-do for any snowmachinine fan and a unique learning opportunity.

"The Expo is the main avenue that non-racers have where they can talk with and compare his/her preparations to those of professional race teams," he said. "It showcases the care, planning and precision that each of these teams place on the preparation for traveling over some of the most desolate country in Alaska, and doing it at speeds approaching that of aircraft covering the race."



MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Getting There

Cabela's Anchorage store is at 155 W. 104th Ave., in South Anchorage. Follow either Seward Highway or Old Seward Highway to O'Malley Road. Take O'Malley west to C Street, and follow C north for one block. Cabela's is on the right. Or, take Old Seward Highway to 104th Avenue, and head west for roughly two blocks. Cabela's will again be on the right. If you prefer to head south on C Street from Downtown or Midtown Anchorage, follow C almost to the very end where C connects with O'Malley Road and Walter J. Hickel Parkway. From that direction Cabela's will be on the left.



Team 11 racers Todd Palin and Shane Barber meet and greet at the 2016 Donlin Gold Safety Expo. After a year's hiatus, the two are back together for 2018, again as Team 11.

PHOTO COURTESY MATT WALISZEK / ORZEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Expo double-checks racers' preparedness, gives spectators a chance to meet the teams

THE IRON DOG snowmachine race is an unforgiving challenge for even the toughest of riders. But for those who have crossed that finish line—or have been beaten back and now can't resist the challenge of chasing that dream—it's a race that is a bit addictive, too.

That's why race organizers stress – beyond winning, money, name recognition or any other prize – safety. Sponsors of Iron Dog reiterate that tenet, said the race's Board of Directors president Jim Wilke. Yes, spectators want an exciting race, but not at the expense of the health of the racers.

"Safety is the paramount focus of Iron Dog," Wilke said. "We do all we can to prepare racers for the challenges they will face starting with the Rookie Workshop, requiring first aid and CPR training, and finally tech inspection. At the tech inspection both man and machine are checked to make sure they have the proper gear to get them safely to the finish line."

The place to see this inspection take place is the Donlin Gold Safety Expo. Throughout the race, until they are safely at the finish in Fairbanks, there are countless ways in which racers put themselves at risk – and the Safety Expo helps reiterate the ways in which they can stay safe.

"The Safety Expo also allows the average fan to see what is required to safely traverse over 2,000 miles of Alaskan Wilderness," Wilke added. "Everything from avalanche information, to helmet assistance can be found at the Safety Expo, as well as the racers themselves."

Kevin Hite, president of the Alaska State Snowmobile Association, which promotes snowmachine safety throughout the state, said: "There have been broken bones and frostbite," but never a fatality, a feat that is due in part to Iron Dog's commitment to keeping the race safe.

"It is evident that the Iron Dog rules that address minimal safety gear have proven to be an integral part of the preparation of this event," he said. "The first three pages of the checklist are exclusively focused on safety/survival gear."

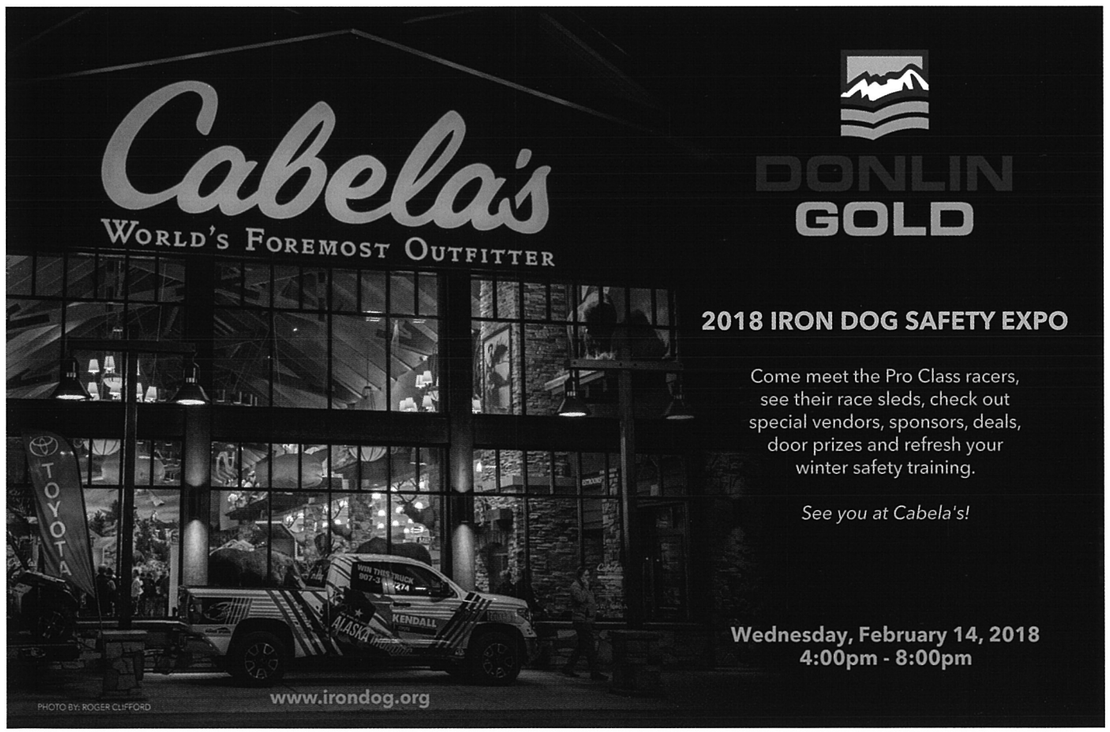
The safety message is consistently delivered and ever evolving when or if the need arises, Wilke added.

