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NCOM BIKER NEWSBYTES

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PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS REPEAL OF KIDS' MOTORCYCLE BAN

President Barack Obama signed a bipartisan consumer safety bill on August 12 that exempts youth-sized motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) from the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) of 2008 that bans children's products that contain lead.

H.R. 2715, introduced by U.S. Representatives Mary Bono Mack (R-CA) and G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), passed near-unanimously in the House 421-2 on Aug. 1 and was approved by unanimous consent by the Senate later that day. The measure excludes kids' off-road vehicles from the overly-broad CPSIA lead certification rules, which previously prohibited their sale due to lead content of components such as batteries and brakes.

"This law is a win-win for American consumers and the American economy," said Congresswoman Bono Mack, "and I thank the President for signing this critically important bill into law."

Be sure to contact your federal legislators and thank them for rectifying the onerous "Lead Law" bike ban, and for supporting the rights of millions of off-road enthusiasts and future motorcyclists.

ABATE OF MICHIGAN REQUESTS YOUR IMMEDIATE ACTION

This urgent Call To Action is on behalf of ABATE of Michigan, requesting the help of all motorcyclists in their fight for freedom.

"Senate Bill 291 passed the Michigan Senate in late June," writes ABATE President Vince Consiglio. "We are asking all rights activists to send a post card to Michigan's Governor, Rick Snyder, urging him to support motorcycle helmet choice for adults."

Consiglio further advises that; "A postcard from a 'FREE' state may help him realize that Michigan loses motorcycle money every day of the summer with a mandatory helmet law. Governor Snyder prides himself on being all about business and helping business. Please urge Governor Snyder to support adult choice." MAIL to: Governor Rick Snyder, State Capital, P.O. Box 30013, Lansing, MI 48909 or call (517) 373-3400 or e-mail Rick.Snyder@michigan.gov. Michigan is one of 20 states with a mandatory helmet law for all riders, but before the state legislature broke for the summer the Senate voted 24-14 on June 28th to repeal their 40-year old helmet requirement for motorcyclists 21 or older, who have been riding for at least two years or passes a safety test, and have \$100,000 in personal injury insurance. A sunset provision would cause the ban on helmetless riding to resume in five years, unless the legislature acts again. The heavily-amended measure now moves to the House of Representatives for further action.

NHTSA (AGAIN) PUSHES HELMET LAWS

NHTSA Administrator David Strickland has testified once again before a Congressional committee urging federal action to get motorcyclists to wear helmets. On July 27, during a reauthorization hearing on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Strickland told a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation that "the most important step we can take to reduce the deaths of motorcyclists on our roads and highways is to assure that all riders wear a DOT compliant helmet."

He further stated that, “A grant program emphasizing the use of motorcycle helmets would be effective in reducing fatalities.”

Last year, in response to Congressional testimony from Strickland that increased helmet use is the core component of NHTSA’s motorcycle safety plan, U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) introduced a resolution urging NHTSA to concentrate on motorcycle crash prevention and rider education instead of lobbying for helmet laws.

U.S. MOTORCYCLE MARKET RESEARCH

Research and Markets, a worldwide marketing research resource, has announced the addition of the "Motorcycle Dealers" report to their offering of over 718,000 global marketing research reports, which covers nearly 4,300 motorcycle-related stores in the United States with combined annual revenue of \$18 billion.

According to their industry research, no major companies dominate; most companies have a single retail outlet, “The industry is highly fragmented: the 50 largest companies generate just 10 percent of industry sales,” states the report.

Under the “Competitive Landscape” heading, the R&M report says: “Discretionary personal income and interest rates drive demand, since motorcycles are high-ticket purchases and often financed. The profitability of individual companies depends on volume and sales of higher-margin goods like heavyweight motorcycles. Large dealers have advantages in broad inventory selections and negotiating power with manufacturers. Small dealers can compete effectively by providing superior customer service or offering unique services, like bike customization.”

The report further observes that, “Major competitors include private market sellers, other recreational vehicle dealers, service center chains, and independent service shops.”

Other key topics include: Industry Overview, Business Challenges & Trends, Industry Forecast & Opportunities, and Products, Operations & Technology:

For those in the motorcycle industry or starting a motorcycle business, or interested in better understanding the two-wheel marketplace, check them out at www.researchandmarkets.com. R&M has also conducted numerous other motorcycle-oriented marketing reports, including a Global Industry Guide and a Global Motorcycle Report, which examines market conditions across Western Europe, North America as well as key emerging countries such as China and India.

NEW REPORT REVEALS THAT 1 IN 7 DRIVERS ARE UNINSURED

Summer is the time for road trips, long motorcycle rides and making those daily back-and-forth trips to run household errands. Chances are drivers will not be involved in a vehicle accident during these travels, but everyone likely will be involved in at least one motor vehicle accident in his or her lifetime.

Across the United States, chances are roughly one in seven that a driver is uninsured, according to estimates released in April from the Insurance Research Council. The economic downturn is thought to be a major factor in the increase of uninsured motorists, with approximately 13.8% of U.S. drivers being uninsured in 2009 despite laws in most states requiring drivers to maintain minimum coverage.

