

MRF E-MAIL NEWS Motorcycle Riders Foundation
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For Immediate Release

Contact: kirk "Hardtail" Willard, MRF President
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June 4, 2008

Motorcycle Riders Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors Update

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) Board of Directors met in Kansas City last month. Two new members to the Board of Directors were welcomed.

The first was Joel Arnoldi from Idaho. Joel was elected by the general membership to serve as Member Representative to the Board. He will serve along with Cindy Hodges. He was recognized at the 2007 Meeting of the Minds as the MRF State Representative of the Year.

Second was Thomas "Doc Ski" Wasileski, PhD, from North Carolina. "Doc Ski" was elected by the Sustaining State Motorcyclists' Rights Organizations (SSMROs) as the SSMRO Representative to the Board. "Doc Ski" will be serving along with Dave Dwyer. "Doc Ski" also serves as CBA/ABATE of NC's Legislative Director and has been a frequent presenter at motorcycle conferences around the country. "Doc Ski" was also appointed as Chairman of the MRF's Statistics and Research Committee.

The Board received and accepted a resignation from Miles France, who held the position of Director of the State Representatives Program. Miles cited ongoing health issues as the reason behind his tough decision. Miles was known as the MRF's original "Robo Rep" for his unique ability in getting new members to join the MRF. He was twice awarded the MRF President's Cup award for merit, as well as serving in the capacity of Director of Membership and MRF State Representative to the Board.

Todd Riba, who was serving as an MRF State Representative to the Board, was unanimously elected by the Board to replace Miles as the Director of the State Representatives program. His replacement will be elected by the MRF State Representatives at this year's Meeting of the Minds in Denver.

Todd also serves Minnesota as an MRF State Rep.

Lastly, Eric Hampton, from Arizona, who serves as the Director of Communications and the MRF Reports Editor resigned his appointed position as the MRF Webmaster. A replacement is currently being sought. In the meantime, the MRF Communications Committee will be overseeing the website.

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Contact: Jeff Hennie, Vice President of Government Relations
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May 2, 2008

WASHINGTON UPDATE - The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) is pleased to report that the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has renewed the charter for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Motorcycle Advisory Council (MAC) for an additional two years. The MAC advises the Secretary of Transportation on all issues concerning motorcyclists and infrastructure issues such as roads, bridges, and barriers. No rulemaking was required to extend the charter; instead it was the positive results of the MAC that warranted the go-ahead from the country's chief transportation boss. The MRF commends Secretary Peters for recognizing the need for the MAC to continue. Under normal circumstances Secretary do not reauthorize councils that they do not have to. Peters by law did not have to renew the charter which uses some of her very limited discretionary dollars to fully fund this council. That's why

we thank her for her attention to this very important issue.

The MAC met a total of four times over the initial two-year charter. The meetings are open to the public and generally span a couple of days. The MAC has no authority to issue any binding recommendations, but it does have the ear of the agency officials, and several MAC's recommendations have been enacted upon. The MAC has put forth some meaningful and useful recommendations to the Secretary, and recent recommendations include implementing motorcycles into the department-wide goal to reduce congestion and fuel consumption. Another recommendation was to continue the practice of letting motorcycles use high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. On a related note, New York City police have continued to violate federal law by not letting motorcycles use HOV lanes, making this recommendation very important for motorcyclists in the Big Apple. Visit <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/mac/index.htm> for more information on the MAC and its members.

ROB ANDREWS FOR CHANGE - Last week US Rep Rob Andrews (D-NJ) challenged long-time motorcycle adversary Senator Frank Lautenberg for his seat. Bucking party politics and in the face of a huge uphill battle, Andrews waged a positive, aggressive campaign. Alas, he came up rather short on Election Day, outspent and out-recognized in the crucial north Jersey demographic. The New York Times endorsed Lautenberg a few days before the primary, and that seemed to put the votes in Lautenberg's column. The MRF stands by its long-term support of Andrews and wishes him the best in his future endeavors. There is somewhat of a silver lining though. Andrews had to give up his House seat to run for the Senate, and poised as the likely successor to Andrews is his wife. Camille Andrews witnessed the outpouring of support from the motorcycling community and has vowed to continue her husband's legacy of championing motorcycles in the Nation's Capitol.

