

# News For Thought

NCOM NEWS BYTES Compiled  
& Edited by Bill Bish



## Michigan Legislature Passes Helmet Law Repeal, Bill goes to Governor

A helmet law repeal bill has passed both houses of Michigan's state legislature, and proponents are mounting an intense lobbying effort aimed at Governor Jennifer Granholm who vetoed a similar measure last year citing safety concerns.

This year's version, House Bill 4749, was approved by the Senate by a vote of 23-15, and by the House 69-39, and is similar to a bill passed by both chambers last year but with an opt-out clause designed to allow qualified riders to purchase a permit allowing them to ride without a helmet.

The law would allow riders over 21 to purchase a \$100 one-year state permit or a \$200 three-year permit. The rider must carry at least \$20,000 in insurance to pay first-party medical benefits in the event of an accident, have been licensed for at least two years to operate a motorcycle or have completed a motorcycle safety course. Riders who do not purchase a permit and ride without helmets face a fine of up to \$300.

"Modernizing Michigan's outdated helmet law will bring in much-needed revenue, jobs and investments," said Jim Rhoades, legislative director of ABATE of Michigan. "We urge the governor to put aside her personal objections to modernizing Michigan's helmet law."

ABATE of Michigan and the Confederation of Clubs of Michigan are among the groups that support the bill, arguing that helmets offer little protection and hurt tourism, and pointing out that revenue from the sales of permits would generate an estimated \$15-20 million a year for the cash-strapped state.

State Rep. Barbara Farrah, D-Southgate, who sponsored the bill, said 30 other states, including all of Michigan's neighbors, allow some form of helmet-free riding, giving them an edge over Michigan in attracting tourism dollars from out-of-state motorcyclists.

The governor will have 14 days to sign or veto the bill when it hits her desk, or let it become law without taking any action, but proponents of the legislation intend to further lobby the governor for her support before sending the bill to her office.

Concerned riders are being urged to contact Governor Granholm at (517) 335-7858 and request that she sign HB 4749 into law. [www.aimncom.com](http://www.aimncom.com)

## Feds Announce Campaign to Curb Rider Fatalities

To combat the rising trend of motorcycle injuries and fatalities, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters recently announced a comprehensive new federal initiative to improve motorcycle safety with more rider education and training, tougher standards for helmet certification labeling, law enforcement training, and road designs that consider motorcycle dynamics.

Secretary Peters – an avid motorcyclist herself – also released a television public service announcement promoting rider safety and use of personal protective gear, referring to her own crash on a two-lane highway near Tucson in 2005 when she suffered a broken collarbone.

Peters said the motorcycle safety initiative will create new national safety and training standards for novice riders, curb counterfeit helmet labeling so that consumers can be certain they are buying DOT-certified helmets, place new focus on motorcycle-specific road improvements, and provide training to law enforcement officers on how to spot unsafe motorcyclists. In addition, Peters said, the plan includes a broad public awareness campaign – including the PSA - on safe riding techniques. [www.aimncom.com](http://www.aimncom.com)

## NHTSA to Evaluate State Motorcycle Safety Programs

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently announced plans to conduct a survey of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators and/or State Highway Safety Offices in all 50 States and the District of Columbia to gather data on state-level motorcycle safety programs.

The study will use the State Motorcycle Safety Administrator

and State Highway Safety Office survey to gather comprehensive data on what each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia are doing to promote and ensure safe riding behavior. [www.aimncom.com](http://www.aimncom.com)

## Prince Charles Rescues Crashed Biker

British royal Prince Charles has been praised for stopping to help a motorcyclist who plunged 15 feet off a mountain road in Scotland. The Prince of Wales was en route to his private retreat in Scotland when he witnessed motorcyclist Hugh Simpson skid on gravel and drive off a steep bank.

The Prince immediately stopped his Land Rover and instructed his bodyguards, who are all trained first-aiders, to help Simpson who sustained a broken wrist and foot. Simpson, 52, says, "I cannot thank Prince Charles enough. He asked his protection officers to come to my assistance. They were very good." [www.aimncom.com](http://www.aimncom.com)

## China South Declared World's Largest Motorcycle Maker

According to Chinese news agency Xinhua, China's state-owned automotive company China South has emerged as the world's largest motorcycle producer with an annual production capacity of five million units.

The company's products are sold in over 100 countries under the brands Jialing, Jianshe, Dayang and Jinan Qingqi. China South is a state-owned enterprise under the management of the "state council of the Chinese cabinet" and is involved in the military and national defense industries. According to the report, the assets and sales of China South are in excess of \$12.66 billion.

China expects to make 21 million two wheelers a year by 2010, up from 17 million in 2005, while the world's second largest motorcycle market in India expects to produce 15 million motorbikes a year in 2010, up from 6.7 million in 2005. By comparison, Americans own around 7 million motorcycles and buy just over 1 million new bikes per year. American motorcycle manufacturer Harley-Davidson produced about 350,000 motorcycles last year. [www.aimncom.com](http://www.aimncom.com)

**Weird News:** A Malaysian man who was talking on a mobile phone while riding his motorcycle was killed when struck by a bolt of lightning, according to news reports from Kuala Lumpur.

The man, 39, was believed to have lodged the phone between his ear and helmet and was speaking on the phone when the lightning struck. Passersby said he was thrown from the motorcycle after being struck by the bolt, the New Straits Times daily reported.

The victim was immediately sent to a nearby hospital in the southern Seremban city, but was pronounced dead on arrival, a police spokesman was quoted as saying. Police are investigating the accident.

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## Remember Your Biker at Christmas

Black & CHROME has a large selection of Christmas gift items that is sure to please any biker. And if they are really hard to shop for, why not just give them a **Black & CHROME** Gift Certificate, so they can get whatever they want.

Stop by our booth at the Free Riders Press "Holiday Swap Meet" at Country Springs Hotel on Bus. 51 in Stevens Point, Saturday, Dec. 2, from 9 am to 5 pm. Lots of crafts and gifts.

## "WALNECK'S" MOTORCYCLE SWAP MEETS & SHOWS

**December 16** - St. Charles, IL  
Swap Meet Only

8am - 3pm

Kane County Fair, Rte 64 & Randall Rd.  
Admission: \$5.00

**January 6** - Springfield, OH  
Swap Meet & Show

8am - 3pm

Clark County Fairgrounds, I70 & Hwy 41  
Admission: \$6.00



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