In a new study, “Uninsured Motorists, 2011 edition,” the IRC estimates the percentage of uninsured drivers countrywide and in individual states for 2008 and 2009 based on the number of uninsured motorist insurance claims versus the number of bodily injury claims.

In 2009, the five states with the highest uninsured driver estimates were Mississippi, 28%; New Mexico, 26%; Tennessee, 24%; Oklahoma, 24%; and Florida, 24%.

The five states with the lowest uninsured driver estimates were Massachusetts, 4.5%; Maine, 4.5%; New York, 5%; Pennsylvania, 7%; and Vermont, 7%.

The moral? Protect yourself by making sure you're fully covered, with Uninsured and Underinsured Motorist coverage included in your insurance policy!

SAFEST STATES TO RIDE

According to a statistical analysis from TheStreet.com financial website, the safest state to ride in is North Dakota, with a fatality rate nearly a third the national average, low levels of congestion and high quality road surfaces.

In an article "The Safest States for Motorcycles" in the August 1st Business Section, writer Greg Emerson points out that, "The truth is that motorcycle riding is up. Way up. Between 1996 and 2005, motorcycle registrations increased 61% while vehicle miles traveled of motorcycles grew only 8.6%, according to the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. That means a lot of new riders, riding not very far or not very often."

In an effort to "help keep all those weekend warriors looking to get on a bike and go riding from losing their heads, we looked at the most recent fatality data -- from 2009 -- to determine which states were the safest for the aspiring Evel Knievels among us. We ranked all 50 states and the District of Columbia to see which ones had the smallest proportion of motorcycle deaths as a proportion of total traffic deaths."

Half of the states fall below the national average of 15.4%, and half above. Here are the 10 states with the lowest ratio of rider fatalities:

Tenth-safest: Vermont - Motorcyclist fatalities: 68; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 11.8%

Eighth-safest (tie): Virginia - Motorcyclist fatalities: 671; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 11.5%

Eighth-safest (tie): Kentucky - Motorcyclist fatalities: 745; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 11.5%

Seventh-safest: Missouri - Motorcyclist fatalities: 806; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 10.8%

Sixth-safest: Wyoming - Motorcyclist fatalities: 129; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 10.1%

Fifth-safest: Alabama - Motorcyclist fatalities: 776; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 9.8%

Fourth-safest: West Virginia - Motorcyclist fatalities: 334; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 7.5%

Third-safest: Mississippi - Motorcyclist fatalities: 632; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 7.4%

Second-safest: Nebraska - Motorcyclist fatalities: 211; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 7.1%

Safest: North Dakota - Motorcyclist fatalities: 135; Proportion of total vehicle deaths: 5.2%

HELMET AND ACOUSTICS RESEARCH COULD QUIET THE RIDE

After accelerating, most of the sound that a rider can hear isn't from the bike engine or other vehicles on the road, but from the air rushing over and around their helmet. Noise levels inside a helmet can reach rock-concert levels when traveling at highway speeds, and a group of engineers and psychologists from two U.K. universities have gathered to study how to minimize helmet noise to protect riders from hearing damage and reduce the potential distraction that noise poses to riders.

Their research paper, which has been accepted for publication by The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, says that riders experience noise from multiple sources. First is the engine noise, which is a relatively insignificant factor once riders accelerate to highway speeds. Audible wind noise can reach volumes as high as 115 decibels or more, roughly equivalent to what power saw operators without ear protection would hear. OSHA recommends limiting such exposure to

15 minutes or less per day. Turbulent air buffeting off the motorcycle windshield is another source of noise, as is air rushing around the chin bar of the helmet.

There's another type of sound experienced by riders, called body conducted sound. Aboard a motorcycle, this process transmits engine vibrations and the percussive force of the wind through the flesh and bone to the ear. Earplugs don't stop it, and it can be significant.

Another topic under investigation by the Bath group is how sound impacts attention, and one experiment measured how different volumes of sound impaired a test subject's peripheral vision. While riders and others recognize that noise can be a serious health issue, many U.S. jurisdictions prohibit the use of earplugs or other noise-reducing devices. One long road trip could take a rider through numerous changes in local laws.

NIGERIA BANS MOTORCYCLES IN TERROR-STRUCK CITY

Officials in Maiduguri, Nigeria's seventh largest city and capital of northeastern Borno State, has banned motorbikes in a bid to curb militant activities borne on the backs of these ubiquitous vehicles.

Motorcycles and Okada (motorcycle taxis) are the predominant mode of transportation in the mostly impoverished city, and members of the Motorcycle Transport Union have protested the ban on their livelihood, but the Borno State government is desperate to crack down on Boko Haram, an extremely orthodox Islamist sect that is seeking to overthrow the secular government in favor of a Muslim state. The terrorist group has become known for brazen public attacks conducted while riding motorbikes, and has killed at least 40 people including police officers and politicians in drive-by motorbike attacks.

QUOTABLE QUOTE: "Useless laws weaken the necessary laws."

Charles de Montesquieu (1689-1755), French philosopher and political thinker