TIERED LICENSING IN UTAH - The state administrator of motorcycle safety in Utah has issued a mandate reorganizing the way motorcycle licenses are handed out. The way it works is that if you test on a 90cc you can ride 90cc or less; if you test on 249cc you can ride a 249cc or less; if you test on 649cc you can ride 649cc or less; and finally if you test on a 650cc you can ride whatever you want. One need not progress up the tiers to attain the unlimited license, but this process does raise a few questions. Will there be an unintended negative effect of discouraging folks from getting M class endorsements at all? Will it force people to take a bike larger than what they are comfortable on to the test in order to ride that new Sportster? Will it turn off people to training curriculum that uses 125cc or 250cc motorcycles? The implementation date is July 8, and the MRF is working with motorcyclists in Utah to, at the very least, have that date pushed back so we can more carefully examine what Utah is trying to do and what the implications will be. The MRF will keep you posted on this issue.

YOUNG ACTIVISTS, WHERE ARE YOU? - The MRF young activists search is on again. Applicants need to be between 18 and 30 and have a motorcycle license. Each year, a handful of superb applicants receive round-trip airfare to the MRF's Meeting of the Minds, as well as a bunch of other goodies. For nomination info visit www.mrf.org.

KILTS VS. BIBS - It's official. The tug of war is on! At a recent MRF board meeting there was some discussion regarding whether we should continue the tug of war or leave it off the Meeting of the Minds agenda, since both squads have a win under their belts (or shoulder straps). That idea was quickly dismissed, and it was decided that we would have the roped-off rumble once again. Rumors are flying of a possible ladies' bikini team, a men's Speedo team, an all-nude team, a Gold Wing team, and several others. What's not rumor is the fact that the undisputed champs will emerge in Denver, and they will be wearing kilts! Right guys? Speculation from the kilt camp reveals that the kilts have been in a rigorous off-season training regimen that is sure to produce some powerful pulling, not to mention seriously sexy calves. Whatever side you are on it's a can't miss event at this year's Meeting of the Minds in Denver. For You Tube video of the kilts victory go here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUJffeyGgdQ>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Kirk "Hardtail" Willard, President
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June 20, 2008

MOTORCYCLISTS RIGHTS ADVOCATES PLAY A KEY ROLE AT INTERNATIONAL MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FORUM

The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) International Transport Forum Workshop on Motorcycling Safety was held in Lillehammer, Norway on June 10th-11th and included over 80 participants by invitation from approximately 30 countries. Among the participants were safety policy advisors, safety experts, safety researchers, motorcycle industry representatives, governmental agency representatives, and motorcycle users. Representing riders from the United States were Kirk Willard, President of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, and Ed Moreland, Vice President of Government Relations of the American Motorcyclist Association. Other groups with representation from the United States included the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the Motorcycle Industry Council/Motorcycle Safety Foundation, Dynamic Research Inc., and the Harley Davidson Motor Company. Also noteworthy was the fact that there were ten other riders' rights and motorcycle user groups represented from various countries in attendance which set the stage for meaningful involvement from the riders' rights and user groups which is not always the case in these types of international forums.

The main expected outcomes of the workshop was to come up with a set of practical recommendations for the attention of policy advisors and to help identify how motorcycle safety strategies relate to overall road safety policies. The Motorcycle Riders Foundation is pleased to announce that many of the 20 top priorities to come out of the workshop are strategies and initiatives that we as motorcyclists have been heavily involved in, recommending, and promoting for some time.

The number one recommendation in part was a call for training focusing on risk awareness and risk avoidance. Others included recommendations for all drivers to have a component on awareness and acceptance of motorcyclists, partnering with rider groups to develop and deliver campaigns to other riders, that motorcycle safety messages should be specific to motorcyclists, to include motorcyclists when considering transport policy and develop training for roadway designers. Additionally, when discussing policy dialogue it was determined the best practice would be to formalize meetings between motorcycle stakeholders and policy makers/road authorities, and one not to be lost in the list of 20 is a simple statement that we must work together.

One can see that the Motorcycle Riders Foundation using many ideas in circulation amongst the motorcycle rights community today certainly played a role in these discussions and ultimate list of recommendations, in fact many of the recommendations somewhat mirror the good work that the State Motorcyclists Rights Organizations in partnership with the Motorcycle

Riders Foundation accomplished in SAFE-TEA LU. The important element in all of this is the critically important audience of non-motorcyclists that have now heard our messages as motorcyclists loud and clear.

