

**Sales of Dual Purpose Motorcycles and Scooters Outpaced Cruisers and Sportbikes**

While cruisers and sportbikes were wondering the consumer love went, dual-purpose motorcycles were riding off the showroom floors in 2008 according to tentative numbers from the Motorcycle Industry Council. Dual-purpose bikes as well as scooters were the brightest spots in last year's MIC Retail Sales Report, which reveals percentage growth or decreases among all categories of bikes last year.

Scooter sales through December were up 41.5 percent compared to all of 2007. Dual-purpose bike sales jumped 22.8 percent last year for the major brands tracked. No other categories in the report showed an increase.

"Overall, motorcycle sales were down 7.2 percent, not nearly as sharp a decline as many other consumer products in today's economy," said MIC President Tim Buche. "We'll look at 2008 as a big year for scooters, dual-purpose bikes and small-displacement motorcycles. If it was smart-sized, offered great value and high fuel mileage, then chances are it was a sales success."

The MIC Retail Sales Report compiles U.S. sales information every month from 12 leading motorcycle distributors: BMW, Can-Am, Ducati, Harley-Davidson/Buell, Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, the Piaggio Group, Victory, Suzuki, Triumph and Yamaha. It provides an indicator of market trends. Among these 12 Retail Sales Report brands, the on-highway segment slipped by just 5.6 percent last year. This includes cruisers, sport bikes, touring bikes and traditional or standard motorcycles.

The off-highway market dropped 30 percent among six leading brands.

As it seemed to several times in the past, a rise in gas prices may have pumped up sales of smaller, more economical motorcycles. Preliminary findings from the 2008 MIC Owner Survey suggest that Americans are looking at motorcycles more for transportation, not only recreation. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

**Get the Lead Out**

With Congress saying "get the lead out," motorcycle manufacturers and local businesses are wondering if common sense gets chucked along with it. Retailers across the country are yanking shoes, toys and any goods marketed to children from shelves to comply with a strict lead law enacted nearly unanimously by Congress.

The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which went into effect February 10, 2009 is meant to protect children from lead-laden products, but unintended consequences of the new legislation are decimating the industry as thousands of motorcycle and recreation vehicle retailers across the country scramble to obey the federal law: all of them had to cease selling small off-road motorcycles and ATVs designed for kids, because according to a provision of the Act the machines are dangerous...not because a child might have an accident on the diminutive machines, but because if a child develops an appetite for the vehicle's brakes or battery terminals and decides to nibble on the ATV or motorbike, lead poisoning may result.

The ban encompasses some 19 models from just Yamaha, Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki. The economic impact of the CPSC's ruling will be substantial for both dealers and manufacturers in an already weakened economy. The regulation takes an estimated \$100 million worth of inventory off the sales floors of some 13,000 dealers immediately. It also impinges on manufacturers, makers of aftermarket equipment and everything from racetracks to distributors.

Honda has already informed dealers that their inventories of new and used youth motorcycles and ATVs will become worthless and legally unsalable effective Feb. 10. "In fact, under the terms of the Act you cannot even display these models on your showroom floor, distribute brochures, or advertise them on your website," Honda told their dealer network.

According to motorcycle and ATV industry sources, most motorcycle and ATV components are compliant with the CPSIA's lead limits, but some components unavoidably contain small quantities of lead in excess of the CPSIA's limits. However, the nature and location of these components suggests a very minimal exposure risk. Industry reps say the lead used in motorcycles and ATVs is embedded in alloys but is not easily transferred to humans through typical use, the way lead in paint or infant toys would be.

Motorcycle riders, activists and enthusiasts are requested to contact their Congressional representatives and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and ask them to exclude youth model off-highway vehicles from the final rule governing the law. www.ON-A-BIKE.com



I hwas in the area of Eau Claire on Feb 1st and decided to catch the monthly meeting at Shooters. I was very impressed with the attendance as well as how well the meeting was run. I would like to thank the ABATE members of 7B for their comederie. Great job and keep up the good work.

**Some Whatevers**

- \*\* My wife and I had words, But I didn't get to use mine.
- \*\* God made man first, just to let him know what peace and quiet sounded like.
- \*\* Aspire to inspire before you expire.

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