

News For Thought



Rally Rescinds Discriminatory No- Colors Policy

Following a "Call to Action" issued by the U.S. Defenders, a politically active arm of the Confederation of Clubs, a major motorcycle rally in the red hills of Oklahoma has rescinded a "No Colors" policy that would have prohibited entry to anyone wearing a patch, including HOG, ABATE and any club.

The Hawg Lakes Motorcycle Rally published a no colors policy on their fliers, ads and website that quickly stirred an uproar across the country, due largely to an e-mail "Call to Action" conducted by the U.S. Defenders and the Oklahoma Confederation of Clubs.

Brook "Xman" Bullock, State Secretary of ABATE of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Defender Rep, sent out a nationwide call to action to "Please take your money and support to BIKER FRIENDLY rallies and events, not 2010 Hawg Lakes. Pass the Word." According to the e-mail; "2R" (ABATE of Oklahoma State Coordinator) personally talked on the phone with Hawg Lakes and "the guy in charge said he was absolutely unwilling to change his policy. ABATE, HOG, BACA, and not any Club, no colors of any kind will be allowed."

Mark "Bus" Buskirk, Oklahoma Commander, U.S. Defenders wrote "Hawg Lakes Rally on July 29th will not allow you to wear your club colors on their property. So we the motorcycling community need to not go. They are stomping on our rights of freedom of speech."

Within days, the Call to Action was called off when Tiger Mike Revere, ABATE of Oklahoma Liaison to the OK Confederation of Clubs and member of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists board of directors, reported that; "The Hawg Lakes event has RESCINDED its No-Colors Ban -- Score one for our side!!" www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Congressional Resolution Reinforces Lobbying Ban

In response to statements made by NHTSA Administrator David Strickland that the core component of the federal agency's motorcycle safety plan is to increase helmet use, five members of Congress have introduced a resolution urging the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to concentrate on motorcycle crash prevention and rider education instead of lobbying state legislators to enact mandatory helmet laws.

Introduced on July 1st by U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), H. Res 1498 "supports efforts to retain the ban on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's ability to lobby state legislatures using federal tax dollars and urging NHTSA to focus on crash prevention and rider education".

Since 1996, NHTSA has been prohibited by federal law from testifying before state legislatures in support of helmet laws unless specifically invited to do so, and H. Res 1498 reinforces Congressional intent. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Yamaha Crisis Impacts Motorcycle Sales

Yamaha Motor Co., the world's second-largest motorcycle maker, said sales in North America and Europe may fall twice as much as forecast, as a spreading debt crisis dampens demand.

"From May, there has been a sudden impact from the Greek

crisis," Chief Executive Officer Hiroyuki Yanagi told the Washington Post. Combined sales in North America and Europe may decline as much as 20% this year, compared with an earlier estimate for a drop of about 10%, he said in an interview from Tokyo. The company last year posted its first loss since the year ended April 1984 as sales tumbled 45% in North America and 25% in Europe, though sales in Asia excluding Japan may exceed a 14% growth forecast, so Yamaha expects to break even this year says Yanagi.

Honda Motor Co., the world's largest motorcycle maker, said in an April presentation it expects its two-wheeler sales in North America and Europe to drop less than 1% to 385,000 units in the fiscal year ending March 31.

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Michigan's Rejuvenated Helmet Law Repeal Efforts

HB 4747 to repeal the helmet law was passed by the Michigan House of Representatives in March, and now awaits action in the Senate. Even though similar legislation has been approved by the state legislature the past two sessions, only to be vetoed by outgoing Governor Jennifer Granholm (D) both times, two out of the three gubernatorial contenders to replace her support giving adult motorcyclists freedom of choice.

Herb Rials who lobbies for ABATE of Michigan claims to have the support of every candidate for governor minus one, he told FOX News in Detroit.

According to the legislative analysis of HB 4747, proponents of voiding the 40-year old helmet law argue it is a civil rights issue. "Wearing a helmet, or not wearing one, they say, should be a matter of personal choice and not a legal mandate." Supporters of repeal legislation, which includes ABATE, the Michigan Confederation of Clubs and both Democratic gubernatorial hopefuls, also argue that removing the helmet requirement would increase motorcycle traffic in Michigan and thereby stimulate the state's sagging economy.

"Our outdated helmet law is a barrier to motorcycle tourism," argues ABATE's Jim Rhoades. "Michigan is the only Great Lakes state with a mandatory helmet law. Surveys repeatedly show that an overwhelming majority of motorcyclists in neighboring states refuse to visit Michigan because of this law." According to a study done by Michigan Consultants in Lansing, Michigan is losing millions of tourism dollars and approximately \$1.2 billion in overall economic benefit because of this law.

So if the House and Senate vote next year to kill the helmet law as they have in years past, there's a good chance that a governor's signature, not a veto, will be attached to the measure. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Could A Helmet Be Bad For A Biker's Health?

Most countries around the world require motorcyclists to wear a crash helmet for their own safety, but could it actually be harming their health and affecting their riding? That is what academics are investigating in a new research project.

A team of Bath University researchers will take on-road measurements to find how noise is transmitted from a helmet and how it affects the riders hearing and ability to concentrate.

Dr. Michael Carley of the university's Department of Mechanical Engineering said: "The noise inside the helmet at the legal speed of 70 mph is higher than the legal limit for noise at work - more than enough to cause serious hearing damage. The issue isn't noisy engines or loud exhausts as you may think. The noise is simply from the airflow over the helmet.


"Ear plugs won't help much either as the noise is transferred into the inner ear from the rider's bones. This has been known for 20 years yet little research has been done on the noise and its effects."

The laboratory study will be split into two parts; the first will examine how noise is transmitted through the whole system of the helmet including the head. The second part will determine if noise reduces performance.

Dr. Nigel Holt from the Department of Psychology at Bath Spa University said: "It is known that noise can affect perception and cognition but, so far, nobody has tried to examine how noise in motorcycling affects the performance of riders."

Riding a motorcycle requires great attention and concentration; anything that reduces performance may lead to more accidents.

Dr. Holt added: "This isn't about putting people off riding or wearing helmets; it's about finding ways to reduce this damage so that riders can have a better riding experience. We hope the research will provide information which can be used in setting standards for helmets and to help improve helmet and motorcycle design." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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