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NEWS & NOTES

American Motorcyclist Association

December 2006

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. In addition to 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 Illinois Off Highway Vehicle Association (IOHVA) has now formed and is looking at several opportunities in the Land of Lincoln for OHV recreation.

Among the goals of the new state-wide group are to expand riding opportunities and to be a voice for the non-competitive casual trail rider. Riding off highway motorcycles and ATVs is a legitimate form of recreation enjoyed by many. Now they can join a statewide organization that will enhance their OHV experience.

Members can expect to be updated monthly on OHV matters in IL. Regional trail rides will be organized for 2007 and the first annual state meeting/ride is planned for next fall. IOHVA recently received a grant from Polaris to help organize the group. Brochures will be coming to a local dealer throughout Illinois website www.rideoffroadillinois.org.

US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson has announced his bid to run for US President in 2008.

Thompson has been a friend to motorcyclists ever since the middle 1970's when he was in the Wisconsin State Assembly. He went on to become governor of Wisconsin in 1986 and served for 14 years, the longest serving governor in Wisconsin.

Secretary Thompson began riding motorcycles at the urging of Wisconsin State Senator Dave Zien. He promoted tourism in Wisconsin from the seat of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, while promoting business and rewarding companies for creating new jobs, during his annual rides across the state. In August, 2002, Thompson was inducted into the Motorcycle Hall of Fame in Sturgis, South Dakota due to his significant contributions to motorcycling and enacting noteworthy legislation.

Pennsylvania House Bill 3028, co-sponsored by 47 bipartisan Representatives, has been introduced to encourage private landowners to make land and water areas available to the public for recreational purposes by limiting their exposure to liability.

HB 3028 was authored by Rep. Bastian on October 17, 2006 and referred to the House Judiciary Committee. Recreational purpose "includes, but is not limited to, any of the following, or any combination thereof: hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, camping, picnicking, hiking, pleasure driving, nature study, motorized recreational vehicle riding, water skiing, water sports, cave exploration and viewing or enjoying historical, archaeological, scenic, or scientific sites."

To track this, and other, legislation go to the Statewatch section of www.AMADirectlink.com and click on the state you wish to track legislation.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) has announced the release of a new video public-service announcement that reminds motorists to watch for motorcycles when they drive.

The 30-second PSA -- which also is available in 20- and 10-second versions -- depicts a distracted driver's near-collision with a passing motorcyclist who, as the driver learns later that day, is his dentist.

Produced by SOS Video Communications of Columbus, Ohio, the PSA is intended for free distribution to television networks and local stations nationwide. Interior scenes were recorded at the dental offices of AMA member Dr. Doug Kowalczyk, and AMA Life Member Colter Rule contributed his well-known voice to the project.

The new video PSA, along with three radio PSAs released earlier this year, is available for download in the "Rights Resources" section of the AMA's website at <http://www.amadirectlink.com/legisltn/resources.asp>. The AMA offers other valuable information for new and experienced riders in the "Rider Resources" and "New Rider" sections of AMADirectlink.com, and at RideStraight.com.

Washington County, Mississippi residents are one step closer to having a dedicated off-highway vehicle (OHV) park on county land.

Officials from the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), All Terrain Vehicle Association (ATVA), and National OHV Conservation Council (NOHVCC) recently met with county officials to continue working toward such a trail system at the Warfield Point Park on the banks of the Mississippi River.

The fight to get this system put in place was started by resident Wally Morse, who interestingly does not ride motorcycles or ATVs, but would like to see a safe and sustainable place for his grandchildren to ride. After contacting the AMA and NOHVCC several months ago to see where to start, he is now looking at just a couple of final hurdles to cross before the trails will begin to be cut. Watch for further developments in this park in upcoming editions of *News & Notes* and *American Motorcyclist*.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) Board of Directors has selected Robert M. Dingman to be the Association's next President.

Dingman succeeds Robert Rasor, who is retiring as AMA President and will serve as AMA Director of International Affairs. Dingman previously served the AMA for nearly five years as its Washington (D.C.) Representative, and is returning to the Association from the position of Assistant Commissioner for Transportation Safety for New York State's Department of Motor Vehicles, where he headed the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.

