

Cars and Bikes don't have accidents: They have tragedies.

Cars and Bikes don't have accidents: They have tragedies. This was one of the slogans suggested for the Drivers Awareness -Bike Safety Banners to hang in downtown Evergreen and by the Smart Trailer to record your speed. The implications may be harsh, but when a car and bike accident happens it's the biker who loses and the driver has to live with the thought that they are alive but the biker is seriously hurt or dead.

Last week, the Courier introduced Bicycle Safety Month with a story citing numerous statistics about fatalities in bike and car accidents. One of the ways this year's legislature sought to prevent the fatalities and the 282 accidents that year in Colorado was to pass a bike safety bill. Unfortunately, even though it passed the committee vote in both the House and the Senate, it was voted down for the second time in the legislature last week.

According to Colorado law both bikers and drivers must obey the same laws and have the same rights to use the road except where specified by signs. The problem results when neither the biker nor driver is aware that the highway rules apply to both vehicles. In Colorado, written driving tests are not required when you change your license from another state; often drivers are not aware of the bicyclist's rights on the road. On the other hand, bicyclists are governed by the same laws as motor vehicles and many cyclists are too young to drive, therefore they are on the road riding but unaware of the traffic laws. In 1997, one third of the 813 cyclists killed nationwide were less than 15 years of age.

What about licensing bikes? If bikers have to obey the same rules as cars and have the same rights as cars on the roadways, why not a test to make sure they are qualified to be on the road riding with a mandatory helmet just as cars must have mandatory seat belts.

Casey Boone owner of Paragon Sports for many years has watched vehicle congestion grow in the mountains. One of his good friends and co-workers at Paragon was killed on his bike riding the Bear Creek Canyon highway. Noel Lilly was an Olympic racer in the 1980's Olympics. The cause of his death was a head trauma. He wasn't wearing a helmet.

He says it's scary because his young son is an avid rider and he will only allow him to ride on the back roads, not on the paved roads. Casey believes the most important thing he can do to help his son ride safely is to follow the rule, "No helmet, No Bike". Helmets, he believes, are one of the major deterrents to head injuries. His shop will carry helmets this year and will give away a Bike Safety water bottle with each helmet purchase.

Rick Willcox, new owner of Canyon Cycles in Kittredge agrees with Casey and he gives a 2 year safety and maintenance check with each bike he sells. He will also be giving away Bike Safety water bottles with the purchase of a helmet or a bike. In addition, Rick

is volunteering his time at the Driver Awareness- Bike Safety booth to do bicycle safety checks at the Kids carnival on Saturday from 9-4 at the Evergreen Academy in Marshdale.

The Driver Awareness-Bike Safety Booth at the carnival is sponsored by the Evergreen Rotary Club, Drive Smart and Team Evergreen. Kids and their parents will be able to receive free information, do a bike check-up and a bike safety quiz. A bike helmet will be given away in a drawing for those completing the quiz.

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