



DRIVING FORCE

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IT'S HAMMERS TIME!

Struggle for Legendary Race and Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area Ends in Victory

Victorious Finish in Six-Year Clash Over Off-highway Land

For over six years, a battle brewed over the future of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Area in the Southern California desert. The issue was simple—how to expand the adjoining Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms while preserving recreation access to 189,000 acres at Johnson Valley. The Marines needed the additional land to simulate brigade-level expeditionary force movements and the Johnson Valley topography seemed ideal for training purposes. The debate reached a crescendo in 2013 and a decision required Congressional approval. As a result of a consistent grassroots effort from the SEMA Action Network (SAN) and many partner organizations, a legislative solution was reached to create a dedicated OHV recreation area and provide land for military training exercises.

Under a provision included within the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDA) signed into law last December, 79,000 acres of Johnson Valley has been transferred to the Twentynine Palms base. Simultaneously, the law created the “Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area,” providing federal protection to more than 96,000 acres established in 1980 for OHV recreation by the state of California. It is the first time an OHV area has been provided

national recognition. Twice a year, 53,000 acres of the OHV area will be provided to the Marine Corps for 30 days of military training exercises. No dud-producing ordnance will be used at that time in order to assure safety and continued OHV access to the area.

“The SAN commends Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA) for the instrumental role he has played in reaching a reasonable shared-use solution,” said SAN Director Colby Martin. “We joined with a number of other organizations representing the off-road community to support this provision that addresses the nation’s military training needs while providing access for responsible recreational activities. We consider this ground-breaking provision a positive result for both the OHV community and the United States Marine Corps.”

The Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area will continue to be controlled by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It contains a unique mix of open desert, dry lake beds and formidable rock-crawling formations that attracts four-wheeler enthusiasts from around the world. The area hosts the famous King of the Hammers Race, which drew more than 50,000 people to the 2013 event. The BLM estimates that Johnson Valley generates more than \$71 million annually for local economies, a number that will continue to grow.

“The agreement preserves California’s most important off-road recreation area for future generations,” said Rep. Paul Cook. “After years in which off-roaders have lived in fear of the closure of Johnson Valley, this permanently ends the threat of base expansion into off-road areas.”

Prior to being elected to Congress in 2012, Rep. Cook served a 26-year distinguished military career in the Marine Corps before retiring as a colonel. He has lived for years in the area that includes Johnson Valley and the Twentynine Palms base and represented those communities in the California state legislature before his election to Congress.

The SAN worked collaboratively with the Off-Road Business Association (ORBA), California Motorized Recreation Council (CMRC), Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) and Americans for Responsible Recreational Access (ARRA). CMRC includes ORBA, California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs (Cal4Wheel), California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA), American Motorcyclist Association National (AMA), AMA District 36, AMA District 37 Off-Road, San Diego Off-Road Coalition (SDORC), American Sand Association (ASA) and California-Nevada Snowmobile Association (CNSA).

Cover image courtesy Kathy Durrett, visionsbykathy.com



New Year Brings Slate of Positive Proposals

Not all legislation is intended to negatively impact car and truck enthusiasts. As state lawmakers convene to begin their 2014 legislative sessions, trends indicate that a majority of automotive bills being introduced offer positive opportunities to the SAN legion. To follow is an overview of a few of these pro-hobby bills:

Delaware Reconstructed Vehicle Emissions: The SAN is supporting legislation to exempt reconstructed vehicles that are more than 25 years old from emissions testing. Under the bill, the vehicle must continue to meet and be inspected for safety and anti-tampering requirements for its model year. The bill was passed by the Delaware House and currently resides in the Senate Public Safety Committee.

Maryland Historic Vehicle/Street Rod Single Plate: The SAN is supporting legislation to require the issuance of only a single license plate for Class L Historic Vehicles and Class N Street Rods. Currently, only Class D Motorcycles, Class F Tractors and Class G Trailers can run a single plate.



