

2013 AMA MOTORCYCLIST OF THE YEAR

Larry Little
AIMExpo Creator And AMA Life Member



By Rob Dingman

As global economic woes continue to linger and recovery in the motorcycle industry remains slow to develop, the stars could perhaps not be more perfectly aligned for a major change in the business of motorcycling. While most in the motorcycling community viewed the cataclysmic changes brought about by the economic crisis as disastrous, one individual saw an opportunity to improve the situation in the motorcycle industry while fulfilling a long-held passion to

bring a European-styled motorcycle show for manufacturers, distributors, dealers, consumers and media to America.

The AMA Motorcyclist of the Year honor recognizes the profound impact that an individual has had on motorcycling over the last year. While the motorcycle industry has been hard-hit by the difficult economy and many companies have been forced to rethink how they showcase their products to their dealer networks and their customers, the American International Motorcycle Expo has provided a cost-effective approach to do just that.

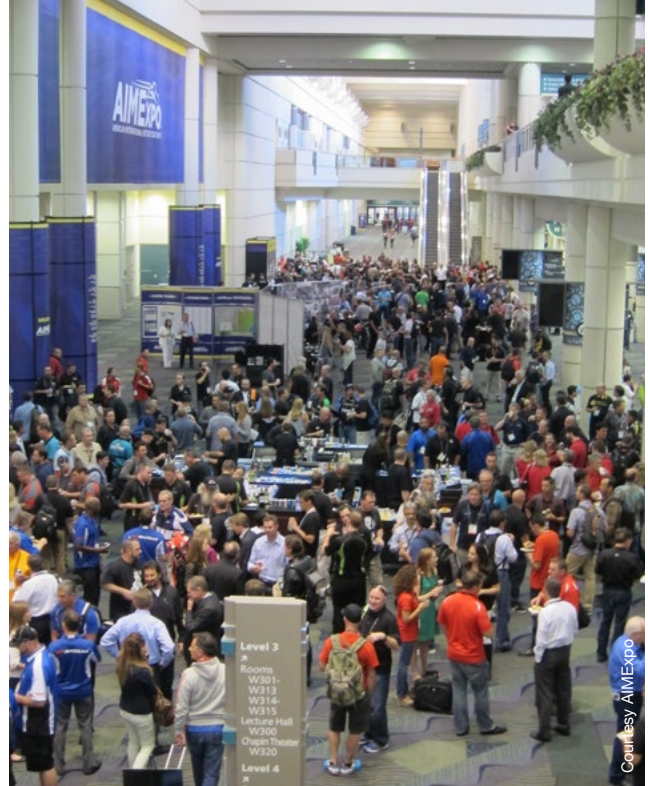
For his success in the creation of AIMExpo, Larry Little is recognized as the 2013 AMA Motorcyclist of the Year.

The inaugural AIMExpo was held on Oct. 16-20, 2013, in Orlando, Fla. Modeled after the EICMA and Intermot motorcycle shows in Europe, AIMExpo is a combined OEM, dealer and consumer show unlike anything we have seen in the United States. By all accounts, the show was a big success and is destined to grow. I spent time in the AMA booth at the show and got to experience first-hand the excitement generated by the attendees.

A major reason that the inaugural AIMExpo was so successful was because Larry had a vision and worked closely with the AIMExpo team for many months to see it become a reality. What you may not know is that Larry's motorcycling pedigree goes back many years. It is detailed in our AMA Motorcyclist of the Year feature starting on page 36.

I first met Larry roughly 20 years ago while I was working in the government relations office of the Motorcycle Industry Council in the early 1990s. Larry and I attended MIC media training together. Although we had not been in touch for quite some time, when I became AMA president in 2006, one of the first meetings I had was with Larry, who at that time was vice president and publisher of Cycle World magazine and chair of the MIC Board of Directors.

The advice that he offered during that meeting proved both accurate and invaluable. Larry has always provided important insights regarding the motorcycle industry and has always been



Courtesy AIMExpo

willing to help the AMA when asked. For example in 2008, when the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame needed a master of ceremonies for its annual induction ceremony in Columbus, Ohio (before AMA board member Perry King became our regular emcee for the event), Larry graciously did the honors—and did so quite well—because we asked. He has been a supporter of the Hall of Fame for years and has volunteered a significant amount of his time assisting with Hall of Fame work.

Larry's work to transform the motorcycle show business in this country is quite impressive. So much so, that the AMA is actively pursuing opportunities to have a greater presence at AIMExpo next year and into the future. With the AMA celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2014, we hope to do something befitting this important milestone.

While it remains to be seen how great an impact AIMExpo will ultimately have on motorcycling, there is no question that it represents a dramatic departure from what has been done in the past. The short-term impact has been significant and if it takes hold as anticipated, the impact will be tremendous for everyone who loves motorcycling.



The AMA's 90th Anniversary

It's true. We are about to roll over 90 years here at the AMA. Dozens of board members, scores of volunteers, hundreds of staff and thousands of AMA members have made an indelible imprint on this organization since it was founded in 1924. Because of their vision and hard work, the AMA has become the premier advocate for motorcycling in the 21st century, and we owe each of them a great debt of gratitude.

To honor their contributions, it is our goal to press on, paying it forward ourselves so that future generations of motorcyclists can enjoy the riding freedoms we are protecting today and the motorcycle lifestyle that fuels our passion for competition, camaraderie and adventure.

Rob Dingman is the AMA president and CEO.