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NEWS & NOTES

American Motorcyclist Association

February 2007

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) is hosting a Washington, DC Ride Into Political Action seminar for motorcyclists who want to learn how to influence governmental decisions, whether in Congress or in their local communities.

The seminar, to be held February 24-27, 2007 at the Phoenix Park Hotel in Washington, DC, allows participants to meet and learn from the AMA's Washington staff as well as other political experts. Besides learning about state and federal issues facing motorcyclists today, participants will get tips on building relationships with government agency officials and on lobbying elected officials. The instructors will also prepare participants to meet face-to-face with members of their own congressional delegations.

A registration form is available in the American Motorcyclist magazine or by contacting Sharon Smolinka at the address below. Mail the completed form to AMA, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147. For more information, contact Sharon Smolinka at (614) 856-1900, ext. 1252 or by e-mail at ssmolinka@ama-cycle.org.

Pima County, AZ motorcycle owners, more than 6,200 strong, will no longer have to worry about whether their vehicles can pass the state's emissions tests.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has agreed that exempting the motorcycles from the testing will not harm air quality in the region. The change, which becomes effective in early 2007, helps more than motorcyclists; the EPA said those who drive "collectible vehicles" also can skip the testing. That affects another 1,400 vehicles. There already is an exemption for the oldest cars and trucks — those manufactured before 1967.

Motorists in Maricopa County are not quite so lucky: The EPA order exempts only collectible vehicles; motorcyclists still will have to go through the testing. Both areas of the state have had testing programs for years to comply with federal air-quality rules, particularly as they relate to carbon monoxide and ozone pollution.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has now posted the comprehensive State Highway Safety Management documents on their website. All fifty states' documents can be found at

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/SAFETEAWeb/pages/SafetyPlans.htm>.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) encourages all motorcyclists to review these documents to make sure their respective state agencies are taking motorcycling into account in their highway safety plans.

The 2007 Arizona State Trails Conference: Opportunities, Issues and Strategies for the Future is

now scheduled for October 4-6, 2007 in Prescott, Arizona. The conference will bring together all trail users (OHV, hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, etc) and land managers to understand current trail opportunities and issues and start planning for the future.

Arizona State Parks Trails Coordinator Annie McVay is now calling for proposed presentations for the conference. Send your ideas in an e-mail that includes: description of the topic to be covered, description of what participants will learn and take away from the session, names and brief credential of speakers for the sessions, and the length of time needed for your presentation. These proposals are due Friday, February 2, 2007. The proposals can be brief; they will follow up with more specifics with chosen presentations. Send proposals to trails@azstateparks.gov.

Saudi Arabian officials are increasing security vigilance in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah for the annual Hajj by banning motorcycles.

Officials almost immediately impounded 350 motorbikes since heightened security operations began. An official who wished not to be named told Arabnews.com that the motorcycle ban was a response to problems related to hit-and-run accidents as well as thefts where criminals used motorcycles to navigate crowds and escape quickly. Motorcycles have also been banned because riders in past years have used them as unsafe, unlicensed, one-passenger taxis. Transportation services are in high demand during the Hajj, causing a problem with taxis and buses.

Noise and pollution caused by motorcycles and scooters was also cited as a concern. Mopeds are particularly polluting because they use two-stroke engines that burn a mixture of oil and gas.

New York City Council proposals under consideration to curb loud motorcycle noise weren't exactly welcomed by the Bloomberg administration recently. Some Council members want to make it illegal to park certain motorcycles that don't have sound-dampening equipment. Also they are attempting to make it illegal for riders to engage in "exhibitionist behavior" including riding with one wheel off the ground, racing and creating unreasonable noise by accelerating whether or not the bike is moving. Motorcycles could be seized from owners. The Council promises to revisit the issue throughout the year.

Pakistan's home secretary has in exercise of powers prohibited the use of motorcycles or two-wheelers without silencers or mufflers for a period of four days around the 2007 New Year.

In a notification issued just prior to Christmas, the home secretary said certain groups of youngsters are likely to create a public nuisance and noise pollution on the New Year's eve by driving around in motorcycles and other two-wheelers without silencers, which creates unrest and disrupts public peace.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has installed the nation's first wildlife crossing designed to warn motorists of large animals approaching the busy highway. As the animal-detection system goes into operation, infrared cameras and military-grade software will set off large signs and warning lights so that drivers will know to slow down and be ready for a possible encounter with a 600-pound elk, a mule deer or some other creature of significant size.

This is an example of real-time ITS (information technology system) communication with drivers

that the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) has been involved in enhancing since our inclusion in ITS America over 10 years ago.

The high-tech crossing is part of an extensive system of wildlife underpasses and electrified fencing along a three-mile stretch of Arizona 260 about seven miles east of Payson that is designed to guide animals across the highway with less danger. It allows the wildlife to maintain migration and foraging patterns while minimizing the danger to motorists and the animals.

Europe's third Driving License Directive was recently adopted without any advantageous changes for motorcycling. The new driving license scheme will restrict access to motorcycles without any obvious safety reasons. The Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA) is concerned by the EU Institutions and Member States' lack of knowledge and understanding over motorcycling issues.

The European Parliament adopted the Directive on Driving Licenses without modifying the compromise reached between the Member States. The endorsement of the Compromise by the European Parliament was followed by the Council Of Ministers second reading which failed to bring about any changes.

Despite FEMA lobbying and the support of many decision makers, the outcome of the vote was no real surprise as motorcycling took a back seat to other issues. FEMA is totally unsatisfied by the motorcycle provisions included in the Directive as they are discriminatory to new and young riders and unjustifiably complex. Instead of improving safety, they will make access to motorcycles more difficult to enforce with an adverse effect on safety.

New Jersey, and surrounding states, riders are urged to contact your State Representative and tell them that you want them to support keeping the only legal OHV park open in the State of New Jersey.

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission has mandated that the New Jersey Off-Road Vehicle Park must close their operation by September of 2008 because the Commission is under pressure from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and the Egg Harbor Water Shed who are both opposed to OHV recreation in New Jersey.

The Commission has a responsibility to honor an agreement that they made with the OHV Park and that they promised not to close the Woodland Township OHV Park until they agreed to a new location for the park to move to within the boundaries of the Pinelands. The agreement was to have both the Monroe and the Woodland parks operating simultaneously by the end of 2005 and then phase out the Woodland operation over the next 3 years ultimately closing it in September of 2008. For further information or to find your representative, go to www.njohva.org.

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.