

News For Thought



Numbers Game

Even if we bought into the government's claim that unhelmeted riders cost U.S. taxpayers \$853 million last year, let's put that number in perspective. According to MAG-UK (Motorcycle Action Group of the United Kingdom), citing statistics from the BBC website, the United States spent \$1.9 trillion on healthcare in 2004, so unhelmeted motorcyclists accounted for .00004% of the total costs.

For comparison, caring for smoking related health problems cost the government \$12.9 billion, or .007%, making it 150 times more costly. Obesity costs the government \$7.7 billion in healthcare expenses. Alcohol costs the government \$12.2 billion in healthcare expenses. Medicaid fraud costs the government \$140 billion in healthcare expenses. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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United Kingdom: No Luxembourg Compromise! The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG-UK) is calling for the UK Government to reject the "Luxembourg Compromise" for the 3rd European License Directive regarding motorcycle licensing. Y'see, WE still worry about HELMET LAWS in the USA, and we

should be paying more attention to what's going on in Europe. The European Parliament is calling for structured licensing across the board in Europe. That means if you're 35 years old, for example, and a new rider, YOU WILL BE RESTRICTED to a lesser license than that your friends might have, and be forced to ride a bike with a smaller engine! MAG says this will have a detrimental effect on motorcycle riding all over the continent. Remember folks, when it happens in Europe, it isn't long before we are dealing with it right here at home. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Alude Police, Forfiet your Bike

The Florida Highway Patrol has developed a plan to fight fleeing cyclists without engaging in high speed pursuit or even taking them to trial.

Florida police have a policy restricting high-speed chases, and police cars can't keep up with a sport bike's top speed or ability to accelerate.

But all the law requires is that police get the tag number, and then they can go pick up the bike later. Police seized 344 motorcycles last year, some valued at more than \$10,000, by accusing their owners of running from police -- a felony -- initiate the seizure proceeding, then drop the charges. This allows police to keep the bike without the effort of a court battle or the danger of a not guilty verdict. Even an innocent motorcyclist will think twice about fighting an unjust seizure since the felony charges carry jail time and a permanent black mark on more than just the driving record.

Although police claim the confiscation policy is done to save the lives of innocent motorists, no automobile driver has been killed by a motorcyclist on the run. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Ducati:

Whoeee! The DUKE has done it again. They have a new machine that's gorgeous! It's called the "Hypermotard." I'm told this critter is the cat's whiskers on mountain roads. It took "Best of Show" at the recent 63rd International Motorcycle Exhibition. At 385 lbs it'll hit 135 mph, and it's air cooled. Right now, it's a concept bike, but it won't be for long. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

National ID on the way:

Some state officials are giving the national ID system a cool reception, and hope Congress will reassess -- and perhaps repeal -- legislation it passed that establishes a national ID system by 2008.

The Real ID Act of 2005 is intended to deter terrorism and illegal immigration, but many deem the program unnecessary, costly and annoying. Some have gone as far to correlate it with the mark of the beast. The legislation would establish national standards for state-issued driver's licenses and non-driver's identification cards, and you'll need one of these new cards to board an airplane, open a bank account or enter a federal building.

Among the most alarming dilemmas, aside from privacy issues, is that under the Real ID system it could take weeks to produce a single identification card. Real ID would also put a major dent in states' coffers, costing tens of millions of dollars to implement the new system and each state will be responsible for footing its own bill. The Real ID Act originated as a standalone House bill in January 2005. It passed 261 to 161, but became inactive. It was then tacked onto a military spending bill by its author, Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., and passed unanimously. It became a law in May 2005. Controversial bills are often attached to military spending measures to bolster their chances of passing.

The new ID cards will contain the same information as current driver's licenses -- a person's name, date of birth, sex, ID number, address and signature. But the cards might come in black-and-white, instead of color, and be printed on expensive polycarbonate material, requiring DMV offices to install new machines to produce the cards.

Right now, no one's sure how long residents will have before they must convert to the new ID system or what types of documentation they must present, and are awaiting further direction from the Department of Homeland Security, the federal agency responsible for issuing criteria for the new licenses. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Salt Lake City Withdrws Helmet Proposal:

Through the combined efforts of bikers across the country who took time to write, call and e-mail Mayor Rocky Anderson to oppose a Salt Lake City, Utah city ordinance requiring helmet use by all motorcyclists and bicyclists within the city, the proposed law has been withdrawn and the mayor's office has responded that they have "Abandoned the proposal, due to the immense amount of calls and e-mails both from local motorcyclists and motorcyclists nationwide. We are now looking into ways to better enforce the helmet law already in existence, (for riders 18 years old and under) and require the same for bicyclists and scooters."

"Now if that isn't proof that combined, our voices are heard, and being pro-active in the early stages of such a proposal, I don't know what is," exclaimed Bill Evans of ABATE of Utah. "Utah thanks all of you who responded." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Not so easy rider:

Bikers are more likely to have problems in bed, new research shows. Studies have already claimed bicyclists face an increased risk of impotence, and now a Japanese medical research team says motorcycle riders, of whom there are 3.5million, mainly men, in Britain are likely to share the problem.

They say it is because pressure and vibration from the saddle reduces the blood supply to their genitals. Doctors in Osaka, Japan, found 69 percent of riders had erectile dysfunction (ED) compared with 35 percent in the control group. The older the biker, the worse the problem was -- more than nine out of 10 over-50s had signs of impotence. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Washington State Patrol:

These minions of the law are using a new approach to seatbelt cheaters. In Spanaway, WA, a State Trooper in plain clothes with a cardboard sign around his neck that read "Happy Holidays - Buckle Up," as he stood on a busy corner and helped bust 30 people for not wearing their seat belts. When he spotted someone who wasn't wearing a seat belt he radioed fellow troopers parked nearby who pulled over the offender. I guess most people thought he was a panhandler, and I would have, too. I call that entrapment, and a real waste of our police resources! www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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