



rights.

NEWS & NOTES

American Motorcyclist Association

September 2006

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will hold a two-day public forum on motorcycle safety beginning on Tuesday, September 12, 2006 in Washington, DC. Board Member Debbie Hersman will preside as Chair of the forum and AMA Vice-president of government relations Edward Moreland has been invited to provide testimony.

NTSB reports that 4,315 motorcyclists died in crashes last year, and the rate of motorcycle fatalities has increased more than 25 percent since 1997. "At a time when highway fatalities have been decreasing, motorcycle fatalities have continued to increase, both in overall number and in fatality rate," said Member Hersman.

The goal of the public forum is to gather information about ongoing motorcycle safety research and initiatives, as well as safety countermeasures that may reduce the likelihood of motorcycle accidents and fatalities."

During the forum, the NTSB will examine issues raised by a number of recent motorcycle accidents, including the June 12 motorcycle crash involving Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, and the June 11 crash involving a motorcycle and a minivan in Williamsport, PA that killed five persons.

NTSB staff will lead technical panel discussions that will examine each major aspect of motorcycle safety, including rider training and licensing, rider protective equipment, vehicle design, and public education of motorists and motorcyclists. Representatives from the motorcycle industry, government, and motorcycling organizations will be invited to give presentations highlighting their perspectives.

The forum will be held in Washington at the NTSB's Board Room and Conference Center, 429 L'Enfant Plaza, SW. An agenda for the forum will be posted on the NTSB's website when available. The general public will be able to observe the forum either in person or by webcast at www.nts.gov.

Iowa's new drivers will soon be more aware of motorcycles and bicycles on the road thanks to a new law that took effect July 1. Championed by ABATE of Iowa and sponsored by Senator Keith Kreiman, the legislation calls for Iowa's driver education students to learn to be more aware of two-wheeled vehicles on the road. The Iowa Department of Transportation will release new materials for driver's education classes this fall.

The law also enhances penalties for motor vehicle violations that result in serious injury or death of a motorcyclist or a bicyclist. The new law is consistent with the AMA's Justice For All campaign. For more information on Justice for All go to www.AMADirectlink.com and for more information on ABATE of Iowa go to www.abateiowa.org.

Missouri Governor Matt Blunt has signed a bill that includes "Clutch's Law," in memory of John Michael "Clutch" Clubine, who was killed by an inattentive driver. The new law, which takes effect January 1, 2007, increases penalties for drivers who injure or kill others by committing right-of-way violations.

Clutch's Law was passed after several years of effort by the AMA and Freedom of Road Riders. The law follows model legislation proposed as part of the AMA's Justice for All campaign, and allows for additional penalties of up to \$1,000 in fines and a drivers license suspension of up to 180 days, when someone is injured or killed, beyond the other fines for right-of-way violations.

The AMA supported the Missouri legislation by issuing Action Alerts through the AMA Rapid Response Center and AMA Grassroots Manager Terry Lee Cook, a close friend of Clutch, personally testified on behalf of the legislation.

The AMA launched the Justice for All campaign in response to numerous instances across the country in which drivers killed or injured motorcyclists and walked away with minor fines. In many cases, state laws do not provide for additional fines beyond a simple ticket for a traffic offense. The Missouri law addresses that potential injustice.

Elsewhere, laws consistent with the Justice for All campaign have passed this year in Louisiana, Wisconsin, Georgia, Oklahoma, New Hampshire, Iowa, and West Virginia.

Virginia's Roanoke and Lexington area tourism officials are joining forces to promote good motorcycling routes in the mountainous western portion of the Old Dominion State. Areas along Interstate 81 from the Shenandoah Valley to Southwest Virginia are already drawing motorcyclists to the meandering roads and natural beauty. So the Roanoke Valley Convention & Tourism Bureau and the Lexington and the Rockbridge Area Tourism Development office launched a partnership to promote what they already have...motorcycle tourists.

Officials mapped out six routes as representative roadways for visitors who like to take in new places on their hogs. There are two routes in Rockbridge, two in the Roanoke Valley and two that connect the two areas.