"I believe this was an extremely valuable and precedent setting event where motorcyclists were given the opportunity to present their views in an inclusive international safety arena and have motorcycle safety and motorcycle related policy considered from a motorcyclists rights advocates point of view and be taken quite seriously", said Willard of the MRF.

A full report will be presented in the September issue of the MRF Reports and during the MRF's Annual Meeting and Conference, the Meeting of the Minds to be held in Denver, Colorado on September 25th-28th, 2008.

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June 26, 2008

Washington Update

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) reports that a new web-based survey for motorcyclists has been launched by the Federal Highway Administration's Motorcycle Advisory Council (FHWA-MAC). The members of the FHWA MAC recently created the 2008 Motorcyclist Road Conditions Survey. The purpose of the survey is to help state and federal highway administrators better understand and plan for the needs of motorcycle

riders. All riders are encouraged to take the survey before the deadline of August 1st 2008. The idea is to launch the survey during riding season when riders are most aware of current conditions and can more accurately respond to the survey.

To take the ten minute survey before August 1st visit:
www.surveymonkey.com/MACmembersHighwaySurvey

Governors Highway Safety Association

Last week the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) released a report on motorcycle safety. The report was in response to the GHSA survey of state motorcycle safety programs. The survey covered a wide range of safety contributors including but not limited to, funding programs, helmet laws, availability of rider education, anti impairment campaigns, road construction and data collection issues.

According to the report, "Motorcycles have become part of the popular culture in the United States. Commercials and movies featuring positive images of motorcycles and motorcyclists are commonplace." The report also goes on to point out that "Not surprisingly, the motorcycle sales increase is one factor that has led to increased rider injuries and fatalities." The report also points out the fact that motorcycle sales have quadrupled over the same time frame that fatalities have doubled.

Funding continues to be an issue. In discussing a survey of state programs and monies issued during the first two fiscal years (FY) of the federal 2010 funds, the GHSA report states, "In 2006, \$5,940,000 in federal 2010 Motorcyclist Safety Grants was distributed to 44 states and Puerto Rico. In FY 2007, \$6,000,000 in federal 2010 Motorcyclist Safety Grants was distributed to 47 states and Puerto Rico. The average grant was \$122,000 in 2006 and \$125,000 in 2007. However, the 2006 funds were awarded very late in the fiscal year (FY) and were rolled over to FY 2007. As a result, most State Highway Safety Offices did not begin actively working to address motorcycle safety issues until FY 2007. Many states also use federal 402 and 410 grants to supplement motorcycle safety activities." During the last two years, almost every state has received a 2010 Motorcyclist Safety Grant from the federal government. Yet, states continue to face serious budget and programmatic shortfalls in this area.

"While the report does put some emphasis on helmet laws, it also carefully points out some of the other issues that groups like GHSA have been reluctant to address in the past. Issues that the MRF has been working to advance to the forefront of motorcycle safety for decades, such as funding rider ed, clear marking of construction zones, and increased new motorcycle sales are several examples" said Jeff Hennie, Vice President of Government Relations for the MRF.

You can find the report in its entirety at:
<http://www.ghsa.org/html/publications/survey/motorcycle/summary.pdf>

This Just In.

A Pennsylvania joint House and Senate committee on legislative budget and finance issued a report on June 25th, 2008 on the fatality trends since PA's modernization of its helmet law in 2003. The report found that "Due to the substantial increase in motorcycle registration, the rate of crashes per 10,000 motorcycle registrations actually declined from 132.4 in CY (Calendar Year) 2000 to 113.2 crashes per 10,000 motorcycle registrations in CY 2007". The report also showed that helmeted riders involved in a collision dropped from 67% in 2000 to 57% in 2007.

The report also attempted to make a connection with the new helmet law and a rise in traumatic head injury but had to admit that "We found that the linkages between existing data sources that are necessary to specifically determine the relationship between helmet usage and head trauma-related injuries and fatalities are currently not in place." The study does quote some secondary studies that claim to actually be able to make a case for a rise in head injuries.

To read the full 62 page committee report visit:
<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/>

Click on "reports released" and then scroll down to the Transportation heading and you will find "Motorcycle Injuries and Fatalities Since the 2003 Repeal of the Mandatory Helmet Law".

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