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New Hampshire Ethanol: The SAN is supporting legislation that prohibits a person from selling or offering for sale gasoline that contains corn-based ethanol as an additive at a level greater than 10%.

New Hampshire Year of Manufacture Plates: The SAN is supporting legislation to expand the range of model year vehicles eligible to use original year-of-manufacture license plates on antique motor vehicles. Currently, only '60-and-earlier model-year antique vehicles are eligible to use these plates. Under the bill, eligibility would be expanded to include all '75-and-earlier model years.

New Jersey Single Plate: The SAN is supporting legislation to require the issuance of only

a single license plate for motor vehicles. The bill, favored by state hobbyists, requires that the single registration plate be attached on the rear of the vehicle.



New Jersey Street Rods and Custom Vehicles: A version of SEMA-model legislation that would create a vehicle registration classification for street rods and replica custom vehicles and provide for special license plates for these vehicles was reintroduced for 2014. The bill defines a street rod as an altered vehicle manufactured before 1948 and a custom as an altered vehicle at least 25 years old and manufactured after 1948. It also allows kit cars and replica vehicles to be assigned a certificate of title bearing the same model-year designation the body of the vehicle most closely resembles.

Ohio Historic Vehicle Use: The SAN is supporting legislation to amend the state's current law defining historical motor vehicles to permit use of these vehicles on public roads to and from a location where maintenance is performed. Under current Ohio law, a "historical motor vehicle" is any motor vehicle that is more than 25 years old and owned solely as a collector's item and for participation in club activities, exhibitions, tours, parades, and similar uses, but not for general transportation.

Tennessee Antique Vehicle Taxes: The SAN is supporting identical legislation that will allow counties to exempt owners of antique motor vehicles from the privilege tax. The county may also only require a one-time only payment of the tax. According to the state, the average amount of the one-time tax imposed would be \$43.10.

Virginia Antique Vehicle Exhaust Systems: The SAN is supporting legislation to allow Virginia's antique vehicle hobbyists to install and use aftermarket exhaust systems. Currently, all vehicles are required to have exhaust systems

of a type installed as standard factory equipment, or comparable to that designed for use on the particular vehicle as standard factory equipment. Further, exhaust systems must not emit noise in excess of that permitted by the standard factory equipment.

Washington Single Plate: The SAN is supporting legislation to require the issuance of only a single license plate for vehicles that do not include a front mounting bracket as manufactured. The bill would protect the aesthetic contours of certain vehicles and relieve vehicle owners of the burden and expense of having to create mounting holes on some original bumpers.



Image courtesy Shutterstock.com

Washington Collectible Vehicle Emissions: The SAN is supporting legislation to exempt collectible vehicles of any age from emissions testing. The bill defines collectible vehicles as a vehicle of unique or rare design, of limited production, and an object of curiosity that is maintained primarily for use in car club activities, exhibitions, parades or other functions of public interest or for a private collection, and is used only infrequently for other purposes.

West Virginia Antique Vehicle Taxes: The SAN is supporting reintroduced legislation that would provide owners of antique motor vehicles with an exemption from taxation and fees. West Virginia law defines an "antique motor vehicle" to mean any motor vehicle which is more than 25 years old and is owned solely as a collector's item.

West Virginia Exhaust Noise: The SAN is supporting reintroduced legislation that would allow West Virginia's vehicle hobbyists to install and use aftermarket modified exhaust systems that meet a 95-decibel limit. Current West Virginia law only allows a muffler

originally installed by the manufacturer or an equivalent. The bill would remove subjective provisions in the law and force compliance with an objectively measured standard. Under the standard, exhaust noise could not exceed a sound reading of 95 decibels under a fair and predictable test.



West Virginia Property Taxes: The SAN is supporting Senate legislation to exempt motor vehicles, including automobiles, motorcycles, airplanes, trucks and tractors that are older than 25 years from personal property taxes. Under the bill, these automobiles and motorcycles would need to display valid current antique licenses and could not be used for daily transportation.

