

News For Thought



Ride To Work, Work To Ride

Every year more and more riders are finding cycles and scooters to be an economical, efficient and fun way to commute. Because of this, the 20th annual worldwide Ride To Work Day, scheduled for June 20, 2011 is expected to be one of the largest ever.

On Ride to Work Day, the practical side of riding becomes more visible as a large number of America's 8,000,000 cycles and scooters are ridden to work, which helps to demonstrate how these vehicles make parking easier and help traffic flow better. Studies have shown that across equal distances, commuting motorcyclists reach their destinations in less time than those using automobiles, and that motorcycles and scooters consume less resources per mile, and that they take up less space on roads.

For further information and promotional materials, visit www.ridetowork.org.
www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Victory For Indian

America's oldest motorcycle brand now has a new owner. Polaris Industries Inc. (NYSE: PII) has announced the acquisition of Indian Motorcycle, adding one of motorcycling's legendary brands to its stable of Victory cruiser and touring bikes.

Polaris, which has manufacturing plants in Roseau, Minn., and Spirit Lake, Iowa, will close down the Indian Motorcycle production facility in Kings Point, N.C., and move all production to Spirit Lake.

Polaris said it hopes to capture a bigger share of the \$11 billion heavyweight cruiser market by operating Indian as an independent business unit, combining Polaris' "engineering acumen and innovative technology" with Indian's "premium brand, iconic design and rich American history." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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"Dead Red" Law Allows Riders To Run Stoplights

Motorcyclists in several states have been given a green light to run red lights, and now riders in Kansas can proceed with caution through a stuck signal if it has failed to change green within a reasonable amount of time because the signal has malfunctioned or failed to detect the cycle.

HB 2192, The Dead Red Law, has been signed into law by Governor Sam Brownback and goes into effect June 1 for intersections across the state with sensors. Traffic sensors imbedded in the roadway normally tell the light to change when a vehicle approaches, but motorcycles often aren't heavy enough to trigger it, argued ABATE of Kansas in support of the legislation. The measure was packaged with a series of road-related measures, including provisions raising the state's maximum highway speed to 75 mph. Nine other states currently allow motorcyclists to proceed through a signal that fails to detect their presence, and similar legislation is being considered in Illinois where HB 2860 passed the House 104-0 and is awaiting further action in the Senate. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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NHTSA Updates Motorcycle Helmet Standards

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has updated the federal motorcycle helmet standards (FMVSS 218) in an attempt to stop riders from wearing non-DOT approved "novelty" helmets. The new standard does not affect the construction of helmets directly, but changes the way they're labeled to make it more difficult to mimic DOT compliance certifications.

Effective immediately under the final rule issued May 13, helmets that conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 218 will carry a sticker with the manufacturer's name, the helmet model and the words "DOT FMVSS No. 218 Certified." The move to make non-compliant

helmets harder to sell comes after the number of riders sporting novelty helmets increased dramatically in 2010 over 2009.

According to NHTSA statistics, in 2010, only 54% of motorcyclists wore a DOT-approved helmet. Around 14% wore a novelty helmet, and 32% rode without a helmet. In 2009, those numbers were 67%, 9% and 24%, respectively. In 2010, 75% of riders who did elect to wear a helmet wore a DOT-compliant one. In 2009, that number was 86%.

NHTSA says 5.2 million helmets are sold annually. Twenty states require all motorcycle riders to wear helmets, but only 13 states specify that the helmets must meet federal standards.

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Motorcycle Sales Stoked By Gas Prices

Motorcycle sales in the U.S. rose 7.2% during the first quarter OF 2011, compared with the same period a year earlier, says the Motorcycle Industry Council.

In its retail sales report, which tracks sales among the 18 leading brands sold in the U.S., the industry trade group said scooters posted the biggest sales increase of nearly 50%. Sales of dual-purpose motorcycles, which are designed for highway and off-road use rose almost 25%, attributed in part to the segment's overall fuel efficiency. In a separate but related report, a recent survey of Harley-Davidson dealerships suggests that retail sales improved in the first three months of the year. According to an analysis by Raymond James & Associates, 55% of the dealerships surveyed said they had a year-over-year sales increase in the quarter, and nearly all reported that inventories were "ideal" or "light".

The MIC also reported that tire sales, which it says are an indicator of motorcycle use, also rose in the first three months of the year. Motorcycle and scooter tire sales increased 29%, while sales of tires for on-highway bikes rose 28% and scooter tires jumped 49%.

The industry council's owner survey estimates the number of motorcycle miles traveled rose 5% to 27.6 billion miles from 2008-09. The percentage of U.S. households with at least one motorcycle grew to 6.8% in 2009 from 5.4% in 2003.

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E-Cycle Growth Forecast

More and more motorcycles and scooters powered by electricity are hitting the road, and some experts predict that the number of electric two-wheel vehicles could swell to more than 100 million worldwide within the next 5 years.

Currently, there are about 17 million electric motorcycles and scooters on the road, but a new study by Pike Research shows that the global market could expand to more than 138 million by 2017.

"Electric motorcycles and scooters have strong appeal for many consumers," says senior analyst Dave Hurst. "They are relatively low cost to own, do not take a lot of space, and are easy to maintain."

Electric motorcycles are becoming more capable every day. Chip Yates recently set a land speed record with his electric motorcycle, reaching nearly 200 mph, and the TTXGP racing series was just officially sanctioned by the FIM.

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