



Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes

August 24, 2017

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Gibb Gilchrist Building, Room 102

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

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Opening Remarks/ Welcome New Members

TMSC Chair Chris Beireis opened the meeting at 10:05 by introducing himself and welcoming new members. Attendees went around the table and introduced themselves. In attendance were coalition members from the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Skilled Motorcycle Riders Association, various motorcycle riding groups and clubs, Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing, and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. Beiries thanked everyone for coming.

Overview of Motorcycle Mapping Project

Paige Ericson-Graber, TTI, presented an update on TTI's motorcycle mapping project. She reminded the coalition that she had presented several coalition meetings ago to give them an introduction to the project. The project is an additional page to the LookLearnLive.org website, funded by TxDOT. The page maps motorcycle crashes as well as popular motorcycle routes. The page brings together the popular

routes along with valuable safety information that riders can use prior to embarking on their motorcycle trips. Ericson-Graber noted that the first phase of this project was to develop the page and create content. The researchers working on it are now improving aesthetics on the page. There are currently 25 routes on the map, and are also listed below the map.

Users can sort routes by title, rider ratings, safety, scenery, and other factors. The routes are accompanied by a brief summary and description of the route, user ratings, and photos. Clicking on a specific route yields a detailed map of the route that has marks where fatal and incapacitating injury crashes on the route have occurred. Total crashes, total fatalities, top lighting crash conditions, the number of crashes involving an impaired rider, and more specific details of the nature of crashes can be found on the page as well. The webpage uses narratives from crash reports pulled from TxDOT's CRIS database that give more details about the fatal and incapacitating crashes. Ericson-Graber told the attendees that the project will hopefully generate interest from riders, who will submit their own photos and summaries of the routes. The goal for this project is to provide a resource for the general public, all motorcycle riders, and in particular, ride captains and road captains who are planning big group rides on routes they may not be familiar with. Once the page is live, Ericson-Graber encouraged the attendees to join the webpage by creating a profile that will give users access to submitting photos, reviews, and a link to their own personal social media accounts.

The question of liability was brought up in regards to different riders rating the skill level of a route. Ericson-Graber noted that they will add a disclaimer to the website that made it clear that comments and skill level ratings were only suggestions. Another question was if a user reports that a road is damaged, will that information be sent to TxDOT? There was consensus that a reporting mechanism to TxDOT on road quality would be ideal. Ericson-Graber agreed, but noted she would have to look into adding that feature.

Ericson-Graber concluded her presentation by showing the coalition one of the accompanying videos for one of the most popular routes – The Three Sisters. Videos of routes are filmed by a rider with a GoPro, riding through the route. Safety tips are provided through a voice over and are also displayed on the screen. Three videos were made this year, and the project allows for four more videos for next year.

The attendees had many questions, including could the map be color coded in relation to levels of safety? Will the map be compatible with mobile devices? Could there be an accompanying real-time weather component?

Overall, the feedback was very positive, with several constructive critiques and suggestions for improving the website.

TxDOT Motorcycle Survival Presentation: Overview & Responses

Jude Schexnyder, TxDOT, gave an introduction to a rider safety presentation project TTI developed for TxDOT. TTI researchers used crash data to identify the common factors and causes in motorcycle crashes and develop the information into a presentation that Schexnyder is delivering to motorcycle

groups and riding clubs across Texas. Schexnyder spoke to the need of driving fatality numbers down, which will not happen if riders are not educated on the reasons why motorcyclists are crashing and dying. Schexnyder articulated that riders need to improve their skill level, educate themselves, and look out for each other. Schexnyder told the coalition that he is open to traveling and delivering the presentation to groups big and small. “I don’t really care about the size, it’s the message that is important”, he told the group. “I don’t preach; I just tell you the reality [of what is causing riders to die]”. Schexnyder delivers the presentation to combat misconceptions regarding motorcycle crashes, and to give riders skills to increase their riding abilities.

