

The 2010 Iron Butt 5000 – Day -2
Saturday, August 14, 2010

The Check-In Process Begins

Mostly sunny skies with temperatures in the low 80s made for pleasant conditions in Denver, Colorado, during the first day of rider check-in and Tech Inspection for the first ever running of the Iron Butt 5000 rally. It's a nice break from the near 100°F temperatures the city has been experiencing in recent days. Riders participating in the Iron Butt Association National Meet were at the head of the check-in line and got the inspection out of the way a day ahead of other riders.

Tech Inspection

Assisting Chief Technical Inspector Dale Wilson today were Tobie and Lisa Stevens, Bob Ray, Matt Watkins, Rick Martin, Chuck Hickey, Jim Fousek, and Doug Chapman.

Tobie and Lisa Stevens Send Riders Out on the Odometer Check



The complexity of the Tech Inspection process depends on how extensively a motorcycle has been modified and how close riders are pushing the 11.5 gallon limit on fuel capacity.

Riders close to the limit must have the capacity of their auxiliary fuel system measured. The time consuming process involves the use of hydrometers to measure fuel density and a laboratory grade electronic scale that is used to measure the weight of fuel required to fill an empty system.

Motorcycles with aftermarket exhaust systems will have to pass a sound test. Since 1999 the Iron Butt Rally has required all participants to use relatively quiet exhaust systems that not only reduce rider fatigue but leave a good impression with the hotels used for the start, finish, and the checkpoints. Participation in the Rally is now limited to motorcycles capable of meeting the even more stringent requirements of a new Society of Automotive Engineers test procedure named "J2825." The sound level of motorcycles equipped with 3 or 4 cylinder engines is limited to 100 decibels (dB) at a measurement distance 20 inches from the exhaust outlet with the engine running in neutral gear at 5,000 rpm. Motorcycles with anything other than 3 or 4 cylinders (i.e., all single, twin, and six cylinder models) are limited to 96 dB at the same measurement distance with the engine running at 2000 rpm. Many aftermarket exhaust systems can comply with these standards, but systems using un-baffled mufflers or straight pipes will fail by a wide margin.

For riders without auxiliary fuel capacity or exhaust sound level issues, the most time consuming part of the process is the odometer check. The odo check for this rally is relatively simple because Interstate 25 is just a stone's throw from the hotel. Each rider is given written instructions for the precise route to follow to the Interstate and then told to take I-25 south to Exit 188. After exiting, the instructions direct riders to turn left and go over the overpass and take the cloverleaf entrance ramp back onto I-25 north to Exit 199. They then follow a few specific turn-by-turn directions back into the parking lot of the Marriott Denver Tech Center. It's about a 24 mile ride from start to finish. The difference between the rider's odometer readings and the true distance (measured multiple times with a GPS) determines the correction factor that will be applied to the distance calculated by the rider's odometer during the Rally.

The other elements of the Tech Inspection process include making sure that the rider's registration and insurance documents match the license plate and Vehicle Identification Number on the motorcycle. Auxiliary fuel systems are checked for secure mounting, proper vent line routing, and electrical grounding of any non-metallic tanks that aren't directly attached to the frame. Each motorcycle is also inspected to make sure there are no commercial decals that would give the vehicle the appearance of a competition motorcycle.

A Damsel in Distress

About half the riders finished with Tech Inspection today. The only significant problem uncovered was an inadequate auxiliary fuel system on Connie Gabrick's Victory Vision. The Victory's auxiliary cell is not securely mounted and the vent line is too close to the exhaust system. Fortunately, the rider should have time to correct the problem tomorrow because there are always people willing to pitch in and help a rider having mechanical problems.

Upcoming Reports

Tomorrow's report will be more extensive. It will cover the conclusion of Tech Inspection, a summary of what transpires at the Riders' Meeting on Sunday afternoon, and report on the activities at the evening banquet at which the bonus listings will be handed out. Although the detailed bonus listing won't be published until after the end of each leg, I will provide highlights of what's included in order to provide some idea as to the routing options the riders have to consider.

Tom Austin

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