

News For Thought

New Jersey Lifts Ban On Sunday Motorcycle Sales

New Jersey motorcycle dealers are rejoicing that they can now sell bikes on Sundays. Governor Chris Christie signed a bill into law allowing the Sunday motorcycle sales on March 3; though the measure does not affect the state's ban on Sunday automobile sales, nor does it apply in Bergen County where Blue Laws continue to prohibit the sale of most nonessential items on Sundays.

State Senator Donald Norcross introduced the legislation after a Camden County dealership complained about losing customers to stores in nearby Pennsylvania and Delaware as a result of the Sunday ban, adding that most motorcycle buyers tend to make purchases on weekends.

"With our dealerships closed for business on Sunday, consumers were heading across the river to make their purchases at bike shops in neighboring states," said Norcross. "Especially in this economy, we need to give businesses the tools they need to remain competitive."

Motorcycle businesses in Indiana and Wisconsin have also been trying to overturn bans on Sunday bike sales. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Riding Out The Recession

With gasoline prices approaching \$4 a gallon, commuters are turning to more fuel efficient motorcycles to save money. Sales and interest are up across the country, and many motorcycle dealers anticipate the popularity of motorcycles to increase even more.

Signs that the two-wheeled world is getting back on the road to recovery are coming from not only improving motorcycle sales, but also by the financial health of bikers themselves. Fewer bikers appear to be making late payments or defaulting on their motorcycle loans, according to a report issued by Fitch Ratings, a credit rating agency working with Harley-Davidson's Financial Services (HDFS) division.

In addition, the report also notes the improving market for previously owned motorcycles is again gaining strength, in part due to reduced inventory levels at dealers. This would allow for any repossessed motorcycles to be sold for a better price than they

may have the year before. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Bills Introduced To Prohibit Motorcycle-Only Checkpoints

Even as Georgia police prepared to launch the nation's first federally-funded motorcycle-only checkpoints during Daytona Bike Week, lawmakers in Washington were taking steps to cut federal funding for

the controversial practice.

Wisconsin Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner, Paul Ryan and Tom Petri introduced House Resolution 904 on March 3rd that would prohibit the secretary of transportation from providing funds to state and local governments for the use of motorcycle-only traffic checkpoints.

"The first step in motorcycle crash prevention should be rider education and increased awareness. Taxpayer money should not be spent on helmet checkpoints that do not prevent crashes," Petri said in a news release. "Also, it's outrageously intrusive. Nobody is suggesting pulling cars off the road for unscheduled inspections, so why are motorcycle riders being harassed?"

"We stand in solidarity against the unconstitutional use of motorcycle-only checkpoints being implemented in Georgia, and may be coming to your state soon," said Escondido Paul, National Lt. Commander of the US Defenders, in issuing a Call To Action (CTA) urging all motorcyclists to contact their federal officials to "solicit their support against grant money being used by the Federal Government to induce other States to participate in such discriminatory actions!"

In related news, bills have been recently introduced in New Hampshire (HB 148) and California (AB 1047) to prohibit any state law enforcement agency from accepting federal funding to establish motorcycle-only roadside checkpoints. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

America's Most Dangerous Drivers By Profession

Chances are the car that cut you off in traffic was driven by an attorney, or a judge, or government worker or maybe even a dog groomer, according to a new study listing the most dangerous drivers by profession.

A study conducted by an online insurance agency found that lawyers snared the No. 1 spot on a Top 10 list of "Most Dangerous Drivers By Profession," with 44% claiming a prior accident when receiving a car insurance comparison quote from insurance.com. Findings were based on accident claims as a percentage of quotes, the agency said, and used its proprietary data. Here is the full list Insurance.com's study of most dangerous driver's by profession: 1-Attorney/Judge; 2-Financial professionals; 3-Government worker (GS6); 4-Bartender or Waiter; 5-Business Professionals; 6-Dog Groomer; 7-Marketing/Advertising professionals; 8-Barber/Stylist; 9-Coach; and 10-Nurse.

So why did these folks rank so high? Distraction.

That was apparently the opposite for those on the other end of the study, deemed the least dangerous drivers. To that end are athletes and homemakers, the agency said. "Professions that demand multi-tasking - being on the phone, moving fast on a tight schedule - are prone to more distractions and, from there, more accidents," said Sam Belden, vice president at Insurance.com. "On the other hand, though the job of a homemaker demands multi-tasking, young children are often along for any car ride. And when children are involved, people tend to take their time and use greater caution." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Economic Uptick Has Americans Buying Leisure Products Again

People are buying expensive leisure products again, after they held back during the recession. A new report from Milwaukee's Robert W. Baird and Company said motorcycle sales fell by half during the downturn, and ATV sales were just 30% of what they used to be.

But Baird analyst Craig Kennison says many consumers now have a brighter outlook, in spite of high unemployment and a housing market that continues to be depressed. He said inventories for new leisure items are low, and there's a strong demand for used goods.

Kennison said Milwaukee's Harley-Davidson Motor Co. slashed its production during the recession - and that drove up the prices for used bikes. But now, he says more folks are buying new Harleys with the help of trade-ins.

And while it's hard to prove, Kennison expects the same trend for cars, RV's, and other big ticket items. He also said consumers are more confident about their personal wealth, especially after the Bush tax cuts were extended. Had Congress not acted this month, Kennison said it might have been a disaster for discretionary spending.

Congressional Motorcycle Caucus Expands

Newly-elected U.S. Rep. Allen West (R-FL), who was accused by his incumbent foe of belonging to a "biker gang" because he was supported by the South Florida Confederation of Clubs, has become one of the newest members of the Congressional Motorcycle Caucus.

The bi-partisan caucus is comprised of members of Congress who are passionate about motorcycling and who work to promote the interests of motorcyclists. The CMSC has actively highlighted the safety of motorcyclists by passing Congressional Resolutions supporting the goals of May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, drawing attention to Ride to Work Day and ensuring that motorcycle safety is remembered in the transportation reauthorization process.

Reps. West and Giffords were both recently selected by the NCOM Board of Directors to receive the coveted Silver Spoke Award - Legislative at the upcoming 26th Annual NCOM Convention over Mother's Day weekend May 5-8, 2011 at the Hyatt Regency in Albuquerque, New Mexico. www.ON-A-BIKE.com



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