One attendee asked how to get riders excited to learn. Schexnyder answered that the culture has to change through a grassroots-level effort. “The only way we can positively effect [change] is through the club members, we need to get club’s members looking out for each other”. One attendee had concerns that there was not enough attention being made to intersection related crashes involving cars and motorcycles. Schexnyder let the coalition know that his presentation does go over car-versus-vehicle and intersection-related crashes.

Schexnyder concluded his presentation by inviting coalition members and meeting attendees to contact him and have him meet with groups and clubs to deliver his motorcycle survival presentation.

Motorcycle Strategic Action Plan Supplemental TMSC Workshop Overview

Mike Manser, TTI, presented about the Motorcycle Strategic Action Plan Workshop that was conducted at the last TMSC meeting. “Our hope is to continue to do this with different strategic items within the action plan; probably every other meeting or every third meeting to continue creating a database of additional action items that people can take”, Manser said. Manser spoke to the need of identifying the next step after creating an action plan, something he hopes to address at a future TMSC meeting. “If you just put ideas onto paper and that’s it, it’s not worth anything. We have to figure out how to take the next step”. Manser articulated that there is no easy way to change culture, but it could be a strong topic to address in future meetings. He concluded by reminding attendees that the document developed that details the efforts of the TMSC’s Workshop is available online at LookLearnLive.org and was emailed out to all coalition members.

Gear Up PSAs Presentation & Feedback

Mike Manser presented TTI’s Gear Up, Torn Up PSAs. The PSAs are a part of TxDOT and TTI’s efforts to encourage motorcycle riders to wear gear. The videos are developed by pulling clips from YouTube and editing them together with a voice over. Due to the success of the videos, TTI & TxDOT are working to develop more Gear Up, Torn Up PSAs. The new videos will feature riders crashing with all their gear on, a stark contrast from the first series that shows riders without gear crashing and getting hurt. There has

been a conscious effort to feature videos that do not show riders on stunt bikes, or any crashes that are too grotesque and gory. Another set of videos will be developed that focus on common crash types for fatal and incapacitating injuries. Crash records were pulled to identify the most common crash types, which are one-motor-vehicle (OMV) run-off-road crashes, OMV crashes with speed as a contributing factor, intersection related crashes, and OMV crashes where the rider hits a fix object. These videos can show riders with and without gear. Manser asked the group what kinds of videos the coalition would like to see in this series, or into another series. Answers included:

- Riders wearing brighter colored gear that are involved in near misses. This would show that they are wearing not only gear, but gear with high conspicuity.
- A video similar to the famed gorilla and basketball court, where multiple riders in bright colors and dark colors ride by and the viewer is asked how many riders they saw.
- An entire series dedicated to conspicuity that would showcase how lane positions, bright colors, certain shapes, and extra lighting all increase conspicuity.
- Instead of focusing on what riders should be wearing, videos depicting what they should not wear, and discouraging flip-flops, shorts, and other improper gear.
- Videos that depict different types of gear, such as mesh and light weight gear compared to leather and heavier gear. This would educate riders on options that may be more comfortable for them that they are not familiar with.
- “Finish the thought” where the rider is shown wearing a helmet and gloves, but not jeans or appropriate shoes. The idea is to encourage riders to wear all of the appropriate gear – not just some of it.
- Testimonials from riders showcasing the damaged gear that saved their lives.
- A series dedicated to skills such as braking, cornering, swerving, etc.
- Instead of focusing on the motorist needing to see the rider, a campaign about the rider needing to see the motorist and car. An inverted effort of “can you see me now?”
- A video demonstrating the parking lot skills learned in MSF courses and how it positively affects one’s riding ability. This could be expanded to show other skills and maneuvers riders can practice in parking lots.

Overall, attendees were very interested in seeing videos created that address the skills needed to successfully ride a motorcycle, a video that addresses the knowledge needed to stay alive that is not intuitive, as well as videos on how to be seen by motorists, and videos depicting details about what kind of gear is appropriate for general riding as well as riding in specific weather.

