

AMERICAN

MOTORCYCLE DEALER #54

JANUARY '04

Organizer forced to postpone launch of Las Vegas trade show

The Powersports Group, a division of Advanstar, has been forced into announcing a delay in its plans to start a new West Coast version of the Harley aftermarket trade show it holds at its Dealernews International Powersports Dealer Expo at Indianapolis in February each year.

Badged as Big Twin West and billed as a sister event to the Big Twin East brand adopted for the Indy show's Harley aftermarket content, the show was still being given the official go ahead by Advanstar until a matter of weeks before the inaugural event.

Scheduled for the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, for the 23rd to 25th January, the organizers have announced a postponement to November 20th and 21st, at the same venue.

"Aside from show dates, nothing has changed," said Mike Webster, Vice President of the Powersports Group. "We're still launching Big Twin West as an exclusive venue designed to help manufacturers connect with notoriously hard-to-reach Western retailers. We're still offering a successful 'Big Twin only' environment tailored to dealer needs. We're still slated to host the biggest names in

American-made aftermarket accessories."

The company says that according to its latest research, "November was determined as a better month for a show like Big Twin West". Powersports Group general manager Tracy Harris said: "In talking to members of the industry, we discovered many were frustrated with their increasingly crowded winter schedule."

In addition to a host of other trade related events in January and February, including one hosted by Tucker Rocky/Biker's Choice (a major target exhibitor for Advanstar), Harley itself is holding its annual 'must attend' winter dealer conference in Florida on the same weekend chosen for Big Twin West.

Some reports are suggesting the organizers had actually overlooked that date clash. Regardless of the reason, it is certain the guaranteed absence of the authorized dealer community would have badly damaged attendance.

Many observers viewed Advanstar's announcement of Big Twin West as an ambitious move at best, with some regarding it merely as a spoiling tactic intended to damage the success that

Easyriders has had so far with its V-Twin Expo at Cincinnati.

Either way, the original announcement had opened a hornets' nest of conflicting views based on past industry experience in even contemplating 'going West'.

It is often said that West Coast dealers are not great trade show attendees. On the other hand, East Coast and Midwestern exhibitors have been broadly in favour of the Las Vegas announcement, because they welcome any opportunity to meet with West Coast dealers.

While the original date chosen was controversial because of other events, the move to November will see Advanstar challenging another historical powersports industry assumption, namely that, in general, the spring-focused cash cycle of the powersports industry means shows held before then are doomed.

However, the Powersports Group appears to be confident the time is right for some of the old taboos of the market to be questioned. "Moving Big Twin West to November gives the industry some breathing room," says Tracy Harris. "So far, the response from the industry has been very positive."

COMMENT

GOING WEST... BUT LATER

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'The homecoming'



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COVER CUSTOM

Planned for launch in 2004, this is 'V', the latest kit bike design to be introduced by Custom Chrome and designed by John Reed. See full story on pages 50-51...