"With new technology and better gear becoming available, the requirements are reviewed every year," he said. "This year's safety updates are minimal."

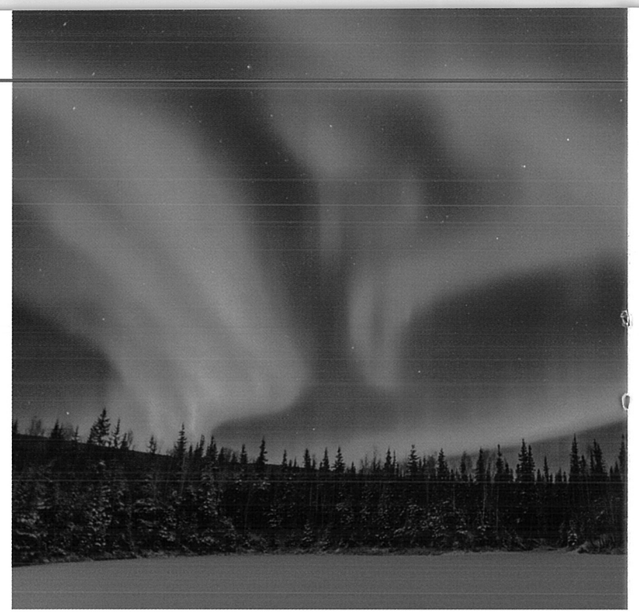
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FUN IN FAIRBANKS



FAIRBANKS MIGHT GET KIND OF CHILLY, and the days might be short, but that is part of the fun when visiting this winter wonderland. Here, like no other place in the world can you view spectacular northern lights, see ice sculptures at their best and dodge inside to get a slight reprieve from said frigidness. There is something very frontier-like about braving real Alaska conditions, where winter is still winter and snow can be guaranteed. So, as you wait on racers to complete their 2,000-mile journey, be sure to explore Fairbanks while you're there. Start with the Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau website at explorefairbanks.com, or look at our suggestions below.

RESTAURANTS

Finding the best local eateries is a must when traveling. Fairbanks offers a variety of restaurants, from authentic to original places, all while capturing the heart of the city. And for those who like Thai food? Interestingly, Fairbanks is a beacon for Thai restaurants, and the city boasts more than 30—all delicious.

The Pump House is considered an iconic restaurant in Fairbanks. Located near the Chena River, they have both outdoor and indoor seating. 796 Chena Pump Road. (907) 479-8452

Fairbanks Distilling Company is one of the newest additions to the craft-distilling scene. This artisan distillery creates high-latitude spirits, including its signature 68 Below potato vodka. 401 Cushman St. (907) 452-5055

Ursa Major Distillery is a small independent distillery whose products are distilled from local barley grown in Delta Junction and certified Alaska Grown. Its tasting room is open Tuesdays-Saturdays. 2922 Parks Hwy. (907) 457-1070

Hoarfrost Distillery Is yet a third option, located at 3501 Lathrop St. (907) 479-6128.