Identification of Future TMSC Meeting Locations, Dates, and Times

Mike Manser addressed the group after lunch, asking if there were any other times or locations to host future TMSC meetings. Typically, TTI researchers involved in the grant that supports the TMSC decide dates and the location. There are four meetings a year, per the grant contract. Manser asked if there should be more meetings that are shorter in length. A TMSC member brought up the annual Forum, and asked if it could be held at a different time in the year. This meeting, which is different from the quarterly TMSC meetings, has been held at the same time as the Motorcycle Instructor Conference held by Texas DPS. One attendee asked if they could be held later in the day, so that attendees would not have to leave so early in the morning if they are coming in from out of town. The group agreed that Thursdays work well. Manser noted that they are hoping to give more notice in the future. The group agreed that more advanced notice would be preferable. The conversation shifted to discussion on the need to include local dealerships from the Bryan/ College Station area. Manser let attendees know that TTI will plan to determine quarterly meetings soon and send out a calendar. Manser asked if there were any speakers that the group would like to bring in as part of a new effort to bring in outside speakers from a variety of different motorcycle safety stakeholder groups. The coalition brought up:

- Bringing in young drivers and teens learning how to drive.
- Having someone from the roadway engineering departments of TxDOT visit.
- Having Jude give his motorcycle survival presentation to the group.

Manser concluded by asking the coalition to email him at any time with any recommendations or ideas.

Associate Designer from KLIM Technical Riding Gear Presents to coalition on New Gear Trends, KLIM Development and Design Strategies, and More

Associate Designer from KLIM Technical Riding Gear, William Makowski, joined the coalition meeting via WebEx to talk about innovation, trends, and statistics in the motorcycle gear industry. Makowski, who started riding motorcycles in 2010 as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zambia, works at the KLIM world headquarters in Rigby, Idaho. Makowski began his presentation by recommending an article called “Blowing the Lid Off” by Dexter Ford, which provides an in-depth look at helmet design and protective capabilities. Makowski spoke about high-end personal protective equipment (PPE), or riding gear, and how companies focus on the needs of competitive riders and design gear accordingly. Makowski noted that Moto GP riders experience up to 690 crashes in a season, with only 30 yielding bone fractures due to the gear they wear, commonly produced by Dainese, Alpinestars, and similar manufactures.

KLIM designs riding gear for a variety of riding environments and styles, with a targeted focus on racing, adventure, and touring. KLIM offers a protection guarantee – if you are wearing KLIM gear during the event of a crash, you can notify them and send them a copy of your official crash report and KLIM will

replace your gear for free. Not only is this a great deal for riders, it is great for KLIM in their quest to understand crashes better. KLIM holds onto the crash reports received and uses them in their approach to designing riding gear. KLIM has looked to other motorcycle crash resources to develop their gear, such as The Hurt Report, The Maids Report, and more and hopes to continue to do so. Makowski spoke to the critical need to understand motorcycle crashes in order to develop effective riding gear.

Makowski then transitioned into discussing upcoming European standards for riding gear. New standards are expected to be implemented in the spring of 2019 across the European Union. These standards will include more rigorous requirements for various aspects of riding gear design, including abrasion testing methods, maximum vent lengths in vented apparel, and required boot-strap connections for boots and pant-legs. This change has the potential to impact the U.S. gear market.

Makowski fielded questions from the group which included:

Q: Why does KLIM use data that is old (The Hurt Report from 1981, Maids study from 1999, etc.)?

A: This is due to the availability of comprehensive reports – which is limited due to the cost of collecting and analyzing new data.

Q: Do riders in Europe have to wear PPE that is approved by European standards, or can you choose to wear anything, for example, a glove?

A: Currently, yes, you can wear any type of glove. However, that may change in the next year or so since it has recently been decided the motorcycle gear must meet certain safety standards.

Q: Can Americans bring their gear over to Europe?

A: American gear used over here would be fine to use in Europe. As the new standard of gear is implemented, there are a lot of unanswered questions about requirement of visiting riders

Q: What are some new innovations in PPE and motorcycle gear?

