

Posse Story by John

As you may recall, I am working/living in Cody, WY until at least mid-October. I had a very pleasant visit from three First State riders who were participating in the HOG Posse Ride.

Last week, Darrell, Tim and Jim M(?) deviated from the suggested Posse route to drop in on me in Cody. We ate a very late dinner together at the Proud Cut Saloon on account of them being delayed because of severe lightening while traveling over the Bighorn Mountains on their way to Cody.

The next day, the four of us rode over the Chief Joseph Scenic Highway to connect with the Beartooth Highway, which crosses the Beartooth Mountains into Montana, at elevations over 10,000 feet. Before making the ascent over the Beartooth, we first ate a very nice lunch at the Beartooth Café in Cooke City, MT, though calling this collection of small motels, cafés and log homes a "City" is a stretch by Delaware standards. The afternoon storm clouds were forming by the time we finished lunch - we were in for rain, for certain. As is common on the Beartooth, we hit rain going over the high country. It was in the mid-eighties in Cooke City and 51 in the rain going over the top. Tim had to pull over and change into warm gloves - wet hands, fifty degree temps and wind chill can add up to interesting riding, to say the least. Both the Chief Joseph and the Beartooth Highway are 'must-see' routes for anyone traveling out this way - whether on a bike or in a cage.

As expected, the rain subsided once we crossed the mountains into Red Lodge, MT. We pressed on towards Billings where we spent the night at the HOG-suggested hotel on the Posse route. As many times as I have been through this area, it took Darrell to show me an authentic Irish bar in downtown Billings, where we ate dinner of authentic Irish fare. It was quite a nice discovery for me (Thanks DW!).

The next day we rode over to Bozeman and Belgrade, MT - starting out in the rain. But by mid-morning, the rain had cleared off and by the time we reached Bozeman, we stripped our rain gear at our gas stop. It warmed up nicely thereafter.

Unfortunately, I felt compelled to return to Cody to stay focused on my writing, and so I split with Darrell, Tim and Jim at the H-D dealer in Belgrade. It was great to ride with competent First Staters, if even only for a couple of days.

Darrell reminded me that the first two people he met at HOG were me and my wife Stacey - way back when the meetings were held at Gallucio's in Wilmington. He said people made him feel welcomed, and so, what goes around comes around - Darrell, Tim and Jim made me feel as though I had made the whole trip with them, not just a ride-along.

One thing I enjoyed particularly well: this was Tim's first trip out West and the comments he made and the impressions he shared upon seeing some of the most spectacular scenery for the first time, reminded me of all the "firsts" I've experienced in almost 30 years in the saddle. I hope I never forget those first impressions.

I have not heard from them since we departed in Belgrade - which is just as it should be. They are too busy having fun riding across this great country

on their Harleys!

I wish them, and all the First Staters who take to the road, safe and memorable journeys, whether a first ride to the beach on a Sportster or a cross-country blitz on a bagger, it's all good...