

News For Thought

Cops tune into illegal cycle exhausts

By Jeni LewisMarshfield News-Herald

The rumble and roar of motorcycles around Marshfield, and people's jangled nerves, led the police department into a training session about the machines. "We get citizens' complaints because of the noise," Lt. Randy Laessig said. "Complaints go up during the summer months." Owners alter their motorcycles' exhaust systems to look cool and louder to attract attention, said State Trooper Jim Binder of State Patrol District 4 based in Wausau, who trained officers with the Marshfield Police Department on legal exhaust systems for public areas. "Not all (motorcycle exhaust systems) are legal," Laessig said. "It's hard to determine what's legal and what's not." What complicates the situation is that manufacturers can legally make and sell illegal exhaust systems, and bike owners can buy them and use them, as long as they are not in a public area. "The majority of the violations I deal with are Harley (Davidsons)," Binder said. He travels to police departments around central Wisconsin for the training, in addition to policing the state's highways. Binder also reviewed with officers other motorcycle violations he's seen while on patrol. "Everybody is slimming their bikes these days," he told officers. "The second most popular reason to stop motorcycles is (turn signals). If I see hand signals on a bike, that means 'stop me.'" Motorcycles are built with turn signals sticking out from the handlebars and rear of the bike. A motorcycle is legal its decibel level is no higher than when the machine was manufactured. Manufacturers like Harley-Davidson install mufflers with baffles on the end of the exhaust pipe to reduce the volume. Binder's standard is the two into four rule. The pipe coming from the engine of the machine typically is 2 inches in diameter. A muffler is typically 4 inches in diameter, expanding the space for the noise and swallowing it in the baffles. Bike owners have been known to replace a muffler with a straight pipe, or standard muffler, causing the bike to make a cracking or rapping sound, rather than the quieter rumble of a tuned exhaust. Marshfield has an ordinance for all zones limiting a noise to 80 decibels between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. and 65 decibels between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. If a person is cited for excessive auto noise in Marshfield, the fine is \$86. Every motorcycle must have a muffler to reduce noise, Binder said. "What I want you to do is listen to (the bikes) and look at them," he said. Reprinted with permission of the Marshfield News-Herald.

'Motorcycling groups support AMA's "Justice for All"

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) has announced that a number of state and national motorcycling organizations have formally voiced their support of the AMA's "Justice for All" campaign. Among the groups backing the goals of Justice for All are the Gold Wing Road Riders Association, ABATE of Indiana, ABATE for Missouri, ABATE of South Dakota, ABATE of Wisconsin, BikePAC of Colorado, the Connecticut Motorcycle Riders Association, and the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association. Although Justice for All focuses the public's attention on inadequate sentencing of drivers who seriously injure or kill motorcyclists, the AMA advocates legislation establishing tougher penalties when traffic offenses or criminal actions by any motorist result in another's death or serious injury. "By endorsing the goals of Justice for All, these organizations demonstrate their commitment to working in the best interests of American motorcyclists," said Edward Moreland, Vice President of AMA Government Relations. "We're gratified to have their leadership and support, and we look forward to working with them to effect change that benefits riders nationwide." In August, the AMA will take Justice for All to South Dakota for the 64th annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Sturgis rallygoers can visit the AMA's Justice for All information center at the Sturgis Music Festival grounds, located one block off Main Street at the corner of 2nd and Lazelle, from Tuesday, August 10 through Friday, August 13. Card-carrying AMA members will have access to special parking (as space is available), as well as a 10% discount at the Sturgis Music Festival's food court and access to the Sturgis Music Festival VIP area. www.AMADirectlink.com



TEAM OREGON Curriculum Approved; MSF Alleges Infringement

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) has learned that the Oregon Traffic Safety Committee met on Tuesday, July 13, 2004 and approved all components of the motorcycle rider training curriculum developed by TEAM OREGON, with the exception of their experienced course. As of January 1, 2005 the TEAM OREGON program will be the only curriculum approved for use in the state of Oregon. Called the TEAM OREGON Motorcycle Safety Program (TOMS), the approved program includes novice, intermediate and advanced courses. It is anticipated that the TEAM OREGON experienced course will be added by year's end.

The MRF has also learned that the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) has sent a letter to Oregon State University, alleging that the TEAM OREGON motorcycle rider training curriculum represents an infringement of MSF intellectual property. This letter was sent prior to Tuesday's Oregon Traffic Safety Committee meeting. Further, ODOT officials anticipate that the MSF or other programs may request approval of curricula other than TEAM OREGON's to qualify for waivers for graduates of other courses, allowing motorcycle endorsements to be issued by those other programs in place of successful completion of the TEAM OREGON program or testing by the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles. ODOT indicates that the Oregon Traffic Safety Committee will consider any such requests, taking into consideration recommendations offered by the Oregon Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety and Oregon motorcyclists.

The MRF is aware Latus Harley-Davidson/Buell filed just such a waiver petition late last year for their Rider's Edge program. ODOT denied Latus' request to obtain certification as an approved motorcycle safety program and denied their petition to allow their Rider's Edge completion cards to be accepted in lieu of Oregon State DMV endorsement tests.

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