



Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes August 29, 2019

Texas A&M Transportation Institute
TTI Headquarters Building, Room 1122
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Highlights

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Opening Remarks and New Member Introduction

TMSC President Chris Beireis opened the meeting and invited everyone present to introduce themselves.

TxDOT Update

Lisa Johnson of TxDOT reviewed crash statistics for the year so far. In 2019, so far motorcycle crashes are down 17% from 2018. We don't know exactly why yet; as more information gets collected and analyzed, we may know what is affecting that number.

Yard signs were not produced this year, but two different ones will be printed in 2020 – Look Learn Live signs and There's a Life Riding on It signs. Once Lisa knows when those are arriving, she'll let the group know. Let Lisa know if you'd like signs.

There have been some cuts to TxDOT Safety Grant projects due to budget shortfalls.

Mike Manser reported that the TTI team has attended 16 events this year as part of the motorcycle safety outreach project, making contact with a total of about 700,000 people across the state. We also have the LLL social media, with about 41,000 unique views this year. We've also put together 14 new videos to build on the Gear Up videos. Next year we will attend 10 events, to put some more funds toward social media.

Paige Ericson reported on her motorcycle training project, looking at reasons why some motorcyclists are unlicensed. She has gotten results back on her rider survey, which she hopes to be able to report on at the next meeting.

Motorcycle Training and TDLR Update

John Young (DPS) reported that training is down this year by 11%; this may be connected to the fact that motorcycle sales are down 19%. Fatality count is down; some of this may be due to continued training, but there are many factors that could be affecting it.

He also provided some updates on the transfer of motorcycle safety program to TDLR. DPS is currently liquidating training motorcycles, with some being transferred over to sponsors. Purchases of motorcycles will begin September 1, 2019. Most sponsors have decided what they will buy and what they will turn in; DPS is hoping to have all motorcycles sold by December 31. The law pertaining to the transition goes into effect on September 1, 2020. In the meantime, discussions are continuing among the state agencies (DPS, TDLR, TEEX). Training will be managed by TEEX; outreach and public information will be at TTI; licensing will be under TDLR. Keeping training at TEEX (state/education agency) rather than privatizing the program will help to keep the cost to riders under control.

Mike Arismendez and Ray Pizarro (TDLR) reported that a team is being developed at TDLR to formulate a plan for the transition, assembling an advisory board, and other preparations. The goal is to continue the program with as few changes and disruptions as possible; the agencies want to make sure that the motorcycle training industry is taken care of and can continue to do the job of training riders.

Safety Tips for Riders and Motorists – Group Discussion

Attendees split into four discussion groups to brainstorm safety tips for motorists and motorcyclists for rural roads, intersections, and work zones, and for improving visibility and conspicuity. The groups then reported and compiled their lists of tips. The consolidated list will be used to help develop social media outreach messages in the coming year.

Planning session - Ways to address alcohol served at motorcycle dealerships.

Attendees split into discussion groups to brainstorm ideas for addressing the issue of alcohol served at motorcycle dealerships. Mike Manser asked the groups to consider ways to encourage alcohol-free events and to discourage dealerships from offering alcohol as a way to bring riders in. The discussion included ideas for alcohol-specific outreach to riders and to dealerships and leveraging other aspects of biker culture (e.g. "I am my brother's keeper") to help self-regulate alcohol use at motorcycle events that also involve riding. Also discussed was the idea that an initiative should not focus on dealerships but rather on other avenues such as the creation of a TMSC award for dealerships that eliminate drinking from their events and reaching out to other states and organizations to learn what others have done to address drinking and riding.

TMSC Updates on Motorcycle Safety Activities

Next year the Look Learn Live campaign will be creating more videos. These could include videos on reduction in alcohol use. Other suggestions included recreating an old distracted-driving “spot the gorilla” awareness video (demonstrating that when you’re focusing on one thing, you can miss even something as big and obvious as a gorilla) using a motorcycle in place of the gorilla.

Open Discussion and Adjournment

Topics raised during open discussion included the following:

- Attendees asked about the availability of outreach materials, particularly “giveaway” items, to Coalition members for distribution. Suggestions for future purchases (if funds are available) included stickers and sew-on patches. It is not yet known if the rules for the motorcycle safety outreach funds under the new TDLR leadership will allow for the purchase of giveaway items; currently, the federal funding that supports Look Learn Live does not allow for purchases of anything except paper items, so other giveaways are bought with funds, when available, from other sources at TTI.
- Question: how do we measure the effectiveness of the motorcycle safety outreach campaigns? The answer: effectiveness is measured in a few ways. While agencies like TTI and TxDOT would love to be able to map reductions in crashes directly to outreach activities, that is incredibly difficult to do with any accuracy. We track the number of “impressions” -- such as the number of people visiting the booth at events and the number of materials we distribute; the number of people who see, like, and share our social media posts; and the number of people who visit the LookLearnLive.org website. In the past, we have sometimes also measured changes in public awareness using surveys. The more that TMSC members “Like” and “Share” posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the more people see the safety messages.
- Question: When TDLR money becomes available to support the outreach effort, can some of those funds be used to purchase the types of booth giveaways that the federal grant used to buy? Answer: Not known yet; there will be some restrictions on that funding, but likely not as restrictive as the federal money. Also, the motorcycle safety outreach money under the new arrangement (TDLR/TEEX/TTI) will be awarded through grants; if you have a great idea for outreach, consider writing a grant proposal. We need new ideas!
- Question: Would you be able to open up the Motorcycle Safety Program’s email list to owners and sponsors so that we can send them information from the TMSC? Answer: The Motorcycle Safety Program can’t open up the list for privacy reasons but it can transmit messages; send a message to John Young and his program can forward it on to the list.
- Other suggestions that were made for promoting motorcycle safety messages from the TMSC included sending TMSC stores to Ride Texas magazine or inviting their journalists to the TMSC meetings; look into providing motorcycle safety messages on privately-owned electronic message signs; inviting Texas Agri-Life to bring their drunk-riding simulator to events (talk Lisa

Johnson and she will check with the Agri-Life people); and continuing to emphasize to motorcycle instructors in their certification classes that motorcycle safety goes beyond training.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m. Next meeting will be in November, likely on the 14th.