

MRF E-MAIL NEWS Motorcycle Riders Foundation
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For Immediate Release

4 November 2008

Contact: Michael "Boz" Kerr, MRF Vice President
Email: boz@mrf.org

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH IS ELECTION DAY

A message to the motorcyclists of America:

The pollsters have told us who is likely to win. The pundits have had their say as to whom they feel would be best to lead our country and to serve in the congress.

Now it's our turn.

Don't let Gallup, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Fox News, or Zogby decide this election.

The only poll that counts is being taken today - take part in it - get out and vote.

Sincerely,
The legislative team of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation Dave Dwyer, Jeff Hennie, Michael Kerr, Kirk Willard

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Send in your nominations and donations for the MRF's Young Activist Scholarship fund today. For complete details, visit <http://www.mrf.org/yascholarship.php>.

Sign up today for the MRF's new roadside assistance program by visiting <http://www.mrf.org/mrfroadside.php> The program is available to MRF members and non-MRF members.

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For Immediate Release

6 November 2008

Contact: Jeff Hennie, MRF Vice President of Government Relations
Email: boz@mrf.org

Feds Consider New Helmet Standards

Recently, it was reported by the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) that the US DOT is contemplating some new requirements for motorcycle helmet labels, as well as testing methods and tolerances. The federal government rulemaking process requires that the proposed new rule be made available to the public for a period of time to allow the general public offer comment.

The MRF has submitted comments on the proposed changes to current standards and is encouraging you to do the same. Read the full MRF comments on the internet by visiting www.regulations.gov and search for Docket number NHTSA-2008-0157-0001 or by using this link.

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=NHTSA-2008-0157>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/65mtw5>

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For Immediate Release

14 November 2008

Contact: Jeff Hennie, MRF Vice President of Government Relations
Email: boz@mrf.org

2008 Election Overview

As expected, Obama garnered approximately 52% of the popular vote. A Democrat piecing together a popular-vote majority is an extraordinary accomplishment, however, it's not a mandate just as George Bush didn't receive a mandate with his narrow victory in 2004.

The pundits calling the election had predicted that the black vote and the youth vote would put Obama over the top. That didn't happen. Nationally, black turnout increased from 11% to 13%, and the 18 to 29-year-old vote increased from 17% to 18% compared to 2004. Rather it was the increased margins toward the Democrat candidate of those two voter categories that tilted Obama to victory.

One demographic that swung dramatically was the wealthy vote. In 2004, voters earning more than \$200,000 voted 63% to 35% for Bush, according to CNN. This year, they voted 52% to 46% for Obama--a far higher margin than Obama enjoyed among the middle class.

Obama did greatly exceed expectations with his large Electoral College win. Capturing historically Republican Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina is a tremendous victory for the Democratic nominee.

Democrats made big gains, however, Republicans have fought off the threat

of a 60-seat, filibuster-proof majority, for now. With the election of two sitting senators to executive office that leaves two Senate seats that will need to be filled, not to mention the unresolved senate contests sitting out there that will likely take months to decide. Should the Democrats win 60 Senate seats they would have a super majority and the ability to pass any legislation they please with no procedural opposition from the minority party.

As for Motorcyclists, it was a decent election. All of our current bill sponsors and caucus leaders were re-elected and nearly all of our supporters were re-elected. In Michigan, we saw Knollenberg (R-MI) and Tim Walberg (R-MI) lose and in upstate New York we lost Randy Kuhl (R-NY). They will be missed and we wish them well.

We don't have a lot of history on Obama but during his time in the US Senate he did vote against an amendment in 2005 that would have reinstated the national universal mandatory helmet law and he also had a favorable rapport with ABATE of IL when he served in the IL State Senate from 1997-2004.

Many of the newly elected members of the House and Senate have a good relationship with the motorcyclists of the state that sent them to the National stage. We at the Motorcycle Riders Foundation look forward to working with the new Congress and President to preserve motorcycling freedoms and the expansion of motorcycle safety and awareness.

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19 November 2008

Contact: Jeff Hennie, MRF Vice President of Government Relations
Email: boz@mrf.org

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation attends Fifth Federal Highway Administration Motorcycle Advisory Council Meeting.

Last week the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) held the fifth meeting of the Motorcycle Advisory Council. The Council convenes twice a year to discuss infrastructure issues of concern to motorcyclists. The Motorcycle Riders Foundation Vice President of Government Relations, Jeff Hennie, is one of the nine seated council members.

