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NEWS & NOTES

American Motorcyclist Association

January 2007

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) is hosting a Washington, DC Ride Into Political Action seminar for motorcyclists who want to learn how to influence governmental decisions, whether in Congress or in their local communities.

The seminar, to be held February 24-27, 2007 at the Phoenix Park Hotel in Washington, DC, allows participants to meet and learn from the AMA's Washington staff as well as other political experts. Besides learning about state and federal issues facing motorcyclists today, participants will get tips on building relationships with government agency officials and on lobbying elected officials. The instructors will also prepare participants to meet face-to-face with members of their own congressional delegations.

A registration form is available in the American Motorcyclist magazine or by contacting Sharon Smolinka at the address below. Mail the completed form to AMA, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147. For more information, contact Sharon Smolinka at (614) 856-1900, ext. 1252 or by e-mail at ssmolinka@ama-cycle.org.

The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) continues to schedule workshops designed to ensure that the new US Forest Service's OHV Route Designation Rule is a success for motorized recreation. The curriculum was developed in collaboration with the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), BlueRibbon Coalition and the AMA. The new national travel management policy requires US National Forests to restrict off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel to a system of designated roads and trails.

Through a public process at the forest and district level the US Forest Service will decide which trails will be designated for use and plotted on a motorized vehicle use map. Existing trails which are not designated through this process will be closed. In the route designation process it is incumbent on the OHV community to make sure that the Forest Service has a comprehensive inventory of existing trails and that the agency gives due consideration to all roads and trails. Enthusiasts must also help the Forest Service identify the most valued routes. Workshops have already taken place in Arizona, South Dakota and Michigan. A schedule of forthcoming workshops can be viewed at the NOHVCC website www.nohvcc.org.

The Federation of Asia Motorcycle Industries (FAMI) views the high use of fake motorcycle spare parts and components in the region as a threat to the sector and riders.

FAMI president Datuk Syed Mohamad Aidid Syed Murtaza said according to a recent report, 94 percent of these fake items were manufactured in Asian countries also attributes these parts as cause for a majority of the accidents due to part failure across Asia. Between 5 and 7 % of the parts trade were fake items and the business was worth US\$449.3 billion.

Eight states approved measures that would curtail local governments' use of eminent domain powers to confiscate land for economic development.

Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Nevada and Oregon voters approved measures in those states that redefine the use of eminent domain powers, in most cases prohibiting the use of those powers to take land from one private party to give it to another private party. Similar measures failed in California and Idaho.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) remains concerned about this issue because riding areas and tracks may fall victim to such schemes. If your local area is being threatened by eminent domain, or any of the dozens of other means of being closed, contact the AMA government relations department at 614-856-1900 extension 1288.

European representatives of the FIM's Committee on Mobility and Transport, including Portugal, Great Britain and the Netherlands have begun meeting with OEM manufacturers, rider's groups, politicians, and aftermarket manufacturers to proactively address the issue of excessive motorcycle sound. Their recent action is in response to growing concerns that the United Nations is taking punitive measures against motorcycles in the regulatory arena as a means by which to lower the negative impact of loud motorcycle exhausts. The coordinators of the effort are using AMA's Sound Advice document as their "road map." The AMA has agreed to share whatever experience and expertise we have on the subject and look forward to a unified effort to address this global issue since we are already represented on this commission.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) has committed \$100,000 to help fund a comprehensive nationwide study of motorcycle crashes, and encourages individual motorcyclists, organizations, and businesses in the motorcycle industry to contribute to the effort through the AMA's new "Fuel the Fund" campaign.

In 2005, Congress approved federal funding to study the causes of motorcycle crashes, the first such research in the U.S. in more than 25 years. The \$2.8 million pledged by the government calls for another \$2.8 million in matching funds from the American motorcycling community before the entire federal grant will be released.

The AMA, in addition to spearheading the effort to secure federal funding and committing the first matching funds, has launched "Fuel the Fund," a national campaign allowing individuals and businesses to contribute matching funds necessary to take full advantage of the federal funding.

Contributions to "Fuel the Fund" can be made online at www.fuelthefund.com; or by calling Cathy Brown at 800-AMA-JOIN ext. 1224; or by mail addressed to Fuel the Fund, c/o AMA, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147.

Legislation authorizing the funding of the crash study specifies that research grants be provided to the Oklahoma Transportation Center, located at Oklahoma State University. The last comprehensive study of motorcycle crashes, commonly called the "Hurt Report" after University of Southern California researcher Dr. Harry Hurt, was published in the 1970s.

Guangzhou, China, formerly known as Canton, officials have decided that the swarms of motorcycles and scooters had become a plague on the streets of this huge city so as of Jan. 1, the city's 260,000 or so registered motorcycles will be forced off the roads. Tens of thousands of people who use the vehicles to make deliveries or otherwise earn livings must turn in their motorcycles or take them out of the city.

