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Clement Wraps Rookie I-500, Approaches \$2,000 in Donations

Thief River Falls, MN (January 18, 2009)- In just his fifth cross country race ever, #171 Tom Clement of East Grand Forks, MN has completed his very first USCC Red Lake I-500 with a sixth place finish in the competitive Sport 85 class. Clement piloted his 2009 Yamaha Phazer RTX through multiple terrain and weather changes and when the checkered flag dropped after three days of grueling competition, he was one of seven riders out of fourteen starters to survive. Clement completed the three-day race with a time of 8 hours, 48 minutes, and 22 seconds.

The finish was significant, because Clement, 38 years old, is racing this season to raise money and awareness for the breast cancer charity Pink Ribbon Riders (www.pinkribbonriders.com). Overwhelming support for Clement's effort was displayed at Sunday afternoon's awards presentation at the Seven Clans Casino, Hotel & Water Park, Thief River Falls. A pink Nitro breast cancer jacket donated by FXR Racing fetched \$460 in a live auction, with the winning bidder none other than this year's I-500 Semi-Pro champ #4 Sam Vandeputte. USCC Race Director Pat Mach arranged to have a USCC sweatshirt autographed by all the pro riders, which was then auctioned off for \$450 and the proceeds were given to Clement.

After the Red Lake I-500 wrapped up, Clement estimates he has just about reached his goal of \$2,000, which he set at the beginning of the season. "I was totally overwhelmed at the support the USCC racers and staff showed", Clement said. "With the condition of the economy, I was beginning to seriously question whether I would reach my goal, now I think I can surpass it!"

The Red Lake I-500 course lived up to its brutal reputation. Friday delivered a combination of ditches, high-speed river running, and remote back roads. "Friday went pretty well and I moved from a twelfth place starting spot up to sixth, so I was happy with how I rode" Clement explained. Saturday was a different story, with rough ditches, plenty of obstacles, and some drifted rivers. "I just had the wrong setup for the loose snow and big holes on Saturday and I rode very tentative, I went from sixth position back to eighth" Clement said. The post-race, Saturday afternoon work session allowed Clement to reevaluate things in time for the Sunday loop over the same course as Saturday's. "I change some things on the sled and I think I slept better on Saturday night and ate better Sunday morning" Clement said. "I was in the zone on Sunday. The sled worked awesome, I was seeing the course very well, and I felt like I could go three more days!"

Clement is an instructor in the Departments of Accountancy and Entrepreneurship at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. He was inspired to raise awareness for breast cancer after his wife, Jeanie, was diagnosed with stage IIa, invasive breast cancer in September 2007. "I was attending the Duluth National Snocross last year and I watched the founder of Pink Ribbon Riders, Jody McKay present a gift card to a cancer survivor and I thought it was very special" Clement said. "I tracked down Jody and said I'd like to help somehow. I had always wanted to race cross country and I felt this was a great way to help her out while chasing my own dream."