

COMMON INTERESTS

The AMA Advocates On All Levels

According to our strategic plan, the mission of the AMA is to promote the motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling. The vision, also stated in the strategic plan, is that the AMA is to be the premier advocate for the motorcycle lifestyle.

I often say that the marquee benefit of the AMA is our advocacy efforts. These efforts, of course, include the work of our government relations department in Washington, D.C., to look out for the interests of motorcyclists in our nation's capital, as well as across the nation. That department's activities include efforts to increase access to public lands for off-highway vehicles and to prevent closure of lands to which we currently have access; ensuring that on-highway motorcycles are considered an integral part of the traffic mix in the development of autonomous vehicles; raising awareness to the dangers of distracted driving; protecting our motorcycles from unsafe fuels; improving the safety of motorcycling; and everything in between.

When most people hear about the AMA and our advocacy efforts, they think about this government relations activity. Advocacy, however, is a multifaceted concept at the AMA. While our government relations activity certainly comprises a great deal of our advocacy, being the premier advocate for the motorcycle lifestyle encompasses so much more than that.

Our marketing department is constantly working to provide more and better member benefits, such as our industry leading AMA Roadside Assistance program. This too, is advocacy work, because we are constantly striving to make motorcycling cost effective, using the size of our

organization to advocate for the best deals possible from companies that want to provide services to our community.

The AMA's communications department serves as the mouthpiece for our organization. You can't advocate for the motorcycle lifestyle without coherent messaging about the various aspects of motorcycling across multiple media platforms. We need to educate our own motorcycling community about important issues and events first if we are to have any hope of educating the non-riding public about the interests and needs of motorcyclists.

Even our activity in support of the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame is advocacy work.

We must ensure that the rich traditions and heritage of motorcycling are preserved to perpetuate and promote the motorcycle lifestyle for future generations.

In its role as sanctioning body, the AMA makes and enforces the rules for motorcycle competition. Given this role, many racers view the AMA as more of an adversary than an advocate. To some, the AMA is viewed as being more like the government than like a trade union. In fact, the AMA serves both roles. On the one hand, as rules maker and enforcer, the AMA's authority is similar to the government. On the other hand, the AMA advocates for the rights of racers and works to ensure fair and equitable treatment of each rider, as well as fair and equitable enforcement of the rules. To many racers, the role of rider advocate is overshadowed by the role of rules maker and enforcer.

For example, in recent months I have written in this space about the treatment of American riders by the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme, the world governing body for motorcycle sport. The FIM has mishandled disciplinary actions of individuals competing in FIM-sanctioned world championship competition and has mistreated our riders in the process. As the sole designated FIM member

federation from the United States, the AMA should be in a position to advocate for our riders to ensure that they receive due process in the adjudication of disciplinary actions of the FIM.

Until recently, that has not been the case. The AMA had been thwarted in our efforts to ensure that American riders receive due process, but new leadership at the FIM (which I wrote about in "New World Order," February) has already taken steps to be more responsive to its member federations. This, in turn, allows member federations such as the AMA, to be more responsive to its individual members and be more effective advocating for their rights and fair treatment.

"THE AMA ADVOCATES FOR THE RIGHTS OF RACERS AND WORKS TO ENSURE FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF EACH RIDER, AS WELL AS FAIR AND EQUITABLE ENFORCEMENT OF THE RULES."

I have spent a great deal of time over the last few months advocating for the rights and interests of American riders with the FIM. The FIM's adjudication process is badly flawed, and I will be working with the new FIM administration to improve it. In the meantime, I have been working to ensure that the voices of the riders who have been stuck in that flawed process are heard and they are treated fairly.

This has not been easy. In fact, it has been quite challenging at times. Because much of this work is subject to confidentiality, most will never know how much work goes on behind the scenes to advocate for AMA members. Rest assured, however, that the AMA will always look out for you and future generations of riders, advocating for your interests in the halls of government, on the highway, on the trail, in the marketplace and on the race track.

Rob Dingman is a Charter Life Member and president and CEO of the AMA.



By Rob Dingman