Before joining the AMA staff in 1994, Dingman was a Government Relations Specialist for the Motorcycle Industry Council, and a Legislative Aide and Research Associate in the New York State Assembly. A 13-year AMA member and an avid street rider and off-highway enthusiast, he holds a Master of Arts in political management from The George Washington University and a Bachelor of Arts in political science and journalism from the State University of New York at Albany.

Dingman's first day as AMA President will be November 27, 2006. Based at the Association's headquarters in Pickerington, Ohio, he'll report to AMA Chief Executive Officer Patricia DiPietro on an interim basis during a transition period.

Leeds (England) Police have started a new Off Road Police Motorcycle Unit to thwart off-highway motorcycles (OHM) around the area. The unit, equipped with motorbikes funded by local councilors' ward allowances, went on patrol at Woodhall Quarry, near Calverley, where the OHM riders are causing major troubles for residents and its owners.

Sighting concern over "noise, trespassing, the welfare of the young riders, quality of life of local residents, anti-social behavior, and the inherent dangers of OHMs" the local police inspectors hope to combine the OHM officers with helicopter units to curtail the local riders.

Canyon Lake, CA supporters of overturning a ban on motorcycle riding within this gated city lost their bid to change the longstanding rule in a special election. Members of the Canyon Lake Property Owners Association voted resoundingly against an amendment to the rules that would have allowed residents to ride motorcycles to and from their homes. Passage of the amendment would have required approval votes from two-thirds of eligible property owners. If passed, the amendment would have allowed only Canyon Lake residents to ride motorcycles to and from their homes with a speed limit of 15mph.

Members of the recently formed Canyon Lake Motorcycle Club collected enough signatures last summer to put the matter to a second vote. In 1995, a majority of residents voted to strengthen the restrictions against motorcycle riding despite the extended efforts of the AMA and others to overturn these restrictions.

Canyon Lake is both a city and a corporation of property owners. The City Council is responsible for safety services and the maintenance of public roads, but the property owners association is responsible for operations within the city gates, such as maintenance of parks and roads.

An Oklahoma state lawmaker is proposing giving a break to motorcycle riders on the state's turnpikes. State Representative Paul Wesselhoft says it's not fair for motorcyclists to pay the same price as a car on the toll roads because motorcycles cause less wear and tear on the roadway. And he says the bikes cause less pollution and are more fuel-efficient.

His proposal calls for motorcycles to be charged half the toll currently charged to two-axle vehicles such as cars and SUVs. Rep. Wesselhoft says he doubts the state would lose any revenue by reducing the toll because he believes more bikers would drive the turnpikes if the toll were lower.

US Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) sent a letter to all fifty governors praising the benefits of compulsory state helmet laws. Eighty-two-year-old Lautenberg is gearing up for a fifth Senate term in 2008 and appears ready to continue his efforts to mandate safety. While Lautenberg played down his sound defeat on the Senate floor last year following his call for a vote on a mandatory motorcycle helmet law amendment, he closed his recent letter suggesting similar legislation may be introduced in the US Senate in the near future.

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF), along with Garden State ABATE (ABATE of NJ) and the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), arranged a meeting with Mr. Lautenberg's DC office staff. The purpose of the meeting was to attempt to determine the Senator's goals and focus the Senator's staff on a comprehensive approach to motorcycle safety rather than simply mandating rider protective gear.

Carefree and Cave Creek, Arizona will have new signs appearing soon encouraging motorcyclists to curb motorcycle noise. Major motorcycle manufacturers, such as Harley-Davidson, Honda and Yamaha, will provide the signs and distribute brochures. It is all part of an effort to educate riders about the benefits of being friendly neighbors as they motor through the quiet streets of Carefree on their way to the entertainment establishments in adjoining Cave Creek.

The program was developed in response to concerns of Carefree residents about excessive motorcycle sound, and is part of the ongoing efforts of the town's Noise Enforcement Advisory Committee to examine and respond to the issue of excessive motorcycle sound. One of the committee's recommendations was to work with motorcycle manufacturers and associations and see if they would be willing to police their own industry.

The current Carefree noise ordinance allows for a maximum noise level of 85 decibels measured at a distance of 25 feet. Maricopa County sheriff's deputies already patrol Carefree with microphone booms on the tops of their cars to measure sound. The fine for a first infraction of the Carefree noise ordinance can run as much as \$175.

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 Terry Lee Cook, Grassroots Manager, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147; fax 614-856-1920 or e-mail to tcook@ama-cycle.org.