

ALL THINGS MOTORCYCLING

AMA Convention In Columbus Dec. 7-9

Since 2014, the AMA has held its national convention in conjunction with the American International Motorcycle Expo (AIME expo), which was in Orlando, Fla., that year. Last year, AIME expo moved to Columbus, Ohio, a short ride from the AMA's headquarters and AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame in Pickerington, Ohio.

The synergy offered by AIME expo to help the AMA get a national member convention off the ground was tremendous. Last year's convention was the best yet and, for the first time, AMA Congress—the annual meeting of the rules making body for amateur racing—was incorporated into the convention. AMA Congress members attended the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony as one of the major elements of the weekend, which also included seminars on a variety of motorcycling topics, an AMA member meeting, a bike night at the AMA and Hall of Fame, a guided ride to the bike night from the convention site and the opportunity for attendees to visit the AIME expo show floor.

It felt right for the AMA convention to be held in such close proximity to the AMA and the Hall of Fame, and it felt right to bring some of the major events organized by the AMA together under the umbrella of a national consumer and trade show. Unfortunately, AIME expo has committed to move to Las Vegas for its 2018 event, to be held Oct. 11-14. This is the same weekend as the AMA Supercross Monster Energy Cup in Las Vegas, which allows the cross promotion of these two great events.

While the AMA is still extremely supportive of AIME expo and what it means to the motorcycle community, and while we plan to be part of the 2018 AIME expo, the AMA National Convention will remain in the AMA's hometown for 2018. This year's convention will be at the

Polaris Columbus/Hilton on Dec. 7-8, with additional activity at the Hall of Fame on Sunday, Dec. 9.



By Rob Dingman

Although it's important to move the event to December so we don't encroach on the October date for both AIME expo and the AMA Supercross Monster Energy Cup, this date introduces another great opportunity: We are able

to incorporate the AMA Championship Banquet into the weekend.

The annual AMA Championship Banquet recognizes the top racers in all disciplines sanctioned by the AMA. By incorporating the banquet into our national convention—which also includes AMA Congress, the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, seminars, a members' meeting and the opportunity to visit the Hall of Fame museum—it creates a truly special event.

While on the subject of the Hall of Fame, I would like to mention another major annual event organized by AMA staff: AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, which takes place this year July 6-8. AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio, is, of course, the largest annual fundraiser for the Hall of Fame museum and is definitely a bucket list item for anyone who hasn't already made it an annual pilgrimage.

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The AMA staff works tirelessly each year to ensure that Vintage Motorcycle Days continues to be the great event it has become. Despite all of the hard work that goes into the weekend gathering for tens of thousands, it's something the staff looks forward to each year and is essential to the AMA's efforts to keep the doors open at the Hall of Fame museum.

Over the years, I have given many tours of the museum. I have some favorite items that I like to point out to visitors. One such item is an AMA flag that orbited the Earth 165 times aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia on mission STS-109, March 1 through March 12, 2002. That flag was brought into space by AMA Life Member and shuttle pilot Duane "Digger" Carey. In addition to the AMA flag, there is Carey's Life Member card, along with a photo of the card floating weightlessly next to him in space during his voyage. Carey is the subject of a feature story in the street version of this issue on page 18. If you don't receive the street version, no problem. You can check it out online at <http://magazine.americanmotorcyclist.com>.

In fact, I encourage all members to check out the online version of *American Motorcyclist*. Not only does it include all the content from both the street and dirt versions of the magazine, but it offers it up in a mobile- and tablet-friendly format. Our creative team has been working hard to tweak the design to best showcase what is included in the print publication, and they will appreciate any feedback at submissions@ama-cycle.org.

Finally, please see the common feature in this issue, "Look & See: Motorcycles are Everywhere." Written by Managing Editor Jim Witters, it provides a comprehensive update on the issue of distracted driving, including the AMA's activity in a very important national initiative being organized by The Ohio State University.

Thanks for being an AMA member, and thanks for supporting your association as we continue work on these projects and others to advance motorcycle rights, riding and racing in America.

Rob Dingman is AMA President and CEO.