

Heartland Steam XXV sponsored by ABATE of Wisconsin.

I have wanted to attend a Heartland STEAM conference for years, but could not justify the expense of doing so while also taking into consideration that's always the same weekend as the Donnie Smith Bike Show. This traveling Biker Rights event happened to be at the Mead Hotel in Wisconsin Rapids, WI, March 27 & 28th this year, and I decided to attend. The event is attended by 7 state biker rights go getters from IL, WI, MN, IA, SD, ND, IA and NE. If it pertains to the safety, rights or statistics of riding these are the folks to talk to.

Saturday I showed up expecting to learn something new, but was I surprised of the intensity of the sessions, and how really informed I had gotten on different issues in the breakout sessions. These 9 sessions ranged from rider responsibility to the effects on the rider as we age to group riding and riding smarter. I attended the 3 R's, Ride Smart (A Biker's Perspective) and Surveilled on the Open Road.

The 3 R's pertained to the riders responsibility while on the scoot and some of the different ways that can be used to cut down on accidents. The easiest being impaired riding. Yeah, ok you are saying, another big brother telling me what to do. Just the opposite! This was a group engaged forum that got you thinking of different things that riders can do to keep themselves safer as well as fellow riders. For instant non drinking stops, food stops, gas stops as a card stop. In short it was knowing your limits. Mine is Zero. What's yours? Then you have the scan, sweep and search methods of what can kill you and the different methods of evaluating situations while riding. All this is for the betterment of you and those riding around you. Think about it, it's not just your life in the wind.

Then came the Ride Smart -A Biker's Perspective. In this forum we had a lot of statistics thrown at us. With everything from fatality statistics that is broken down even farther from age, sex, years riding, cc of bike, traffic conditions, number of cyclists that are not endorsed, day or night and time of accident etc. The theory being, "We would rather not crash than learn why someone crashed." If you'd like to find out more on this check out abate-il.org.

The last was on different ways we as motorcyclists are being surveilled through technology. This forum discussed the vehicle black boxes and the information that is recorded about the way the vehicle is being driven. This can mean speed, where it is and what happened at the time of an accident. We discussed the different ways we are taxed through our travels (or at least the taxes lawmakers are proposing). We also discussed the different ways law enforcement can track us. These and many more ways that we as motorists/ motorcyclists should be aware and watching for.

All in all it was well worth the day spent and I strongly urge you as riders to get involved in a biker's rights organization and how you can help. After all it's you and your rights that are at stake.

abatewis.org
www.facebook.com/events/200243023499220/

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