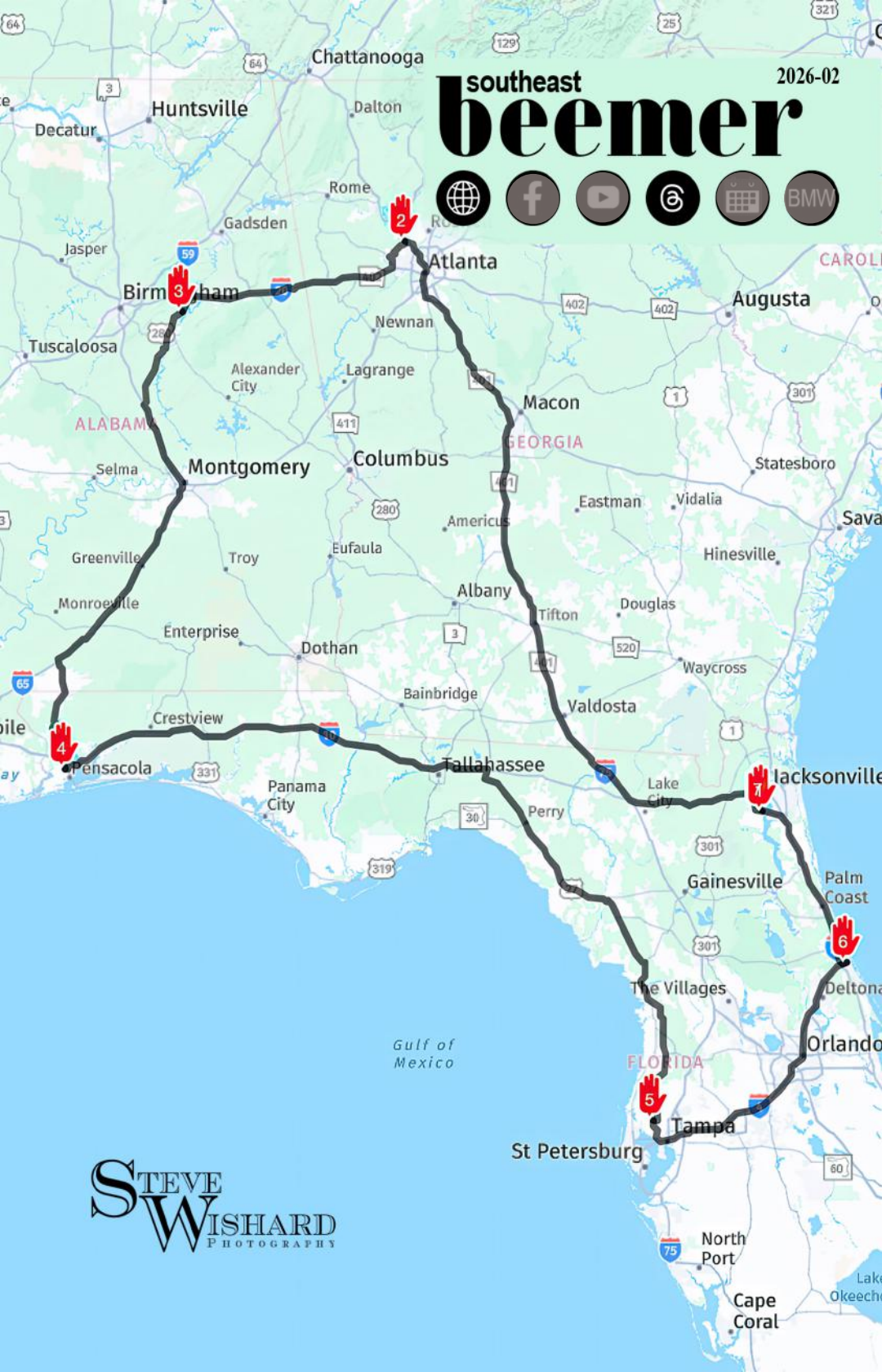


2026-02

# southeast beemer



**STEVE  
WISHARD**  
PHOTOGRAPHY



# Editorial

By Steve Wishard

## What's This All About?

Welcome to the first issue of **Southeast Beemer**.

