

Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes

December 4th, 2015

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

MEETING MINUTES HIGHLIGHTS

- [Jude Schexnyder to step down as TMSC Chairperson](#)
- [Chairperson Position Opening](#)
- [Transportation Bill and the Impact on Motorcycles](#)
- [Texas Motorcycle Strategic Action Plan](#)
- [DPS Motorcyclists Training Program Update](#)
- [2016 Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum Update](#)
- [Motorcycle GearUp videos](#)

MINUTES

Opening Remarks - Jude Schexnyder

Jude Schexnyder (TxDOT) began the meeting by having all the attendees introduce themselves. Afterwards, Jude announced that he has taken a position as a Traffic Safety Specialist for TxDOT in the Austin District. Though he will no longer serve as chairman of the TMSC, Jude will remain on the coalition as a member. Jude will serve as chairman of the coalition until a new one is selected. He asked that members consider putting their names forward for the position of chairman. The *LookLearnLive* website will also post information pertaining to Jude's new position as a TxDOT TSS.

DPS Update - John Young

An update was given on the dedicated motorcycle education fund. John Young's (TxDPS) motorcycle safety unit has been given the funds necessary to operate the unit. They know where the budget has been set, and where it is being expanded. Part of the money is being used to buy new motorcycles for riders to train on and to help subsidize the costs of the training course, keeping the course fees reasonable for riders.

TxDOT Update - Daniel Jeffries

Daniel Jeffries (TxDOT) confirmed that both the House and Senate passed a transportation bill yesterday, and that Obama was expected to sign off on it today. It is a five-year funded transportation safety bill, meaning that all the funding that is offered through TxDOT will be offered for at least the next five years. The decision to allow for multi-year grants will be up to Terry Pence (TxDOT). The initial analysis shows a fairly significant increase in funding, especially in the 402 section. DJ is hopeful to step up the funding devoted to motorcycle safety next year.

Mr. Jeffries provided an overview of motorcycle fatality data in Texas. Using CRIS data, in 2013, there were 503 motorcycle crash fatalities in Texas. However, for the same year, FARS data indicates there were 498 fatalities. There is some discrepancy in total fatalities because of cut-off dates and when data is received at the national level.

Using CRIS data, in 2014, there were 463 motorcycle traffic fatalities, which is a 9% reduction from 2013. In 2014, Texas had fewer motorcycle fatalities than those in the State of California. As of this morning, there were 405 motorcycle fatalities in 2015 in Texas. If the numbers hold until the end of the year, there will likely be a 9-10% decrease in motorcycle fatalities for the second year in a row. Reductions in motorcycle fatalities are laudable because 1.) Texas adds about 1,000 people to its population a day and 2.) Texas is adding about 45,000 motorcycles on the road a year. However, there is still a lot of work that has to be done; every day since the year 2000, someone has been killed in a motor vehicle crash in Texas.

Coalition Update & Changes - Michael Manser

Michael Manser (TTI) explained that there are some coalition bylaws in place for selecting the next coalition chairperson (due to Mr. Schexnyder's departure). The procedures are:

1. M. Manser will notify the coalition members of the coalition chairperson opening via email as well as post this information on the *LookLearnLive* website.
2. Coalition members submit nominations and a short bio to Michael Manser(m-manser@ttimail.tamu.edu). The short bio will help familiarize other members with that person's experience as well as why that person is interested in being chairperson.
3. M. Manser will gather names and bios, verify with nominees they are interested, and then send the final names and bios to coalition members.
4. The notification, nominee names, and bios must be sent 30 days before the next meeting.
5. Those in attendance at the next meeting will vote for the next chairperson. The process for selecting a new chair will follow the following steps.

A reminder about how to join the TSMC: Visit www.lookLearnLive.org, click on the "Safety Coalition" tab, and there is a small form on the right hand side of the screen that will appear.

Discussion on Updates and Changes to Strategic Plan

Mr. Jeffries indicated that the Strategic Motorcycle Action Plan ends in 2016. The Strategic Plan is a requirement of the 405 funding, and guides where we would like to go, and what we'd like to do.

