

BMW, SCCA join forces to make teens better drivers on the road

BY FRANK HAMILTON
NWR Regional Executive

Drivers in the age group 16 to 18 are among the highest crash-prone groups in the nation. Keeping in mind that education is the foundation for our not-for-profit status with IRS, we need to keep education in the forefront. At the 2007 SCCA National Convention, I sat in on a seminar that is right down that alley.

The BMW Foundation has researched and developed a program targeting these kids that is now being implemented in 50 Eastern cities, and it's working! It is called: "Street Survival: Teenage Drivers."

Should NWR-SCCA opt to establish this program, it would be the first in the Northwest. Tire Rack has put money into the process to make it go and SCCA has stepped up to make the effort to promote the classes in its regions. SCCA has sanctioning in the works.

This is not about competitive driving.

It is about how to handle a motor vehicle. Public relations to promote this end are directed at parents. Parents can jack their kids out of bed on a Saturday morning and get them to training sessions. Sessions are about one hour in classroom and four or five hours on driving course. Coaches (not instructors) ride with the teens and show them how they should drive.

There is a \$60 tuition to get in the class; \$20 of that stays with sponsor group, the rest goes to BMW. Students get a manual, a tire gauge and are shown videos. They need to bring the car or truck they most often drive and there is a tech inspection. They must have a valid driver's license. Back east they are getting as many as 360 students per class.

A classroom (even if a tent) is needed and a paved surface without traffic islands is good. There needs to be TV monitor for the videos. Coaches are needed. BMW will furnish most of the materials. Parents may come but they

are restricted to the back of the room and asked to hold their comments. At the end of the day, if both teen and parent are willing, the teen may take their parent for a ride after the coaching is done to show their stuff.

Tire Rack and BMW have already logged several incidents where this defensive driving program has paid off.

This program could be a complement to the First Gear program. We would obviously have a chance to plug SCCA and PRG. New blood in this world is important!

Should NWR-SCCA buy into this program, I would be willing to spearhead it. I have been an instructor in police and fire academies, Evergreen Safety Council, several community colleges, law enforcement Explorer advisor for 19 years, and a youth leader for 37 years. I will need coaches and sites to make it happen. Let me know if you're willing to help out. I will train others to make this happen.

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National Tour, ProSolo schedule for 2007

National Tour

March 17 and 18, San Diego, Calif., Jack Murphy Stadium

April 14 and 15, Atwater, Calif., Castle AFB

April 28 and 29, Walnut Ridge, Ark., Walnut Ridge Airport

May 19 and 20, Houston, Texas, Gulf Greyhound

June 2 and 3, Huntsville, Ala., Milton Frank Stadium

June 9 and 10, Devens, Mass., Moore Airfield

June 30 and July 1, TBA, Great Lakes area

July 7 and 8, Milwaukee, Wisc., Miller Park

Aug. 11 and 12, Salt Lake City, Utah, Miller Motorsports Park

Aug. 18 and 19, Packwood, Wash., Hampton Mills

ProSolo

March 24 and 25, El Toro, Calif., El Toro airfield

May 5 and 6, TBA, Southeast

May 26 and 27, Mineral Wells, Texas, Mineral Wells Airport

June 23 and 24, Washington D.C., FedEx Field

July 21 and 22, TBA, Great Lakes area

Aug. 25 and 26, Packwood, Wash., Hampton Mills