



## ON THE ROAD

### Member Outreach At Work

One of my favorite places to ride is the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. I got a chance to ride there again last month when I rode to Americade. It had been a couple of years since I made it back to Lake George for the world's largest touring rally, and the AMA Oasis hospitality tent that we had on location there for the first time provided an extra incentive to attend this year.

The AMA Oasis offers a spot where AMA members can get out of the sun, get a cold drink of water and relax—and where non-members can learn more about the many benefits of belonging to the AMA. The AMA Oasis is set up and staffed by AMA Road Riding Department, which includes Road Riding Manager Chris Harrison and Road Riding Coordinator Rob Baughman. In addition to Americade, to date they have hosted the AMA Oasis at Thunder Beach in Panama City Beach, Fla., Rolling Thunder in Washington, D.C., and Laconia in New Hampshire. Looking ahead, the AMA Oasis will be staged at AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days in Lexington, Ohio, on July 10-12, at the Buffalo Chip in Sturgis, S.D., on Aug. 2-9 and at the Ray Price Bikefest in Capital City, N.C., on Sept. 25-27.

On my way to Americade, I stopped in Harrisburg, Pa., to participate in the annual ABATE of Pennsylvania Rights Rally at the state capitol. I was eager to participate in this year's rally as I had been invited there to present the 2015 AMA Dud Perkins' Lifetime Achievement Award to AMA Life Member Charles Umbenhauer.

In January 1970, the AMA created the Dud Perkins Award and presented the inaugural accolade to its namesake, AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famer Dudley Perkins. A champion hillclimber in his younger years who became a successful San Francisco motorcycle dealer, Perkins was one of motorcycling's most tireless and generous benefactors through volunteerism, financial support and leadership.

The AMA Dud Perkins Award honors Perkin's memory each year by recognizing the highest level of service to the AMA in any area of activity. The award is bestowed by the AMA Board of Directors and acknowledges a lifetime of dedication and work.

Charles Umbenhauer received the award for his many decades of advocacy on behalf of motorcyclists in the Pennsylvania legislature, with notable victories that safeguarded funding for rider education, reduced tolls for motorcycles, secured motorcycle parking at state-owned facilities and ensured that adult motorcyclists have the freedom to choose to wear a helmet.

The rally was very well-attended, not only by hundreds of motorcyclists but by an impressive number of state legislators who were all there to show their support for the state's motorcyclists and to associate themselves with Charles.

In my remarks at the rally, I described the reasons I believed Charles has been such an effective advocate for motorcyclists over the years. He has long understood the need to develop and maintain strong relationships with elected officials and policy makers. Charles



By Rob Dingman

also understands that the best time to develop such relationships is before you need something from them. The number of legislators who showed up to support Charles and motorcyclists at the rally is a true testament to the hard work he has done in Pennsylvania.

Charles has worked behind the scenes for decades, with no expectation of personal reward or recognition, fighting injustices that unfairly target motorcyclists. He is a true champion of riders' rights. Because of his hard work, Pennsylvania motorcyclists enjoy more freedoms, fairer laws and safer roads.

It was an honor and a privilege to present Charles with the 2015 AMA Dud Perkins Lifetime Achievement Award.

While at the rally, I also had the opportunity to meet Mary Lou Gallatin and Michelle Gallatin-Baughman, the widow and daughter of Daniel Gallatin, the 20-year AMA member and namesake for Daniel's Law, Pennsylvania H.B. 853, that was featured in the May issue of *American Motorcyclist*. It is truly remarkable what they are trying to accomplish to ensure that other families are not forced to endure the pain of losing a loved one to a distracted driver.

AMA Chief Operations Officer Jeff Massey met me in Harrisburg for the ride to New York. It wasn't long after leaving that it started to rain, and the rain stayed with us most of the way to Lake George. Of course it was raining—after all, we were headed for Americade! I don't know that I can ever remember an Americade when it didn't rain at least a little bit. My Triumph Tiger doesn't provide nearly as much protection from the rain as I used to get from the Gold Wing I sold last summer, but then again, not much does.

The AMA Oasis offered both Jeff and me the opportunity to interact with current and prospective AMA members. The feedback we get from events like Americade is invaluable to us, as we constantly strive to improve the AMA to better serve you.

I always enjoy attending Americade. The event is excellent, there is great riding in that part of the country, and it is great to catch up with old friends and make new acquaintances. It was encouraging to speak to a number of people who told me how much they appreciated what the AMA does for its members.

In remarks at a Friday evening event, I told Americade attendees about the challenges we constantly face as motorcyclists, such as motorcycle-only checkpoints, unsafe fuels like E15, raids on funding for motorcycle safety programs and the persistent threat from distracted drivers. I talked about how the AMA derives its strength to combat these challenges from its members. I thanked those in attendance who are currently AMA members and asked for their help in recruiting their non-member friends to join the cause of promoting the motorcycle lifestyle and protecting the future of motorcycling.

I've said it before and it's worth repeating: The bigger we are as an organization, the better equipped the AMA will be to overcome the challenges we face as a community. Please encourage your friends to join the AMA. While the best reason to become a member is to join the ranks that protect the future of motorcycling, with your help we have made it more attractive than ever to be a member of the AMA.

If you can, bring your friends by an AMA Oasis to learn firsthand what the AMA does to make motorcycling better for all of us.

*Rob Dingman is AMA president and chief executive officer.*