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News & Notes is a monthly publication compiled and edited by the AMA's Government Relations Department. Designed to inform motorcyclists of 'rights'-related issues and events around the world, we welcome your news & views. Suggestions and contributions can be sent to Sheila Andrews, Legislative Assistant, American Motorcyclist Association, by e-mail at sandrews@ama-cycle.org.

Motorcyclists' voices were heard on the international motorcycle safety scene recently. Among the recommendations accepted by the International Transport Forum of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were to create better motorcycle safety training, teach car drivers to watch for motorcycles, and promote responsible riding. The meeting was held June 10-11 in Lillehammer, Norway.

The International Transport Forum, comprised of high-level officials in the transportation, logistics and mobility arenas in their countries, held the workshop to focus on motorcycle safety. Ed Moreland, AMA vice president for government relations, Kirk Willard, president of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, John Chatterton-Ross, Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme, director of European Union public affairs, and Hans Petter Strifeldt, president of the European Federation of Motorcyclists' Associations, were among those representing the interests of riders.

Others taking part from the United States included representatives of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)--a powerful Washington, D.C.-based group of insurance companies that recently suggested banning or capping the speeds of "sport" and "supersport" motorcycles.

"High-level transportation officials from around the world attended this conference to discuss motorcycling and motorcycle safety, so it was critical that motorcyclists made their voices heard," Moreland said. "Based on many of the recommendations, I feel we succeeded."

One recommendation is to create a tiered approach to motorcycle safety training that builds on existing standards, focuses on risk awareness and risk avoidance and understands the limits of riders and their motorcycles. Another calls for the general training of all drivers to watch for motorcycles and to share the road. A third suggests that the motorcycle industry promote and market responsible motorcycling. Riders are asked to be responsible as well.

The workshop attendees encouraged training for road planners, as well as highway and traffic engineers, so that motorcyclists are considered in their designs. Other recommendations include better braking systems for motorcycles, formal safety meetings between motorcyclists, government policy makers and other interested parties, and more safety messages geared for motorcyclists.

"Quite often these types of meetings occur in a vacuum, devoid of the opinions and perspective of the people most impacted by the topics discussed," said Moreland. "This meeting was particularly significant because the real-world perspective of riders was given equal weight and our input was recognized on a global stage."

The United States Forest Service, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture, announced the next meeting of the Roadless Area Conservation National Advisory Committee (RACNAC) for July 30-31, 2008, in Washington, DC.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed rule for the management of Roadless areas on National Forest System lands in the state of Colorado and to discuss other related Roadless area matters.

The meeting is open to the public and anyone wishing to obtain more information can contact Jessica Call, RACNAC Coordinator, at jessicacall@fs.fed.us or (202) 205-1056.

The AMA Government Relations Department has issued sound testing kits to the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan, Stoney Lonesome Motorcycle Club, and others.

Under the department's sound-testing program, now in its fourth year, recipients receive a kit that includes a sound meter, tachometer, instructional DVD and manual, spark arrester probe, personal protective equipment and a certificate for a free annual recalibration of the meter from the meter supplier.

The Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition sought the kit to educate off-highway vehicle users about the sound levels of their machines before they faced possible citations for excessive sound levels.

Other organizations that received kits were the Boise Ridge Riders and Dublin Gap MX Park. Another five kits will be awarded by the end of the year.

For more information on the sound meter grand program, contact Royce Wood at (614) 856-1900, ext. 1225, or by e-mail at rwood@ama-cycle.org.

California - Assembly member Joel Anderson (R, 77th District) is starting a petition drive to authorize a specialized OHV license plate. California will produce the plate only after it receives an initial order of 7,500. Visit www.OHVPlates.org for more information.

California - Jim Woods, the current president of AMA D37 Dual Sport, was recently elected president of the California Off Road Vehicle Association (CORVA). Mr. Woods brings a long commitment to OHV and motorcycle issues statewide. Go to www.corva.org for more information on this important election.

California - On July 9, 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced new appointments to the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission. The Commission controls millions of dollars in fuel tax revenue in the State of California and is a division of California State Parks.

The new appointees are: Bradley Franklin, of Chino Hills, CA; Kane Silverman, of Soquel, CA; and Paul Slavik, of Huntington Beach, CA.

For background information on the new commissioners, the press release on all of Governor Schwarzenegger's appointments can be found at <http://gov.ca.gov/press-release/10131/>.

Georgia - Senate Bill 437, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R- Chickamauga), provides for the titling, registration and licensing of assembled motor vehicles and motorcycles. Signed into law by Governor Sonny Perdue, the new law took effect May 14, 2008.

Illinois - Senate Bill 2596, sponsored by Sen. William Delgado (D-Chicago), would provide for increased penalties for causing bodily harm or great bodily harm to a 'vulnerable user of the public way.' The list of users includes motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and other roadway users not in or on a motor vehicle.

Minnesota - On July 3, 2008, the Crookston Daily Times reported on the need for motorcyclists to ride safe and sober this riding season.