Silver Gulch Brewhouse is for any beer lover, and this is one of Fairbank's most popular brewing companies. 2195 Old Steese Hwy. N, Fox (907) 452-2739

Hoodoo Brewing Co. is one of the quirkiest brewing companies in Alaska. There are food trucks set up to pair your beer with food, and there's yoga on tap, where you'll enjoy a good brewski and have an experience within itself. Hoodoo also just opened its outdoor fire pit for those who want to watch northern lights with a brew, too. 1951 Fox Ave. (907) 459-2337

Lavelle's Taphouse is a new addition to the brew scene with craft beers from around the state and around the world. This laid-back location allows you to sit back and relax (or work) while you enjoy a high-quality brew. 414 Second Ave. (907) 888-2220. Lavelle's Bistro is still around as well. This fine-dining experience steps it up a notch from the basic beer offering American cuisine but with a culinary twist. Here's where you might celebrate a race well done! 575 First Ave. (907) 450-0555

Alaska Coffee Roasting Co. has been roasting its own coffee in Fairbanks since 1994. The shop also serves breakfast, pizza and baked goods. 4001 Geist Road. (907) 457-5282

Sip some organic coffee at the **College Coffeehouse** while enjoying open mic night or listening to local musicians play. 3677 College Road No. 4. (907) 374-0468

Enjoy handmade food from **Lulu's Breads & Bagels**, which is a great spot to get a quick bite to eat before exploring Fairbanks. 388 Old Chena Pump Road. (907) 374-3804

CollegeTown Pizza offers great made-from-scratch pizza and sells local craft beer in a laid-back location where you can show up still in your riding gear with duct tape on your face. The pizzas are creative and tasty, and this college favorite is a locals' go-to. 3535 College Road. (907) 457-2200.

Check out the many Thai food restaurants that are scattered throughout the city. One of the top rated places to go is **Thai House Restaurant**. 412 Fifth Ave. (907) 452-6123

MUSEUMS AND ART

Fairbanks should be the official capital of museums in Alaska. With world-renowned exhibits and displays for every type of person, it's a must to see at least one museum while in the city. So, too, with the art scene, which is vibrant here.

The **Museum of the North** has over 2,000 year old artifacts that showcase Alaska Native culture, wildlife, and natural wonders. It's on the university campus and is a must-see to add to the itinerary. 907 Yukon Drive (907) 474-7505

Who would have thought that the Last Frontier holds a car collection that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world? **Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum** features not only a great car museum, but also vintage clothing and other antique items. There are even some old sleds worth checking out. Here's the place to truly appreciate just how far the motorized world has come. It's all part of the Wedgewood Resort, 212 Wedgewood Drive (907) 450-2100

Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitor Center offers a view of all the things to do and see in Interior Alaska, as well as world-class exhibits that depict life in the region year-round. There also is Native art, music, stories and dance. Conveniently, this is where Iron Dog ends, so it's an easy visit. 101 Dunkel St., (907) 459-3700

The Fairbanks Ice Museum is unique to the area. In the winter, there are morning and evening aurora shows, as well as plenty of ice art to see. Walk through rooms filled with sculptures made out of ice. 500 Second Ave. (907) 451-8222

Fairbanks Children's Museum is a new addition to the Fairbanks scene and features an interactive science and nature exhibit for kids who like to explore. After 10 years of planning, the museum opened its doors in 2015 amid much celebration in the community. Play-based learning experiences make this a place children will want to explore for hours. 302 Cushman St., (907) 374-6873.

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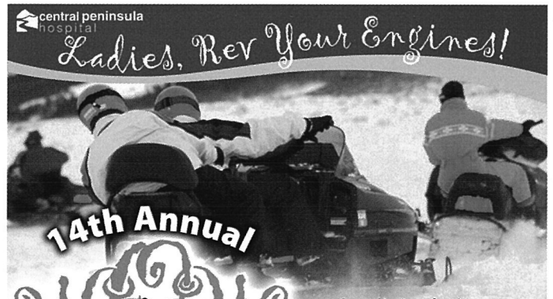
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One of the best places for northern lights viewing is Fairbanks, especially in February. Here, the aurora shine off the Steese Highway.
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pieces of Alaska Native Art. 1003 Cushman St. (907) 456-6449

2 Street Gallery, LLC has more contemporary artwork filled with local artists' works. This gallery, along with other art exhibits around the city, comes alive during First Friday, a monthly event showcasing local artwork and music. 535 Second Ave., Suite 102 (907) 455-4070

SHOPPING

Gulliver's Books is an independent new and used bookstore. It is stocked with many Alaska featured authors and books, and a great place to duck in from the cold and browse or buy. 372 Old Chena Pump Road (907) 474-9574

Co-op Plaza is a small area that houses a diner, gift store, and a small museum. Check out their shops or sit back and enjoy a cup of Joe while people watching. 535 Second Ave. Fairbanks

If you are in need for some outdoor gear, **Big Ray's** is a great place to start. This Alaska company has been dedicated to gearing up men, women and children with whatever adventure they are seeking. 507 Second Ave. (907) 452-3458.

