

NCOM BIKER NEWSBYTES  
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National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM)

### GAS PRICES FUEL MOTORCYCLE BOOM

Gasoline prices are soaring to new heights daily, with many consumers considering two wheels instead of four, so as fuel surges past five dollars a gallon, motorcycle sales are skyrocketing.

A typical motorcycle will get you an average of 44 miles per gallon, while an average car gets you around 24 mpg.

That fact is not lost on new bike buyers, as new data from the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) shows bike sales are up more than fourteen percent year over year, and many consumers who are switching to two wheels are looking at bigger bikes.

Coinciding with the boom in bike sales, consumers have a strong demand for rider training and education as well. According to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF), class enrollment increased 48% from 2021 to 2022.

### PAIN AT THE PUMP IS MAKING BIKERS RIDE LESS, AND MORE

Gas prices have surged to record levels causing what economists and strategists call "demand destruction," where the prices will affect actual consumption. They have already begun to cause a shift in driving habits.

The average U.S. retail gasoline prices have risen by over 30% since the start of the year, according to data collected by analysts at RBC Capital Markets. As recently reported in Newsweek; "These prices are affecting how Americans spend time on the road, including how they ride their motorcycles."

Motorcycle sales site Cycle Trader recently surveyed 2,209 shoppers on the effect of the high prices. Among the respondents, 35% said that high gas prices have caused them to adjust how they ride.

The Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) claims that 10 million U.S. households have at least one motorcycle, so that translates to roughly 3.5 million riders feeling the sting at the pump. Among those who have made changes, 34% of riders have decreased how often they ride, cutting down on recreational trips or only going out when necessary. Another 21% said that they have decreased the distances that they ride, while 12% have stopped riding entirely until gas prices go down.

However, many motorcycle riders have adapted their time on the road in different ways, opting to ride more. Roughly half of those who have made riding adjustments have increased their biking as a fuel-efficient alternative to driving their cars and trucks that require more gas.

## AS FUEL COSTS SPIKE, MORE PEOPLE RUNNING OUT OF GAS

Adding yet another obstacle to avoid on the roadways, AAA reports an increase in roadside assistance calls from motorists stranded with empty fuel tanks. It seems that for lots of folks, the higher gas prices go, the lower the needle on the gas gauge goes, with many drivers running on fumes or even running out of gas.

For the months of April, May and early June, AAA Blue Grass has seen a 60% increase in assistance calls for empty tanks compared to last year's numbers when unleaded gasoline was around \$3 per gallon.

AAA, the nation's largest motor club, told FOX Television Stations that it responded to more than 200,000 out-of-gas calls from January - April, up from 153,668 at the same time last year. In April alone, AAA received 50,787 roadside assistance calls from stranded drivers out of fuel.

The surge of drivers short on cash to fill up their gas tanks has been noted by top executives at gasoline retailers who have reported that drivers are buying less fuel at the pump.

## CRIME RISES AS TRAFFIC LAWS NOT ENFORCED

Los Angeles and some major cities have stopped enforcing some traffic laws, like broken tail lights or expired stickers, all in the name of racial equity, but critics have said letting people get away with breaking the law will only lead to more crime, and the current crime wave may prove them right.

Back in March, Philadelphia became the first city to ban police officers from pulling over drivers for minor traffic violations like expired tags and broken lenses, but now the Philadelphia FOP (Fraternal Order of Police) is suing to invalidate the new city law, saying it illegally preempts existing state laws on traffic violations.

L.A., Minneapolis and the entire state of Virginia have passed similar prohibitions on low level traffic stops, which they claim disproportionately targets Black drivers.

## ILLINOIS PLANS ELECTRIC VEHICLE REBATE, INCLUDING MOTORCYCLES

On July 1, 2022, the state of Illinois is set to kick off a slate of electric vehicle rebates for residents -- and with fuel prices at an all-time high, the timing couldn't be better. The good news for riders, according to RideApart.com, is that street electric motorcycles are included in Governor J. B. Pritzker's rebate plans.

Some details are still being worked out, but unlike some EV rebates, the Illinois state EV rebate does include road-going electric motorcycles. A cool \$1,500 rebate can be yours if your electric motorcycle purchase qualifies (\$4,000 for electric cars), but be aware that electric off-road bikes and mopeds do not qualify, however.

Who can qualify? All Illinois residents who purchase their electric motorcycles or other vehicles in the state of Illinois after July 1, 2022 and file the appropriate forms may qualify. It's also worth

noting that vehicles purchased out of state are not eligible. Plug-in hybrids are also ineligible; only fully electric roadgoing vehicles meet the eligibility criteria.

When Illinois lawmakers hammered out this package in 2021, they included some key provisions aimed at reducing inequities in these types of programs. For one, it isn't just purchases of brand-new electric vehicles that qualify for the rebate -- it's also purchases of used EVs, which is a big deal considering the high sticker prices.

#### E.U. CLOSER TO COMBUSTION VEHICLE SALES BAN

Back in July 2021, when the European Commission -- the executive body of the European Union -- adopted a slate of proposals to lower the E.U.'s greenhouse gas emissions called the "Fit for 55" package, it called for a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and a 100% reduction by 2050.

