



Panel Discussion: The Future of Rider Education  
St. Louis, Missouri – September 25, 2004

## **Key Message Points**

**Vision** – The MSF is an internationally recognized not-for-profit foundation, supported by motorcycle manufacturers, that provides leadership to the motorcycle safety community through its expertise, tools, and partnerships.

**Mission** – To make motorcycling safer and more enjoyable by ensuring access to lifelong quality education and training for current and prospective riders, and by advocating a safer riding environment.

**Primary Focus** – How training is being delivered (quality), how well the training community is meeting demand (capacity), and how well the participants are served (customer satisfaction).

**Key Strategies** – 1) Develop, market, and maintain the highest quality research-based rider education and training system to meet the lifelong learning needs of motorcyclists. 2) Help create and maintain a quality delivery system that ensures timely access to our products. 3) Work in effective partnerships with other motorcycling, advocacy, government, and public organizations to promote a safer riding environment. 4) Employ a comprehensive government relations strategy that supports the best interests of motorcyclists and emphasizes access to training. 5) Establish, monitor, and analyze performance measures to foster accountability and drive progress toward our strategic goals.

**Why Training Works** – Training works because it provides the knowledge, experience, and skills development that leads to improved performance and behavior. It provides an environment for growth and development.

Motorcycling is largely a perceptual-motor activity, that is, riding requires mental strategies as well as physical coordination and skill. Motorcycle safety training is designed to increase rider knowledge, skills, attitude, habits and values. Providing basic riding and safety knowledge is fundamental for developing safe riding practices. Attitudes are developed and modified with knowledge and experience, and training exposes riders to a variety a conditions and situations to help them identify their personal capabilities and limitations, which results in better decision making and in assessing personal risk.

Note: for additional information on these and other topics, as well as for papers, presentations, press releases, and more, please visit the MSF website, [www.msf-usa.org](http://www.msf-usa.org), under the Library and News sections.

We are confident that rider education improves basic skills as well as crash avoidance skills. Post-test results have shown the knowledge and skill improvements by course graduates. Additionally, anecdotal evidence from ardent supporters of Motorcycle Safety Foundation training course participants abounds that supports the effectiveness of the training in real-life scenarios where riders' lives depended on those skills in "near-miss" situations. Yet, these countless anecdotes have not been represented in formal studies. Therefore, researchers have found it difficult to "prove" that training works.

We know training works. It's easy to prove knowledge and skill improvements, especially for novice riders. What is difficult to prove is the lasting effects of training and the specific ways training affects attitude and behavior on the road. We believe that more training, especially over time within a context of safety renewal, can effect positive changes not only in knowledge and skill, but in habits, attitude, and values. An individual should be exposed to multiple learning experiences about safe riding techniques, which will effect a change in attitude or intention and, subsequently, behavior. If a motorcyclist is involved in a variety of learning experiences over time, with no artificially imposed breaks between taking beginning and experienced courses, the likelihood of the individual mastering the various cognitive and motor skills necessary for crash prevention increases. Furthermore, renewal training periodically reminds the rider of important safety issues, which should increase a rider's level of safety awareness and risk assessment. Trained riders manage risk better and make better riding choices.

Sometimes the choice they make is to not ride. Participating in a training course will provide a potential rider with a more realistic assessment of the physical skills, cognitive focus, and attitude that is essential for mastering the complicated perceptual and motor skills required to ride safely. Faced with these realities, some have estimated that up to 30% of those who take the basic course never ride a motorcycle regularly. The importance of learning that lesson on a closed range in a controlled training environment cannot be underestimated.

**The Discovery Project** – A review of rider and driver education research studies spanning the past twenty years concludes that these previous studies produced skewed and often contentious results, primarily because the research design did not accurately reflect the full range of positive outcomes associated with rider education and safety renewal.

MSF believes that new research, with a rigorous methodological design, will more accurately depict the positive outcomes of motorcycle rider training, in particular the concept of "safety renewal." As defined by the MSF, safety renewal occurs when a rider is involved in a comprehensive rider education and training system that includes introductory and advanced training courses with multiple entry points over a period of time.

The Discovery Project, a new research study based on a cooperative agreement between MSF and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), will involve a series of longitudinal studies tracking multiple groups of riders with different levels of involvement in the rider education system. By comparing qualitative measurements that take into account variables not previously documented – such as 'near misses' – as well as traffic violations, crashes, and fatalities, the Discovery Project will attempt to demonstrate how involvement over time in a rider education and training system increases crash avoidance skills, reduces traffic violations and crashes, and increases safety awareness.

