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Resources Are Available to Improve Motorcycle Safety

North Dakota Department of Transportation officials note a disturbing trend in the state: the number of fatalities on motorcycles has tripled in the past two years. In 2008, there were 13 deaths attributed to motorcycles, up from four in 2006.

It is important that motorcycle riders are trained to handle all road situations. The North Dakota Department of Transportation partners with ABATE to provide motorcycle safety classes called RiderCourses to the public. Information about the Motorcycle Safety program is available at www.ndmsp.com.

Linda Butts, Deputy Director for Driver and Vehicle Services states, "The website is an excellent source of safety information for motorcycle riders. We strongly encourage riders to take advantage of the riding course because a majority of riders report that the classes increase their knowledge and street skills."

Motorcyclists should be on high alert at intersections. Approximately seven of every ten motorcycle crashes occur at intersections. Motorcyclists also should check rearview mirrors before stopping to prevent rear-end crashes.

Other safety practices include using headlights day and night, and wearing brightly colored clothing, with retro-reflective material when riding at night. Avoid riding in a car's blind spot. Drive at a speed consistent with driving abilities.

Another tip stresses the importance of not drinking alcohol or taking drugs before riding. A slight shift in balance caused by alcohol can mean a serious crash.

Finally, when it comes to licensing, any motorcycle type vehicle with an engine of 50cc or larger, is required to have a motorcycle license. Approximately 1/3 of the fatalities were not licensed, or were improperly licensed to ride a motorcycle.

Butts continues, "North Dakota's highways and byways allow riders a beautiful view of the North Dakota countryside. It is our hope that all motorcycle riders will enjoy riding safely. The classes and website are available to educate and improve their safety on the road."