

MINNESOTA **SKI & Snowboard** **EXPO**

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BIG CHANGES are afoot for the Minnesota SKI & SNOWBOARD Expo

May 12, 2010 - After being downtown for the past 2 years - in an attempt to revive a show that years ago was one of the largest in the country - we've decided, in consultation with, and with the active encouragement of, the local ski community, resorts, retailers and manufacture reps - to make a change in the structure and operation of the Minnesota Ski & Snowboard Expo. This fall the expo will take place at the Mall of America, located 6 miles from downtown Minneapolis, near the airport, in Bloomington, MN and it will be held the weekend of October 22 - 24, 2010, a bit earlier than past years.

There are a number of reasons for this change: A feeling among some that the ski/snowboard audience that we want to attract to the Expo just won't come downtown, pay to park, and pay to come into a show, and that this audience doesn't care so much about the free lift pass giveaway or the "pre-season" sale that has been used successfully in other cities to build attendance. Given these facts, the costs involved with producing an Expo at the Convention Center - both for us as producer as well for individual exhibitors - can't be justified with the results the Expo has had in its first 2 years.

Why the Mall of America?

We don't make this change lightly and without some trepidation: The Expo we produced over the last 2 years did okay (but not great) attracting an audience of dedicated skiers and snowboarders who interacted well with the exhibitors on-site, and normally our inclination would be to build on these pluses. But after careful analysis, and talking with our key local partners, we felt that the volume is just not going to be there in the downtown location to make the show viable for the retailer and us, as producers, this year.

However, there is still a very strong feeling among all segments of the local ski/snowboard community - as represented by their MnSnow organization - that the Twin Cities marketplace needs, and would support, a pre-season "kick-off" event that gets people excited and gets them motivated to get into their favorite local ski and snowboard shop to get their gear, connect with local resorts, purchase season passes, as well as research western destination resorts and book holiday vacations. Such an event, if situated in the right locale, can still create the excitement, among local snowsports enthusiasts as well as the local media, that a big league Expo, with the attractions normally associated with one - athlete appearances, aerial demonstrations, interactive features, etc. - has and yet, because of its location attract a larger audience than a downtown convention center would. The Mall of America fits this bill very nicely - in fact more than nicely: The Mall of America (MOA) is a major attraction in its own right; it is the #1 attraction in the Midwest U.S. with over 500 stores plus a 7 acre indoor amusement park, an indoor aquarium, a huge Legoland, 15 movie theaters plus numerous bars and restaurants. Additionally the Mall is in the midst of an expansion plan that will attract more upscale shoppers via the addition of more high-end shops. For demographic information on mall attendees [CLICK HERE](#).

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The Changes!

Of course, being in The Mall of America means the Expo would be, in and of itself, a totally different type of presentation and production.

- Admission to the Mall is FREE and parking is FREE, something we will promote heavily.
- It also means longer hours (The mall is open daily 10Am to 9Pm; 7PM on Sunday)
- Yes, being at a mall means a lot of the people coming by your booth may not be qualified customers; but a lot will - this is Minnesota after all, where winter is an accepted part of life - and being at the Mall provides the opportunity to expose your resort, shop, or product to a whole new audience of potential converts to skiing and snowboarding.
- We expect the involvement of a number of the local ski and snowboard shops; there will be **no exclusivity** as to participation. Retailer's, as well as any exhibitors, can sell out of their booth (either actual product or just order taking), we just need to know in advance so we can get clearance from the Mall that there is no conflict with existing tenants.
- There will be some tenants who might tie-in by running a sale in conjunction with the Expo, and promote that they're doing so (which will help increase attendance)
- BEWI, as producers, The Mall management, and many of the MnSno members will run an extensive direct marketing and public relations campaign to specifically attract to the Expo the active and dedicated skier and snowboarder living in the Twin Cities area.

Attractions & Feature Areas

You'll see from the layout of booths ([FLOORPLAN](#)) we will have two feature areas - by the Rotunda and the Sears Court; The Rotunda will have a freestyle Aerial Olympic show and the Sears Court will feature Doug Lewis's EliTEAM Fitness Challenge area. Both attractions are proven crowd pleasers and offer reasons for the public to stop and become involved with the Expo. This set-up also keeps all the activity and energy of the Expo on the East Side of the Mall. If there is enough demand for booth space we can expand to the West Side. Additionally, in the Rotunda area there is a main stage from which we'll do various interactive presentations, including hourly give-a-ways. This stage also has a giant video wall on which we'll continuously play various ski and snowboard films as well as, potentially, exhibitor and sponsor films. We'll also be using the Great Room, located within the Nickelodeon Universe amusement park area, for running the First Minnesota Ski & Snowboard Film Festival. All of these attractions will be **FREE TO THE PUBLIC**, family friendly, and designed to attract consumers to the areas around which exhibitors are located in all parts of the Mall.

Cost to Exhibit

We're happy to report, because of how we'll be structuring and operating this Expo, that we've been able to keep the cost to exhibit for a standard booth to \$1,575 - and given that booths at The Mall of America will include both a table and 2 chairs that price is actually **\$50 less** than a booth, purchased with a package plan, downtown at the Convention Center (electrical hook-ups, if needed, are also **FREE**). A number of booths located in prime, heavy traffic, feature areas will be available for a premium "up-grade" price of \$400. In figuring your costs to participate keep in mind that, like for the public, **parking will be free** (we know that was a big cost for many exhibitors last year who had a number of staff working the Expo). For out of towners we will have a room block at one of the hotels located within walking distance of the Mall with rooms priced under \$100.

We hope after reading this you are as excited about this idea as we are. Yes, it is a different approach for a SKI & SNOWBOARD Expo but The Mall of America is different than any other Mall in the U.S. (the world?) which is why this undertaking will be markedly different than other Mall promotional efforts that have been attempted over the years. Check it out, talk to friends and associates in the Twin Cities, [CONTACT US](#) with questions! [CLICK HERE](#) for a booth layout or [CLICK HERE](#) to register. **Booths will be allocated, as always, on a first come, first serve contract basis.** If you have any questions, don't hesitate to [CONTACT US](#).