**On protecting standards and intellectual property rights** – It is the MSF's responsibility to ensure that its research-based, field-tested curricula products maintain national standards and meet high levels of expectation among a variety of stakeholders, including current and prospective motorcyclists,

policymakers, and the training community. MSF member companies further validate these stakeholders' confidence in MSF's products and services by investing millions annually to support national standards, implement certification and recognition programs, and develop new curricula products – all of which confirm MSF's commitment to “continual process improvement.” MSF makes its products and services available to state programs and other training sponsors, and therefore indirectly to current and prospective motorcycle riders, at no cost. A nominal charge for materials is assessed for student workbooks, training aids, and RiderCoach Guides. MSF encourages submission of “best practices” from RiderCoaches, solicits input from state program administrators, and conducts research laboratories to objectively evaluate proposed changes to the curricula. This strategy ensures that MSF products stay current and best address the needs of students and state programs.

In order to protect the integrity of its training materials and to maintain the research-based, quality-assurance standards under which they were developed, the MSF must take action against potential abuse or misappropriation of its curriculum products to maintain the confidence stakeholders have in MSF products.

Therefore, the MSF must be vigilant in enforcing its intellectual property rights, which include copyright, trademark, and service mark rights. MSF curricula products are copyrighted and cannot be reproduced or distributed by any individual or entity without permission. The copyright laws also give the copyright owner the right to prepare derivative works, thus excluding others from altering the works without permission.

MSF welcomes inquiries from state programs with specific needs relative to curriculum and, through its evaluation processes and research labs, will make every effort to accommodate changes or additions to the extent that the integrity of the curriculum is not compromised and that adherence to national standards is maintained. One of the four guiding principles of the MSF RETS (Rider Education Training System<sup>SM</sup>) is “Flexibility for Jurisdictions” (see page 5).

At the recent SMSA conference, reciprocity was a frequent theme. Multiple curriculums developed without national standards do not further the goals of reciprocity.

**What is the distinction between “very good training practitioners” and “curriculum developers”?** – Motorcyclists should be grateful for the thousands of certified RiderCoaches who train riders and the RiderCoach Trainers who train the RiderCoaches. After years of experience, virtually all practitioners have their own views on how to conduct training, and MSF recognized early on that the valuable inputs and participation from the training community would lead to an improved novice training course. That's not to say, however, that any one training professional has the depth and breadth of knowledge and experience required to develop curriculum. That's why MSF integrates – along with motorcycle training experts – a broad range of individuals in the scientific, education, and administrative communities when we develop curricular products. We call this team the Rider Education Training System Development and Oversight Team (RESDOT), and its members offer these qualifications, among others:

- 1) Academic preparation, professional experience from both motorcycle-specific contexts as well as overall curriculum development;
- 2) Knowledge of the theory behind curricular decisions as well as a clear understanding of the principles of curriculum development;
- 3) Awareness and understanding of how people learn;
- 4) An ability to develop a curriculum that balances all the forces that lead to a final product, including:

- a. Simple to complex content
  - b. Formal and informal learning environments
  - c. The characteristics of and training processes for those who will deliver the instruction
  - d. Addressing various kinds of learning styles;
- 5) An understanding of mental models (beliefs and assumptions) that affect curricular decisions;
- 6) Systems thinking (how parts of curricula/lessons fit together) to form a cohesive whole based on a sound philosophy of training and education, both within a single course and within the overall system.

**A unifying focus** – MSF considers the severe lack of training capacity in many states to be the overriding challenge to motorcycle safety. MSF looks forward to exploring how all stakeholders might leverage their respective strengths to further the goals of increasing training capacity, providing access to lifelong learning, and improving the riding safety and enjoyment of all motorcyclists and potential motorcyclists.

MSF believes that if all the diversely passionate motorcycle organizations and interest groups focus their efforts toward meeting the safety needs of riders and prospective riders, there will be greater alignment in goals and strategies. There is agreement on the need for more training. This is a starting point. The result can be a safer riding environment for the ever-growing number of motorcyclists on our streets and highways.

**Motorcycle training: it's not about sales, it's about safety.** – MSF is a not-for-profit 501c(6) organization. Thanks to the dedicated sponsorship of its member partners, who continue to be heavily committed to improving motorcycle safety and training for riders and perspective riders nationwide, MSF has an annual budget of more than four million dollars. Neither the MSF, nor its funding member partners, derive any profit from this investment, not on a national basis, nor in the states in which MSF serves as the administrator.

Also, training doesn't create a demand for motorcycles – it's the other way around. Sales continue to grow, and the popularity of motorcycling has created a demand for training that in many states goes unmet. MSF's biggest concern is that in most states, students face delays of up to months just to get into a BRC, which allows very little opportunity for the state to offer the ERC Suite and other training courses that support the goals of safety renewal through lifelong learning.

