



# Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes

## March 9, 2017

Texas A&M Transportation Institute  
Gibb Gilchrist Building, Room 102  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

### Highlights

[TxDOT is transitioning management of motorcycle related grants](#)

[In 2016, there was a 5% increase in motorcycle fatalities](#)

[Only 50 open slots left for The Statewide Motorcycle Safety Forum](#)

[TTI researchers are developing a safety-focused interactive map of motorcycle routes in Texas](#)

[TMSC Volunteers wanted for Look Learn Live outreach events](#)

[Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing representatives present on Share the Road: Look Twice for Motorcycles statewide media campaign launch on April 27. Speakers with motorcycle riding history and personal stories are wanted for the event.](#)

[TTI researcher presents using Look Learn Live social media as a tool for promoting events and for encouraging behavior changes](#)

[Open Discussion](#)

### Opening Remarks/Welcome New Members

Chris Beiries opened the meeting with introductions of attendees.

### Tribute to Dan Jeffries

Jude Schexnyder led a tribute to Dan "DJ" Jeffries, who passed away in February 2017. DJ was the state program manager for TxDOT's motorcycle safety activities, and played a strong role in advancing motorcycle safety in the state of Texas. Among his many accomplishments were the championing of a NHTSA assessment of motorcycle safety activities in Texas and the subsequent development of a five-year strategic action plan for motorcycle safety, and the funding of a comprehensive analysis of motorcycle crash data for the state.

## TxDOT Motorcycle Safety Activities Transition

Jude Schexnyder, TxDOT, will be taking over the management of the Look Learn Live motorcycle outreach project and motorcycle mapping project at TxDOT. TxDOT is transitioning other work that DJ managed to Jude and others at TxDOT. Proposals for FY18 TxDOT Traffic Safety Grants, which includes the grant that funds Look Learn Live activities, are currently being evaluated; it is important to ensure that proposed activities under this grant continue to be relevant to motorcycle safety outreach needs, so input from motorcycle safety stakeholders is important to make sure the grant activities meet these needs.

In 2016, there was a 5 percent increase in motorcycle fatalities and a 6 percent increase in motorcycle crash injuries over 2015 (preliminary count as of end of February 2017). Some of the crash/fatality statistics for 2016 are as follows:

- 53 percent of motorcycle riders killed in crashes in 2016 were not wearing a helmet
- 38 percent of fatalities were at intersections or intersection-related
- 3 percent of fatalities occurred on wet pavement
- 846 crashes involved at least one other vehicle
- Top 5 most cited contributing factors:
  - Failure to control speed
  - Unsafe speed
  - DUI
  - Failure to drive in single lane
  - Driver inattention

Alcohol use among riders was discussed; approximately 44 percent of motorcycle fatalities over past several years involved an intoxicated rider.

2016 crash data for motorcycles will be posted on the Look Learn Live website.

## Motorcycle Safety Forum and Motorcycle Instructor Conference

Mike Manser, TTI, introduced the planned agenda for the 2017 Forum, which is posted on the Look Learn Live website. The Forum will be held in Austin on April 7. Planned speakers include:

- Tim Buche of the Motorcycle Industry Council,
- Amber Trueblood of TTI with a presentation on the five-year motorcycle crash analysis,
- Jay Jackson of ABATE in Indiana,
- Jude Schexnyder with a motorcycle safety update from TxDOT, and
- John Young of the Texas DPS with a motorcycle training update.

The lunchtime presentation will be by SKIDBIKE.

A panel discussion in the afternoon will discuss ways to improve rider safety; panel members including motorcycle club road captains and non-riding motorists are being sought to participate in this panel. Contact Sam Haynes, at [s-haynes@tti.tamu.edu](mailto:s-haynes@tti.tamu.edu), to get involved or suggest a participant. About 100 people have signed up for the Forum as of March 9; maximum attendance is 150, so there are spaces left. Sign up on the Look Learn Live website; if you sign up, please attend if at all possible to avoid wasting attendee slots and food costs.

The Forum will be held the day before the Motorcycle Instructor conference, at the same location. Forum attendees with an interest in becoming motorcycle instructors are encouraged to register for and attend both events. Note that each event has a separate registration; signing up for the Forum DOES NOT register you for the Motorcycle Instructor conference, and vice versa.

