

A Short History

In 1981 twenty-three golfers from three golf courses, the Ponderosa at Glyndon, Village Green in Moorhead and Willow Creek at Barnesville formed what was called the Red River Valley Senior Men's Golf Tour. Members were required to be 55 years old. Phil Sanders, the manager and superintendent of the Ponderosa, was instrumental in organizing the tour and served as president (1981-1982) and as secretary-treasurer (1981-1983).

The first year the Senior Tour played once a week, about a dozen events, at the Ponderosa, Village Green and Willow Creek. By 1987 the Association had grown to 200 members, its limit at the time, with 17 prospects on a wait list, playing 24 events at 12 golf courses.

Chet Vosburg became the secretary-treasurer in 1984. Officers were elected and a board of directors chosen. For the first few years most of the work was done by the secretary-treasurer. By 1986 Course Representatives were managing each event and had become the board of directors. Pre-registration, the use of sign-up books had been initiated. Course Reps and sign-up books are still important factors in keeping the Tour running smoothly. Bob Dahm was hired to calculate handicaps. The Tour purchased its own handicap system a few years ago. It is the same system used by the USGA and most state associations today.

In 1987 the Senior tour became a traveling group by adding the Memorial Park Golf Course at Grand Rapids, ND to its schedule. A bus was rented from the VFW to provide transportation for the 200 mile round trip. This was also the year of the first overnight bus trip. A group of about 50 golfers traveled by charter bus to the Twin Cities where they played two rounds of golf and went to a Twins game. In addition to the Twin Cities trips have been trips to Winnipeg, Bemidji and Walker, Mackinac Island, the Hostfest in Minot and "Ladies Only" trips to the Twin Cities. In recent years the annual bus trip has been a two day trip to Madden's Resort on Gull Lake northwest of Brainerd, MN in late August.

Originally the annual membership fee was \$3.00. Green fees were \$4.00 with \$2.00 added for prizes. Golf balls purchased at the course played that day were often used as prizes. Fees have increased through the years to keep up with the times and to provide for added services. Today the annual membership fee is \$25.00. Green fees are \$11.00 for 9-hole courses and \$10.00 for 18-hole courses. Prize money has remained at \$2.00.

In 1990 the minimum age was raised to 60. In 1991 the membership limit was increased to 375 with 11 on the wait list. Today the active membership is limited to 400 plus an additional 40 or 60 associate members. The wait list runs between 100 and 150. There is a two to three-year wait to become active.

Chet Vosburg retired as secretary-treasurer in 1992. He was succeeded by Gordy Indvik (1993-1997) and Larry Smith (1998-2003). The sign-up books and most other work were done on paper.

Dick Anderson was hired as secretary-treasurer in 2004. He brought the Senior Tour into the 21st century by computerizing the Association's business. He established a web site that included membership and wait lists, the schedule, new member applications, event results, computer sign-up sheets and other general information. This resulted in increased efficiency and untold man-hours saved. The Tour's web site was upgraded prior to the 2011 season and again prior to the 2014 season. The latest changes include an option for golfers to play from a forward tee if their age and HCP is 90 or higher and the forward tee players are in their own flights separate from the regular tee players, better communication with our members, computer set-up of event pairings and printing our scorecards and much more. When Dick stepped down in 2008 the Tour was basically a one-man operation. It was decided that it would be more practical to divide the duties of secretary-treasurer among several people. Today there are three people doing the work that was done by a single person in the past. The Tour also has people trained as backups for every job.

Each year members play between 4500 and 5000 rounds of golf at about 50 events on about 25 golf courses within a 100 mile radius of Fargo-Moorhead. About \$7,500 is paid out in prize money. This includes flight prizes, flag games and holes-in-one.

Today's members owe a huge debt of gratitude to those first twenty-three members, the founders and pioneers of the Senior Tour and those who have served so faithfully. Phil Sanders who organized the Association. Chet Vosberg who served so long as secretary-treasurer and set up the mechanics of the Tour. Chet also served two terms as president. Gordy Indvik who served as secretary-treasurer and still willingly helps out whenever asked. Larry Smith who ably served as secretary-treasurer for many years. Dick Anderson who spent more hours than anyone can imagine bringing the Association into the computer age and was the force behind the recent changes in the web site.

To Ken Krause and his many assistants, for passing out prize money and processing score cards for more than twenty years. To those who served as officers, course reps, schedulers, the volunteers who collect fees at events and to many others.

Although the Senior Tour is constantly changing and moving forward it is testimony to the foresight, imagination and planning of those who started the Tour that the same basic system they developed thirty years ago is still used today.

As of January 1, 2018, the old organization was dismantled and a new organization was formed. Its name is "Red River Valley Senior Men's Golf Association" and is now organized under IRS code section 501-C7 under the Internal Revenue Code Non-Profit section. It now is operating on calendar year.