

October 2009

First off, welcome to the TEN n' TEN Rally!

I want to spend a little time with you and explain a few of the concepts of the rally. . .how we will score the event. . .and what will be expected of you, the rider.

While you will certainly be challenged on this rally, our primary purpose will be three fold.

- "Fun": For you the rider, as well as the Rallymaster and those in the community with an interest in following the rally.
- The opportunity to see wonderful places in this great country.
- An opportunity to earn one of the Ironbutt Association's most Prestigious awards: The 10/10ths award.

We will do our best to not burden you with excessive rules and regulations. But, we want folks that will not be joining us on this adventure to be able to follow you, the riders, as you travel over hill and dale. This openness means that there will be some very simple responsibilities put on the riders, and a few very basic tenets.

So let's get to the information.

Tracking of Riders: It is strongly encouraged that all riders have a Spot tracking unit that is interfaced with Jason Jonas' STM service. Now for those of you unfamiliar with the term "strongly encouraged" when it is used by MERA, I would suggest that you ask someone who has ridden any prior MERA sanctioned events. To further encourage you to have a Spot unit on your bike, we will also be adding bonus points to your total score for having the unit. It makes it kind of a no brainer, huh? We really want you to carry a Spot unit folks.

The reasons for suggesting Spot are many. First, we want to keep the Rallymaster from going completely crazy during the rally, and by being able to see where the riders are at any given time will help in that regard. Another issue is due to the fact that most riders will be out there on their own in unfamiliar country. In the event of an emergency, we would be able to direct emergency services to their aid much quicker than without the unit. And third, by having an open location page those folks that were not able to join us in this adventure will be able to follow the progress of their friends as they travel hither and yon around the country.

Tracking will be done in two separate methods during the rally. There will be an open location page set up with Jason Jonas where all riders in the TEN n' TEN will be visible at once. Yep, 50 little flags going in every direction at the same

Tracking of Riders cont.: time! This page will show only your current location, not longitude or latitude, and not where you've been. And the riders will be listed by a number not their name or initials. I would suggest that you use your rally number which will be sent to you in the spring. There will also be a password protected individual page for each rider. Family members, friends, and the Rallymaster will be able to view this page because you will have given them your password prior to the start of the rally. If you don't want friends or family to view this page, then only the Rallymaster will have the password. **Or if you want the entire world to see what you're doing, where you've been, and how much fun you're having, then you are free to leave it open for viewing by everyone.** You will need to have an STM account set up with Jason for all of this to be accomplished, and that should only take you a minute or two to do so. Please plan to have this accomplished prior to your arrival in Salt Lake and the start of the rally.

I understand that not all riders are comfortable with having their routes followed, but due to the remoteness of locations in this event, and the fact that most riders will be riding alone in unfamiliar country, I feel that it is a very important rally addition. The open location page will not show your history of where you've been, just where you were located when the page was opened. And it will not show longitude or latitude. Also, no one will be able to access the tracking page without your authorization. As stated earlier, the password-protected page will be used by the Rallymaster in the event we have to go looking for you, or if there is a question on your verification of a bonus location that you visited. For those of you that really don't want folks knowing where you are, or where you've been, then I would suggest that you not give out your user name or password to anyone other than the Rallymaster.

A link to Jason's STM page, and instructions on how to set up an account will be forwarded to the riders in the spring.

Bonus Locations & Routing: A complete bonus listing will be emailed to the riders 30 days prior to the start of the rally. You are free to ask your family and friends to help you with your route at this time. You can use any and all routing software. . .multiple GPS's. . .every map ever printed by Rand McNally . . .and your good buddy who used to be a long haul trucker to help you in the process of defining your optimum route. But please remember that once the rally starts, no outside routing assistance will be allowed. When you show up in Salt Lake City for the start of the rally you will need to bring **THREE** printed copies of your route. These route copies would be best viewed as a Word document. One of the copies will be given to the rally staff so that we have a basic idea where you are attempting to travel to during the rally. The other two copies will be used by you during the rally. While we understand that plans change during a multi-day rally, you should endeavor to stick very close to your proposed route. And at the very least, call the Rallymaster if those plans should vary for any reason.

