

Philanthropist's Beaver County visit postponed after road accident

By Emily Kohlman emkohlman@timesonline.com Jul 9, 2016

"I was driving on the most beautiful road that I had seen yet in Ohio. Everything was perfect."

That was the last moment a motorcyclist on a record-breaking mission could recall before a debilitating traffic accident early July 2 set him back on his charitable goal.

Motorcyclist Adam Sandoval said he was soaking in the "perfect riding weather" at 35 mph when a car in oncoming traffic crossed into his lane, smashing into the side of his bike.

The Green Bay, Wis., native and Scooter the Chihuahua began their mission in November 2014 to visit all the Harley-Davidson dealerships across America, raising awareness and money for the U.S. military and members' families.

Together they are "ScootinAmerica," and they've been keeping busy riding from coast to coast.

ScootinAmerica started when Sandoval decided he wanted to give back while exploring the country on a motorcycle, exposed to the world from outside the confines of a car, he said.

"I regret never serving in the military. I wanted to give back to my country by doing something I love and enjoy," said Sandoval.

Diane Jordan, who is in charge of dealer outreach for the team, said Sandoval had always wanted to be in the military, but due to a variety of reasons, it never happened.

In the past two years, Sandoval and Scooter have visited Harley-Davidson dealerships in 44 of the lower 48 states, said Jordan.

With only Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York left to go, ScootinAmerica was planning on making its Beaver County debut at McMahon's Cycle Sales in Beaver Falls on July 16. Sandoval said his accident will not prevent him from completing his journey, but he is not yet sure when he will be able to get back on the road.

"The pain right now is bad, but spirits are great," said Sandoval. "People have me motivated. I plan to finish strong, and having all these people behind me is an inspiration."

He said he is recovering from surgery on his smashed leg, and more surgeries may be necessary. As for his riding partner, the pet carrier kept him unharmed, said Sandoval. On the other hand, his motorcycle, lovingly dubbed the Warhorse, needs a lot of repairs, he said.

Having been on the road for the past two years, Sandoval said it hasn't always been smooth sailing.

Sandoval refuses to let blizzards and rain stand in the way of his goal, said Jordan.

“Harley-Davidson donated a school bus to ScootinAmerica for the winter months,” said Jordan. “Scooter would ride in the bus to stay warm while Adam stayed on his bike. But he would sleep out of the elements in that bus.”

When the temperature is more bearable, Jordan said, Sandoval sets up a little tent next to his bike to sleep under.

“You never know where you’re going to end up sleeping. We’ve stayed in some pretty crazy places, and we’ve stayed in some pretty amazing places,” Jordan said after riding with Scooter and Sandoval for a month.

It’s all a part of the greater mission that Sandoval is hoping to accomplish, said Jordan.

ScootinAmerica’s tour will finish in New York City, said Jordan, and Guinness World Records for longest charity ride and most miles ridden in one country will be set by the man-dog team.

Jordan said Sandoval also has his hopes set on breaking the record for the longest Harley-Davidson parade. Depending on his recovery, Sandoval said, he is still planning to hold a fundraising event Oct. 8 in Florida to round up at least 2,405 Harley-Davidsons in a row.

To date, Jordan said, ScootinAmerica has raised approximately \$300,000, all of which is donated to the Wounded Warrior Project.

The ScootinAmerica team holds meet-and-greets during visits and invites local bikers to join the ride from stop to stop. Supporters are also able to donate through ScootinAmerica’s website, www.scootinamerica.com, said Jordan.

With just under 100 of the 696 Harley-Davidson dealerships left to visit, Sandoval said the support from friends and family is keeping him strong on his road to recovery.

“Reading everyone’s Facebook comments and well wishes -- there’s a sense of pride, American pride, maybe,” said Sandoval. “And this is what I stand for.”