### What Is It?

Simply put, it is a **FREE quarterly publication**, distributed digitally, and focused on fostering general awareness, joint activities, personal relationships and broader community among six southeast BMW motorcycle clubs.

The included clubs are Alabama, Daytona, Emerald Coast, Georgia, Northeast Florida, and Tampa Bay. All of which include me as a member.

Those who have attended BMWNEF's Winter Rally, in Live Oak, FL, in the past 4 years, and even more so this past January, will already be familiar with this type of publication. Rally attendees in 2023-2025 all received a printed copy of the Winter Rally Program. This year, 2026, saw the publication go primarily digital with a limited print run.

As the producer of the Winter Rally Program, and due to the positive feedback it has received, I have modeled this publication on that one. However, as a digital only publication, it will be possible to include capabilities not previously available. For instance, active links will be included throughout, and with a little help from Wheelman555, there may be the occasional embedded, article related video.

### So - What's In It?

Keeping in mind that it is a new idea, which will evolve due to suggestions & feedback, the initial intention/design includes the following:

**Editorial** which will provide info about the production of the publication such as any unusual elements or changes in the current or upcoming issue(s).

**Beemerology** which will be a regular short segment covering BMW motorcycle or technology offered 100 years prior to the current year.

**6 Club Sections** which will include active links to each club's website, social media, contact info, and event calendar if available.

Each club section will also include special club event promotions, like rallies or multi-club meet-ups, and any feature articles written/submitted about a member of that club or location unique to that club's area. Like Daytona Speedway or Barber Museum. ■

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I intend to ride/meet with every club each quarter. Each club has unique locations, roads & scenery. I'm looking forward to making new friends - and - riding with folks who have local knowledge will be a great adventure. If you don't want to write but have ideas for an article, please let me know when you see me or e-mail me. ■



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## Come Along On One Of Our Adventures

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BMW Motorcycle Club Of Daytona

BMW Motorcycle Club Of Northeast Florida

BMW Motorcycle Club Of Georgia

BMW Motorcycle Owners Of Alabama

BMW Motorcycle Riders Of The Emerald Coast

BMW Motorcycle Riders Of Tampa Bay

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# The Evolution Begins

By Steve Wishard

Well, that didn't take long. As I mentioned on page 2, this publication is an idea which will evolve due to suggestions & feedback. I first mentioned the idea during a BMWNEF meeting in January. I began developing it, based on the Winter Rally Program files, shortly after the rally. It is now mid-March and I'm about to release the first issue. Only half of the clubs have heard anything about it and already some significant changes are in the works.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, it turned out that BMWMOA was adapting positions within the organization. The new positions were give objectives and an approach which mirrored my own with this publication.

Greg Beck assumed the new BMWMOA role in the southeast, and soon after reached out to BMWNEF President, John Bruggemann, to establish a club contact person. Since John was aware of my plans, and how they lined up with Greg's, he connected us. The rest, as they say, is history.



Greg Beck Speaking At MREC/MOAL Meetup

After a zoom meeting, a few e-mails, and a face-to-face meeting in Pensacola, we're working on a way to expand to all of the southeast clubs. I won't be able to visit them all quarterly, like the original six, but I believe there is a way to accomplish the expansion.

Greg extended, and I accepted, an invitation to join his club, Gulf South BMW Owners, during a gathering on April 18th. Greg will endeavour to have officers from the western southeast region in attendance. It should be a good time and an opportunity to meet and make several new friends. ■



Another evolution being worked on is actually more experiential than change. Initially, I based this publication on the BMWNEF Winter Rally Program, which I have produced for the past five years. In fact, I began with the 2026 rally program file and modified from there. However, the Winter Rally Program is primarily information and text driven, with photos where possible for visual appeal.



