

Legislative Update for Chatham County CBA – Nov 2008

Vinny Neuman – Legislative Coordinator – NCRider@att.net (919) 522-4922 www.NCRider.com

State Issues:

- **NC Elections:** Below is the link to the voting details for NC.

Not much changed for us:

- Rep. Joe Hackney ran unopposed.
- Rep. Stam was reelected.
- Rep. Ty Harrell was reelected.
- Rep. Jim Crawford was reelected
- Sen. Richard Stevens was reelected.
- Sen. Atwater was reelected.
- Sen. Doug Berger was reelected.

NC had a 68% voter turnout. Chatham County had 77%. Wake County had 73%.

- **CBA State Lobby Day** - The NC General Assembly will open on January 28th for the 2009-2010 legislative session. Our State CBA Lobby Day is Wednesday, February 11, 2009. Please plan to attend if you can. The more people who lobby their state legislators, the more power bikers have in shaping the laws that affect us.

- **Legislative Committee meeting in October:**

We are going to ask Rep. Dewey Hill to sponsor a bill to increase penalties for car drivers who violate our right-of-way. Currently, the minimum penalty for killing a biker is \$25. Our proposal will also require violators to have to attend motorcycle awareness classes and pay the cost of the class.

We are also looking for a sponsor for an anti-discrimination bill so bikers are not discriminated against for wearing back patches or other riding attire.

Doc Ski provided wording for two helmet bills and is requesting feedback. I emailed the bills to members in October. Please provide me with your feedback before December 1st.

Federal Issues (Reported by the MRF):

- **2010 Federal SAFETEA-LU Funds** - The third round of the 2010 funds has been announced and it's another successful year for 47 states and Puerto Rico. (3 states did not apply.) The 48 grants are listed below. This round spent \$6 million, the next and final round will spend \$7 million. The deadline for that application is August 1st 2009, and the guide to apply is on the MRF website. (SAFETEA-LU = Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) FY 2008 SECTION 2010 MOTORCYCLIST SAFETY GRANTS **North Carolina 3rd yr of funding: For: Training and Awareness programs \$136,206 I believe the CBA receives about \$7,000 of that \$136K.** This is federal funding for safety training and awareness programs that MRF members lobbied for and received several years ago.

- **MRF Awareness and Education Corporation** – The MRF has created a separate corporation called the MRF Awareness and Education Inc. The new corporation is a 501C and all donations to the MRF A&E are tax deductible on your federal income tax. The other reason they created this was to enable the MRF to apply for grant money to promote motorcycle safety and awareness. Our own Doc Ski will head the committee to apply for grant money. Join the MRF here: www.mrf.org/register.php

Awareness is our best defense. Please stay involved legislatively.

Please read DocSki's latest blog entry at least once a week:

<http://docskivv.bravejournal.com/>

You can also subscribe to the email alerts and receive an email every time Doc posts a message.

What is an MRO and why you should join?

What is an MRO?

MRO stands for Motorcyclists' Right Organization. There are federal level MROs like the MRF and the AMA and there are state level MROs (SMROs) like CBA in North Carolina. Many riders either don't know about MROs, don't care about what happens to them, or have a biased, unrealistic opinion of the goals of an MRO.

The portrayal of motorcyclists in movies, a bias media, and the irresponsible actions of a very small percentage of riders has created an image of motorcyclists that is far from the truth. As a result, we are continually faced with prejudices and discrimination. Today, our government's answer to many issues is to impose more regulation and control over individuals. Poorly informed legislators and insurance companies that don't want to pay medical claims, would like nothing more than to see a decrease in motorcycling. Off-road riding bans, denial of access to hotels, high insurance rates, prohibition of motorcycle modifications and senseless laws to inhibit your enjoyment of riding have, and will, continue to be a threat to motorcycling. In order to protect your right to ride, it is necessary that you include yourself among the thousands of North Carolina motorcyclists who have formed the most effective grassroots motorcyclists' rights organization in the state. Someone in the motorcycling community must take the action to monitor legislators to make sure they do not pass laws that adversely effect motorcyclists. State MROs do that now for YOU.

Concerning brand or style of motorcycle:

MROs are brand neutral and will not tolerate brand bashing. They do not promote organizations that discriminate against a brand or a type of motorcycle. If you are a brand basher, please stop reading now as you will not be welcomed in any MRO.

Federal level MROs

The MRF (Motorcycle Riders Foundation) is a nationwide organization based in Washington, DC that lobbies full-time for our rights at the federal level. They are solely dedicated to street rider issues and legislation. They are currently lobbying to close a loophole in the HIPAA act that allows medical insurance companies to deny your medical claims when you are hurt on your bike. They also help out at the state level by working as a conduit between state MROs. They facilitate communications and help to share best practices between state MROs. To review their complete legislative agenda or become a member, please see their web site: <http://www.MRF.org>

Please note that the MRF is not the same as the MSF. The MSF is the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. The MSF provides the BRC and ERC safety classes that many of us have taken. The MRF is the Federal level MRO that protects our rights. They are completely separate organizations with completely separate goals.

The AMA (American Motorcycle Association) is focused on both street riders' rights, and off-road riders' rights. They too fight against discrimination, promote an unrestricted riding environment, and also lobby to make sure there are lands available for off-road riders to use. If you are an off-road rider or an on-road rider, joining the AMA will keep you informed and educated on the issues that are important to off-road riders. <http://www.ama-cycle.org/legisltn/index.asp>

State level MROs (SMROs)

CBA/ABATE (Concerned Bikers Association / American Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments aka: American Bikers Aimed Towards Education) CBA promotes fair motorcycle legislation, motorcycle awareness in high school driving classes, and promotes motorcycle safety. Since the 1970s, the CBA has taken on the responsibility of improving the image of motorcycling in North Carolina, supporting fair legislation and legislators, and increasing the level of public funds that go towards rider safety education. CBA / ABATE works to protect your rights at the state level. Many members of riding clubs and manufacturer sponsored clubs also complement their memberships in those riding clubs with a membership in the CBA. That keeps them informed and educated on issues important to them and expands their friendships and fun ride opportunities. CBA members have several goals. Riding more and sharing time with others with similar interests are some of them. With chapters in 21 North Carolina counties and 1800 members, the CBA is a family of riders who band together for group rides and events all across the state.

What is NC BikePAC?

NC BikePAC is a political action committee (PAC) created to help further the legislative goals of the motorcyclists of North Carolina. Most motorcycle rights organizations' nonprofit tax status does not allow the organization to expend great amounts of its budget on lobbying activities, to make direct monetary donations to candidates or to write letters of endorsement for a particular candidate. A political action committee is allowed to participate in these activities. North Carolina BikePAC will assist motorcycle rights organization members and all interested motorcycle enthusiasts to educate and lobby government and the general public about motorcycling, the rights of motorcyclists, and the preservation of our American tradition of freedom.

"But I'm not a political person":

Almost all members of MROs start out without any knowledge of the legislative process or have an interest in politics. Many belong to MROs for years and never get involved legislatively. The point is that joining a MRO will help fund safety training, motorcycle awareness, and lobbying efforts on your behalf. If you would like to ride more, meet new friends, and contribute to the betterment of motorcycling in North Carolina, you should consider joining a state level MRO and a federal level MRO. Of course, you will receive newsletters, patches, pins, the opportunity to attend local chapter meetings and participate in local charity and fun rides.

One last note:

Don't wait until you are laying in a hospital bed, or attending a friend's funeral before you start caring about bikers rights! The \$25 you will spend on the membership fee will keep you educated and informed on local and federal issues that threaten your lifestyle.