

MOTORCYCLE RIDERS FOUNDATION MEETING OF THE MINDS

22nd – 25TH SEPTEMBER

ATTENDEES REPORT

This conference was presented by the Motorcycle Riders Foundation in conjunction with the MRF Awareness & Education and was hosted by ABATE of Michigan.

First General Session:

This was an opportunity to meet the board members of the MRF and each State Motorcycle Rights Organization (SMRO) had an opportunity to speak on accomplishments, intentions, and problems that were pertinent to them. Representatives from 35 states and 5 countries were present and there many issues that were common among the attendees. These included;

- Motorcycle Awareness/Share the Road programs presented in high schools
- Rider Awareness for Out of State Riders campaigns
- Rider Education programs, finding space to conduct courses, mandatory vs voluntary
- Impaired driving, don't ride fried
- Developing legislation to ban the discriminatory motorcycle only roadside stops
- Red Light bills; allowing motorcycles to make left turns at lights that don't sense motorcycles
- Right of Way legislation; increasing penalties for violations
- Defining what is a motorcycle
- Right to Repair motorcycles; OEMs need to make codes & manuals available to shops
- Road Hazards; rumble strips and painted road surfaces
- Mandatory Helmet laws; what about riders rights to freedom of choice
- Graduated licensing proposals/problems
- Noise ordinances and rider responsibilities
- Sportbike riders and how to get them involved

Second General Session:

This session consisted of a State of the MRF, presentation of Federal & State Legislative awards, presentation of the Youth Advocate Scholarship award, and an update on the MRF Awareness & Education program, financial report, and legislative update from the lobbyist in WashDC.

Third General Session:

While the majority of this session was dedicated to the recognizing individuals for their outstanding efforts it also included presentations on the state of motorcycling by CMC (or MCC) which is the Canadian Motorcycle Conference and by FEMA (Federation of European Motorcycle Assn). These organizations have encountered and continue to campaign many of the same issues that are now facing the US motorcycling community. There are a lot of scary initiatives that being proposed in their

communities that may someday impact US riders.

Breakout Sessions attended by Juneau ABATE representatives:

- Legislative Planning;
 - This was a group discussion to help form the 2011-12 legislative agenda for the MRF. The discussions began with a review of last year's accomplishments and continuing efforts.
 - HIPAA "Light" was passed in the House and pends in the Senate. The purpose of this legislation is an interim measure to counteract the loophole that could allow insurance companies to decide NOT to pay medical expenses for injuries resulting from "risky" activities such as motorcycles, skiing, horses, etc. This legislation, if it passes, will require the insurance companies to state in writing what will or will not be covered at the time the policy is purchased or this goes into effect.
 - NHTSA funded, motorcycle only, checkpoints. Legislation is in the House to stop future funding by NHTSA to local law enforcement agencies to conduct these discriminatory practices. Sponsors in the Senate are needed.
 - HR 904 & HR 239
 - Motorcycle Grant Funding per the SAFETEA-LU bill. This bill has not yet been renewed/reinstated but is on it's 9th extension. It is hoped that it will be passed without changes. This fund arises from a gas tax of 0.18.5 cents per gallon which results in approximately \$49M for states.
 - MRF tasking for the upcoming year are to pursue:
 - Supporting crash avoidance studies
 - Monitoring for Distracted Driving legislation, unless the legislation addresses all forms of distractions, MRF will not support the legislation.
 - Maine has a regulation which permits checking of cell phone records to determine if the phone was being utilized at the time of a crash and fines/penalties are increased if so.
 - Monitoring legislation for emission and sound level enforcement
 - Definitions of motorcycles (vs 3-wheeled cars, etc)
 - Right to Repair issues, HR 1449

Good of the order: Kentucky Motorcycle Drag Strip decided to implement a policy of "No Colors" at events. A boycott of the venue was organized as well as a telephone campaign with approximately 400 calls in which resulted in a reversal of the ruling within a 24.5 hour period.

- "Town Hall" Meeting; Q&A session regarding the MRF and the support it provides to the State Motorcycle Rights Organizations (SMROs).
 - This was primarily for the executive directors/presidents of the SMRO's and since Madame President was not there, I attended to find out what the execs thought that us

reps should actually be doing for the cause.

- Most felt that the reps should be selling memberships to improve the financial support for the lobbying causes.
- Most SMRO's track legislative efforts as an organization rather than tasking the rep.
- Of course, most SMRO's are large organizations with thousands of members.
- MRF State Reps; roundtable discussions to promote the MRF, administrative update from the WashDC office, and election of rep board members.
- Blessings of Liberty, Bikers View of the Constitution; history of the S Constitution from 1787 to present and how it has impacted our lives and continues to impact our lives.
 - Wow! Jesse McDugald, a high school Social Studies teacher delivered quite the inspiring and thought provoking presentation.
 - Laws are not so cut & dried and there are many ways to raise questions about the legitimacy/enforcement of some regulations.
- Magic Members & Toxic Members;
 - Magic Members – the single most critical element in a successful organization.
 - Recognize and cherish them
 - Toxic Members – can be classed into 3 Threat Levels.
 - Level I can be helpful if dealt with properly
 - Level II may temporarily reform but will always relapse.
 - Level III has no cure and the best thing to do is turn them out quick.