



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Is Tops WITH State's Snowmobilers

PATTY RITCHIE August 9, 2011

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Named Legislator Of The Year

State Senator Patty Ritchie, an avid snowmobiler and outdoors person who has championed the sport both in her previous role as County Clerk and now as State Senator, was named "Legislator of the Year" by the state's leading sled riders' group.

The New York State Snowmobile Association presented its coveted "Bill Sears Appreciation Award" to Senator Ritchie at the group's annual meeting Saturday in Cicero, Onondaga County.

Sen. Ritchie, who has been riding for over 40 years, owns several sleds and regularly rides trails throughout St. Lawrence County, is the first freshman lawmaker to receive the honor, named for the former State Senator from Central New York who was an early advocate for snowmobiling, and who helped create a statewide trail system that today spans more than 11,000 miles and is a boon to the wintertime economies of many Upstate communities.

"Snowmobiling is such a large part of our economy and way of life in Upstate New York, and I have been very excited to share the sport with my own family, friends and neighbors for a number of years," Senator Ritchie said. "And New York is blessed with a fabulous system of public and private trails, and some of the best snow, that have helped the sport to grow."

"I am honored to be recognized by my fellow snowmobilers, who have worked tirelessly to build this sport, and I am committed to working with them to grow it even more, so that more families and more communities can enjoy the benefits of this fun winter pastime," Senator Ritchie said.

"The New York State Snowmobile Association is proud to honor one of our own who already has a long record of defending our sport and standing up on our behalf in Albany," said Executive Director Dominic Jacangelo. "Senator Ritchie understands the critical role snowmobiling plays as an economic catalyst supporting thousands of jobs across upstate New York."

Sen. Ritchie has been an outspoken booster of snowmobilers. As St. Lawrence County Clerk, she was among the first to denounce Albany's plan to "sweep" the state Snowmobile Fund, which is paid for with sled registration fees, and used for trail maintenance and expansion, insurance and other expenses directly related to the sport. She organized an online petition that collected thousands of signatures to stop the sweep.

She also worked closely with local snowmobile clubs in St. Lawrence County—the county leads the state in the number of local clubs—and offered extended office hours to make it more convenient for weekend and out-of-state riders to properly register their sleds. And she has been working with local clubs throughout Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, and the statewide group, to ease the registration process, safeguard the trail fund, and promote the sport. New York is home to over 240 snowmobile clubs, and snowmobiling is estimated to contribute over \$750 million to the state's economy. Nationwide, it's estimated that the sport helps to support 90,000 jobs, according to a study conducted by SUNY Potsdam.