One thing that will help guide the new strategic plan is a 5-year motorcycle crash analysis study being performed by TTI. A deeper delve into motorcycle crash analysis will help identify associated crash factors, and understand if associated crash factors are behavioral or engineering problems. Once crash factors are understood, the project will examine appropriate countermeasures and then start assigning responsible parties for each area. For example, it may be that TxDOT and TxDPS are responsible for the majority of the areas. However, if there are things that the COC can take care of, or a local PD, or an MPO, then there's no reason why

that agency cannot contribute in that area or task. We also want to put a definitive time date to accomplishing said tasks.

Officer Richmond (Austin PD) offered their CR-3 data to be used at Coalition's disposal.

State of DPS MSU & Two Year Transition Plan

Mr. Young spoke about the two-year transition plan for the motorcycle safety unit. He indicated that it's been a good year because significant funding was restored, which was a direct result of the coalition and other stakeholders' efforts.

Currently, they are preparing for a two-year transition in which the motorcycle rider curriculum will be updated. Mr. Young has chosen to stay with the MSF curriculum because it's not just evidenced-based, it's been scientifically tested. He and his unit are making plans to update chief instructors in April, will subsequently be retraining 500 instructors. John indicated that the classroom portion and delivery methods are a little different, the range exercises include more ride time and are a bit more challenging.

They are in the midst of buying new motorcycles for training program providers. Sometimes, the TxDPS motorcycle unit provides up to 90% of the motorcycle training fleet. He has already ordered 80 new training motorcycles. And, he has been authorized to order 80 more for this year.

John Young remains open to researching new curriculums, such as ones utilized by California (Mr. by Oregon, and loaned out to Idaho). However, current statutes don't allow to move completely away from MSF curriculum.

Mr. Young also spoke about the fairly new intermediate rider course being offered. So far, the course has trained 191 students. This class is targeted at individuals who want to enhance their rider skills, but also at those who may have many years of riding experience but never obtained a motorcycle endorsement. But, there are issues on how best to advertise this course, and currently, there is no dedicated place to train instructors for this course. The site formerly used at the Texas State University is no longer available.

TxDPS has asked for a dedicated range to train instructors and riders. They asked for a full size range 200 x 300 and a compact range, being slightly smaller; a pavilion (which could provide shade and watch either side); a building with two classrooms to accommodate 30 students; and motorcycle storage space and ATV storage space.

Mr. Young indicated that with the MSF curriculum update, TxDPS anticipates losing around 30-40% of rider coaches, who don't want to go through another change, being observed, going through another test. This loss of rider coaches will hurt the training community. Based on the NHTSA review conducted in 2014, the State is currently at the half mark of the trainers needed for the state. So, losing the projected 30-40% of rider coaches through the curriculum update is a huge approaching challenge.

In terms of rider coaches, the State needs to attract younger rider coaches, bilingual rider coaches (both Spanish and Asian-speaking), and American Sign Language instructors.

2016 Statewide Motorcycle Safety Forum

Mr. Manser spoke about the planning process for the upcoming Motorcycle Safety Forum. Currently, they are trying to coordinate the instructor conference with the Forum. Below are a list of potential speakers/subject areas and themes for the upcoming Forum. Bolded topics received the most support. Potential speakers may include:

- NHTSA – Kenneth Copeland
- **NHTSA – Motorcycle Program – Jeremy Gunderson; vehicle infrastructure and vehicle communications**
- Texas Senator Watson
- TSS
- Speaker from 1+ clubs – how to promote motorcycle safety in clubs
- **Kiara Dobrovlny (TTI) – Crash tests motorcycle**
- American Motorcyclist Association
- Motorcycle Manufacturer – CEO at Yamaha, Engineer at Harley; developing safety technology

Potential Themes:

- Next generation (riders, equipment, safety, etc.)
- Bridging the gap (building partnerships)
- 100 to 50 in 10 – Go from 100% fatalities to 50% of fatalities in 10 years
- **Every Action Counts (what each individual could do to help motorcycle safety)**
 - o **It starts with me**

Ideas for WHEN to do Future Forums

- International Motorcycle Show in Dallas – typically in January
- State’s COC Rally (Thursday or Friday before that begins)
- Month of May (Motorcycle Safety Month) / before Moto GP

General Discussion

Road Signage

There was discussion about what signage information would help riders. Some spoke about seeing signage in other states or cities that advise when there’s “milling ahead,” or in construction areas seeing signs that say, “motorcyclists use extreme caution” as being helpful. Others spoke about standardizing the length of entrance ramps to the highway. Overall, the conversation pointed to a need for greater information sharing between the TMSC and roadway engineers, something that is being pursued by Mr. Jeffries.