In fact, a national research project in 2003 found that 62 percent of the riders had not taken any form of organized rider training course. Further, 15 percent of riders ride without a license.

With scarce resources and ever increasing demand, those who are responsible for or administer programs must seek efficiencies to stretch the available resources as well as look for additional revenue to increase the availability of training.

For most of the training community, including MSF, the motivation to provide training isn't based on financial reward – it's based on making motorcycling safer and more enjoyable for our fellow riders.

**MSF RETS (Rider Education Training System<sup>SM</sup>) Goals and Learning Principles** – The purpose of MSF RETS is to create and maintain an education and training system embraced by the stakeholders and delivered in an effective, cost- and time-efficient manner. It is a system to enhance the human side of motorcycling, that is, to focus on the human factors related to motorcycle safety. The four goals of the MSF RETS are:

**1. Comprehensive Model.** The MSF RETS is a dynamic program that packages education and training courses into interconnecting building blocks, each containing a specific set of core skills and competencies. MSF RETS offers learning opportunities at a wide variety of levels for riders, the community that supports RiderCoaches<sup>SM</sup>, policymakers, program administrators, and allied interests.

**2. Custom-Tailored for Riders.** The MSF RETS uses stand-alone yet interrelated modules so participants can select courses to create a personalized education and training program with coaching matched to particular interests, needs, and skill levels.

**3. New Opportunities for RiderCoaches.** The MSF RETS enhances professionalism in rider education and training by adding development opportunities for RiderCoaches and RiderCoach Trainers and by providing increased responsibility, visibility, and recognition.

**4. Flexibility for Jurisdictions.** The MSF RETS complements existing programs by offering options to respond to emerging countermeasures such as graduated licensing, rider improvement programs, and online learning opportunities. The modular approach affords each jurisdiction the opportunity to design a program that is tailored to specific needs and enhances the quality of instruction participants will receive in the skills required for licensing and for a lifetime of safe operation. An additional benefit is that jurisdictions can expand their programs to meet increasing demands for education and training beyond the novice course.

### **RETS Curriculum Goals**

- 1) Establish lifelong learning opportunities
- 2) Establish ongoing self-assessment
- 3) Establish multiple entry points and renewal opportunities
- 4) Use modern learning technologies
- 5) Ensure fun and exciting programs
- 6) Establish capability to control learning environments
- 7) Create comfort with products and services
- 8) Strive for continual program improvement through open processes
- 9) Increase focus and follow up regarding quality assurance

### **RETS Achievements**

- Since 1973, more than 3 million motorcyclists have graduated from basic or experienced MSF *RiderCourses*<sup>SM</sup>.
- Each year throughout the nation and the military, there are approximately 5,500 MSF-certified RiderCoaches<sup>SM</sup> actively teaching, each trained by one of a team of 185 MSF-certified RiderCoach Trainers.
- *RiderCourses* are available in all states at nearly 1,200 ‘on highway’ sites and at 240 off-road ranges for *DirtBike* School.

- The MSF provides comprehensive curricula, supporting materials, technical assistance, *RiderCourse* insurance, RiderCoach certification. and national training-site/training-sponsor standards.
- Several of the MSF member companies loan and offer substantial discounts on training motorcycles through their local retailers.
- A national toll-free hotline, (800) 446-9227, and the MSF website, www.msf-usa.org, provide contact information for *RiderCourse* training sites.

**RiderCoach Certification** – Throughout the nation and the military, there are more than 5,500 MSF-certified RiderCoaches<sup>SM</sup> actively teaching at over 1,200 sites, each trained by one of a team of 185 MSF-certified RiderCoach Trainers. To ensure the highest level of consistency and adherence to standards, MSF has established and will continue to closely monitor and enforce national certification standards for its RiderCoaches, who must meet these national certification standards and achieve additional performance guidelines in order to maintain their certified RiderCoach status.

**Operator Licensing** – The MSF model Motorcycle Operator Manual and written tests were created using the same research-based development process as the curricula; they also serve as a complement to the education and training information contained in the MSF RETS.