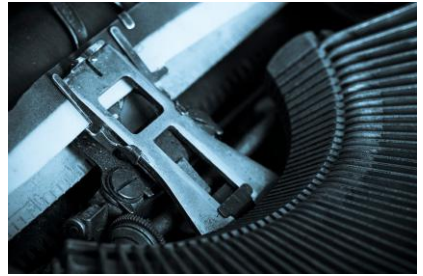
Southeast Beemer, on the other hand, is intended to be more image driven. Not entirely, mind you, but more than 50%. A publication inspired by Life Magazine. Which told the American story, largely through pictures, for 36 years as a weekly, then six years later, again for 22 years as a monthly. Achieving the proper image/story balance, especially with the right images to support the story, is as much art as science. It will improve with practice. ■



Photographers & Writers

Submissions Welcome

[Click To Contact Me](#)





# southeast beemer galleries

Southeast Beemer Galleries contain all of the full size, high resolution photos taken during a covered event. While attending club events hundreds to thousands of photos are taken. From these, the photos best representing the event are uploaded to a photo gallery for the event. The number of photos included

in the event gallery varies but can be quite high. From these photos, typically five or less are cropped and reduced for use in the publication's article. When an article or photo essay has an associated gallery, a direct link to the gallery is include with the article. Galleries provide the best view of all images. ■



# southeast beemer singles



# southeast beemer singles

Southeast Beemer Singles are single articles, or photo essays, covering interesting, BMW Club, people, places or events, which for one reason or another were not included in the quarterly publication. Typically, singles will be created when a club has a large number of activities within one quarter.

Southeast Beemer Singles can also include single articles or photo essays covering events or people not associated with a BMW Club, but which a BMW Club member attended or felt would be of interest to BMW Club members. Links to Singles will be included in the associated quarterly publication. ■



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# beemerology

By Steve Wishard

## The Beginning

As the debate over global climate change, and its cause, occupies much of the news today, most have forgotten, or never realized, that the internal combustion engine was hailed as the solution for the rampant pollution of its day.

With tens-of-thousands of horses working in and near the major cities around the world, people were struggling to deal with the hundreds of tons of manure & straw, and the odors & insect infestation that creates.

And, just as scientists and engineers are hard at work designing, testing and improving green energy solutions today, scientists and engineers of the late 18th and 19th century were working hard to find horseless energy solutions for their day.

While we are still seeking a viable solution, or combination of solutions, to provide the world's energy needs for the next century, we know that Nicolaus Otto, like James Watt a century earlier, eventually refined the internal combustion engine design into that which has carried us throughout our lives.

Otto's four-stroke, Otto cycle engine, design, which is still used in nearly every gas vehicle you see on the road today, soon benefited from improved metals & refinery technology. As the internal combustion engine continued to improve it was adapted for use in a wide variety of applications. One of the earliest of those was the motorcycle.

Most of us today recognize the names of those early adopters. Gottlieb Daimler, as in Daimler Chrysler, now simply Daimler. Karl Benz, as in Mercedes Benz, now a subsidiary of Daimler. Rudolf Diesel, Robert Bosch and Ferdinand Porsche might all ring a bell with most. However, most probably aren't aware that it was Daimler who created what was arguably the first motorcycle.

The growth of engine powered transport was slow, but steady. But then, as is usually the case, World War I supercharged development. While that war began with largely horse and man power, by the end, gas powered trucks, tanks and airplanes had become dominant.

Despite BMW's origins and success in the aircraft engine industry, and despite all of the benefits a boxer engine would provide to early aircraft design and operation. BMW's early aircraft engines were not boxers. It was motorcycles which benefited from the boxer design initially.

Mounted with the crankshaft aligned with the frame allowed for better cylinder cooling, and warmer ride's feet. The boxer also had a lower center of gravity, less vibration and made shaft drive possible. The cooling and shaft drive benefits also resulted in less complexity, which translated into better reliability.

