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## NEWS & NOTES

American Motorcyclist Association

June 2008

*News & Notes* is a monthly publication compiled and edited by the AMA's Government Relations Department. Designed to inform motorcyclists of 'rights'-related issues and events around the world, we welcome your news & views. Suggestions and contributions can be sent to Sheila Andrews, Legislative Assistant, American Motorcyclist Association, by e-mail at [sandrews@ama-cycle.org](mailto:sandrews@ama-cycle.org).

**Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month** was officially launched with a news conference on Thursday, May 1, 2008 on the grounds of the nation's Capitol in Washington, DC. Speaking at the event were the co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional Motorcycle Caucus, Rep. Michael C. Burgess M.D. (R-Texas) and Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.), along with Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters, Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) President Tim Buche and American Motorcyclist Association President and CEO Rob Dingman. The gathering of national leaders was organized by the MIC and called attention to the annual spring surge of motorcyclists on America's highways and encouraged responsible riding and driving by all roadway users.

Burgess has introduced a bipartisan bill to fix a loophole in the HIPAA law that allows insurers to deny payment for injuries sustained while engaged in recreational activities like motorcycling. Burgess and Giffords have sponsored a House resolution (H. R. 339) that highlights Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month.

Dingman encouraged Secretary Peters and the DOT to urge state highway safety offices to do more with federal 402 funds to educate motorists regarding the importance of watching out for motorcycles.

Prior to making their remarks, the leaders shrugged off raindrops from a passing shower to view a motorcycle riding simulator, several late model bikes and the latest protective riding gear. Flanking the assembled group was a detachment of the U.S. Capitol Police Department's motorcycle corps.

**A Louisiana** House Committee voted recently for Louisiana to modify a law requiring adult motorcycle riders to wear helmets. The bill, which has Gov. Bobby Jindal's support, would require riders under age 18 to wear helmets, and would create a mandatory training course for anyone applying for a license to operate a motorcycle. The committee's approval moves the bill to the house floor. Louisiana is one of only 20 states that require all motorcyclists to wear a helmet.

**Maryland** motorcyclists will get one step closer to a safer ride this summer with a new state law that allows the use of auxiliary lighting. Both the House and Senate have approved a bill to make it

legal to use the auxiliary lighting, thus increasing their visibility to other drivers.

The auxiliary lights allow drivers to see motorcyclists from the side, as well as front and rear, when it's dark. The lights, which will only be used at night, illuminate the side of the motorcycle and don't project outward.

The bill will be passed on to Governor Martin O'Malley for signing on June 1. The bill passed unanimously through the House and Senate.

**The US Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** has issued an immediate, temporary closure of 31,000 acres of public lands in the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA) in southern California to all public use. The closure is to protect the public's health and safety from exposure to asbestos, according to a recent press release. The BLM has closed the area that serves for off-highway vehicle use, hunting, rock climbing and other activities in a response to a human health risk assessment. The assessment released by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concluded that the exposures measured by the EPA for recreational activities at CCMA are above the EPA acceptable risk range of cancers.

BLM Managers say the next step is to continue a scoping period through June 21 to determine what should be considered for the management plan, then develop a draft of the proposal and have a final document drawn up after that.

**South Carolina** Senate Bill 111 has passed the Senate and now resides in the Criminal Law Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. S111 will address faulty traffic signal devices that fail to detect motorcycles.

All Palmetto State riders are urged to contact their Representative and urge them to support S111 - the motorcycle red light bill.

For further information on this and all legislation affecting South Carolina riders, be sure to check out the Statewatch section of [www.AMADirectlink.com](http://www.AMADirectlink.com).

**In 2007, the National Audubon Society**, the Defenders of Wildlife and Southern Environmental Law Center filed suit in a Federal District Court against the National Park Service because the Park Service did not have a travel management plan for the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

In an attempt to resolve the lawsuit, the Park Service negotiated an interim agreement to satisfy the concerns of the plaintiffs. Essentially the interim plan would ban OHV travel at night during the peak summer season and altogether at certain breeding grounds. The proposed plan is subject to approval by a Federal judge. The interim plan, once official, would remain in effect until a permanent OHV management plan is completed by a deadline of April 1, 2011.

Sport fishermen, OHV enthusiasts, and the County Commissioners for Dare and Currituck Counties are less than pleased. The national economy is hurting local real estate sales, high gas prices are cutting down on vacation travel, and limiting access to some of the most exciting sport fishing grounds on the east coast seems to be the last straw.

While a number of citizens in North Carolina have been contacting their congressional delegation in hopes that the Congress will intervene to ensure that OHV access to Cape Hatteras remains unrestricted. For them, beach driving and surf fishing are beloved local traditions dating back far before this particular National Seashore was created in the 1930's. Congressional pressure is

certainly needed to change this situation and the AMA encourages all people to contact their Congressional delegation and encourage this responsible and traditional use of OHV recreation.

**Washington** State Governor Christine Gregoire exercised her line-item veto of a measure that would have banned all construction of new trails or facilities for off-road motorized recreation for at least a year.

The measure, which had been inserted in the state budget in a last-minute maneuver, without the opportunity for public debate, would have prohibited the state's Department of Natural Resources from building or expanding trails or facilities for off-road recreational vehicles until July, 2009. It was one of seven sections of the proposed capital budget that Gov. Gregoire vetoed.