Bonus Locations & Routing cont.: Since you will have 30 days in which to figure out which route you will be traveling we will not be supplying you with GPS co-ordinates of the bonus locations. We figure since you have all this time to work out where you want to go, you can plug those destinations into your GPS or mapping software yourself. I anticipate that there will be approximately 200 bonus locations for you to test your riding skills, and possibly 10% more. We're not attempting to burden you down with locations, we only want you to be able to ride and have a good time. Of the approximately 200 bonus locations, less than 5% will be time limited. In other words, you will be able to secure the points for virtually all of the bonus locations twenty-four hours a day. Now that is not to say that some won't be worth more during business hours than in the middle of the night. But again, since you have 30 days in which to figure out your route, it will be your decision how and when you schedule that stop.

For those bonus locations that require photographic proof of your visit, you're free to use all of your photographic talents. You're not limited in the number of photos you can take, and you're also not limited in their size either. We honestly don't care how many photos you take on this incredible journey. The choice is yours. A good size that still gets all the necessary information in the photo is 640x480 pixels, but if you've got the card space for larger photos then go for it.

The only addition to the bonus listing that will be emailed out to you, will be the addition of one or two additional locations that will be handed out at the checkpoint. The decision to use them will be entirely up to you.

Checkpoint & Scoring: There will be one checkpoint. This checkpoint will be located in either Nebraska or Kansas, and will be on the 4th day of the rally. The reason that we're going to use the 4th day of the rally is so that once riders have checked in at the checkpoint, they will still be able to make the far points of the east coast and still make it back to Salt Lake City for the finish. It is proposed that this checkpoint will be open for a total of **Six** (6) hours, and once the rider checks in, he or she will be free to travel on to their next bonus destination. In other words, you do not have to stay at the checkpoint until it closes, but you must get there before it closes.

Since you will be turning in your mid rally paperwork at this checkpoint, we have taken a number of steps to insure that you will lose a minimum amount of time waiting to check-in. You will turn in any receipts that you have collected so far in the rally. . .your camera storage card. . .and your bonus scoring sheet will be scanned in a high speed document scanner and returned to you. In initial tests, we have found that this entire process takes less than 2 minutes if the rider has everything in order when they come to the table. If they don't have everything in order, they will be allowed to step aside. . .go back to their bike and get what they forgot, and then re-organize their paperwork and get back in line at the end of the line. We have instituted this entirely new scoring process that will not only allow the rider to keep their score sheets, but also speed the entire process up considerably.

Checkpoint & Scoring cont.: After the last rider has checked in, a tentative ranking will be available for viewing by those riders that have hung around the checkpoint, and on the MERA webpage as well. All riders must make the checkpoint within the specified time window, or they will be considered a DNF in the rally. The checkpoint location and time window will be sent to the riders with the bonus listing so you will be able to plan your route around that window.

As we did in the RWYB rally, there will be a "Phone the Rallymaster" bonus. You will have a very long time window in which to call me and tell me that you miss me. We will both make a notation of the time at which you called. You will then have 10 minutes to make any kind of purchase that generates a computer-timed receipt. For the rider to receive credit for the phone bonus, the receipt must be timed within that ten-minute time window and be from the same city you told me you were calling from. If not, well you'll get to start the process all over again. There will be at least two of these so-called "Phone the Rallymaster" bonuses throughout the rally, and they will be included in the bonus listing.

Communication with the outside world during the rally: We figure you will have spent well over a year preparing for this rally. . .30 days planning your route. . .and 10 days riding the event. And, we also figure that you've got a lot of folks you would like to share this monumental accomplishment with. So it is not our intention to limit your communication with friends and family during the rally. While my personal opinion is that you should be concentrating on the rally and not your personal blog, it will ultimately be your decision how you handle this social phenomenon. And yes, you may post a link to your bread crumb page from STM so all your friends and family can see what is going on. What I will ask of you is to make sure any references to speed on your blog will be the posted speed limit.

