

Motorcycle Safety and Awareness

By Jim Roberson

This month's article deals with improving safety through the efforts of the Washington State DOL Motorcycle Task Force. Bruce McMahon, the Washington District Educator sent out a note that contained information forwarded to him by Eric Carlson, Chapter WA-I Educator. Eric is also a member of the task force. Their ideas are very good but require the assistance from not only us as riders but also motorcycle dealers. Four of their recommendations are

- *Increased training opportunities for riders*
- *Improvements to the current curriculum, including evaluation and possible adoption of different curriculum*
- *Increase public awareness of the requirement for all motorcyclists to have a motorcycle endorsement*
- *Promote motorcycle safety statewide through public information campaigns in partnership with law enforcement and other state agencies.*

I would offer the following comments on these recommendations.

1. Increased training and curriculum improvement
 - a. GWRRA provides courses for advanced riding skills, trike riding, sidecar riding and trailering. This is the only formal training agenda that I know of offered by a motorcycle club. We are truly friends for fun safety and knowledge. We also have the Rider Education Levels program that helps us tune our skills and keeps us current in our training needs not only for riding skills but also CPR and first aid.
2. Increased awareness for the requirement for an endorsement and promotion of motorcycle safety
 - a. Again GWRRA offers the items listed in 1a but we also know the value of having an endorsement. We realize that the vehicles we drive are much different from cars and trucks, (yes, even you 3-wheelers) and we ride accordingly. We do have the occasional accident or lay down but they are few and far between.

One of their findings totally amazed me; *One third of fatalities were motorcyclists who did not have a valid motorcycle endorsement.* That should not happen! A dealer should not be allowed to deliver a motorcycle to a rider without a valid endorsement. For those vehicles bought out of state, the endorsement should be a requirement before the license tag is issued. With that, I will close and remind all of you to **ride safe!**