

News For Thought



Government May Make Anti-Lock Brakes Mandatory on Motorcycles

Citing spiraling motorcycle accident statistics, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration may require new safety features on bikes. For example, the federal agency plans to decide by next year whether or not anti-lock brakes should be mandatory equipment on motorcycles.

The government report also mentions an insurance industry study that shows that the rate of fatal crashes are 28% lower for bikes equipped with optional ABS braking systems than for those same motorcycles without them.

Though NHTSA frequently enforces the implementation of safety technology into automobiles, their involvement in motorcycling tends to focus more on helmet usage and the prevention of drunk riding.

Anti-lock brakes are now standard on some Harley-Davidsons and optional across a variety of manufacturers on everything from dual purpose bikes to scooters -- and in many cases, they can be disabled if the rider chooses. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Engine Revving May Become a Crime in Albuquerque

Revving your engine in downtown Albuquerque, New Mexico, may soon be a crime punishable by a fine of up to \$500, imprisonment and seizure of your bike or car. Mayor Martin Chavez (D) proposed adding a blip of the throttle to the city ordinance

listing "nuisances" that the city uses as a justification to seize automobiles. The city council is expected to vote on the idea soon, and may expand ticketing to the entire city.

"It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in exhibition driving in the Downtown Quiet Zone by operating a vehicle in a manner that willfully creates excessive engine noise because of revving the engine to magnify the engine noise," the proposed ordinance states.

At first, Chavez will ask police set up traps to ticket motorcyclists before going after other motorists. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

California Smog Check Bill Held Over

ABATE of California would like to thank everyone who helped lobby against Senate Bill 435, which would establish biennial emissions testing for motorcycles.

According to Tim Tennimon, ABATE Executive Director, SB 435 is now a two year bill and will be held over until next session...no amendments have been submitted, so it still appears as a smog check bill. "Despite the promise by Senator Pavley to amend the bill to be more about catalytic converter inspections, rather than smog check...there have been no amendments to the bill," explains Tennimon, adding that the bill won't be eligible to be heard again until January 2010. "Stopping this bill for this legislative session is a huge victory for us...and a testament to Jim Lombardo's (ABATE lobbyist) hard work...we really weren't sure we could stop this bill once it hit the Senate floor...but you guys did it!"

However, Tennimon cautions, there are plenty of reasons to be concerned; "The smog debate ended up being a noise debate on the Senate floor...and there was much discussion about loud pipes...and, not coincidentally, the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) has just released a new standard for sound tests on motorcycles which will make it easy and consistent to test bikes...in addition, the MIC has called for a focus more on noise than emissions...all of which means that we will have to look at all new legislation because it is very possible that there will be attempts at new sound standards and emission standards...and they could pop up anywhere...Unfortunately, this is the message you have heard from us for over a decade...we must police ourselves...we know you love the sound...but not everyone feels the same way...and as much as I hate booming cars and loud trucks, etc...we are an easy target and those behaviors are coming back to get us now." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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On The Road To Romance

Motorcycling opens the road to romance, love and sex appeal. Famous faces increase their x-factor when they get onto two wheels on the big screen, and Hollywood has provided us with many cool biking images -- remember Quadrophenia? The Great Escape? Easy Rider? And they've recognized that girls like to ride too, from stylish Audrey Hepburn in Roman Holiday to more recently the modern Charlie's Angels and glamorous Angelina Jolie as Lara Croft.

Plenty of celebrities like to pull on a pair of leathers and enjoy the freedom of riding

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on two wheels, from actors and musicians to politicians, comedians, and chefs have all joined the growing numbers of people who like to ride. But at least in Britain, romantic bikers would rather ride with their other half than movie megastars like Kate Winslet, or Tom Cruise. In a Motorcycle Industry Association survey, when asked to name who they would most like to take a fantasy ride with, twice as many bikers nominated their partners than petite pop star Kylie, Star Wars' Ewan McGregor, or Bond's Pierce Brosnan.

So if your partner doesn't already ride, why not get them onto two wheels so you can "Get More Out of Life" together, as promoted during National Motorcycle Week in England, held July 12-18..."More freedom, more fun, more friends, more action and more opportunities." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

South Carolina Considers Legalizing Poker Runs

Not all of the news coming out of the Palmetto State is as controversial as Myrtle Beach's anti-biker ordinances, and recent actions by the State Senate could eventually legitimize poker runs.

The S.C. Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation in May that would have revised the state's 207-year-old gambling laws which ban "any game with cards or dice." Although the bill died at the end of the legislative session, bikers were able to educate some legislators that banning all such games is not in the best interest of charities.

Currently, the state's centuries-old gaming laws are enforced at the discretion of the local law enforcement agency and typically only when someone complains. South Carolina's Lions clubs have lost roughly \$500,000 since last year when state law enforcement officers - responding to a complaint - threatened a club that was raffling off a motorcycle.

Traditional motorcycle poker runs, which have historically raised tens of thousands of dollars for local and statewide charities have been severely curtailed as a result of an

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Attorney General's ruling that the events were illegal under the current State statute.

A separate proposal would ask voters whether the state constitution should be changed to allow nonprofit groups to hold a limited number of raffles yearly. Currently, the only legal raffle is the state lottery.

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