

INDUSTRY WATCH

Motorcycle & Moped Industry Council (MMIC)
Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV)
By Jo-Anne Farquhar

MMIC Numbers Show Two Wheel Sales Still Climbing

Although there are many reports of a general economic downturn, figures from the Motorcycle and Moped Industry Council (MMIC) show that total motorcycle and scooter sales in Canada were up over 8 percent year-to-date at the end of December 2008.

Regrettably, the motorcycle industry is not impervious to a world-wide economic downturn. But the increase in sales across Canada in 2008 shows resilience in the Canadian market and reinforces the fact that motorcycles and scooters are more relevant than ever.

2008 was a year where escalating fuel costs, coupled with the expense of fuelling larger gas guzzling vehicles motivated people to look for alternate modes of transportation. The solution for a lot of them was and still is the purchase of a motorcycle or scooter. In fact, increased attendance at the seven 2009 MMIC/COHV motorcycle and ATV shows across Canada were good indicators that Canadians are choosing two-wheel riding as part of their life style choice.

These people get that industry, through research and development; continue to build bikes that are cleaner, more fuel-efficient, and a low cost transportation option that fits in nicely as part of the urban mobility traffic solution. But industry hasn't stopped there.

The increased growth in motorcycle and scooter sales has drawn greater attention to the need for effective noise control of excessively loud motorcycles. With a number of jurisdictions in Canada looking for solutions to loud sound emissions and with several local jurisdiction in the U.S.A. adopting inconsistent and in some cases, unreasonable regulations that limit motorcycle sound levels, it makes sense that a standard simplified test procedure be developed.

Ideally, the test should be consistent with the federal pass-by sound level standards (ie: the 80 dBA standard) with no false failures of motorcycles that comply with the pass-by standard recognized in both the USA and Canada.

The Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) and the Society of Automotive Engineers in the USA, with MMIC support, as one of its funding partner, conducted extensive sound testing throughout 2007. They took the existing SAE J1287 sound test procedures that is now used as an essential tool for the effective and economical enforcement and evaluation of in-use, off-highway motorcycle (OHM) and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) sound levels and used it as a template in the development of in-use on-highway motorcycles tests.

Following these tests, the MIC and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) established the SAE J 2825 sound test, which they believe will provide a quick, easy, economical, and science-based tool for accurately identifying motorcycles with excessively noisy sound emissions.

Once this process is adopted, hopefully in the spring of 2009, the SAE J 2825 will become the industry standard. This also meets MIC's and MMIC's objective to provide a consistent tool nationwide for identifying excessively loud motorcycles. On an international level, it will eliminate a lot of the confusion and frustration for motorcyclists when they ride through different jurisdictions.

MMIC continues to monitor and participate in the SAE J 2825 approval process through its sister association, the MIC and will present this project to the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) in May 2009. At that time the MMIC will recommend that the SAE J 2825 be implemented as a national standard through the CCMTA member jurisdictions.

Being proactive and leading the way with safe and accommodating new policies that allow motorcycles and scooters to reach their full potential, is a step in the right direction to creating more efficient and environmentally-friendly cities and towns across Canada.

As the national non-profit trade association, originally founded in 1971, MMIC represents the responsible interests of major motorcycle and scooter manufacturers, as well as the distributors and retail outlets of motorcycle and scooter related products and services in Canada. For further information check out the MMIC website at www.mmic.ca

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