SKILLED MOTORCYCLIST ASSOCIATION–RESPONSIBLE, TRAINED AND EDUCATED RIDERS, INC.
(SMARTER @ www.smarter-usa.org | e-mail info@smarter-usa.org · smarterusa@gmail.com)
P.O. Box 121, Scottville, MI 49454-0121

Dan Petterson, Ed.D., President/CEO · Call/Fax (231) 845-9589

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Contact: Dan Petterson, Ed.D.
(231) 845-9589

BROAD-BASED MOTORCYCLIST-SAFETY EFFORT WILL SAVE MORE LIVES

Scottville, MI – *The Skilled Motorcyclist Association–Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc. (SMARTER) releases the remarks made by SMARTER President and CEO Dan Petterson, Ed.D., at a news conference held May 21, at the Lansing Community College West Campus, by Michigan Secretary of State Ruth Johnson to announce May as "Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month." Petterson was one of four speakers at the event.*

I want to extend my thanks to Joe Kelly and the Secretary of State office for inviting me to speak today.

I am the president of the Skilled Motorcyclist Association–Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc.; the acronym is SMARTER.

SMARTER is a nonprofit motorcyclist association that supports comprehensive motorcyclist-safety efforts. We are also an association that believes our motorcyclist-safety efforts must grounded in solid research, not unsubstantiated claims or old biker myth.

Many states' motorcyclist-safety programs are less than comprehensive because efforts are aimed only at the limited goal of reducing the number of crashes. While reducing the number of crashes must be ONE of the goals of comprehensive efforts, it is foolish to believe we can eliminate all crashes and is therefore foolish not to include preventing deaths and injuries in the event of a crash and lessening the severity of injuries in the event of a crash as additional, vital goals of comprehensive motorcyclist safety.

These last two goals are best accomplished by wearing proper protective gear. The only motorcyclist-safety strategy that has been scientifically proven to prevent deaths and injuries is the wearing of a helmet. Responsible riders understand the effectiveness of a helmet and choose to wear all the gear, including a quality helmet, every time they ride.

In addition to rider training and motorist awareness, states sometimes direct efforts toward

- increasing motorcyclist conspicuity or
- increasing the number of motorcyclists who are properly licensed and/or
- encouraging riders not to drink and then ride.

OHSP, under the direction of Chad Teachout and in association with the Department of State, is currently focusing on encouraging riders to make themselves and their bike more conspicuous and also on an effort aimed at reducing the number of riders who choose to ride without a proper endorsement. SMARTER supports these efforts.

Approximately one half of all motorcyclist crashes do not involve another vehicle, so we can't blame the car driver for all these crashes. A motorcyclist's lack of skill is a factor in many of these crashes. A great way to enhance skills and gain eligibility for an endorsement is to complete a rider training course. Classes are inexpensive and lots of fun. Over the past couple of years, under the term of Secretary Johnson, the number and type of available training opportunities have been expanded.

In summary, we have in place some good efforts and some good people supporting those efforts. We also have some major holes in our motorcyclist-safety program. I look forward to a future when Michigan becomes a recognized leader in motorcyclist safety because then we get to the place where we have in effect a broad-based, wide-ranging, complete, and inclusive effort to save the lives of our citizens who ride motorcycles.

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The Skilled Motorcyclist Association–Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc. (SMARTER) is dedicated to enhancing motorcyclist safety by educating riders and the public for the advancement of responsible riding.