- More than 30 state licensing agencies use one of five different MSF skill tests as part of their motorcycle endorsement procedures.
- More than 40 states use MSF's *Motorcycle Operator Manual*, and many incorporate the related knowledge test.
- *Sharing the Roadway*, a six-page insert for state drivers' manuals, informs car drivers about differing vehicle characteristics and asks them to expect to see motorcyclists on the roadway and respect their right to be there.
- MSF licensing assistance to states includes conducting examiner-training programs, qualifying motorcycle license examiners, and providing technical expertise on motorcycle operation.
- The MSF partners with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to update and improve motorcycle operator licensing systems.
- For example, MSF conducted a three-day License Examiner Training Workshop August 10-12, 2004, for 12 Utah Department of Public Safety License Examiners in Salt Lake City. The training activities consisted of classroom and range lessons for conducting MSF's Alternate Motorcycle Operator Skill Test (Alt-MOST). The Alt-MOST is used by nearly half the states as the licensing skill test for motorcyclists, and it consists of seven basic riding and collision avoidance skills.

**MSF involvement with state programs** – It is not MSF's goal to operate state motorcycle safety programs directly. MSF wants state programs to be successful at meeting the needs of riders and prospective riders. However, MSF may pursue multiple strategies in line with its mission to make motorcycling safer and more enjoyable by ensuring access to lifelong quality education and training for current and prospective riders. MSF may seek to contract with states but generally only after other avenues that would meet riders' needs and further the implementation of the RETS have been explored and exhausted.

### **State Program Update: California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP)**



In December 2003, the MSF was awarded the 2004/2005 state contract to administer motorcycle training for the California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP). Since January 1, 2004, the MSF has updated 302 RiderCoaches to the Basic *RiderCourse* curriculum, trained 118 new RiderCoaches, painted 63 ranges – at no cost to the sites – and conducted more than 45 quality assurance visits.

Thanks to the combined support and cooperation of the California Highway Patrol (CHP), site sponsors, site managers and RiderCoaches, the CMSP has trained more than 29,000 riders between January 1 and July 31, 2004. The CMSP estimates that it will train more than 42,000 students in 2004, up from about 39,000 in 2003.

MSF estimates that savings for the CMSP will be approximately \$450,000 per year in administrative fees compared to the available budget, and that riders will save between \$1.2 – \$1.5 million in lower tuition fees each year (compared to the tuition cap that had been proposed by another bidder).

### **State Program Update: New Mexico Motorcycle Safety Program (NMMSP)**



MSF assumed the responsibility of working with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department to deliver rider training beginning July 1998. The program consisted of eight training sites, many of which were mobile-operated. Today, there are 10 permanent sites throughout the state. The New Mexico Motorcycle Safety Program trained 3,037 students in 2003, compared to 1,009 in 1998. In 2004, the State of New Mexico again exercised its option to extend the Motorcycle Safety and Education contract to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. The New Mexico Motorcycle Safety

Program continues to succeed in meeting training demand by increasing training capacity an average of 22 percent each year since 1999.

### **State Program Update: PennDOT's Motorcycle Safety Program (PAMSP)**



In 2003, Pennsylvania solicited and evaluated bids to administer Motorcycle Safety and Education. In December, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation was again awarded the contract for a five-year term.

MSF was pleased to honor ABATE of Pennsylvania in 2002 for its accomplishment in passing legislation to increase motorcyclists' fees to be dedicated to the Program, thereby increasing the funding available for training. Thanks to those efforts, the budget for the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program (PAMSP) was increased from \$1.7 million to \$2.7 million. The additional funds were used to increase training capacity by adding nine training sites. After the capital expenditures from the new sites were invested, the remaining funds helped train over 4,000 additional students in 2003.-

The following highlights key areas of ongoing program improvement for 2004/2005:

- 10 new training sites (from 53 to 63). Five additional sites are expected to be operational by 2005.
- The program owns 850 training motorcycles. Today the average age of the fleet's training motorcycle is 6.5 years; in 1999 it was 14 years.
- New public website, [www.pamsp.com](http://www.pamsp.com), with a web-enabled enrollment system, making registration more efficient for the student and program administrators.
- PAMSP became an extension of PennDOT by entering license information into each person's record in the state system.

- Conducted 12 small-group updates for RiderCoaches in an effort to facilitate learner-centered activities.
- Conducted seven RiderCoach Preparation Workshops this year with the possibility of up to three more in the fall. The program currently uses over 400 active MSF-certified RiderCoaches and seven RiderCoach Trainers as well as several RiderCoach Trainer Candidates in a mentoring program.

MSF began administering the Pennsylvania program in 1999. Compared to the previous contractor's last year administering PAMSP (1998), training capacity has increased by 72.6 percent (12,302 students trained by Millersville University vs. 21,230 students trained in 2003). For 2004, the program is on track to train 23,000 students.

### **State Program Update: West Virginia Motorcycle Safety Program (WVMSP)**



In 2004, West Virginia solicited and evaluated bids to administer the Motorcycle Safety Education Program. Several key state employees, a legislator, concerned citizens, and representatives of a riders' organization became involved to ensure the fairness and integrity of the bid process. In June, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation was again awarded the contract, continuing its third year of administration of the WVMSP.