The AMA and other organizations spread the word of the legislature's maneuver. Nearly 500 people used the AMA's Rapid Response Center to send messages to Gov. Gregoire, urging her to veto the measure. Others helping rally support for a veto were the Northwest Motorcycle Association, the Washington Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance, the Washington Road Riders Association, the BlueRibbon Coalition, the Motorcycle Industry Council, the AMA District 27 organization and Americans for Responsible Recreational Access. Notices were also posted on the popular Thumper Talk and KTM Talk internet forums.

**The European** motorcycle community has for a long time expressed serious concerns regarding Vision Zero, the strategy in which road authorities have envisioned how to achieve zero deaths and zero serious injuries on the roads. The concerns are due in large part to policies that rely on bans and regulations instead of adaptation of the road environment to suit all road users - motorcyclists included.

But even if motorcycles have been viewed as high-risk road vehicles with regard to accidents, they have been all but excluded from the Vision Zero document. The Vision Zero document has first and foremost given anti-motorcycle campaigners an opening to propose a ban on motorcycles as these, they claim, are not compatible with a Vision Zero.

The Vision Zero Motorcycle Road is the brainchild of two passionate engineers at the regional Road Authorities, Jan Petter Lyng and Bjørn R. Kirste, who have successfully designed the road exactly as the motorcyclists themselves recommend. It is not much that is needed to make a motorcycle friendly road with regard to preventing injuries in case of accidents: Crash barriers fitted with a sub-rail, forgiving side terrain, well thought out placing of signposts, cutting down sight-hindering vegetation - all in all small modifications and investments that are beneficial for all road users, including bicycles and cars. The price tag for modifying these 15 kilometres of road is estimated at 630 000 Euros.

**The Roof** R06 Bamboo is a new-design motorcycle helmet with a shell constructed entirely from bamboo fibers - a sustainable, eco-friendly and innovative medium of creation - that passes European safety requirements for street-use helmets.

Constructed from bamboo slivers, the Roof R06 managed to pass the E22-05 safety requirements for use on the road. The great thing about this helmet is that not only does it offer adequate protection

for your head; it also helps reduce the use of plastics and other environmentally-unfriendly materials during the manufacturing of standard helmets.

The only feature against this cool product is the price tag. The company is retailing these limited edition pieces for £189 (\$377) each.

**US Transportation Secretary** Mary E. Peters recently launched Fast Lane, the Department's new blog. Accessible at <http://fastlane.dot.gov>, Fast Lane will be an on-line community for all those interested in the nation's transportation system and its future.

Fast Lane contributors will include Secretary Peters, Deputy Secretary Thomas Barrett, Administrators from the Department's operating agencies, and other senior officials. In addition, the site will welcome guest bloggers from government, industry, and the transportation community. The Department will also use the blog to break news and make announcements.

Fast Lane is an open forum, and visitors are encouraged to submit comments, contribute ideas, and bring to the Department's attention innovative and exciting transportation activities in their communities. All comments will be reviewed before inclusion, and a representative sample will be posted to the site.

**Staffordshire, UK** mini-motorcycle riders are being targeted as part of a police campaign. Officers said they would seize and crush the bikes belonging to anyone found causing a nuisance on them.

Staffordshire Police said the bikes must be taxed and insured. If not, they can only be legally ridden on private land with the landowner's permission. Officers said more than 1,000 mini-motorcycle incidents were reported in the county last year.

**The AMA/ATVA** has teamed up with Americans for Responsible Recreational Access (ARRA) and several other national motorized recreation groups to develop a survey designed to gain a better understanding of how the US Forest Service's travel management rule is being implemented on the National Forest lands you access with your off-highway motorcycle or ATV.

If you're an off-road rider please go to <http://online.svia.org/survey/cgi-bin/qweb.cgi?4YXM42B> to take the survey. Even if you're not familiar with the US Forest Service's travel management rule your input will still be useful.

**The US Forest Service** finalized its Travel Management Rule in November 2005. The rule requires each Forest to designate roads, trails and areas open to OHV use and to publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) indicating those decisions. After the MVUM is published, any use of OHVs on routes or areas not identified on the map will be illegal. While there was no deadline for Forests to publish an MVUM in the rule, the Forest Service Chief directed Forests to complete work on travel management by December 2009. Virtually every Forest in the nation is currently implementing the rule.

Rider participation in the travel management process is critical. The AMA encourages all OHV enthusiasts to be involved in the travel management process.

The survey was developed and is being distributed through a partnership of ARRA, American Council of Snowmobile Associations, AMA/ATVA, BlueRibbon Coalition, Motorcycle Industry Council,

National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council, Off-Road Business Association, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America, Tread Lightly!, and the United Four Wheel Drive Associations.

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AMA Government Relations *News & Notes* is a monthly service compiled and edited by the AMA Government Relations Staff to keep motorcyclists informed of happenings around the world. We welcome your news & views. Please submit all material to Terry Lee Cook, Grassroots Manager, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147; fax 614-856-1920 or e-mail to [tcook@ama-cycle.org](mailto:tcook@ama-cycle.org).