John Young, DPS, commented on the ongoing need for motorcycle instructors in Texas, and related issues that will be addressed at the Motorcycle Instructor conference on April 8. The release of motorcycle training funds by the state legislature was a positive development; among the initial projects funded is a new motorcycle instructor training facility being built in the Midland/Odessa area. The training curriculum has recently changed to focus more on safe riding behaviors rather than solely on skills. A question was raised about how to encourage motorcycle training/licensing among young riders, including funding training for those who can't afford the course fee; there is currently no mechanism for scholarships or similar subsidization of training fees. Those who are interested in training needs, funding, and related issues are encouraged to attend the instructor's conference.

Mike asked the attendees for feedback regarding this draft agenda. Comments/questions included requests from Coalition meeting attendees for TTI researchers Amber Trueblood and Eva Shipp, regarding the crash analysis presentation.

## TTI Motorcycle Mapping Project

TTI's Paige Ericson-Graber presented on the TxDOT-funded motorcycle mapping project, which is developing an interactive map of motorcycle routes in Texas that includes safety information, such as locations of motorcycle crashes. Three specific features:

- Crash map – map of Texas with popular motorcycle routes highlighted. Routes can be selected from a drop-down menu or by clicking on the map. The selected routes will include information on crashes along that route, including contributing causes of those crashes.
- Some of the popular routes will include a video of the route, to show a rider's view of the roadway and the environment. This year, the featured route is the Three Sisters. Next year additional routes will be videoed and added to the site.
- The website will include a social component, for riders to interact, post pictures, and comment. Participants will be also able to rate routes for fuel availability and other amenities, scenery, and other features.

The website is under construction; a prototype has just been approved and the website will go live in August. Paige asked TMSC members to try out the website when it goes live, and participate in a user survey to provide feedback on the site's features and suggest improvements.

An attendee asked if the safety information on the map will include causes of specific crashes shown on the map. Paige answered that the map will provide analyses of crash clusters to identify common crash factors. Fault (i.e., whether a particular crash was the fault of the rider or not) will not be specified for each crash, but contributing factors will be identified. Suggestions included ratings of the roads in terms of difficulty (similar to ratings for ski slopes); Mike Manser answered that user input/ratings will include estimates of the skill level required to ride a particular route safely.

John Young commented that the map will be useful for trip planning; is it possible to develop a hard-copy version of the map for distribution as well, with recommendations about specific routes? Jude answered that the online map is intended to be a unique resource, not intended to compete with the various printed maps available; TxDOT/TTI can't recommend specific routes, businesses along those routes, etc., but can provide information that can be a resource for planning; however, users can comment on these items through the social component. A question was raised about potential links from this map to maps in other states; Jude and Mike answered that this specific type of resource is not currently available in other states that they know of. Jeff del Castillo asked if information on construction along routes, etc. could be added to the map; since TxDOT maintains a separate real-time road condition map already, a link to this map should be added to the motorcycle route map. Mike Manser asked if information about standard hand signals used for group rides could be added or linked from the map.

An attendee asked if rider registration and training will continue to be a focus of the TMSC, and asked if the state's stance on helmet requirements is likely to change with the increase in motorcycle fatalities in 2016. Jude answered that the focus of TMSC has always been to identify motorcycle safety issues that everyone can work on together. Since a mandatory helmet law is not supported by all of the riders involved in the TMSC, the TMSC does not take that position; instead, TMSC focuses on encouraging voluntary helmet use and other gear use through education.

## Look Learn Live Outreach Events and Volunteer Opportunities

Christie Havemann presented an overview of Look Learn Live outreach events. So far Look Learn Live has attended nine events, with another seven or eight planned for the remainder of the fiscal year. Events have included the Lone Star Rally, the COC&I Rally, the Dallas Autorama, and other rider-centric and general-public events.

Volunteers are always needed to help TTI staff work at event booths; if you are interested in volunteering, there is a sign-up on the Look Learn Live website. Jude also asked for any suggestions on future events to add to the list; keep in mind that one of our primary messages is to motorists: Look Twice for Motorcycles! For that reason, we want to include a lot of events for the general public. Christie added that many of this year's events came from TMSC member suggestions.

Christie also described the new event backdrops, the display motorcycle, and the iPad stands for showing video, all of which are now available to enhance the booth displays at events. Others commented about the new “I am a motorcyclist and I ride” personalizable photo frame that is now circulating on Facebook.

