

Hello all riders,

I am a resident of Leesville near the Stonyford area. Last weekend, you gathered together for a motor event. Apparently, this year's route was changed and went through Bear Valley and Leesville. It appeared on Sunday that riders are unaware of safe driving conditions. To my understanding, unpaved rural roads have a speed limit of 35mph. If there are animal caution signs or farm equipment present, then the speed limit is even slower. This was not the speed at which drivers were driving during your event.

On Sunday, I was piloting a car for two swathers. A swather is a large piece of farm equipment with a header used for cutting hay. We met many riders on the Bear Valley/Leesville Rd. Not a single driver slowed to 35mph. They passed the pilot car and swather on both the right and left sides. They created so much dust it was unsafe to drive. They came inches from the pilot car and swather head.

Later, we traveled to the paved part of Leesville/Ladoga Rd. Riders still did not follow DMV speed limits. Motorcyclists again passed us on the right side and "BLIND DOUBLE LINED" turns!

In addition, another issue happened. There is a tight switch back in Ladoga where the road has to be shut down temporarily for the swathers to get through safely. My job as a pilot was to stop oncoming traffic at the top of the hill for the safety of all. I blocked the road with my truck, and had hazard flashers going. I stood on the road waving a caution sign to stop traffic. Your motorists, who at this time were now done with the race and returning home with trucks and toy haulers, did not stop at barricade. I had to yell and scream to get people to stop their vehicle. I even had one event participant roll their eyes, get out of their car, and charge my truck with anger because they had to pull over. Ironically, those heading home who had already passed the swather before, while on bikes, STILL refused to obey traffic laws passing the swathers in returning vehicles.

This event CAN be a fun and exciting time for participants. As a member of this community, I like bringing positive attention to this area and creating a place where people can experience the country. The issue that lies is with safety. I was appalled and disgusted with the high speed of driving and lack of respect for farm equipment. It is not just your event participants using these roads! These roads are highly used by cowboys with long stock trailers, tourists pulling boats and toy haulers, and general travelers looking for a place to visit. Something needs to be changed for next year's event. This was inexcusable. How would you like me driving over 60 mph in your neighborhood? If nothing else, tell your drivers the closest major hospital is one and a half hours away. We have no local deputy on duty. We only have a volunteer fire dept. It takes over an hour for first responders to get to Stonyford and longer than that to be airlifted to a hospital. Please use common sense when driving in our community. Please be respectful of those of us who live here and are just trying to make a living. It is not right what happened last weekend.

Leesville resident