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NEWS RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

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OHS Announces Start of Ride Smart Motorcycle Safety Campaign
Motorcycle Awareness Day (Event, Parade & Bike Show) April 25th

Dover – Motorcycle crashes have been on the rise nationally for the past ten years. And in the last five, while fatal crashes involving a motorcyclist in Delaware have gone up and down, injury crashes have steadily increased. Just in time for May’s Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, the Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) is launching its Ride Smart Motorcycle Safety campaign.

The Ride Smart campaign, which begins April 27th and runs through the month of October, is a combination of enforcement and awareness activities. Throughout the campaign, Delaware State Police, Dover Police, Felton Police, Dover Police Middletown Police, Newark Police and New Castle County Police will conduct patrols on high crash roadways and will cite violators of the state’s motorcycle safety laws. They will be paying particular attention to speeding and impaired motorcyclists.

Public awareness efforts though are aimed at reaching not only motorcyclists but also the drivers of passenger vehicles. Motorists will be encouraged to share the road with motorcyclists through billboards, bumper stickers, radio messaging and internet ads. The billboards, like enforcement activities, are being placed statewide in high crash areas. Now that the weather is warming up, motorists should actively look out for motorcyclists which are easy to miss in a vehicle’s blind spot. Since January 1st, one motorcyclist has been killed in a traffic crash, when according to police reports, the driver of the other vehicle pulled into the path of the motorcycle operator then fled the scene.

Motorcycle operators are being reminded not to speed or ride while under the influence of alcohol through radio ads, and through internet ads placed on sites that motorcyclists frequently visit. Posters with alcohol prevention messages on them are being delivered to bars/restaurants where

motorcyclists like to hang out. Additionally safety brochures, bumper stickers and posters are being distributed through OHS's partners including motorcycle rider groups.

OHS formed partnerships with these groups through the State's Motorcycle Rider Education Advisory Committee (chaired by Sen. Bruce Ennis and Rep. Danny Short) of which OHS is a member. Other members include DMV, the Dover Air Force Base, motorcycle businesses, and members of motorcycle rider groups. The Committee's Motorcycle Awareness Day (Event, Parade and Bike Show) will be Sat April 25th from 9:30 – 2 p.m. and will include a parade in Dover from William Henry Middle School to Legislative Hall where there will be vendors, displays, judging and presentation of awards. The event is open to the public.

Additionally, motorcycle enthusiasts are invited to participate in the 1st Annual Police Escorted Memorial Ride for the Delaware Chapter of COPS (Concerns of Police Survivors). The event, which takes place Saturday May 9th, starts in two locations – the Seaford Harley Davidson and Mike's Famous Harley Davidson of New Castle. Registration, which is \$25.00, starts at 9 a.m. and the ride starts at 10 a.m. The two groups will meet up at the Little Creek Fire Hall and then ride as one parade to Legislative Hall for food, entertainment and a reading of the names of fallen officers. COPS is a non profit group that provides support to the families of officers killed in the line of duty. Proceeds from the Ride will go to benefit the local chapter of COPS (for family financial support when a line of duty death occurs, to send members to Healing Seminars, to send the families to COPS National Retreats, for local meeting and organization costs) as well as toward the construction of a fallen police officers memorial in Dover.

Here are additional facts about motorcycle crashes in Delaware:

- There were 16 motorcycle fatalities in 2008 – 1 less than in 2007.
- 9 of the m/c operators were under the influence of alcohol...7 were wearing helmets.
- Half of the year's motorcycle deaths last year occurred in a 3.5 week period in August.
- There were 286 injured in motorcycle crashes last year
- 50% fatal crashes occurred on a weekend
- Last year 1 of the fatal crashes was caused by driver of a passenger vehicle (according to State Police reports)
- Primary causes of fatal crashes: alcohol, speeding, loss of control of motorcycle
- Average age of person killed 31 – 40 (usually skews a little older in ages)
- Average age of persons involved in crashes 41 – 60
- In 2008 – most m/c involved in fatal crashes were sport bikes – in past years it's been the touring bikes that older riders favor
- Crashes occurred in Milford, Dover, Rt 1 in beach area, Rt 113 Georgetown – Millsboro area, Rt. 13 Bridgeville – Laurel area, Rt. 1 between Dover and Middletown, Rt. 301 area, Rt. 141, Rt 2, Rt. 4, Rt. 40 area

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