So, beginning with Otto, and after a series of manufacturer startup & mergers, and the limitations of the treaty of Versailles, BMW eventually enters the motorcycle market with the R-32. And thus begins our passion.



BMW R-32

## R-32

The unique design skills of Max Friz, combined with the superior manufacturing skills of men used to building aircraft engines, enabled BMW to enter the motorcycle market with a bike years ahead of the competition. While most motorcycles of the time resembled bicycles with an engine shoehorned in, the R-32, BMW's initial offering, can easily be recognized as related to the motorcycles we know today.

The idea behind the beemerology series is to present BMW Motorrad offerings from 100 years ago, and point out their engineering and design improvements. In the case of the R-32 every aspect of the motorcycle is a significant advancement in engineering & design. So much so that it became the archetype for all R-Series motorcycles to follow.

The R-32's 8.5-bhp engine produced a top speed of nearly 60 mph. Much more than practical considering the absence of a front brake, which would come later, and the conditions of the roads at the time.

In addition to the features mention in The Beginning, the R-32 had a steel tube cradle, hard-tail frame, sprung seat & leaf-spring front suspension, aluminum pistons, gear driven camshaft, bronze screw-in valve covers, wet sump gear pump lubrication, footboards with guards, and Bosch magneto. Electric lighting was optional.

One significant improvement in later models was replacement of the side valve and spark plug design with cylinder heads with valves and spark plug. Produced from 1923 - 1926, BMW sold over 3,000. ■

# the road less paved

By Steve Wishard

## Why This Program Now?

While planning the 2023 BMWNEF Winter Rally, Jim Allen and I invited the BMW Rider Academy, from the BMW Performance Center in Greer, SC, to attend the rally and provide multiple, half-day, off-road training sessions. All four sessions were well attended so off-road training has been offered at every winter rally since.

For a couple of years now I've thought the club should give members a chance to utilize the training they received at the rally. So, I joined the BMWNEF activities committee and presented the idea of a monthly ride which includes a few miles of unpaved roads. The idea was encouraged and it was suggested that I try to plan rides that align with the street rides so the two groups could have lunch together.

I can hear those of you who DON'T live in Sugar Sand Purgatory laughing, or saying "*you haven't been doing that all along?*". To you I say, come on down to Central Florida and give it a try. There are a few forest roads that aren't deep sugar sand, but they can be challenging to find and may change between visits.

I had also presented the club with the idea of this publication and including more opportunities for BMWNEF members to meet, ride & socialize with the members of other BMW clubs.

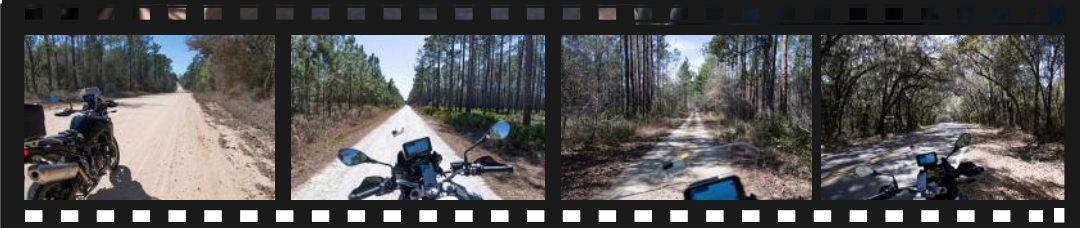
So, putting it all together, I thought I'd organize mixed-surface rides in Florida to identify those interested and get things started. Then - reach out to the clubs with better off-road conditions about joining them for off-road rides in their areas. ■



# Belmore State Forest

By Steve Wishard

## Story & Photos Following The Event



Initial preparations for the first BMWNEF mixed surface ride have begun. We will be starting off simple just to see who and how many are interested in participating. The planned Belmore State Forest route has minimal sugar sand and is mostly hard packed. Regardless, it provides a different experience and scenery and an entry level degree of sand to expose those new to it, with minimal risk. The actual ride will be in april with photos & story to follow. ■



