

2014 AMA NATIONAL CONVENTION

Oct. 16-19, Orlando, Fla.

One of my goals when I became AMA president was the establishment of a national convention for AMA members. Sure, we have a national convention category of AMA-sanctioned events that represent the top tier of recreational rides and rallies, primarily serving our road riding members. These include two great national events put on by premier promoters: Americade, held this year on June 2-7 in Lake George, N.Y., and the Golden Aspen Motorcycle Rally held Sept. 17-21 in Ruidoso, N.M. While these iconic events are excellent, we don't have a true national meeting hosted by the AMA that appeals to all members of the association.

Some of you may recall that in August 1990, the AMA did host the AMA Heritage Homecoming and Motorcycle Heritage Museum grand opening. This event was billed as the AMA's first national convention to benefit the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation. This event eventually morphed into what is now AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, held this year on July 11-13 at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio, and continues to be a major fundraiser for the AMHF and the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame.

AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days is an amazing event that should be on everyone's must-do list, but while it is promoted and managed by the AMA, it is primarily focused on those members whose passion is vintage motorcycles and vintage competition. AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days also is built around its mission of raising money for the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame and the AMHF, a 501(c)(3) organization.

While these events do a great job bringing together specific segments of AMA membership, we lack an all-encompassing convention that speaks to everyone who loves motorcycling.

Meanwhile, there was another group working on an event of their own. In the January issue of *American Motorcyclist*, Larry Little was recognized as the 2013 AMA Motorcyclist of the Year for his success in the creation of the American International Motorcycle Expo (AIMExpo). AIMExpo is an event that brings together consumers, dealers, manufacturers and press in a single arena to create North America's most comprehensive motorcycling business and enthusiast



By Rob Dingman

event. In my column that month, I mentioned that the AMA was actively pursuing opportunities to have a significant presence at AIMExpo this year and into the future, and that we hoped to do something that would celebrate the AMA's 90th anniversary.

In early April, we announced that the AMA would hold

the 2014 AMA National Convention in conjunction with the AIMExpo on Oct. 16-19 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla. We also announced that in addition to a full slate of convention and expo-related attractions, participants will have the opportunity to attend the 2014 AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, which will welcome a new class into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame.

The AIMExpo provides the perfect platform on which to build a 21st century AMA National Convention. One of the most difficult aspects of establishing such a national convention is creating the infrastructure to accommodate the disparate interests of the wide variety of motorcyclists that make up the membership of the AMA. The AIMExpo organizers have done most of the heavy lifting in that regard for us. They have put together an incredible trade and consumer show, complete with both on-street and off-road demo rides and worked through the logistics of hotels, meeting rooms and lots of other moto-centric activities

that will help make the 2014 AMA National Convention something that no motorcyclist will want to miss.

I attended the AIMExpo last October, hoping to find the synergy necessary to help the AMA build its national convention. What I found exceeded my expectations. Just in case bringing the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and the new AMA National Conventional to Orlando to be part of AIMExpo doesn't make enough of a statement, on behalf of the AMA, I would like to officially endorse the American International Motorcycle Expo.

I also would like to ask you, our valued members, for your thoughts on the 2014 AMA National Convention. What are your expectations? What would you like to see included? What, for you, would make this a successful event? Feel free to drop us a line at submissions@ama-cycle.org.

Watch for AMA National Convention updates on the AMA website (www.americanmotorcyclist.com) and social media, including Facebook (www.facebook.com/americanmotorcyclist), Twitter (@AMA_Riding), Instagram (@AMA_Riding), YouTube (www.youtube.com/americanmotorcyclist), Google+ ("American Motorcyclist Association") and LinkedIn ("American Motorcyclist Association").

As always, thanks for your support. I hope to see you in Orlando in October!

*Rob Dingman is
AMA president and
CEO.*



Courtesy AIMExpo