

Share the road, save lives May is Arizona Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) and the Arizona Motorcycle Safety & Awareness Foundation (AMSAF) remind motorists that May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, both nationwide and in our state.

"For almost 40 years, the AMA has promoted motorcycle awareness in May because, as the weather warms in large parts of the country, riders take to the road in increasing numbers to enjoy the thrill of riding," said AMA president and CEO Rob Dingman. The AMA urges motorists to be steadfast in their awareness of conditions around them, maintain a safe distance when following motorcycles, check their mirrors and blind spots before changing lanes, and pay particular attention when making left turns across traffic.

AMSAF is playing a key role in an Arizona statewide effort known as Share the Road, which is geared to significantly reducing the number of crashes and fatalities on Arizona roads.

AMSAF, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (AZGOHS) and key sponsors are providing dis-

counted rider scholarships so riders get properly trained; offer a unique helmet program with substantial savings to protect riders; and AMSAF provides startling yet critical information about the importance of roadway respect and the need to reduce distracted driving, as hundreds of new drivers are moving to this state every day—and this is impacting Arizona roadways in a major way.

Arizona was just named one of the nation's top 10 states for the worst drivers/riders. AMSAF executive director Mick Degn notes that the economic loss in Arizona last year was more than \$10 billion from some 126,987 vehicle crashes in our state in which people were hurt—more than 3,100 motorcycle and 123,000 all other vehicle crashes—and there were record numbers of fatalities.

The Share the Road program is a statewide public awareness effort aimed at focusing Arizona motorists on the critical need to be undistracted when driving, while providing scholarships statewide to train motorcyclists how to ride more defensively.

This multi-pronged movement is supported and

promoted by Arizona's governor, AZGOHS, AMSAF, Dignity Health (Chandler Regional Medical Center), RideNow Powersports, Law Tigers and others.

Share the Road was originally developed to provide training scholarships at a reduced cost, so more Arizonans could get the training they need to ride safely. However—with half of the crashes and fatalities on Arizona roadways the result of distracted drivers—corporations and organizations statewide are noting that everyone operating a vehicle in Arizona has to start paying more attention.

The **AMA** tracks bills in state legislatures across the country that address the issue of distracted driving. Examples of activities that take a driver's focus off driving include talking or texting, eating and drinking, and adjusting entertainment or navigation system controls, etc. They note that driver-assistance technologies including adaptive cruise control, automated braking and lane-keeping assist promise to reduce crashes, but are still in their infancy, and drivers must not rely on these systems. Launched by the AMA in the early 1980s, Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month and its message have been adopted by many AMA-sanctioned clubs, state motorcycle-rights organizations, the motorcycle industry and government entities. Visit www.AmericanMotorcyclist.com.

AMSAF, a 501c(3) non-profit organization, works with the state of Arizona, business partners and sponsors including local businesses, healthcare, police departments, insurance, legal and other prominent entities and individuals, to help decrease the number of distracted and DUI-impaired drivers and to provide scholarships, statewide, to train motorcyclists how to ride more defensively. Their overall mission is safety awareness to reduce the phenomenal number of crashes and fatalities on our roadways. Visit www.amsaf.org. ■