West Virginia Remote Starters: The SAN is supporting legislation that would provide that a motor vehicle that has been started by use of a remote starter when the vehicle is locked is not an unattended vehicle and not in violation of the law. Under current law, no person driving or in charge of a motor vehicle may permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, removing the key, and effectively setting the brake.



West Virginia Collector Vehicle Plates: The SAN is supporting legislation to provide for the issuance of special plates for use on collector vehicles and allow for the transfer of the special plates temporarily between the collector motor vehicles owned by the collector. Delegate Gary Howell, the sponsor of the bill, indicates that most cars 25 years old and older will qualify for the collector plates.

For the complete list of Legislative Action Alerts, visit semaSAN.com/Alerts.

SAN DIRECTOR'S DISPATCH



Meeting in the Middle Means Everybody Wins



With California's Johnson Valley Off-Highway (OHV) Recreation Area now under federal protection, off-roaders will be able to enjoy use of the land well into the future.

“I believe in friendly compromise... *Compromise is the oil that makes governments go.*”

—Gerald Ford

Victory can be measured in a number of ways: fractions of a second, number of laps ahead, miles per hour and a myriad of others. The outcome of any competition depends on many factors, all contributing to how far ahead the first finishes before the rest. However, winning “big” doesn’t always mean “taking all.”

As you’ll read in the cover story, the positive result of the negotiated settlement that resulted in the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that saved the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Area was really a large compromise. Off-roaders and the U.S. Marine Corps were both winners. The military base received an extra 79,000 acres of land, 60 days per year in the “shared use” area and off-road enthusiast no longer have to fear future expansion since the OHV area is now protected by Congress. In the end, the most important needs of both parties were ultimately met in the agreement.

This is an example of how the system can be successfully conquered with purpose, per-

severance and patience. Sure, not every bill is perfect and many pro-hobby bills are dismissed before they’re given adequate consideration. But, as we continue to build a larger, more unified voice, the odds may favor our position more often. When working with competing interests, greater results can generally be more easily attained using logic and reason than anger or might. Tactfully and responsibly navigating legislative proposals is how the SEMA Action Network (SAN) best positions itself. What began as a “get the government out of my garage” effort has evolved into an operation dedicated to finding real solutions for the betterment of the hobby. Win or lose, a level-headed approach is how we encourage and assist SAN contacts in reaching lawmakers. Now that doesn’t mean we go down without a fight as anyone with knowledge of our history will tell you. It does mean, however, that our best chances for victory are when we seek to identify the merit of the other’s side arguments and find outcomes that leave both satisfied with the result. That’s called compromise, folks...and it works!

As the state sessions heat up this year, thanks for fighting the good fight!

—IGNITED WE STAND!