Check in and inspection: As many of you know, we have a very simplified form of inspection and check-in procedure at MERA events. Most of what you'll do at inspection, you'll do yourself. Now this is not to say that we don't care, it's just that we prefer to make you responsible for your own equipment and actions. There have however been a few questions on fuel and specific gravity of fluids. The answer is yes, your fuel will be required to have specific gravity. However, we don't care what the value is, and we will not be testing it at check in.

We also will not be checking noise levels of your aftermarket exhaust. If you can stand the noise, then we're good with it. I would estimate that for a rider to go through inspection, ride the extended odometer check, and pick up your rally goodies should take no more than an hour. But that time window will depend on your handwriting speed and how well you follow the instructions on the odometer check.

Outside assistance: I've had a number of riders ask me questions on this subject, so I'll attempt to clarify it for everyone. If during the rally you discover that you need to replace a tire you can have someone else change the tire. But, they just can't come and get the bike and take it to another location to have the work done while you sleep in a motel or campground.

If your final drive fails or you run out of fuel, it is perfectly legal for you to ride in the tow vehicle that takes you to the gas station or the repair facility. It is my understanding that some roadside assistance plans will bring you fuel in the event you run dry, and if you have one of those plans it is perfectly legal for them to bring you fuel.

I guess the simplest way to explain this rule is the following: Folks can work on your scooter, but you must be with them while they do it. And someone can come get your disabled bike and take it to a repair facility, but you have to go with it. Now obviously this is something that is impossible for us to enforce. But we believe that the integrity of the riders entered in this rally is such that they are not interested in pushing that envelope.

The only area where outside assistance is not allowed during the rally is with routing. This is why I stressed the point that you will need to ride the route that you bring to us prior to the start of the rally.

Sleep during the rally: I'm going to take a wild guess here, but I guessin' that when you work on your route you're going to allow time for sleep. If not, well you're probably going to have a very short rally. Every rider has their own sleep habits and patterns, and I believe that each rider should know those habits and patterns prior to the start of the rally. While one rider may be absolutely happy as hell sleeping alongside their scooter on the ground, another will only want a hotel bed and a shower. One rider may get tired at 0200, while the next rider is just getting up at 0200.

My point to all of this is that it is your responsibility to figure out your own sleep patterns and needs. I won't tell you that you must sleep at a certain time on a certain day, and for a specific amount of time. Body clocks just don't work that way.

For the aforementioned reasons there will not be any mandatory sleep stops on the TEN n' TEN rally. When and how much you sleep will be entirely up to you.

Fuel logs & fuel capacity: You will need to keep two fuel logs during the rally. The first fuel log will be from the start of the rally until the checkpoint. The second fuel log will be from the checkpoint until the finish of the rally. There will be a point value assigned for each fuel log, and they must be complete to earn the points. Fuel capacity as mentioned in the application is limited to 11 ½ gallons for motorcycles, and 15 ½ gallons for trikes and motorcycles with sidecars.

Team riding: We here at MERA really don't care if you want to ride with another rider or not, and in fact encourage it because it increases the opportunity to further enhance the fun factor of a rally. But endurance riding is an individual sport, and just because you meet up at a bonus location does not mean you're now riding as a team. It is your decision if you want to ride with another rider or not. And no, you do not have to call us and let us know that you are now riding with another rider. . .just go have fun and share the experience with that fellow rider!

To be considered a finisher: A couple of you have asked why I listed 8,000 miles as the minimum mileage to be a finished in the TEN n' TEN. While the rally was named for riding 1,000 miles a day for ten days, I realize that not everyone is capable of riding that many miles in that period of time. Hence, a minimum standard had to be established, and 8,000 miles seemed about right. You will all know your routes prior to the start of the rally, and I'm just guessin' here, but I'll bet most of you put in a few interstate miles in your routes. So, 8,000 miles in 10 days is certainly doable.

It should also be noted that your finishing position is not tied to your mileage. .it is based on the amount of points that you earned during the rally.

Payments and refund deadline: Those of you who paid the \$250.00 portion of the entry fee when you entered have until January 15, 2010 to pay the balance of the entry fee. And the refund deadline to withdraw from the rally is March 1, 2010. After that date, all monies paid will be forfeited.

Well, that should give you a little reading material for a few days. And if you know of any buddies that might be interested in riding this event with you, well pass this information on to them.