A: Magnetic closures on jackets and apparel are becoming more common, which meets ergonomic needs more so than safety. This makes the gear easier to get on and off. Other new trends can be seen with airbag technology, such as Alpinestar's new helmet that features airbag technology deployment upon impact.

Look. Learn. Live. Outreach Events

Christie Havemann, TTI, presented a list of upcoming events planned as part of the motorcycle safety TxDOT grant. There are two more planned events this year (Pearland International Festival and the Good Guys event). Next year, events are scheduled in over a dozen cities around Texas. Havemann asked for input about future events (suggestions included the Lone Star Roundup in April in Austin, the Spyder Rally in Boerne, OTT Rally in Nacogdoches), and also asked for volunteers to help with upcoming events. A list of events will be emailed out to the coalition upon finalization of the event list. People who would like to volunteer to help staff a booth at an event can sign up at <http://LookLearnLive.org/category/events>

Skilled Motorcycle Riders Association

Long time coalition member, Sara Parks presented on the Skilled Motorcycle Riders Association (SMRA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Association's mission is to promote the benefits of rider training, to encourage riders to seek training, to raise motorcycle safety awareness among riders and non-riders, and to hold events (practice days and competitions) where riders can practice their skills and receive training. SMRA promotes the idea that many motorcycle crashes could be prevented with better riding skills. SMRA offers free practice spots for members and guests; members set up courses in parking lots to allow riders to practice skills learned in MC rider courses.

SMRA has over 200 members from 22 different countries. Members self-report their annual riding mileage, crashes and near misses and the causes, and practice days that they have participated in. Members have reported 0 fatalities, and 0 crashes (excluding 2 mechanical failure induced crashes). Parks concluded by discussing the multitude of ways that SMRA gives back to local communities, including hosting law enforcement officer only skills days at local courses, sponsoring local clubs' skills days upon invitation, and participating in local events such as Memorial Day parades, Oktoberfest, and supporting local charities through toy runs. The organization's website is <http://www.skilledrider.org/>.

Open Discussion & Adjourn

Open discussion began at 2:32pm with an update on an agenda item from the last TMSC meeting regarding an update to Texas Department of Public Safety's funding for the Motorcycle/ATV Safety Unit and the motorcycle safety training program. The Texas Legislature bill that provided funding for the motorcycle safety training program was line-itemed vetoed by Governor Abbott. Leadership from the Texas Confederation of Clubs and Independence administered a call to action to their members to contact the Governor's office. It was discussed that the Governor did not know that the money was specific to motorcycle safety, only that there was a significant amount of money for safety in general. Since the TMSC is restricted from lobbying, it was discussed that individuals could contact the Governor's office as individuals, or as part of another entity such as the Legislative Strike Force. It was also discussed that the TMSC could invite local Texas Legislature representatives to attend future coalition meetings as a learning opportunity.

There are plans in development to erect a fallen biker memorial in Houston. The coalition members that are involved in this effort have been working with the City of Houston and private companies to design and build a granite wall. Currently, the group has a date to appear before Houston's City Council.

The need for rider coaches was discussed, with a focus on empowering attendees at the table to recruit members, employees, and colleagues in their respective organizations and affiliations. Costs associated with being trained as an instructor, the time it takes to obtain training, and the time it takes to see a return on the investment were brought up as potential barriers to entry for would-be new rider coaches.

The conversation shifted back to the need for funding for motorcycle licensing efforts in Texas, and the need to solve the issues. Since the coalition can't lobby, it was asked if the TMSC could set aside time at

the next meeting to develop an action plan for addressing the issues of blocked funding to the motorcycle training program in regards to identifying what the TMSC can and cannot do. The need to involve elected officials in the coalition was voiced by several members in attendance.

Before the meeting adjourned, the texting bill that recently passed in the Texas legislature was brought up. The law goes into effect September 1st state-wide. It was recommended to members to read the language of the bill and become familiar with it.

The meeting adjourned at 3:21pm.