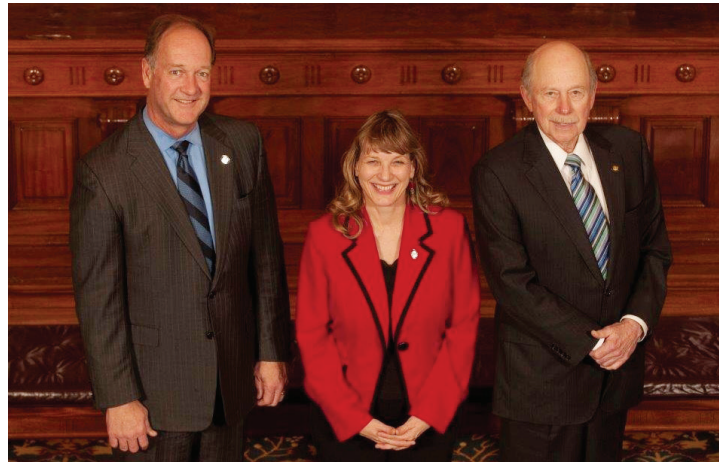
CAUCUS CONNECTION

Walking the Walk

Members of the SEMA-supported State Automotive Enthusiast Leadership Caucus share many similarities. For example, all currently serve as lawmakers in state capitols around the country and all support legislative policies that promote the automotive hobby and the industry that serves it. Three state legislators from a single state have even more in common; each is a State Senator in Kansas and each runs a car dealership in the Sunflower State. Senators Les Donovan (R-Wichita), Jeff Longbine (R-Emporia) and Elaine Bowers (R-Concordia) have been in the automotive industry for 52, 27, and 25 years respectively and each came to public service with the goal of allowing businesses and communities to prosper.

Senator Les Donovan started Donovan Auto (Cadillac, Buick, GMC) in Wichita in 1977. In the '90s, Donovan vowed to do what it took to help ease the state's high property tax on vehicles and clean up the workers compensation system. Donovan was elected to the Kansas House of Representatives in 1992 and then elected to the Kansas Senate in 1997 with the specific aim of removing these and other obstacles facing state businesses. He also served two terms as Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee. Donovan was named as Kansas' 2002 *Time Magazine* Quality Dealer of the Year.

Senator Jeff Longbine is the third generation to run Longbine Auto Plaza (Chevrolet, Buick). He swept floors and sold cars before becoming a partner in 1986 and then taking ownership of the dealership in 2004. In order to serve the community where he was raised and still lives, Longbine made a successful run for the City Commission and eventually became Mayor of Emporia. In 2012, he was named as a 2012 *Time Magazine* Quality Dealer. In the Kansas Senate, he serves



Members of the SEMA-supported State Automotive Enthusiast Leadership Caucus from the state of Kansas (from left): Senators Jeff Longbine (R-Emporia), Elaine Bowers (R-Concordia) and Les Donovan (R-Wichita).

as vice-chair of the Financial Institutions & Insurance Committee and also sits on the Commerce and Utilities Committee and Federal and State Affairs Committee.

Senator Elaine Bowers started Concordia Auto Mart with her husband Charlie in 1988. Bowers has served her community in Rotary, the American Legion VFW Auxiliary and the Concordia Chamber of Commerce. Beginning in 2006, she spent three terms in the House before running and winning a Senate seat in 2012. From her perch in the Kansas Senate, Bowers continues to serve her community in Topeka. In the Kansas Senate, she serves as vice-chair of the Public Health & Welfare Committee and is on the Agriculture and Financial Institutions & Insurance Committees.

Three cheers for these stellar examples of state lawmakers working hard to promote auto-friendly legislation.

WEB RESERVES

A Century of Salt Fever

SEMA Action Network Helps Restore Bonneville Salt Flats

The Bonneville Salt Flats (BSF) in Utah is where land speed racing began 100 years ago. Since 1914, legendary racers have set speed records and achieved their personal best times. The BSF race track is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and located on land managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

For decades, the BSF decreased in size as potash was removed from the salt by an adjoining mining operation. Recognizing the damage that had occurred, the racing com-

munity partnered with the mine operator in the '90s to pump salt onto the BSF. About 600,000 tons of salt brine was pumped last year, and millions of tons have been pumped since the program began.

In 2011, the SEMA Action Network (SAN) joined the Save the Salt Foundation and a number of prominent motorsports organizations to form the "Save the Salt Coalition." The Coalition's immediate mission was to make sure the salt pumping program was permanent. This was accomplished in 2012.

The Coalition is now pushing forward to expand the pumping program and pursue other restoration alternatives. The current focus of attention is to conduct a dry salt lay-down this spring on the first two miles of the International Track. If successful, it would provide a second and more targeted method for replenishing salt around the race tracks.

Mark your calendars: the landmark's two annual races, Speed Week (August 9–15) and World Finals (September 30–October 3), will take place later this year. For more information, visit www.savethesalt.org.



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