

Legislative Update for Chatham County CBA – March 2012

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NC State Issues:

H 105 MAY AS MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS MONTH – Designates the month of May as Motorcycle Awareness Month. This bill was introduced at the request of and is actively supported by CBA/ABATE of NC. Introduced by Keever, Fisher. Filed: 2/15/11' 5-4-11: Passed 1st reading, referred to Rules **No change this month – no action possible until the 2012 session.**

H 166 PURPLE HEART MOTORCYCLE SPECIAL PLATES – Authorizes DMV to develop a special motorcycle license plate for Purple Heart recipients. Introduced by McGee, Folwell, Killian, Spear. Filed: 2/22/11. 5-4-11: Passed 1st reading, passed Transportation, now in House Finance committee **No change this month – no action possible until the 2012 session.**

H 392 MODIFY MOTORCYCLE HELMET REQUIREMENTS – Repeals the requirement that a person who is eighteen years old or older wear a helmet while operating a motorcycle on a public street or highway or public vehicular area. Introduced by Hastings, T. Moore, McCormick. Filed: 3/16/11 Passed 1st reading, 5-4-11: referred to House Transportation **No change this month – no action possible until the 2012 session.**

S 187 - Outlaw Red Light Camera Systems - Sponsor East (R - Stokes/Surry/Yadkin) 5-4-11: Passed Senate, in House Rules committee. **No change this month – no action possible until the 2012 session.**

S 355 - MASONIC SPECIAL PLATE/MOTORCYCLES – Authorizes DMV to produce a motorcycle plate for civic clubs such as the Jaycees, Masons, Kiwanis, Optimist, Rotary, Ruritan, and Shrine. Introduced by East. Filed: 3/16/11 Passed 1st reading, referred to Finance: 3/17/11 **No change this month – no action possible until the 2012 session.**

S 480 – Bill title: “Let Those Who Ride Decide” Provides helmet choice for people 18 and over. 5-4-11: Sent to the Senate Rules commit. **No change this month – no action possible until the 2012 session.**

IMPORTANT NC DATES:

2012 Primary Election: 8 May 2012
General Election: 6 November 2012

Second Primary Election (if necessary): 26 June 2012
Short session starts: May 16, 2012

1-28-12 - Lobby Day for CBA/ABATE of NC will be held on 23 May 2012 beginning at 9:00 AM. The meeting place will be the Huddle Room of the Clarion Hotel Downtown. The Clarion is located at 320 Hillsborough St, Raleigh, NC 27603. The number for room reservations is 919-832-0501. We will convene the meeting at 09:00 hours for a brief discussion of the CBA Goals for 2012 and some tips for talking to your elected officials. If you are scheduling meeting times with your legislators please do not schedule anything before 10:00. The meeting should be over in plenty of time for you to make a 10:00 appointment. Please advise your chapter early so that members may make plans to miss work on that day. Looking forward to seeing all of you there. Doc Ski Legislative Director, CBA/ABATE of NC

Chatham CBA ride will leave the Citgo gas station on the corner of Hwy 64 and Jenks Rd in Apex at 8:00 AM.

Federal and international issues:

2-7-12: US House Committee Passes HR 3199 - The United States House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space and Technology passed HR 3199 - a bill that would require a comprehensive study of the scientific and technical research on the implications of fuel with more than 10 percent ethanol. Essentially, this bill would slow down the fast tracking of the fuel blend that is 15 percent or more ethanol. The Administration made it legal at the end of 2010 for fuel suppliers to sell the blend. We at the MRF are all for reducing our dependence on foreign oil and keeping the planet healthy, but the facts are not all in when it comes to the 15 percent blend when used in a motorcycle engine. In fact, the Motorcycle Industry Council has said that the blend could be harmful to motorcycles. The EPA went so far as to say that motorcycles are prohibited from using the new blend altogether. Until further comprehensive study, such as required by this legislation, is conducted we must issue caution when using the new blend. The MRF will keep you updated on this and every other issue effecting motorcyclists from Washington DC.

2-24-12: VIRGINIA MAY LEGALIZE TWO-ABREAST RIDING – The Virginia General Assembly is considering the repeal of a 40-plus year-old law that makes it against the law for two motorcyclists to ride side-by-side in the same lane. Virginia and Vermont are the only two states in the U.S. with such a law on the books, while 48 other states either don't ban the practice or have specific laws allowing it. There's no indication those states have more crashes or problems related to two-abreast riding, according to the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists.

