



FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO THE NEXT 100 YEARS

BY ROB DINGMAN

The first 100 years of the AMA is now in our rearview mirror, and while I hope the review of the AMA's birth and work over the last century in these pages has been enlightening and informative, it's now time to look ahead to what comes next, as the AMA endeavors to continue to promote the motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling.

The motorcycle industry has certainly evolved over the last several years. We've seen an evolution away from sportbikes and heavyweight tourers toward adventure and dual-sport bikes, and while ADV bikes are now the fastest-growing segment, we are starting to see growth in the smaller-displacement dual-sport category.

With Honda's CRF300L, Suzuki's DR-Z4S, KTM's 390 Adventure, CFMoto's 450MT, Kove's 450 Rally and BMW's recently introduced F450GS concept bike, just to name a few, it's pretty clear the OEMs are responding to pent-up demand for these smaller dual-sports.

Riders who gave up their big-displacement touring machines for large and mid-sized adventure bikes to experience the backcountry — while still being able to tour on the tarmac — may be realizing there's a lot of backcountry to explore, and even more of it is accessible on a lighter, smaller bike.

My first bike was a small-displacement dual-sport, a 1989 Yamaha XT350. I graduated to a mid-sized UJM, then to a sport-tourer, then to an 1,800cc tourer, and finally to a mid-sized adventure bike. Today's smaller-displacement dual-sports are making me miss that XT just a little bit, and it'll be interesting to see if these smaller dual-sports continue to

grow as the ADV segment has.

I can't see the ADV segment slowing down anytime soon, particularly as more opportunities to explore the backcountry become available. A big reason for this is the Backcountry Discovery Routes organization, and specifically BDR's current President Tim James. That is why the AMA Board of Directors named Tim the 2024 AMA Motorcyclist of the Year.

The AMA board could not have

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made a better choice, not only for Tim and BDR's efforts to grow adventure riding opportunities, but because of Tim's passion for motorcycling. I had the opportunity a couple of years ago to spend a week riding with Tim on the Mid-Atlantic BDR; it's obvious he truly loves what he does, and I believe that's why he's been able to have such a big impact.

So, back to the future. Access will continue to be a priority issue for the AMA. Over the years, we have fought hard to grow and maintain access to public lands, and have even occasionally had to fight to maintain access to public roads.

One of the great things about dual-sport and adventure riding is that there are ample opportunities to ride on public roads, both paved and unpaved, if you know where to look. While we have all lost favorite riding areas that have been closed because somebody else's interest took precedence over ours, public roads are generally harder to close than off-highway trail systems. For this reason, I believe we will see adventure riding continue to grow, and I

would bet money we'll see dual-sporting take off in a similar way.

All of the issues you read about in the pages of this magazine are likely to continue to be issues the AMA will wrestle with on behalf of America's motorcyclists for the foreseeable future. In addition to access, those issues also include excessive motorcycle sound, which is an element of the access issue, distracted driving, lane splitting, motorcyclist profiling, rider

education and autonomous vehicles, just to name a few.

I still firmly believe that the issue that holds the most promise regarding improving motorcyclist safety is also the one most fraught with danger to motorcyclists...the issue of autonomous vehicles. There are far too many autonomous vehicles on our nation's roadways that have not been adequately proven to detect the presence of motorcycles around them, and therefore pose a pretty significant hazard to motorcyclists.

Despite the dangers, however, if the technology continues to improve, it has the potential to exponentially improve motorcycle safety. There is no doubt that this issue will continue to occupy the AMA government relations staff for years to come.

Thank heavens someone had the great idea 100 years ago to create the AMA!

Rob Dingman is the President and CEO of the AMA, and a Charter Life Member