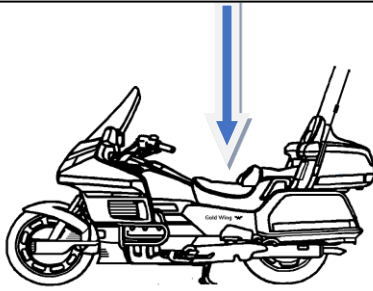


From the Director's Chair



August, 2020

Riding During Minnesota's "Second Season"

As every Minnesotan knows, in this state we have only two seasons – winter and road construction. While we can't wait to hit the road on our bikes, construction season seems to start earlier every year and run longer into the fall or even into the winter. That means we have to remain alert and aware; even when riding two or three wheels is our favorite way to relax.

We were on a short ride last weekend on a two-lane road, when we abruptly encountered a lane closure. It was pretty scary as there was no flag man or traffic control device at either end – so we were riding down a one lane road with no idea of whether or not we would encounter on-coming traffic. About a half-mile along the single lane of traffic, it got even scarier when we encountered two orange barrels that had blown over and were having a good time rolling around in the only available lane of traffic. Just another relaxing ride during Minnesota's second season.

These little "surprises" just reinforce the fact that we need to constantly be prepared for unexpected changes to normal traffic flow. While major construction projects are sometimes announced in the paper or via other communications, we are often not aware of them until they are right in front of us.

Especially when you are on two wheels, any change to the road's surface could have serious consequences. Following are a few things to consider when traveling through that inevitable stretch of summer road construction:

- Chances of encountering rocks, dirt, gravel or other low-traction conditions increase in construction areas and where traffic flow has been temporarily changed.
- Shoulders are often missing or minimal on detours or areas of diverted traffic and the pavement may be uneven or have drop-offs.
- Exposed manhole covers are common in the midst of resurfacing projects.
- One can pretty much count on the fact that traffic will slow or stop unexpectedly in the middle of a construction zone.
- Explanatory signage may be (I want to say probably will be) missing or confusing.
- Workers may be near or on the road.
- After a rain, water may pool in unexpected places when road work is in progress.

As we enjoy the rest of our "second season" stay safe and don't let the oranges get you!

District Educator Newsletter



With all of our GW activities having been cancelled and/or put on hold, are you maybe planning a trip somewhere just to get away? We recently took a trip with friends and members of our extended GWRRA family and met up with other friends/members for a few days of “family” fun and camaraderie. A big shout out to Don and Cheri Walloch for being our tour guides and leading the group on some great roads to see the area. And for the great choice of dinner venue on Friday night. Everything was great and our social distancing was practiced every time we stopped.

The trip took a little extra planning because of the situation in the world today. Here are a few things you need to consider:

Hotels – are they open? If staying in a hotel with other guests, you have to be more conscious of social distancing, something we’re starting to take as normal behavior (sorry, but I still have to give/get a hug once in a while). Other guests may be even more aware of social distancing than you are because they don’t know you.

Restaurants – are they open for dine-in? We found that the majority of fast food locations are still open only for drive-thru but some will allow you to walk through the drive-thru. Many dine in restaurants are open with limited seating, usually allowing a maximum of 6 persons per table. At least at this point.

One other note. It was hot and humid the week we traveled. Make sure, if you’re traveling in the heat and humidity, that you stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, Powerade/Gatorade, or a combination of both. Personally, I’ve found the combination of water and Powerade works better for me. You get the hydration from the water and the electrolytes from the other. Frequent stops in the shade also help – air conditioning, if available, is great but you may feel the heat more walking out of that AC!

Till next time, stay safe and stay cool!

Joy Mattson
MN District Educator