2-24-12: FLORIDA SEEKS STIFFER PENALTIES FOR NEGLIGENT DRIVERS - ABATE Florida members from around the state were out in full force at the state capitol on Monday, Feb. 13th asking lawmakers for safer roads and to support legislation for stricter penalties for drivers who kill bikers on the road. "Kill a motorcyclist they get an \$82 fine, that's all they get; failure to yield. You do that in a car, hit somebody else in a car, you get vehicular manslaughter," said James "Doc" Reichenbach, ABATE President. Reichenbach, who also serves as Chairman of the Board for the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM), testified on behalf of ABATE's Stiffer Penalties Bill, S.B. 1754, which passed the Senate Transportation Committee on Jan. 27th by a vote of 7-0, and now goes to the Senate Criminal Justice Committee. During the rally in Tallahassee, the names of bikers killed in wrecks last year were read aloud. Fifty-six bell chimes were sounded; one for each lost life. The bikers spent the rest of the day talking to lawmakers, then headed home hoping when they return next year, there are fewer bells to ring and fewer bikers lost.

2-24-12: MYRTLE BEACH RALLY DATE CONFUSION PROMPTS ABATE BOYCOTT - Myrtle Beach Harley-Davidson has moved the dates of its official spring rally into late May, effectively adding 10 more days of Harley-related events on the Grand Strand and sparking confusion among bikers, businesses and rally promoters over when the rally will take place. "They just don't seem to want to play by whatever rules we set," said Councilman Gary Loftus in calling on council members to revoke all May vendor permits for biker events. "They keep wanting to push and push and push well they've just pushed too hard this time." Horry County (S.C.) ABATE has decided to stage a boycott, not of the spring bike rally, but of the local Harley dealerships involved in rescheduling the Cruisin' the Coast rally to May 18-28, carrying it over into Memorial Weekend when sportbikers traditionally begin arriving for Atlantic Beach Bike Fest aka "Black Bike Week". "The dust just got settled with Horry County, and now this has upset the county council all over again," said Gary Balcom, ABATE chapter coordinator, recalling that in 2008 Myrtle Beach passed a litany of laws aimed at ending the rallies altogether, including a city-wide helmet law that was later ruled unconstitutional. "It's a bad idea and was not discussed with anyone else," said Balcom. But there are other concerns, too, Balcom said. The large crowd would overwhelm local law enforcement resources, he wrote in an ABATE statement. "The last thing we want to see is any event getting out of hand," Balcom wrote. The statement calls the date change "a slap in the face to the county council" and encourages bikers to boycott the two dealerships in Myrtle Beach and North Myrtle Beach "and we hope that the biker community as a whole will come together with us on this boycott until such time as they retract their plan of overlapping dates."

2-24-12: MOTORCYCLE SALES HOLD STEADY FOR 2011 - The 2011 motorcycle sales estimates from the Motorcycle Industry Council are in, with annual unit sales holding steady at 440,000. The good news: motorcycle sales haven't declined from 2010. The bad news: they haven't gone up either. The MIC reports 440,899 total motorcycle sales for 2011, up 0.3% from 2010's unit tally. The motorcycle market shows gains and losses within the various segments, reports www.motorcycle-usa.com, noting that the largest sector, on-highway motorcycles, recorded a 1.8% increase over last year at 312,124 units. The boom and bust scooter market benefited with an 11.8% gain at 31,850 units. The biggest winner, however, was the dual segment which jumped 14.2% for the year, gaining 3337 units. Off-Highway motorcycle sales dropped 13.5% on the year, losing 10,905 units from the 2010 tally of 80,962. Combined with the ATV market, which continued a downward sales trend, more than 45K OHV unit sales were lost on the year. The 2011 total 440K annual motorcycle sales mark shows stabilizing of a market that crashed following the economic crisis in late 2008. Total motorcycle unit sales topped 1.1 million in 2008 (the sixth consecutive year sales had topped the million unit mark), but plummeted 40.8% in 2009, followed by a further 15.8% decline in 2010.

2-14-12: WORLD-FIRST STUDY ON CAUSE OF SERIOUS MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENTS - A world-first study will examine the cause of serious motorbike crashes. Motorcyclists will be part of a \$1.3 million Australian study aimed at slashing the number of motorcycle accidents. The ground-breaking inquiry will compare the experiences of riders injured in crashes at specific sites with riders who have travelled through the same site safely. Transport Minister Terry Mulder described the new research as one of the most comprehensive motorbike studies attempted globally. "By comparing the two groups, we hope to learn not only what went wrong for those involved in crashes, but also what went right for those who negotiated a particular crash site safely," Mulder said. More than 1100 riders - half of whom have survived crashes - will be recruited over the next 18 months. The research is being funded by the State Government and headed by the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC). Experts, five of whom are motorcyclists themselves, will analyze factors such as speed, experience and the physical environment in accidents. Experienced and active riders have contributed to the questionnaire design to ensure relevance and improve study outcomes. Results are expected towards the end of 2013.

Awareness is our best defense. Please stay involved legislatively.
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