Guangzhou is the center of an industrial zone that manufactures everything from cars to golf clubs. The city is China's fifth-largest auto market, with 900,000 vehicles jamming its roads. Adding to traffic problems, motorcycle and scooter prices have plunged, causing throngs of residents to eagerly turn to two-wheeled motorized transport. Apart from the 260,000 registered motorcycles, another 100,000 unregistered ones ply the streets, as well as 100,000 or so electric bicycles. Motorcycles were involved in about half the city's accidents last year, when crashes left 311 people dead, according to the public security office, and motorcycle riding snatch-and-run gangs of thieves menace pedestrians.

Guangzhou isn't the first city in China to ban or sharply limit motorcycles, scooters and electric bikes. Shanghai and Beijing also do so to some degree. But Guangzhou is taking action after hundreds of thousands of consumers have already bought the vehicles. Guangzhou authorities are offering some compensation, depending on the age of the motorcycle or scooter, often amounting to \$100 to \$200. Owners also receive about \$8 for the scrap value of their vehicles. Officials say they'll give some job training to those who needed their motorcycles to earn livings, but they haven't provided details.

Tread Lightly! has developed a new television public service announcement (PSA) touting a positive message geared toward ATV riders. The PSA is now available to your local station by having the station contact Monica Clay at monica@treadlightly.org. You can view the PSA at www.treadlightly.org/edu.mv

Illinois State Police announced the enforcement figures for the state's new Motorcycle Enforcement Bureau. Since the start of the program on May 16, troopers on motorcycles have issued 17,167 citations. Of those, 13,851 citations were for speeding and 1,362 were for seat belt violations. The primary focus of MEB is to reduce traffic fatalities by targeting speeding, safety belt violations, improper lane usage, following too closely, and driving under the influence. MEB is funded through a grant by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Louisiana Motorcycle Awareness Program (MAP) is now successfully integrating a share the road message with high school drivers education classes thanks to the grassroots effort of ABATE of Louisiana and AMA members, as well as a \$5,000 grant to help cover the costs from the state's highway safety agency.

2004's Legislative Act 216, which was signed into law by the Louisiana Governor, requires motorcycle awareness training in drivers' education programs and is an important component of the AMA Justice for All campaign in which ABATE and the AMA have been closely working together.

ABATE of Louisiana's MAP is offering to assist any Pelican State educator in fulfilling this requirement at no cost to the local school system.

Oregon Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety, which advises the governor and the state Department of Transportation's Safety Division on motorcycle safety issues, is looking for two volunteers from the motorcycling community to serve on this important committee.

The committee focuses on rider education, prevention of drinking and riding, road hazards unique to motorcycles, motorist awareness of motorcycles, sharing the road and other issues. Committee members are appointed by the governor and serve four-year terms.

Applicants with motorcycle endorsements on their driver licenses who reside outside of the Portland area are preferred. For application materials or information, call 503-378-6246 or see www.governor.oregon.gov.

Traffic Safety Facts 2005 Annual Report: Early Edition is a newly released 224 page report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis, which is a compilation of motor vehicle crash data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System. The document can be downloaded at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/TSFAnn/TSF2005EE.pdf.

Arizona off-highway vehicle(OHV) groups are encouraged to participate now in planning the Motorized and Non-motorized State Trails Conference October 3, 4, and 5, 2007 at Prescott Pines in Prescott. The AZ State Parks Department is asking for your help since they already have formed committees looking at marketing, curriculum (program/mobile workshops), entertainment, and registration. If you would like to join a Committee please contact Amy Racki, Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator, 1300 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007
Phone: 602.542.7162 Fax: 602.542.4180 or www.azstateparks.com.

US Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters recently announced the 2006 Seatbelt and Motorcycle Helmet Use Statistics.

Citing new data from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), Secretary Peters said that new data also shows that 51 percent of motorcyclists in the US now wear helmets, up from 48 percent in 2005. She noted that motorcycle helmet use rose in the West between 2005 and 2006 (from 50 to 72 percent); and in the Northeast (from 42 to 47 percent). However, the use rate fell in the Midwest (from 53 to 50 percent) and in the South (from 49 to 45 percent).

Nicole R. Nason, Administrator of the DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) added that NHTSA recently began to offer federal grants to states for programs to reduce the number of motorcyclist crashes. This year, for example, the agency will provide \$6 million in grant funds to states for motorcycle safety training and motorist awareness programs. She said the agency will also create a public service announcement to promote helmet use and a consumer video for its website on how to choose a safe and well-fitting motorcycle helmet. For further information go to "Motorcycle Helmet Use in 2006: Overall Results" on the DOT website.

Government Relations Staff to keep motorcyclists informed of happenings around the world. We welcome your news & views. Please submit all material to Terry Lee Cook, Grassroots Manager, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147; fax 614-856-1920 or e-mail to tcook@ama-cycle.org.

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