

Riding For the Long Haul



A huge thank you to Director Alberto Gutier of AZ's GOHS for everything he does to help reduce Motorcycle Crashes & Fatalities in Arizona

The 3rd annual 'Riding For the Long Haul' hosted by AMSAF [Arizona Motorcycle Safety & Awareness Foundation] took place on Sunday March 5, 2017 at the El Zaribah Shriners Auditorium located at 552 N 40th Street in Phoenix. My thanks to AMSAF's Executive Director Mick Degn for his help with this report. The goal of this event is motorcycle safety... Promoting Motorcycle Safety and Awareness to help to reduce motorcycle crashes and fatalities here in Arizona. The means is fundraising for Rider Education Scholarships and educational information and presentations.

But quite frankly ... as much as we all recognize the need for it... motorcycle safety isn't fun. It ain't sexy. It can be downright boring. So how do you get people to attend an event centered around such dry stuff? AMSAF's Board of Directors and the 'Riding For the Long Haul' organizers have managed to strike the right balance ~ creating more of a festive atmosphere in which to wrap their message.

There was music throughout the day by 74th Street Band ~ a community favorite.

Rider skills demonstrations were given by Mesa Police Motor Unit. Their motorcycle maneuvers are always impressive to watch.

There was a photo booth set up where folks could get their picture taken on their bike.

A total of 54 vendors were set up inside and outside of the auditorium. A big % of them were Healthcare related ~ with information booths from State & County organizations; plus the state offices ADOT & AZGOHS were represented. Healthcare hospitals, rehab, trauma, helicopter rescue, Police & Fire from Phoenix, Chandler, & Mesa were there; and insurance companies, attorneys, Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF), as well as some biker businesses.

And yes, there was some gentle bribery as well

☺ A \$2500 Grand Prize package including \$1500 CASH plus a 3-night stay in Laughlin and concert for two was up for grabs. There was no purchase required, just show up at the event. There was a 'Bingo Walk' for the grand prize. Participants got a Bingo-style card and visited the various vendor & information booths, getting their card signed in the process. The stamped cards were turned in & put into the hopper for the big drawing.

There was a Fashion Show featuring safety gear which was well received. Attendees to the show had the chance to win a \$1000 gift card for Motorcycle Safety gear and another \$200 gift card for a helmet. Cool! Among other gear presented there was a demo of a safety vest with an internal airbag. It was pretty remarkable. If you are curious about it, AMSAF posted a video on their FB page.

A blood drive to benefit United Blood Services had 20 donors and 15 successful blood draws.

Each of the Guest Speakers spoke on the importance of community involvement. Mick Degn, Executive Director of AMSAF explained the rising trend in motorcycle crashes and fatalities. Alberto Gutier, Director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety spoke on what the State is doing in regard to that trend. Wendy Otten and Pam Gosler, a Manager and a Doctor from Dignity Health each talked about what they are seeing from the Hospital side.

Mick commented, "Unfortunately many folks don't get involved or care until someone they know is in a crash or lost their life to a motorcycle crash. Motorcycle crashes are about 50% the fault of the motorcycle rider due to lack of experience, or drugs and alcohol. Left hand turns are a big factor and again, the fault of both the car and motorcycle rider."

While this was a free event to attend, it was a fundraiser all the same ☺ Monies raised through donations, raffles, silent auction, etc go into a fund

called "Riding it Forward" which gives out Scholarships to get folks into Motorcycle training. Money goes to PSAs for TV & radio and for billboards, etc ... all to help get the motorcycle safety message out. It also helps cover some of the expenses that AMSAF incurs as a non-profit 501c3.

Special recognition trophies, created by Clyde Brooks, were presented for: Largest Group in Attendance - Superstition HOG, First Group to Arrive - Forsaken Hawgs, and Furthest Distance Traveled - Desert Road Racers ~ out of Prescott.

It's estimated that a little over 1000 people attended throughout the day, with the majority being there between 10a- 2pm. About 2/3 arrived on bikes. Mick sent along thanks to Title Sponsors Dignity Health and the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. "Our biggest supporters were the Healthcare community where unfortunately most of our motorcycle crashes and fatalities end up, Insurance, Legal, Police, Fire and a number of other vendors helped us."

Photo credits go to Brian Oakley of Brian Oakley Photography and to Terry Cooper Photography.

AMSAF is all about Motorcycle Safety & Awareness ... just safety and reducing motorcycle crashes. They aren't involved in politics ... no lobbying, no bills, none of that.

More scholarships are expected to be available starting in September, although it could be sooner depending on Grants, Sponsorships, and Donations. So, watch AMSAF via their website www.amsaf.org and follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AMSAF.ORG/> for these and other announcements.

MAY is Motorcycle Awareness Month ~ Motorcycle Awareness and YOU. Ride safe & be well.

Betsy

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