

News For Thought



Texas Bike bill Requires 3-Foot Clearance From Drivers

A new bill could mean new rules for Texas drivers. House Bill 2459 states that drivers would have to give pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists three feet when passing or turning. HB 2459 was heard in the Texas House Transportation Committee for "unprotected road users," and if passed a violation would be a Class B Misdemeanor.

"At this point, I'm excited with three feet, anything is better than zero feet. We're just waiting to see whether or not Governor Greg Abbott ratifies that bill," cyclist Les Akins told Newschannel 6, adding that he hopes HB 2459 will raise awareness.

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Congressional Measure Would Create "Autocycle" Vehicle Class

With a growing number of 3-wheeled vehicles hitting the marketplace, Congress seeks to create a new classification of vehicles to be designated as "Autocycles". Previously, these types of vehicles have been classified as motorcycles, so Senator David Vitter

(R-LA) has introduced the Autocycle Safety Act, S. 685, to create their own new category and require the new class of three-wheeled enclosed vehicles to meet both motorcycle safety standards as well as certain passenger vehicle standards.

3-wheelers are currently exempt from many state and federal rules that dictate safety and emissions standards that apply to cars, but the new category created under S.685 would impose many rules on manufacturers by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): including automotive standards for seating systems, seat belts, child restraints, air bags, roof crush resistance, and flame-resistant interiors; as well as motorcycle standards covering brakes, lights, rims and tires, controls and displays, and glazing materials.

South Dakota Raises Speed Limits In Time For Sturgis

South Dakota became the latest state to kick up the speed limit, as an amendment to Senate Bill 1 passed on March 24, 2015 changing the speed limit on the state's two interstate highways. The new law took effect on April 1 (no joke), so you'll legally be able to travel at 80 mph on the I-90 and I-29, meaning that motorists and bikers going to the 75th Anniversary Sturgis Rally will arrive a little bit faster.

States across the country have been raising their speed limits as lawmakers argue that roads and cars are safer. Idaho, Wyoming and Utah have already raised their limits to 80 mph; on one toll road in Texas, it's 85.

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Bill Would Require Motorcycle License In Alabama

Legislators in Alabama, the only State in the Union that doesn't require a motorcycle license or endorsement, are considering legislation to end that distinction. An oversight in the 1990s led to a gap in the law that allows anyone 16 and older with a regular driver's

license to also operate a motorcycle in the state.

If enacted, the new law would require operators to pass a knowledge test to obtain a Class M endorsement, and the bill also authorizes police officers to write a ticket if you are riding a motorcycle without a license. 40 states require a skills test for a motorcycle license, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, but

that's not likely to happen anytime soon in Alabama.

Political insiders indicate the bill is likely to reach Governor Bentley's desk, who is expected to sign it into law.

AIM & NCOM Founder Richard M. Lester Inducted Into Hall Of Fame

Aid to Injured Motorcyclists (A.I.M.) and the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM) and affiliated & supported groups and organizations, extend Congratulations to founder Richard M. Lester on his recent induction into the Freedom Fighters Hall of Fame.

The Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame has announced their 2015 inductees into the Sturgis Motorcycle Museum Hall of Fame and one into the Freedom Fighters Hall of Fame. Lester, a California attorney who founded AIM & NCOM three decades ago and numerous subsequent motorcycle outreach groups, is the first national bikers' rights attorney to be inducted.

"The Sturgis Motorcycle Hall of Fame is designed to recognize individuals or groups who have made a long term positive impact on the motorcycle community," said museum Executive Director Christine Paige Diers. "The Freedom Fighters Hall of Fame recognizes the commitment and sacrifices individuals across the nation, and world, have made to protect the rights of motorcyclists, and who have made a significant impact through their work in grassroots rights efforts."

Richard became an attorney at the ripe age of 45. While in law school he realized that motorcycle riders were an unrepresented group who didn't have a voice. His love for the sport prompted him to focus on the need of a voice in the motorcycling community. In 1982 after passing the bar, his work for motorcycling began. It took him a couple of years to organize a team of attorneys who rode motorcycles, and

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who also had an understanding of what was needed in the motorcycle community and how to go about finding the voice that was needed.

Aid to Injured Motorcyclists (AIM) was founded in 1984, and is a legal protection program that is free for all motorcycle riders, providing free medical information and emergency contact of next-of-kin. To

date, over 2 million cards have been distributed nationwide, with A.I.M. attorneys in every state providing legal services for riders and doing pro-bono (free) work within the motorcycle community.

The following year, in 1985 Richard Lester founded the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM) to provide a much-needed voice for the motorcycling community. Today NCOM is a national organization with over 2,400 motorcycle groups and organizations that have joined together as a whole to tackle the legal and legislative aspect of motorcycle riding.

Today, more than 30 years later, Richard is still working hard for the motorcycling community. He has attorneys in every state, and has also founded three (3) additional organizations so that every motorcycle rider has a voice. One program is the Confederation of Clubs, which is comprised of motorcycle clubs, from 1%ers to family clubs. The Christian ministry sector came together in 2005 to form Christian Unity to improve networking with both secular and Christian bike groups. And the newest addition is the National Sports Bike Association, the sport bike division of NCOM to have a clear and unadulterated voice directly from the Sport Bike Community on issues that directly affect them.

"Richard has dedicated his life to the lifestyle of motorcycling and has contributed so much of his time and effort, not to mention the financial investment he has donated to the cause," reads his nomination for the Freedom Fighter Hall of Fame. "He is the only attorney who has always, and continues, to give back to the motorcycling community by creating five (5) FREE and useful national programs, and by hosting many conventions and seminars to educate and inform all motorcyclists of their right to ride."

Individuals chosen for induction into the Sturgis Motorcycle Hall of Fame and the Freedom Fighters Hall of Fame will be honored at the annual induction breakfast ceremony on Wednesday, August 5, 2015, at The Lodge at Deadwood during the 75th anniversary of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. This event is open to the public and tickets are available at www.sturgismuseum.com/hall-of-fame/freedom-fighters, or by calling (605) 347-2001.