Since the MSF began administering the WVMSP in 2002, it has trained over 40 new RiderCoaches, increasing the pool by 500 percent. Furthermore, in a state where very little motorcycle dealership support was provided, the MSF, with the help of West Virginia's new RiderCoaches, has established a renewed relationship with various dealerships and training site facility providers in an effort to expand the program and meet increased demands for training.

Also in 2004, the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (WVDMV) focused efforts on recognition of MSF's Experienced *RiderCourse*<sup>SM</sup> (ERC) Suite. Key WVDMV personnel revised the licensing guidelines, allowing students who successfully complete MSF's ERC Suite License Waiver component to receive their motorcycle endorsement in lieu of DMV testing.

The WVMSP expects to increase training capacity by an average of 25 percent each year in the near term, and will continue to expand training sites, its RiderCoach network, and its motorcycle training fleet. Cost efficiencies in program management have enabled MSF to reduce training costs from \$183 to \$163 per student and have also enabled the state to increase its investment in motorist awareness campaigns.

In support of its ongoing efforts to seek efficiencies in rider education, the WVDMV approved Harley-Davidson's Rider's Edge as a state-recognized training provider. Currently, there is one Rider's Edge site in West Virginia and another pending.

**Greatest Challenges?** – The greatest issue facing rider education and training is availability and accessibility. Many states report that they may be meeting only 40 to 70 percent of the annual demand. Estimated training volume for 2004 is likely to be 300,000 students with about 90 percent of those participating in the novice course.

However, we know that over 5,795,000 people in motorcycle owning households rode a street motorcycle in 2003. Only 38% of those people have taken any kind of organized training course.

An additional 10,317,000 people in non-owning households rode a street motorcycle in 2003. Seventy-five percent of these non-owners did not even know a training course was available!

MSF uses the term accessibility to refer to current and prospective riders' access to the Rider Education Training System. Although new courses are currently available from MSF, such as those addressing the specific needs of youth and 'seasoned riders', the fact is that most training providers cannot meet the demand for the BRC, let alone additional training opportunities that foster lifelong safety renewal. Today's motorcyclists want intermediate and advanced courses that offer crash avoidance skill development. If the training community wants to serve its fellow riders, additional delivery partners are needed.

**E-Learning** – Web-based learning has exploded in the last ten years in universities and corporate settings. In rider education, it is just around the corner, and we're confident that it will create a more rewarding environment for course participants and RiderCoaches. What does this mean to the training community? The great news is that the knowledge portion of the learning can happen 24/7. By first using a method to verify that students have met basic objectives, RiderCoaches could then assess the individual students, fill in the gaps in knowledge, and move to a deeper level of understanding. Advanced application-oriented and multi-layered experiential classroom activities can be developed which reach the core attitudes of safety, risk assessment and management through appropriate riding choices and strategies. MSF will continue to explore web-based learning as part of a range of training opportunities.

**MSF Initiates Annual State Motorcycle Program Survey** – To help serve current and prospective riders and the motorcycle training community – including policymakers, the military, program managers, rider advocacy organizations, RiderCoaches, RiderCoach Trainers, site sponsors, and State Administrators – MSF has added a special State Motorcycle Program Report (SMPR) to its website, [www.msf-usa.org](http://www.msf-usa.org). The SMPR will feature important contact information, financial and funding information, state statistics, training demographics, and an overview on each state program.

These reports will empower riders to check up on their investment, and for administrators and policymakers to benchmark their performance and benefit from the best practices of others.

Reports for Kentucky, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, and are already posted, with more in the works.

The goal of the SMPR is to create a resource whereby any organization or person with an interest in motorcycle safety and training can view publicly available data about a state's program in a comprehensive yet easy-to-digest format. The SMPR will include information on licensing, reciprocity, state training requirements, customer service procedures, special programs, and other pertinent information. It is hoped that the SMPR will be a valuable resource for those directly involved in administering state programs by making at-a-glance descriptions of state programs available in a centralized location for review and benchmarking. Equipped with this info, organizations focused on supporting state programs will be better able to direct their resources to strategies that will lead to increased capacity, accessibility, and safer riders.

Having the opportunity to see other state programs' objectives, services, initiatives, and methodologies – some of which have proven successful as cost-saving measures or to better maximize funding, increase training availability, decrease student wait times, and improve access to the BRC and beyond – should benefit everyone dedicated to serving the safety and training needs of riders and prospective riders.

**Thank you for your continued support for rider education and training.**