The conversation moved to the lack of motorcycle awareness education. Though there are the “Share the Road” message and the Motorcycle Safety Awareness month in May, those are very concentrated efforts during certain times of the year. There is a lack of rider education and how to encourage riders to participate in training. Multiple individuals mentioned that motorcycle training builds better decision-making. It’s not just physical skills that are built, but it also builds cognitive skills. Yet, Texas still has a significant problem with riders participating in basic training courses, or not pursuing advanced rider courses. Rider courses teach skills and strategies that riders can learn to help mitigate some of the risks of riding. But, the challenge comes in getting that message across to the majority of riders.

Some spoke of the Harley Owner’s Group, which has a safety man, or Road Captain, talk about safety at each meeting. Many agreed that to have riders wearing gear and interested in safety, it has to come from internal leadership -- they have to be the ones who set the example.

The rider associated with CMA indicated that there’s a Road Captain in each chapter. The Road Captain writes a section containing safety information for a distributed newsletter. This representative commented that he would be interested in having a hands-on training program.

Other known safety initiatives were (1) Gold Wing Riders Association, where riders earn pins/badges for completing certain training (2) Harley offered \$50 off training courses and they received a patch for completion as well.

Mr. Young spoke about his past involvement and success in pushing safety initiatives. He said when he talked about safety he actually dropped the term “safety,” and approached the topic as “motorcycle skill enhancement.”

Mr. Jeffries suggested possibly getting a skills competition going between Road Captains in all clubs.

Mr. Jeffries mentioned that a more successful way to encourage riders to wear gear is to tell them it’s a matter of comfort in the Texas heat and winter. As a free state with no helmet law, Texas has relatively high helmet usage. According to the results from TTI’s gear survey, the heat was both one of the biggest reasons why riders didn’t wear a helmet and one of the biggest reasons why riders *did* wear a helmet.

Highway Bill Update

After lunch, Mr. Jeffries announced that the American Motorcyclist Association announced a press release related to the recently passed highway bill. The highlights of the bill for motorcyclists include:

- Continued funding for Recreational Trails Program
- A nationwide prohibition against using motorcycle only checkpoints
- Reestablishes a Motorcycle Advisory Council to coordinate with and counsel the USDOT administrator on specific infrastructure concerns to motorcyclists

- Funding of highway safety grants that include programs to reduce distracted driving, including language that make it easier for states to successfully qualify for and receive the money
- Measures to ensure privacy in vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure technology
- No expansions of pilot programs to place tolls on the nation's existing interstate highways

To read the full press release: http://www.americanmotorcyclist.com/News/15-12-04/Congress_passes_five-year_highway_bill_including_big_wins_for_motorcyclists.aspx

Officer Training

Mr. Schexnyder reintroduced the question of how to get training to officers regarding the necessity of a motorcycle rider taking a training class and obtaining a motorcycle endorsement. Jude reiterated that the operation of a four-wheel and the operation of a two-wheel vehicle are totally different. Education is a part of it, but so is enforcement.

Officer Richmond indicated that judges in the Austin area are telling violators (riders without a motorcycle license/endorsement) that they have to take a basic rider course to get a citation dismissed. But, as far as getting officers to understand the importance of riders going through a training class and getting a license, TCOLE-credit class may be needed. Efforts can also be maximized through stakeholders such as TMPA and CLEET to push the cause.

GearUp Videos

Relating to gear use, Mike Manser presented two short videos that are meant to be more assertive PSAs. The intent is to use these videos on the *LookLearnLive* website, Facebook, and Twitter, as well as to push them with dealerships, clubs, the coalition, etc. The videos graphically illustrate riders without gear crashing. Other videos will demonstrate riders with gear crashing and their ability to leave from the crash relatively unscathed. They will be released after final approval from TxDOT.

This meeting adjourned just before 3:00pm.