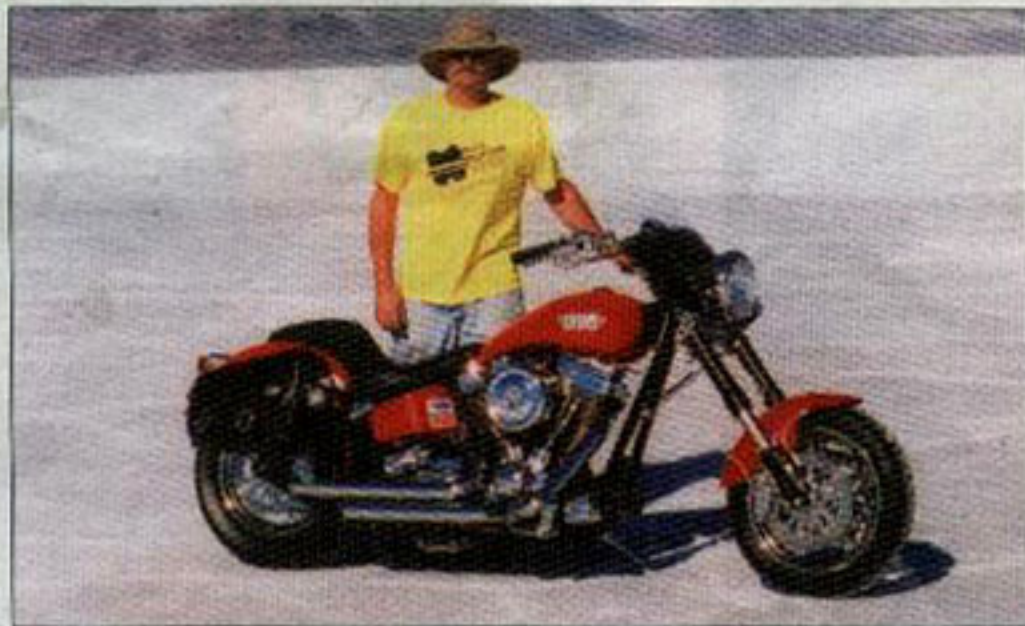
Launch of the BUB Bonneville Bash

Denis Manning is someone who gets things done. Denis is the head of BUB Enterprises, builders of exhaust systems including the Rinehart systems sold exclusively through Drag Specialties. However, Denis is also an enthusiast for outright speed.

Last year, the Fat Book Flyer, a bike constructed entirely from the pages of Drag Specialties' catalog, ran 155mph with Pete Davis aboard. This year, the team built an FL Bagger! Don't laugh – this one ran 140! His streamliner special, 'Tenacious', achieved 289 mph on the Australian salt of Lake Gairdner in 2001. Not a record, a blown engine had seen to that, but 'tenacious' sums up Denis's attitude in launching the BUB Bonneville Bash.

This will happen on the legendary Utah salt on 5th-10th September 2004. It is an event that has not been held before and one that Denis has dreamed of running for years – a meeting purely for bikes. Usually, bikes are obliged to run on the back of SCTA (Southern California Timing Association) meetings, organized primarily for cars. Denis felt it was only fair the two-wheelers should have a go all by themselves.

It has taken two years of protracted negotiations with the Bureau of Land Management before the necessary clearance could be provided. The



meeting is thus fully sanctioned and insured. While those hurdles were being cleared, Denis set about standardizing the rules, so the records could be truly meaningful.

Outside of America, most international motorcycle sport is organized by the FIM (Federation Internationale Motocycliste), based in Switzerland. The FIM has its own set of

rules that are applied before it will endorse a world record as such. Denis has worked hard to bring the organization on board so all competitors know what they are shooting for – the records recognized by the SCTA will continue to be recognized as Club records. AMA records will continue to be recognized as national records. Those accepted by the FIM will be true world records.

Traditionally, similar events are organized on an amateur basis. The reward for success is usually limited to a certificate of achievement. Denis takes a more robust attitude and feels the effort involved in simply having an attempt at this sort of meeting raises the status from amateur to professional.

Consequently, an impressive amount of prize money is available. Top run of the meet attracts \$10,000. Almost certainly, that cash will head the way of a streamliner, so there is an equal-sized purse for the fastest run by a 'sit-on-and-hang-on' type bike. A further \$5,000 comes from Rinehart, for the best run by an American V-twin and an equal amount in a cc/mph competition for the best time by a smaller bike. Denis points out the world record for a 50cc machine stands to Kreidler at 140mph+!

Denis is already working on TV and magazine coverage; T-shirts, posters and flyers are on the way. He is also in negotiation with a very smart hotel in Wendover to be used as event headquarters. Accommodation will be offered at very attractive prices for the duration of the event and the climax of the meeting will be a party and awards ceremony on the 10th September.

CHRONOPRINTER 501
MANUAL MODE

ENTER TIME

00H 00M

PRECISION?

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SPLIT/LAP (2)

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CHRONOPRINTER 501
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ENTER TIME

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SPLIT/LAP (2)

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Denis reckons for those out of the prize money the party will more than compensate! So far, six streamliner owners have expressed interest, as well as a double-engined Hayabusa.

Interested? Initial contact is through Delvene, event co-ordinator at BUB.

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