ACTIVITIES

Ice Alaska Ice Park is a place where kids and winter come together. Long a favorite among Fairbanks children, make sure to bring your kids to the Ice Park, where outdoor sculptures are meant to be climbed on, slid down and enjoyed first hand. This is where the World Ice Art Championships are usually held, as well, although in 2018, the Ice Park is taking a break from that event. Still, look for the kids park and contact the park for hours. George Horner Ice Park, 3050 Phillips Field Road, (907) 451-8250.

Aurora viewing is one of the most popular activities in Fairbanks due to the area's exceptional viewing in the winter. The Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau lists a plethora of guides and tours at eplorefairbanks.com. For snowmachine enthusiasts, though, a great choice is **Alaska Private Guide Service**, which offers aurora-viewing snowmachine tours. Trips up to Cleary Summit are four hours or longer and you can even ride your own snowmachine. 299 Alvin St., (907) 457-8318

Ski Land is worth checking out if you or your family has time for a little off-the-snowmachine fun. Ride North America's farthest north chairlift. Skiing and snowboarding is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. weekends, weather permitting. 2315 Ski Land Road, (907) 379-2314

EVENTS

In the days leading up to and following Iron Dog's finish, there are plenty of special events happening in the area.

Sports fans can watch the **ASAA State High School Cross Country Ski Championships** at Birch Hill Nordic Ski Center in Fairbanks. Those races happen Feb. 21-24. Hockey Week is Feb. 16-25, with games happening almost daily if you want to try and catch one. (907) 452-6857.

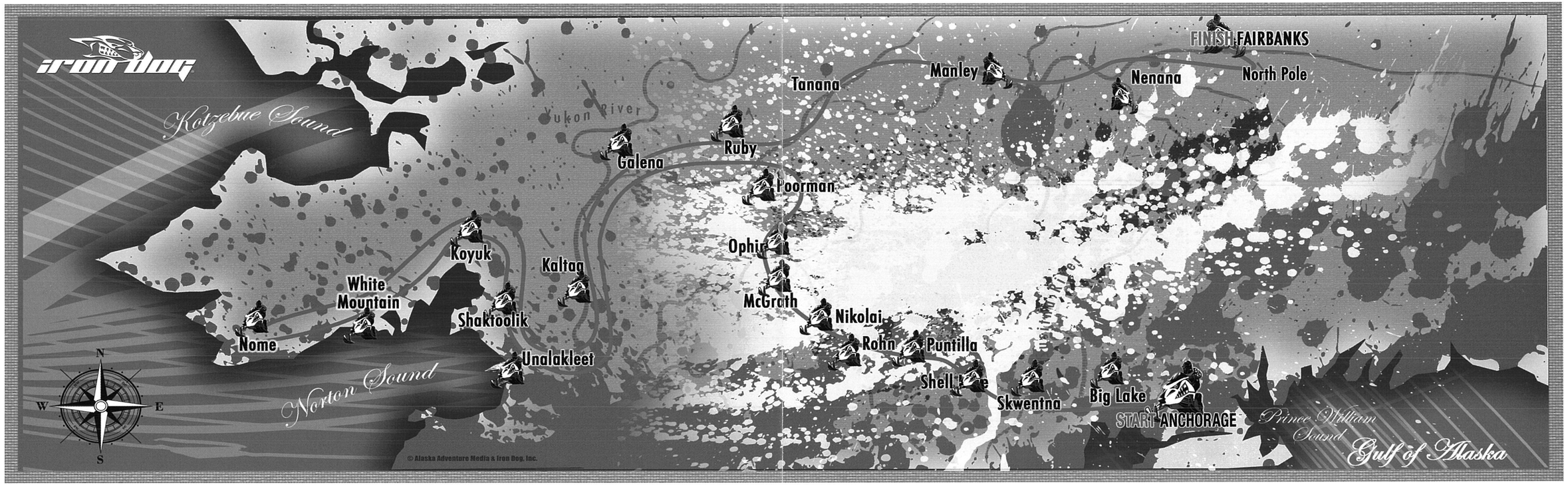
If you're driving through Healy on your way to or from Iron Dog, consider stopping at the **Denali Winterfest**, Feb. 19-25. There is plenty of family fun and winter activities for everyone at this annual event.

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UP TO 50% OF THE NET PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT
USO Alaska

2017 TOYOTA TUNDRA 4X4
KENDALL TOYOTA

2017 POLARIS PRO-S 600
HATCHER PASS POLARIS
+ ALUMA TILT 10FT TRAILER
WHITE SPRUCE TRAILER SALES

$ 1,000 GIFT CARD
CABELA'S ANCHORAGE

$ 800 LED LIGHT PACKAGE
VISION X LIGHTS

$ 500 GIFT CARD
KLIM

$450
Flying Iron athlete-autographed
Bell Motox Helmet

