

# News For Thought



## Motorcycle Thefts Fall

Motorcycle thefts in the US fell by 13% to 56,093 last year from 64,492 in 2008, the biggest drop since 2007 according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau in an April 13th statement. Honda was the most stolen brand accounting for 24% of the thefts, followed by Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki and Harley-Davidson, said the NICB citing National Crime Information Center data.

The recession prompted lower bike sales and a decrease in production, pushing motorcycle thefts down for a third consecutive year. Sales of new bikes fell 43% in 2009 from the year-earlier period, according to the Motorcycle Industry Council. Likewise, the Japanese Automobile Manufacturers Association reported a 47.4% decrease in motorcycle production last year.

Recovery rates have declined along with thefts, with only 30% of the stolen bikes recovered in 2009, compared with 41% in 2006, NICB data show.

The top five states for motorcycle theft were warm-weather ones: California, Texas, Florida, North Carolina and Georgia, together accounting for 39% of the total.

It should be no surprise that the summer months of July (6,319); August (6,079); and June (5,672) saw the most theft activity while the fewest thefts were recorded during the winter months of December (2,927); February (3,100); and January (3,570).

The best way to prevent theft is to keep your motorcycle out of sight or covered up and secured to an immovable object with a good through-the-frame lock in addition to the steering lock. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)



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## Motorcycle Advisory Council Surveys Road Conditions

The Motorcyclist Advisory Council (MAC) to the Federal Highway Administration has made recommendations to U.S. Transportation Secretary

Ray LaHood and his predecessors on various topics, including 1) Barrier design; (2) Road design, construction, and maintenance practices; and (3) The architecture and implementation of Intelligent Transportation System technologies.

Of special significance was the creation and approval of the yearly Motorcyclist Road Conditions Survey, which can be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/ykbsqr6>.

The purpose of the survey is to better communicate to the MAC, road construction engineers, and transportation safety officials the specific needs of motorcyclists that should be considered when developing new roadways or altering existing routes.

The MAC-FHWA coordinates and advises the Secretary of the Department of Transportation on infrastructure issues of concern to motorcycle riders, and is comprised of ten members of the motorcycling community with professional expertise in national motorcyclist safety advocacy. James "Doc" Reichenbach II, State President of ABATE of Florida and Chairman of the Board of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM) serves on the MAC as one of two members representing state motorcyclists' organizations. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

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## Maine Requires Motorcycles to Display Inspection Stickers

Maine Governor John Baldacci on April 9, 2010 signed LD 1675 into law, requiring the state's 50,000 registered motorcycles to carry inspection stickers that are "completely and clearly visible from the rear" starting in 2012.

A bill that started in the state legislature as a broadly worded bill to quiet noisy motorcycles evolved into a measure requiring riders to display inspection stickers when Maine's Transportation Committee concluded that 38% of Maine motorcycles aren't inspected, noting faulty and noisy motorcycle mufflers would fail annual inspections.

The bill also sets up a task force to explore other methods of reducing motorcycle noise, including sound testing, and report to the

Transportation Committee by January 15, 2011.

LD1675 passed the Maine House by a vote of 104-33 on March 22. The Senate passed it April 5, with no tally released. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

## Antilock Brakes Make Motorcycles Safer

With motorcycle ownership skyrocketing from 4.3 million to 10.4 million over the past decade, and a corresponding increase in rider deaths and injuries, two new studies have found that equipping motorcycles with antilock brakes makes them much safer.

The studies, one by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and the other by the Highway Loss Data Institute, found that bikes with antilock brakes are involved in 37% fewer fatal accidents per 10,000 registered vehicles and reported 22% fewer accident damage claims per insured vehicle year.

Stopping a motorcycle is trickier than stopping a car. For one thing, the front and rear wheels typically have separate brake controls. In an emergency, a rider faces a split-second choice to either brake hard, which can lock the wheels and cause an overturn, or hold back on braking and risk running into the emergency. This is when antilock brakes can help by reducing brake pressure when they detect impending lockup and then increasing the pressure again when traction is restored. Brake pressure is evaluated multiple times per second, so riders may brake fully without fear of locking up.

Until lately, such crash avoidance technology as antilock brakes has primarily been available only on larger, more expensive motorcycles, but they are now available on 60 new models.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is considering whether or not antilock brakes should be mandatory on motorcycles. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

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## Wyoming Bikers Work With City To Promote Motorcycle Awareness

The Casper City Council voted unanimously to pay for motorcycle-safety billboards in the coming months, with Wyoming Central ABATE picking up the campaign halfway through the riding season. The council approved \$5,400 in grant money to pay for four billboards from April through July, when Wyoming Central ABATE would begin paying for the billboards with its own message to run through October.

The push for motorcycle awareness stems from two high-profile accidents involving motorcyclists last summer, including an ABATE member who was killed by a left-turning Hummer. The accidents prompted Wyoming Central ABATE to meet with city officials and hash out a plan to increase awareness of motorcycles among drivers.

The Casper Police Department applied for grant money from the Wyoming Department of Transportation to be used on a "campaign targeting the reduction of the number and severity of motorcycle crashes in the Casper area," according to a city memo. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)


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