

Legislative Update for Chatham County CBA – Dec 2009

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State Issues:

- **The 2009 Session of the General Assembly adjourned on August 12th.** The NC General Assembly will reconvene on Wednesday, May 12, 2010 at 12:00 noon.
- **The State CBA annual Lobby Day will be on Wednesday, May 19, 2010.** Please plan to attend if you can.
- **Myrtle Beach re-elected John Rhodes to another four-year term so the ordinances against bikers will probably continue for at least another four years.**
- **The NC Republican Party is considering only allowing registered republicans to vote in their primary. They say that left-leaning independents are helping to elect more moderate Republicans and they believe that is hurting the party. They have not made their final decision yet.**

Federal Issues (Reported by the MRF www.MRF.org)

- **US House Bill 1253 – HIPAA loophole fix.** – Forces insurance companies to tell you if they will not cover your medical expenses for injuries received in what they consider “dangerous” activities. (motorcycling is one of them) Passed the full House vote on April 2nd. In the Senate Health committee. Title: To require that limitations and restrictions on coverage under group health plans be timely disclosed to group health plan sponsors and timely communicated to participants and beneficiaries under such plans in a form that is easily understandable. Sponsor: Rep Burgess, Michael C. [TX-26] (introduced 3/3/2009) Cosponsors (1) Latest Major Action: 4/1/2009 Referred to Senate committee. Status: House voted: 422-3 in favor. Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.
- **Right to Repair Act HR 2057** - a bipartisan bill called the Right to Repair Act of 2009 has just been introduced in the House of Representatives that would, in fact, make it cheaper and easier for millions of consumers to have their cars and motorcycles repaired. Although similar legislation has been introduced in previous Congresses but not voted on, it takes on additional urgency in these tough economic times, especially with the closing of many auto dealerships. Currently some manufactures only make diagnostic tools and software available to their dealerships, severely limiting repair opportunities for consumers. Enter HR 2057, introduced by Edolphus Towns (D-NY), which would require car manufacturers make the tools and diagnostic information needed to repair their vehicles available to independent repair shops on the same basis that they make them available to their dealer-operated shops. Basic consumer choice in vehicle repairs means more fair market competition, which helps keep repairs affordable. Enactment of the Right to Repair Act of 2009 would be a win both for small businesses and consumers at a time when both need a boost. Although HR 2057 does have a greater likelihood of passage this Congress than similar bills have in the past, it still has a long way to go before being signed into law. Latest Major Action: 4/22/2009 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. **Rep. David Price (Western Wake), Rep. Bob Etheridge (Chatham), and Rep. Brad Miller are already co-sponsors. We are good on this one.**
- **Philadelphia Councilmen to propose license plates for bicycles** - Two Philadelphia city councilmen want bicycle riders to start getting the same treatment as motorists, and they plan to introduce bills that would require cyclists to get license plates for their bikes and increase fines against bikers who violate traffic laws. The bill would require bikers over 12 years old to register their cycles within six months of buying them and to get license plates. The one-time registration would cost \$20, and failure to do so would be punishable by a \$100 fine. The proposed terms of Kenney's bill would increase the fine for riding on the sidewalk from \$10 to \$300. The fine for wearing headphones while biking - currently \$3 - would become \$300.
- **New Motorcycle emissions standards taking effect** - As 2010 motorcycles hit dealer showrooms, new EPA emissions standards will be making them greener both environmentally and economically. Starting next year when stricter Environmental Protection Agency guidelines on motorcycle emissions come into effect for all new two- and three-wheelers built or sold in the U.S., the EPA projects a 50% reduction in pollutants emitted at their tailpipes -- but such drastic reductions come with a bigger price tag: According to a 2003 EPA report, the average estimated cost per highway motorcycle to meet the 2010 standards is \$45, which is likely passed along to consumers. At the same time, motorcyclists are likely to save money at the pump as the new technology brings with it better fuel efficiency.

Increased use of technologies demonstrated as effective in 4-stroke motorcycle engines, such as the catalytic converters, secondary air injection and electronic fuel inject systems, are expected to decrease harmful emissions, according to a 2003 EPA report. The report also reads, however, that the standards will not result in universal use of catalytic converters. Catalytic converters are pollution control devices that reduce nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide, and while not specifically required by the EPA rules, catalytic converters will have a hand in reducing emissions in the new standards. "We already have the 2010 models coming in, and they all have the catalytic converters on them," Steve Tuchschild Sr., owner of Mid-America Harley Davidson, told the Columbia Missourian newspaper. "That's new." The more stringent EPA standards won't affect existing motorcycles. The emissions limits will only apply to motorcycles and scooters manufactured after the effective date.

- **The passing of Dr. Hugh H. "Harry" Hurt, Jr.** – Harry Hurt, who passed away of an apparent heart attack at 82 years of age after being hospitalized 18 days for major back surgery. Dr. Hurt, as you know, was the principle investigator of the original motorcycle crash causation study, known appropriately as the "Hurt Report." The motorcycling community learned so much from his work and have labored 30 years hence to remedy the causal factors he identified in his 1981 report.

- **The passing of our brother Eddie James** – Eddie was our ride manager for the Ride for Kids in 2007 and 2008. Eddie was also an Iron Butt rider and judge. He was a great guy, loved riding, and loved helping other people. He will be missed! *A motorcyclist who slammed into the back of a van stopped in the HOV lane on I-75 has died, Atlanta police said Monday. Witnesses told police a Ford Van was driving in a northbound lane of I-75 Sunday night and stopped close to the Northside Drive exit because of a flat tire. The driver turned on the van's hazard lights, police said. A motorcyclist traveling in the HOV lane then hit the back of the van, causing the cyclist to be thrown from the bike, police said. The gas tank also ruptured, and the motorcycle caught fire, police said. The motorcyclist was taken to Grady Memorial Hospital and died shortly after, police said. The motorcyclist was from Atlanta; the driver of the van was from Rome, police said. Charges are pending a further police investigation.*

Awareness is our best defense. Please stay involved legislatively