"This council meeting was significant because it was the first meeting since the charter was extended past its initial two year trial run" said Jeff Hennie. He added, "The likelihood of keeping this council intact well past the congressionally mandated 2 years is very good and gets better with each accomplishments of the council".

This meeting began with a review of the results of the online motorcyclist road conditions survey that was opened for comment this summer. The survey was designed to get a national snap shot of what motorcyclists think about the state of the roads they ride. Some areas that the 10,000 respondents overwhelmingly agreed needs improvement are construction zones, slippery pavement markings, stuck at red lights and harsh road edge drop-offs. The areas that received positive marks were ample signage and plenty of lighting of the road. A follow-up survey is in the works for spring 2009. The MRF will let you know when that is available.

The next agenda item was a presentation by the leading expert of intersection design at Federal Highway Association (FHWA). Intersections are notoriously the most dangerous part of any traffic pattern. The standard four way cross intersection may very well be a thing of the past, not in any hurry though. Traffic control experts are working feverishly at making intersections safer. Some designs have been shown to significantly reduce crashes. For instance, adopting traffic circles or roundabouts has been shown to effectively reduce crash occurrences. It doesn't stop there though; the experts are designing and implementing even more involved intersections that essentially eliminate a left hand turn through the intersection. It's a complicated system of lanes and stoplights that in theory will be safer. Few exist today, but Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Louisiana, Michigan, Virginia, New York and Missouri are experimenting with some of the European concepts. Bigger, more complicated intersections

may be safer but they will also need more and more slippery striping that remains a concern to motorcyclists.

The council then had a lengthy discussion on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Essentially a PPP is any venture that involves the leasing of traditionally public services to a private entity to run, build or maintain. Historically PPPs have been found in services such as waste water treatment, garbage removal and disposal, even law enforcement. Now we are seeing an influx of PPP's in the transportation world.

Municipalities are leasing off sections of toll road to private, sometimes foreign, companies. This poses a lot of questions. Take the Chicago Skyway for example, this heavily traveled elevated toll road provides a way in and out of the windy city for millions each day. The 7.8 mile highway was recently leased to a Spanish company for 99 years to the tune of 1.8 billion. The Spaniards are responsible for maintenance of the road but get to keep any and all tolls. Can the new owners invoke a helmet law for their road despite the fact that Illinois doesn't require a helmet? Can they raise tolls as high as they want? The answers to those questions vary agreement to agreement, but it's also difficult to overlook the issues involved with putting a foreign company in charge of our infrastructure. Not only does it send profits overseas - it reeks of an anti-American ethos.

The 1.8 billion that Mayor Daley got his hands on was spent on back debt the City of Chicago was carrying. It also constitutes another 1.8 billion removed from the transportation world. What happens to the next generation of Americans when they need to get out of debt and there is nothing left to lease? PPPs are here to stay but they need to be carefully regulated and observed.

The Council drifted off its charter of focusing on infrastructure for a bit when the topic of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) came up. For years the MRF has been asking for a better VMT and recently the feds started listening. They admit the motorcycle VMT numbers are highly suspect at best. They held a three day meeting in DC last year on the very issue of improving motorcycle VMT accuracy. They had a test day for vendors of traffic counting devices at a Department of Transportation (DOT) research facility this past spring. They know the numbers are extremely inaccurate yet they continue to use them to exacerbate the number of fatal motorcycle crashes. After a slightly heated exchange the Federal government refused to give a timeline for a better VMT number, they did agree that at the very least, a strong footnote indicating the frailty and gross inaccuracies of the number should be present when using the motorcycle VMT number. While that's not good enough, it's a good start.

The meeting concluded with a brief presentation on what the State of Texas is doing to reduce pavement slab spreading which leaves a gap between lanes in the pavement large enough to capture a motorcycle's front tire. The presenter informed the council on how the State of Texas can identify a potential road hazard like this and have it repaired that day or with in

the next few days. A lesson that many municipalities should note.

This meeting was the last for the Council's Designated Federal Official, Mike Halladay of FHWA. Halladay is fully retiring from Federal service. Mike has done a great job keeping the sometimes cantankerous group on time and topic over the past two and half years. We here at the MRF wish him the best and encourage Mr. Halladay to go buy a bike and ride out his retirement.

For those of you who aren't aware this council was created by the motorcyclists of this country who lobbied Congress along with the MRF to include the authorizing language in the last highway bill, SAFETEA-LU which was passed in 2005. Congress is expected to begin the drafting process for the new highway bill in 2009 and the MRF will need the help of the motorcyclists of America once again to engage their federal elected officials on the importance of motorcycle safety. You've been warned.

For more info on the Council visit <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/mac/>

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