The local tourism offices expect to attract an attractive visitor demographic. The regional promotion is the first such tourism venture of its kind in the state.

The Tennessee Department of Safety has approved a grant of \$75,000.00 to CMT/ABATE of TN targeted for the implementation of the Volunteer State's first "Save a Life Campaign". These monies will be used to facilitate equipment purchases, video production and training of volunteers.

The initial focus will be training within the Drivers' Education classes of targeted high schools throughout the state. The group will also be looking for other venues where the training of automobile drivers would be beneficial.

The Amador County, California Board of Supervisors voted unanimously against the adoption of an off-highway vehicle (OHV) ordinance that would have curtailed recreational OHV use on private property.

Dave Pickett, American Motorcyclist Association District 36 Legal Affairs Officer, suggested to the Supervisors that the county enforce current regulations already on the books instead of punishing law abiding citizens who wish to use their own property in a responsible manner.

Amador County Supervisor Candidate Brian Oneto spoke against this ordinance because of private property issues and restriction of legal recreation by owners of said private property.

Similar ordinances have popped up all over the country. Riverside County, for example, has adopted the most restrictive OHV and noise ordinances in the state, and as a result is facing lawsuits from the OHV community.

The US Congress is in recess this time of year and many federal agency officials are taking vacations. Congress leaves town with an approval rating of only 28% and a disapproval rating of 58%. President Bush has an approval rating of 36% and a disapproval rating of 55%. What this all means is anyone's guess, but for now, Republicans are nervous and Democrats are optimistic about the November elections.

When Congress returns in September, intense political jockeying between the two political parties will begin in earnest. Some political pundits are predicting major shifts of political power. Whatever happens, the AMA will follow the political trends closely in order to keep you apprised on how any change in political winds might affect motorcycling.

The US Forest Service (USFS) published its Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use rule on November 9, 2005. The rule requires each National Forest or ranger district to designate those roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicles. This will be a massive undertaking that will require individual forests and districts to undergo an extensive process of route identification, evaluation, designation and mapping.

Many forests have already started the process and others will begin soon. In an effort to help ensure that each forest hears and understands the needs of the OHV community the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA), the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC), the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), United Four-Wheel Drive Associations (UFWDA), the BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC), and Americans for Responsible Recreational Access (ARRA) have partnered to develop a land use database to collect and disseminate information regarding the USFS' Travel Management Rule.

Local riders will be able to input information about the rule, i.e. meeting times and locations, updates on status, concerns with the process etc. and the groups will be able to provide direction and assistance or help identify other off-highway enthusiasts in the area. Representatives from each of

the associations will review the collected data and work together to determine the most suitable course of action for each database submission. This collaborative approach will allow the allied associations to pool resources and memberships and provide for a comprehensive approach to dealing with route designation.

Please take this opportunity to review the Land Access Notification Database (LAND). If you are aware of upcoming meetings regarding OHV use or have a report about a recently completed meeting or hearing let us know. Our groups are working together to do our best to ensure a successful implementation of the Travel Management rule but we cannot do this without your help.

Many Forests have outdated mailing lists and will provide little additional notification about their processes or upcoming meetings. As such, it is crucial that all of our members become involved at the individual forest (and in some cases forest district) level. Please stop by or call your local forest and ask to be placed on its mailing/email list for updates. Ask how they intend to implement the Travel Management Rule then enter what you learned into the Land Access Notification Database. With your involvement the OHV community will have our voice heard at Forests all across the country, without your involvement there will be an almost guaranteed loss of access to National Forest land for OHV use.

The US Forest Service is publishing for public notice and comment for 60 days proposed revisions to the agency's national trail classification system, including the Trail Class Matrix and Design Parameters, and proposed implementing directives in the Forest Service Manual and Forest Service Handbook. For the Federal Register Notice available for public comment see www.fs.fed.us/recreation/, and scroll down below the pictures.

This is a 32 page Federal Register Notice, so they spend several pages talking about what they are going to propose. The actual text begins on page 8. The Trail Design Parameters begin on page 17. If you have US Forest Service lands in your State, these parameters will affect your State.

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.