

Rauner urges Illinois to ‘Start Seeing Motorcycles’

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SPRINGFIELD (May 2, 2018) – With winter finally in the rear-view mirror, Gov. Bruce Rauner is encouraging all drivers and motorcycle enthusiasts to be extra cautious as more bikes start hitting the roads.

Rauner joined motorcycle safety advocates and officials from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) today to kick off Motorcycle Awareness Month and IDOT's annual Start Seeing Motorcycles Campaign.

“I’m an avid rider myself,” Rauner said, “I know how important it is for all of us to be aware of who’s on the road with us. Just last week, a good friend of mine, a veteran, was seriously injured when a pick-up truck didn’t see him. He’s still in the hospital today. We’re asking everyone to stay focused and check their rearview mirrors and blind spots before changing lanes. We all have a part to play when it comes to keeping our roads safe.”

Although motorcycles represent 3 percent of total vehicle registrations in Illinois, they account for 15 percent of traffic fatalities. There were 1,097 traffic fatalities in Illinois in 2017 – 162 were motorcyclists, eight more than 2016, according to preliminary data.

During the riding season, Start Seeing Motorcycles banners and yard signs will be on display throughout the state, reminding the public to always stay alert for motorcycles.

All riders are urged to take precautions to ensure they stay visible to other motorists. By wearing the appropriate protective gear, getting regular maintenance checks and taking advantage of IDOT’s free motorcycle safety courses, they make the roads safer for themselves and other drivers.

A motorcycle can easily be hidden behind other vehicles so all other motorists are advised to avoid distractions and be on the lookout at all times.

“Warmer weather means more bikes on the road and more interaction between motorcyclists and other vehicles,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “The number of fatalities and injuries involving motorcycles is heading in the wrong direction. That’s unacceptable. By staying alert and extra vigilant, we can begin to reverse these trends.”

Start Seeing Motorcycles is made possible by the teamwork among IDOT, the Illinois State Police, Gold Wing Road Riders Association, A Brotherhood Aimed Towards Education (ABATE) and other organizations that promote motorcycle education, awareness and safety

“Riding motorcycles safely is just as important as driving cars safely,” said Illinois State Police Director Leo P. Schmitz. “All of us have a responsibility to do our part to ride and drive safely. We want to remind motorcyclists of riding dangers, practicing safe riding habits, ensuring they are operating a safe vehicle having the correct classification on their driver's license We are also asking drivers to keep their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel.”

Visit startseeingmotorcycles.org for more information on IDOT’s free motorcycle training and safety programs.