

News For Thought



Amended Helmet Law Has Positive Economic Benefit In Michigan

Changes last year in Michigan's mandatory helmet law have had a positive effect on motorcycle riding in Michigan, according to ABATE of Michigan. There has been an increase in motorcycle travel in Michigan since April of 2012, said ABATE in a recent press release.

"Motorcycle tourism is up. Motorcyclists across the country are coming to Michigan in droves. Very few out-of-state motorcyclists were seen in Michigan before the adult helmet requirement was modified," according to ABATE. "Cyclists from across the country are discovering the beauty of the lower and upper peninsulas of Michigan. There is an increase of out-of-state participation in Michigan motorcycle events by as much as five times during the summer of 2012."

"Our members have reported an increase in motorcycle tourism since the enactment of the rider choice law," added Scott Ellis, executive director of the Michigan Licensed Beverage Association, which represents more than 1,800 restaurant, bar, party store, hotel and casino establishments across the state. "From Monroe to Muskegon to the Keweenaw Peninsula, more out-of-state motorcyclists are stopping, staying and spending money at our restaurants, hotels and attractions," he told the Midland Daily News.

Motorcycle sales also are up in Michigan, and ABATE says that 2012 was the safest riding season in 10 years for licensed motorcyclists in the state.

Guam Enacts "Limited Helmet Law"

Originally, Senator Tommy Morrison's bill called for universal helmet use for all motorcycle riders in the U.S.

protectorate of Guam, but the revised version of his proposed helmet law makes it mandatory only for riders under the age of 18 and for those with less than 3 years riding experience.

After a lengthy public hearing and receiving input from the community, Bill No. 87 "Limited Helmet Law" passed unanimously, and also requires new riders to first complete a defensive driving/motorcycle safety education course prior to being licensed and prohibits licensees from operating a motorcycle or scooter of larger engine size than that which they take the motorcycle exam on. In order to operate a motorcycle with a larger engine, the operator must apply and test for a new license under that engine size.

Man On A Mission

"This will be the most important thing I have ever done," says Tim King, founder and news editor of Salem-News.com, in regard to his scheduled 48-state motorcycle ride for Veterans. "I am riding 48 states this summer to educate Vets through talks and media appearances about health issues that are taking lives; we're talking about PTSD/TBI, Agent Orange and the effects of serving aboard toxic military bases."

A former Marine who has covered the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Tim and his wife Bonnie received the NCOM Silver Spoke Award for Media in 2011 for advocating on behalf of motorcycle clubs and riders and their civil rights, and they have also been recognized by the Oregon Confederation of Clubs for Excellence in Journalism.

Tim is riding thousands of miles to share the information he has accumulated over his journalism career and nine specific years reporting for Salem-News.com and he's doing it by himself, so your help can make Tim's trip safer and more effective.

Tim's covering an ongoing war here at home where Veterans are fighting for their rights, and he'll be checking in with motorcycle riders who are busy defending their civil rights in regard to club membership and other issues, so he's enlisting the support of the motorcycle community to publicize and help fund his mission. Along the way he'll be writing stories and posting photos and videos of the places and people he visits, and you'll be able to track his progress at Salem-News.com and also via this dedicated Facebook page at www.facebook.com/tim.king.146612?ref=tn_tnmn.



Lisa Bilogan
General Manager

667 W. Kemp Street
Rhineland, WI 54501

Phone: 715-369-5880 • Fax: 715-369-2312
managerabvirhineland@gmail.com

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Motorcycle Club Sues City Over Discrimination

A local motorcycle club said it was just doing things by the book when it filed a permit to hold a BBQ fundraiser at a local park in Rio Vista, California, but the city and the police chief turned that simple request down. Now, the motorcycle club is filing suit, claiming it was discriminated against.

"No one other than us has ever tried to put in a permit," Saxon Creed MC President Rob Anderson told News 10/KXTV. "We thought we were doing the right thing."

Last July, the club wanted to hold its fundraising pig roast at Blackwelder Park, the same park where dozens of other community events have been held. So, the group filed for a permit with the city. But, the request was declined by the police chief and the city.

The group held their pig roast this year without problems at a Veteran's Hall, right next door to the park they applied to last year.

Members of Saxon Creed MC say they feel like the request was denied because they are bikers. The group has filed a discrimination lawsuit, claiming its civil rights were violated. They're suing for \$250,000 in damages on behalf of their 15 members. "It makes me very angry," Anderson said. "This is America. We all have rights. I don't like seeing anyone's rights trampled on."

More Rules Proposed For Canadian Riders

Saskatchewan is considering more requirements for new motorcycle licensees, supervision for new riders and the possibility of mandatory gear. The ideas are among more than a dozen changes to motorcycle safety, training and insurance rules proposed by Saskatchewan Government Insurance as it looks for ways to reduce claims, save money and quell the roar of angry riders.

One suggestion is for potential riders to pass a basic skills test or complete a motorcycle training program before they're issued a learner's license. New riders who don't take the training courses could see an additional \$500 a year fee or be restricted on the size of the bike they use.

Helmets and eye protection are currently the law in Saskatchewan and similar rules apply across the country, but no other jurisdiction in Canada has mandatory rules for wearing gloves, ankle-covering boots or clothing that cover arms and legs, according to SGI.

The review was launched earlier this year after a proposed rate increase which would have seen insurance costs for motorcycles go up by an average of 73% to cover a \$9 million gap between what SGI takes in from motorcyclists in fees versus what is paid out for collisions.

The public has until the end of July to comment on the proposals and SGI is to report to the government in the fall. The goal is to have the new rules in place for next year's riding season.

Motorcycle Ban Lifted In Pakistan

After five years, Pakistani authorities have lifted ban on motorcycle riding in Bajaur tribal region. The ban on motorcycle riding was imposed in 2008 when the Taliban stepped up their activities in the region, and the ban was aimed at controlling insurgency and preventing targeted killings because motorcycles were being used for attacks against anti-Taliban forces.

The announcement about lifting the ban was made by Brig Ghulam Haidar, a sector army commander, during his speech through the security forces-run FM radio channel (Radio Aman FM 88). "The lifting of ban on motorcycle riding is a gift for the tribesmen on the eve of the holy month of Ramadan. This good news may enhance happiness of Ramadan," he said.

Brig Ghulam said that imposing the ban on motorcycle riding was a difficult decision but it was taken only in the larger interest of people of the tribal agency.

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