



Inmates building true 'outlaw' choppers

Associated Press

CARSON CITY, Nev. - If you're looking for an "outlaw" motorcycle, Nevada prison officials have a deal for you - a custom, high-powered chopper that costs \$40,000 or more and is built by real outlaws.

The prison system's "Big House Choppers" venture is expanding from a small wooden shed involving a few motorcycle-savvy convicts to a larger prison shop in southern Nevada that will employ as many as 30 inmates.

"We are producing the only true outlaw motorcycles being produced by outlaws in the United States," Howard Skolnik, head of the state's prison industries program, said Monday.

Skolnik boasts that buyers also will receive a certificate that confirms pieces of scrapped prison cell bars went into their bikes - in the form of 5-inch-long

fender supports.

"Little things like that make these bikes look desirable," he said.

Skolnik told a legislative oversight panel that payment of a \$15,000 licensing fee to the state Department of Motor Vehicles will clear the way for sale of the custom choppers.

"You know, there's no accounting for bad taste, senator," Skolnik said to state Sen. Bob Beers, R-Las Vegas, who asked for details on the program and its market appeal. "People want these bikes. They really do."

Middle-age and older bikers with money to spare are part of "a huge market" of potential buyers of the choppers, he said.

Skolnik also said that since word began circulating a few months ago, he's had inquiries about setting up dealerships in several states.

The venture, with the motto "Built with Conviction," started at the Southern Desert Correctional Center, but may soon move into a 10,000-square-foot area within a large industrial building at the High Desert State Prison. Both prisons are in southern Nevada.

Two convicts are now building the choppers and already have produced their first, a cherry-colored motorcycle with a big, 110-cubic-inch engine and a prison guard tower painted on it.

Skolnik said a young inmate who worked on the first motorcycle recently was released and, because of the skills he learned in the prison industries program, quickly got a job paying nearly \$20 an hour.

Nevada's prison industries programs go well beyond making license plates and include old car restoration, making draperies, embroidery work and concrete casting. The programs are designed to be self-supporting, so they don't rely on taxpayer money. Inmates can earn \$5.15 an hour for their work, and learn a trade that will help them once they're released.

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and Paulie's among others we stopped in on along the way. (Thx Skipp) I also hooked up with Kenn and Chuck Hartmann, from the book Chicago Biker Bars, at DeMito's Time in Villa Park. And on my last day in Chicago I stopped in at Grave Yard Choppers (If you ever get there stop in you won't regret it), up to Odin Tatu to say hi to Tapeworm and lastly up to Chicago Cycle where they have a very impressive new building. (Could definitely fill my kids wish list with 4 wheels and such.) Then en route to home, I stopped in at Firehouse Performance and Jill's Place in Kenosha for a bit to say hi. All in all I just wanted to mention these businesses to name just a few because they all made me feel right at home. Thanks All.

Lastly, I don't know if you've checked the calendar on our website yet to see if there is anything going on. Well you will find the same thing I am, not much in the line of activities. Works for me though. I am getting sorta used to having a short break this time of year. All in all I hope all the Brothers and Sisters in the wind have fun and safe holidays, while keeping in mind that riding season is just around the corner.

Till next time, Preacher

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