

# Meeting of the Minds 2015

## Sept 24-27, 2015 Milwaukee, WI.

The annual conference of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) began Thursday, September 24, 2015 in Milwaukee, WI with five attendees from Idaho. The Meeting of the Minds (MOTM) was as informative, enlightening and entertaining as usual. During the opening session on Thursday evening, seated at the head table were 20 officers and members who have stepped up to do the heavy lifting for the members of the MRF and MRFA&E. Lane Triplett, Chairman of Idaho's ICMS was introduced as A&E's vice chairman. According to my count there were 350 + attendees, 35 states represented and 31 reps who spoke about the focus of their state's legislative efforts. Helmets, autocycle, checkpoints and handlebar heights were issues that were mentioned repeatedly. Many states announced legislative successes but it became apparent that there is much work to be done to protect the motorcycling lifestyle that we hope to pass down to our children and grandchildren. I mentioned our legislative successes for both the autocycle and the training permit process. I also mentioned lane sharing, highway maintenance techniques and "2 up" rider training considerations as points of focus for the coming session in Idaho.

Friday morning's general session was opened with comments by the MRF President "Hardtail" Willard and the focus was our approaching loss of freedom through legislation and the murders in Waco, Texas. (*My choice of words to refer to the events in Waco and the legislation was implemented in Australia.*) The treasurer, Frank Carbone, spoke about the increasing financial strength of the MRF. The Young Activist Scholarship Awards were presented by the MRFA&E to three young active riders, two of whom were from Colorado and one from Virginia. (*"Kid" Crawford, the vice chairman of ICMS and the Idaho Asst. rep to the MRF is a prior recipient of the scholarship award.*) Then legislative awards for both state and federal efforts were awarded to various states for successfully passing significant state legislation. The awards included efforts for stopping noise, motorcycle-only checkpoint, handlebar height, and helmet legislation. (*Thanks to your efforts, none of these are issues in Idaho.*) Later in the morning session we heard Tom Hoelter, one of the 12 original buyers of Harley Davidson from AMF in 1981. The 12 got a bank to lend the buyers \$80M, AMF carried a note for \$10M and the group mortgaged every asset that they each personally held and came up with \$10m between them. After the first 6 months the motor company had lost \$50M. WHOOPS! You know the rest, as they went public with the aid of tariff restrictions enacted by the government, and today you are riding American iron.

The afternoon was comprised of two breakout sessions consisting of three choices each. I attended the legislative planning session with the chief executive officer of each SSMRO in attendance at the conference. During this session the legislative agenda for the up-coming year is determined for the MRF. (*There were many items discussed and voted on by the attendees. I can't take accurate detailed notes that fast so I will not attempt to list them here. I will post the list with its correct language when it is published by the MRF office in Washington D.C.*) These issues and the appropriate corresponding actions are the essence and purpose of the MRF, the national voice on the congressional platform for all the Sustaining State Motorcyclist's Rights Organizations throughout the United States.

Prior to the evening's MRFA&E fundraiser, a braking demonstration was held in the parking lot where highlights of the STAR Braking Skills Practice Course were shown. The event was narrated by Lane Triplett of ICMS. The fundraiser was held at the local Harley dealer.

Saturday morning general session was comprised of the presentations of awards and a "Fact or Fiction" presentation by Matt Danielson of the Virginia Coalition of Motorcycles. He showed the fallacy of the arguments used for mandatory helmet legislation from injury to insurance premiums and points in between. Jeff Hennie V.P. Government Relations, our lobbyist in D.C. spoke in general terms about

the various bills in Congress and the bills were thoroughly discussed later in the legislative planning breakout session of the afternoon. Dave Condon, the Director of the MRF's Reps Program presented the State Reps Awards. "Slider" Gilmore, of Iowa, had a presentation entitled "What Successful People Do". You know what they do? Among other things they set goals and write them down, and among other things, you should use common sense and think before you speak. Slider highlighted the media personality Dave Ramsey and his book The Financial Peace University. Your goals should include who, what, when, how, where and why.

The two afternoon breakout sessions offered 4 options each and I attended the Reps Meeting in the first period where we re-elected Doc D'Errico of the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association (MMA) as the Reps' Representative to the BOD along with other nuts and bolts business items. The last session was an eye opener for me. I didn't know what to expect from the "Off Highway Vehicle" break out session but I had received a phone call from a OHV member in Kootenai county about our legislative successes, so I thought I would attend. Idaho has 13,000 miles of off highway trails for quad and dual sport bike riders, along with horse, bicycle and hiking trails. The funding program was initiated by Senator Sims of Idaho in the 70's. The high point of the session for me was the fact that Indiana has formed a coalition among on and off road riders into ABATE because they have common "state and federal" funding issues within their state. (*Maybe ANI and ICMS should look at this to grow its membership, among other things.*)

Saturday evening was filled with the Bibs vs Quilts tug of war (*the bibs won 2 out of 3*) and the annual awards banquet with the silent and live auctions. A lot of money was raised for the MRF from the items donated by the ABATE chapters throughout the USofA. (*The Hoodoo hippy tee shirts were a hit.*)

All in all the conference was a tremendous success and your rep returned invigorated. I would like to thank **every** member of ABATE of North Idaho for financially supporting my attendance. I also thank each member of ICMS for sponsoring their four BOD attendees, Lane Triplett, Judy Petersen, Boyd Rue and Bob Brumpton. I hope to be able to continue to represent ANI, ICMS and the SMRO motorcycle riders of Idaho to this ever so important national organization, the Motorcycle Riders Foundation. This organization is us and without it we wouldn't have a voice for motorcyclists on the national stage.

Thank you, each and every one,

Dave Cazel  
MRF Rep, Idaho