Governor proclaims May â€˜Motorcycle Safety Monthâ€™

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Governor Ted Kulongoski has proclaimed May â€œMotorcycle Safety Awareness Monthâ€• in Oregon. Oregon is joining with other federal, state and local highway safety and law enforcement organizations in a nationwide campaign designed to raise awareness about sharing the road with motorcyclists. â€œWith warmer weather coming, more motorcycles will be on the roads. Drivers of passenger vehicles need to be extra alert,â€• said Michele Oâ€™Leary, motorcycle safety program manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation. â€œMotorcycles are the smallest motor vehicles on the road so folks in other vehicles need to really look out for themâ€”and to take extra care to safely â€˜Share the Roadâ€™.â€• Motorcyclists are much more vulnerable than passenger vehicle drivers in the event of a crash. Research shows that approximately 80 percent of motorcycle crashes injure or kill a motorcycle rider, while only 20 percent of passenger car crashes injure or kill a driver or passenger in their vehicle. In fact, per vehicle mile traveled in 2005, motorcyclists were 37 times more likely to die in a traffic crash than occupants in passenger vehicles according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. Oregon is a national leader in motorcycle safety education, program administration and licensing practices. Oregon has reduced motorcycle fatalities by over fifty percent during the past two decades through efforts from the TEAM OREGON Motorcycle Safety Program, Governorâ€™s Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety and various riding organizations and groups. Oregon motorcyclists plan to mark the month with the 17th annual May Awareness Rally on Saturday, May 5, at the Oregon Capitol in Salem. Sponsored by BikePAC of Oregon Inc., the events begin at 10 a.m. with a ride-in to the Capitol. At noon, there will be an update on what is happening with motorcycling, motorcycle training and motorcyclist rights in Oregon. For more information on the rally, visit www.bikepac.com. Oregon Department of Transportation offers the following tips for drivers to help keep motorcyclists safe on our roadways:

Remember the motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the rights and privileges of any other motor vehicle on the roadway. Always allow a motorcyclist the full lane widthâ€”never try to share a lane.

Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections.

Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic.

Remember that road conditions, which are minor annoyances to passenger vehicles, pose major hazards to motorcyclists.

Allow more following distance, three or four seconds, when following a motorcycle, so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. Donâ€™t tailgate.

Motorcyclists have responsibilities, too, including following the rules of the roadway, being alert to other drivers, and always wearing protective gear.