For vehicle users, perhaps the most standout proposal in the package was a requirement that 100% of all new cars and vans be zero-emissions vehicles by 2035.

The combustion vehicle sales ban just took the next step toward becoming reality as of June 8, when members of the European Parliament (MEPs) met to discuss matters in Strasbourg, France. The body voted in support of an E.U. ban on the sales of all new gasoline and diesel cars throughout the 27-nation group, effective as of 2035. The measure passed with 339 votes for, 249 against, and 24 abstentions in total. MEPs also signed off on a requirement of a 55% reduction in CO2 emissions from automobiles by 2030, which is where the "Fit for 55" initiative gets its name.

This vote doesn't make the measure law throughout the European Union just yet. Now, E.U. MEPs must take the proposal up with all 27 of the E.U. member nations for final approval.

#### 'TIRE POLLUTION' COULD BE THE NEXT GREEN ISSUE

As the internal combustion engine gets ever cleaner and battery power increases, "tire pollution" could become the next point of focus as a new study claims Tire Pollution is 1,850 times worse than Exhaust Emissions.

Independent British research firm Emissions Analytics tested a number of tires at multiple stages of life to reach its conclusions, contained in their report titled "Tyres Not Tailpipe," which focuses on the particulates produced when driving and riding that do not emanate from a vehicle's tailpipe.

Tires as they wear produce tiny beads of microplastics, which are so small they can be carried on the breeze and, in some cases, end up getting washed into water courses and washed out to sea. Here they can be ingested by small animals and eventually end up back in the human food chain.

While the title would have you believe it centers around tires alone, it also notes other

consumable parts such as brakes as being an area that adds to airborne particulates.

The study found that no matter how clean running a petrol engine or electric motor is, there is a bigger picture to understand when it comes to localized air pollution.

And don't think the report is all about bashing the internal combustion engine either, as it seems electric vehicles -- in particular large electric SUVs -- could produce more non-tailpipe emissions than conventional combustion engines. The report cites electric vehicles' increase in mass as being one factor that could increase tire and brake wear.

#### MILLIONS AWARDED TO WOMAN "INJURED" WITH STD AFTER SEX IN A CAR

In a stranger-than-fiction case that could have far-reaching legal ramifications, a Missouri woman was awarded a \$5.2 million settlement by a three-judge panel after claiming she got a sexually-transmitted disease from her ex-boyfriend after they had sex in the back of his 2014 Hyundai Genesis. The Missouri Court of Appeals upheld the judgment against the insurance company that was entered during earlier arbitration proceedings. Reportedly, the woman had been seeking monetary damages from GEICO, which insured her ex-boyfriend's car, because she claims she contracted HPV, human papillomavirus, while having sex in the car.

When you think of insurance payouts to cover injuries sustained in a vehicle, you'd usually imagine crashes and other vehicular accidents. But now it seems they'll also have to think about injuries incurred from getting freaky in the back of a car.

According to court documents in the case, the woman alleged that her ex-boyfriend knew that he had HPV, and still chose to have unprotected sex with her, without informing her of his condition. Last year, an] arbitrator determined that their sexual liaison in the man's car "directly caused, or directly contributed to cause" the woman's HPV infection.

This determination is what led to the judgment that, by not disclosing his condition, the man was on the hook for the \$5.2 million in damages. While a lawsuit over contracting an STD from the insured driver may be the first of its kind, this award shows that it's not a stretch for someone to file against an insurance company for any actions occurring in a motor vehicle, or perhaps even go after their home insurance.

The entire insurance industry is certain to be looking at this case, because it could have ramifications in all kinds of situations, and you can bet there'll be notifications of changes to our insurance policies in the near future.

#### FINALLY, A FLYING VEHICLE

Since before The Jetsons, we've been promised that someday soon we'd all be tooling about in flying cars, and now that dream may be about to take off. The Japanese company A.L.I. Technologies has been taking their XTurismo flying machine on the road, or over it, premiering their finished object for the Top Marques Monaco 2022 in June, an event that showcases supercars, hypercars, exclusive motorcycles, and other forms of unique transportation.

Whether you call it a hoverbike, a flying car, or some combination of the above, the XTurismo looks like a sportbike ran over a drone. The XTurismo's claimed curb weight is 300 kilograms, or a hair over 661 pounds. It's 3.7 meters long by 2.4 meters wide by 1.5 meters high (approximately 12.1 feet by 7.87 feet by 4.9 feet), has a range of approximately 30 to 40 minutes, a top speed of 80 kilometers per hour (just under 50 mph), and has a rated load capacity of 100 kilograms (or 220 pounds). The company is currently accepting preorders for the 200 initial XTurismo Limited Edition units it plans to produce, at a cost of ¥ 77,700,000, or about \$610,710.

QUOTABLE QUOTE: *"The price of freedom of religion or of speech or of the press is that we must put up with, and even pay for, a good deal of rubbish."*

~ Robert H. Jackson, US Supreme Court justice (1892-1954)