According to the article, more than 30 percent of motorcycle fatalities in the state in the last three years involved operators that were riding impaired. Additionally, 35 percent of motorcycle deaths on weekends (the period traditionally with the highest fatality rates) were "alcohol-related."

Of special attention is the notification that East Grand Forks and Crookston Police Departments will be conducting increases DWI patrols in the month of July.

Ohio - As reported by the Columbus, OH, branch of the Associated Press, the state of Ohio recently approved

the use of three-wheeled electric vehicles on Ohio roads by making changes to the definition of a motorcycle.

The vehicles typically resemble small cars and are rechargeable. Two examples, the Zap Xebra and the Myers Motors NmG, will be registered as motorcycles under provisions in House Bill 562.

The new vehicle approval was part of a large funding bill signed into law by Governor Ted Strickland on June 24, 2008. Although he vetoed some portions of the legislation, the motorcycle definition provision was unaffected.

Oklahoma - A Senate Concurrent Resolution, authored by Sen. Kenneth Corn (D-Howe), expresses concern about the Ouachita National Forest's new travel management plan, which will limit OHV use to 40 miles of designated trails. The resolution calls on the US Congress to intervene and postpone the implementation of the new policy. The text of the resolution is available on the "Rapid Response" page of www.AMADirectLink.com.

South Carolina - Joining six other states in permitting motorcyclists to proceed through stuck red lights under certain conditions, Senate bill 111, sponsored by Sen. Phil Leventis (D-Sumter), was signed into law by Governor Sanford. The legislation also provides for certain specialty license plates for motorcycles. SB-605 was signed into law June 16, 2008 by Governor Mark Sanford and takes effect immediately.

The Women's Motocross Association recently announced that Jessica Patterson has been nominated for a 2008 ESPY award. The official press release is below:

Bend, Ore. (July 3, 2008) - The Women's Motocross Association's multi-time National Champion Jessica Patterson, of Tallahassee, Florida has been nominated for a 2008 ESPY award. With the support of the motocross community Patterson hopes to bring home this prestigious award.

The ESPYS, Excellence in Sports Performance, is the premier sports awards event, put on by ESPN, which honors individual and team athletic achievements and other sports-related performances each year.

Sports icons nominated for a 2008 ESPY include: Tiger Woods, Tom Brady, Kobe Bryant, and Danica Patrick - household names and amazing company for WMA motocrosser, Patterson.

Patterson has been nominated for Best Female Action Sport Athlete for her performance in the 2007 AMA/WMA Women's Motocross national Championship presented by Kawasaki. The 25-year-old racer dominated the Championship winning an impressive 10 out of 12 motos and the title. She even suffered a painful hand injury in the first moto of the Thunder Valley National, but road through the pain in the second moto to salvage points.

Other nominations in the category include: Snowboarder Gretchen Bleiler, Surfer Stephanie Gilmore, and Snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis.

"I'm incredibly honored and excited to be nominated for an ESPY Award," said Jessica Patterson. "I'm really looking forward to being at the awards show at the Nokia Theatre L.A. Live in Los Angeles on July 1th. And hoping to represent women's motocross by winning it."

The 2008 ESPYS will be hosted by Justin Timberlake and air Sunday, July 20th at 9 PM ET on ESPN. Celebrities such as Lance Armstrong, David Beckham, Ashanti, Zac Efron and Samuel L. Jackson will be presenters at the event. The winner of each ESPY category is decided by fan votes, to do so visit www.espys.tv. Voting continues through July 12th and motocross fans are encouraged to vote for Jessica Patterson and support the sport we all love.

Tread Lightly! is urgently seeking volunteers for an important project in the Sierra National Forest on the Bald Mountain Off-Highway Vehicle trail in California.

According to information from Tread Lightly! on the event, volunteers will be needed to help clear a short rail reroute and also to help fence off some areas. They will also be digging holes, laying pipe, pouring cement and filling in holes.

The volunteer day will take place on Friday, August 1, 2008, beginning at 8 a.m. and lunch with a light breakfast will be provided. For details on where to meet, what to bring, and who the project sponsors are, please visit <http://www.treadlightly.org/page.php/programs-r4r-hummerrecreationrescue>.

All volunteers will be required to complete a US Forest Service volunteer agreement.

If you cannot make the volunteer day, there will be a one-hour training and awareness course the night before for anyone that wishes to attend. That will take place from 7pm - 8pm at the High Sierra Ranger District Office Conference Room.

Tread Lightly! is an organization devoted to the development, maintenance, and active management of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails across the country. If you are in California on August 1st, you are encouraged to volunteer for this great event. For more information on this event, other events, or the work of Tread Lightly!, please visit their website at www.treadlightly.org.

AMA Government Relations *News & Notes* is a monthly service compiled and edited by the AMA Government Relations Staff to keep motorcyclists informed of happenings around the world. We welcome your news & views. Please submit all material to Sheila Andrews, Legislative Assistant, 101 Constitution Ave., NW Suite 800W, Washington, DC 20001; fax (202) 742-4304 or e-mail to sandrews@ama-cycle.org.