## Paid Media Campaign

Robert Nash and Mark Evans from Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing presented information and distributed flyers on the statewide launch of the Share the Road: Look Twice for Motorcycles statewide media campaign on April 27. SMA is looking for two speakers for the launch, including someone who can share the perspective of motorcycle clubs and someone who can share a personal story about a motorcycle crash. They would also like to identify people in several local markets around the state to speak at local events following the initial launch. Pictures of event displays were presented. The paid media campaign launch will be in Austin on Thursday, April 27, followed by local events:

- April 29 – King William Fair, San Antonio
- April 30 – Texas Crawfish Festival, Houston
- May 6 - Kite Festival, Waco
- May 13 – Downtown Art and Farmer’s Mkt, El Paso
- May 27 – Art on the Greene, Greene Park, Arlington

The event display items will be available for use at other events after the above event schedule is complete. Contact Sherri Robelia at TxDOT. To volunteer to speak at the media events listed above or to request campaign materials, contact Robert Nash at [RobertM@sherrymatthews.com](mailto:RobertM@sherrymatthews.com) or 512-779-384, or Mark Evans at [marke@sherrymatthews.com](mailto:marke@sherrymatthews.com) 979-492-1150.

Jude asked that as many riders as possible attend the April 27 launch event.

## Identification of Future Speakers for TMSC Meetings

Mike Manser asked for suggestions from TMSC members for speakers to be invited to future TMSC meetings. Speakers have the option of teleconferencing in rather than traveling to College Station. Suggestions received included the following:

- Someone to speak on motorcycle training – how training affects riding, how training benefits emergency maneuvering.
- Aging riders and age-related changes and limitations to be aware of.
- Statistics regarding the ages of riders who are at fault in motorcycle crashes (both older drivers and younger drivers); effects of medications on riding.
- Mike suggested speakers from other motorcycle safety advocates and program representatives in other states to hear what is being tried outside of Texas; this suggestion was met with interest from attendees.

- Mike suggested representatives from motorcycle dealers/manufacturers.
- Jude suggested hearing from motorcycle industry on emerging technologies (connected vehicles, automation, advanced protective gear, other advanced technologies) that may start to become options or standard on new motorcycles.
- IIHS representative on emerging technologies, etc.
- Speaker from Austin – he has spoken in the past about LED helmets, other technologies
- MotoLiberty in Dallas – large gear store, might send a representative.

## Using Social Media to Spread Motorcycle Safety and Awareness

Gabriella Medina of TTI joined the meeting via WebEx with a presentation on uses of social media in motorcycle safety efforts. She focused specifically on using social media as a tool for promoting events and for encouraging behavior changes. She also presented Look Learn Live's social media platforms on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram.

Questions from attendees included the following:

- What are the top three things we could do to improve Look Learn Live's social activity? Answer: follow Look Learn Live on social media, share posts/tweets, and engage with social media posts by commenting or liking.
- What's the most effective social media platform right now? Answer: couldn't say at this point, still need to study this question. Twitter seems to be the most effective for getting media match dollars; people are more likely to follow Twitter than Facebook for outreach programs like this. Instagram can be more effective for young audiences. Much of this, however, is personal preference.
- Are you seeing a general trend regarding age groups on various social media preferences? Answer: yes, in general the newer social media programs attract younger users, older users are later adopters. The newest trend among young users is Snapchat; Facebook has older users since it has been around longer. The disadvantage of Snapchat is that posts disappear after 24 hours.
- Does Look Learn Live have analytics on the social media programs? Answer: yes, we track analytics on the different social media channels.

Mike Manser invited TMSC members to also send suggestions about the types of information they would like to see posted on Look Learn Live social media.

## Open Discussion and Adjourn

Stephen Ratke, from FHWA, summarized FHWA/TxDOT's exploration and assessment of engineering solutions such as high-friction surfaces and paint markings, signing, improved vehicle detection at signalized intersections, other intersection treatments, etc. to evaluate their effects on motorcycle safety. This effort will likely be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Jude mentioned three intersections in Fort Worth where motorcycle-specific warning signs have been implemented. There was a discussion of other motorcycle-friendly measures such as reduced or free tolls for motorcycles.

Lane-splitting and lane-filtering – a bill allowing lane-filtering is being introduced by Kirk Watson in the current legislative session, along with a “dead-light red-light” bill that allows a vehicle (like a motorcycle) that cannot be detected by a signal’s loop detector to treat the red light like a four-way stop and proceed when safe.

Jude reminded meeting attendees about Motorcycle Safety Awareness month in May. A question was asked about why motorcycle safety messages are concentrated in the first half of May while Click It or Ticket messages take over (on changeable message signs, etc.) during the second half of the month; would it be possible to alternate days for these two messages through the whole month to spread the awareness out for a longer period of time? One suggestion – while TxDOT dynamic signs are harder to change, signs operated by cities/local governments could be another way to get the word out.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:50.