Click To See Complete  
Photo Gallery

# alabama



Cheaha State Park's Bald Rock Overlook In Talladega National Forest - Alabama's Highest Point

## Exploring Alabama

By Steve Wishard

Those of you who attended BMWNEF's 2025 Winter Rally received a printed copy of the Winter Rally Program. That program included an article titled "Sweet AirBnB Alabama". That article described a trip to Alabama, in which I took a group of friends, to explore the viability of using my AirBnB, located in Auburn, as a base for small motorcycle groups wishing to explore central Alabama.

Despite my frequent visits to Auburn, I was completely unfamiliar with the area outside of town. I had always just driven up from Florida through Tifton, Albany and Columbus GA. Once there, I just did any needed maintenance on our place, attended AU sporting events and frequented local restaurants.

I had never been to Barber Museum and had only ridden my motorcycles in the area on Iron Butt Assoc. rides, during their annual pizza party in Jacksonville, FL, or passing through on my way to Chicago, Sturgis or Great Falls.

I had been a member of the Alabama BMW Club for several months but had not had an opportunity to meet or ride with them. As I write this it's a year and a half later and I still haven't had that opportunity. I've tried several times but schedule conflicts have always prevented it. But I digress.

Since I was completely unfamiliar with the area, at that time, I turned to the Alabama BMW Club website for possible guidance. It turned out to be a wealth of



information. I was able to utilize several of their routes, together with a couple of my own, to produce a week of great riding. And, I had planned the trip to coincide with Barber's Vintage Festival, so I checked that box as well.

I don't get there as often as I would like. This year I vow to change that. Every time I've ridden there, since that 2024 trip, as soon as I'm out of the city limits, I'm glad I made the trip. After 36 years of flat-as-a-board Florida, with mostly straight roads, the rolling hills and sweeping turns of Alabama are like a breath of fresh air.

I'm confident that once I get a chance to meet and ride with the Alabama club members, they will be able to share local knowledge which will enable me to truly experience all that the state has to offer.

I don't know if the Alabama club is as active in the off-road arena as Georgia, but

if they are, I will see if they are willing to have some Florida members join them on one of their off-road rides. While I know there are very challenging routes available, I'm sure there are also routes with conditions which are much more scenic than scrub swamps and more manageable than sugar sand.

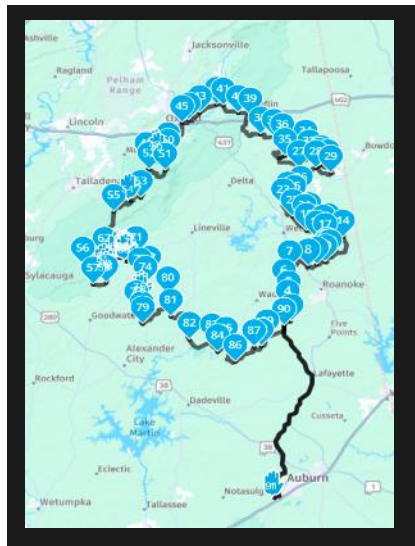
One of the off-road routes I am interested in riding is the East Alabama Adventure loop. However, I don't think it's a ride for beginning off-road riders. So I've reached out to a couple of friends to see if they would like to join me. I'm actually thinking of breaking it up into 3 or 4 sections and ride one section each day. Then return to Auburn for the night. By starting in Auburn, if I rode the entire route and returned to Auburn, it would be a 383 mile day. That is not realistically feasible. This ride is one I would like to discuss with the Alabama club members.



Thurlow Dam, Across The Tallapoosa River, South Of Lake Martin, In Tallassee, Alabama

Regardless, going forward, I plan to participate in Alabama club events at a minimum of 1 per quarter. However, probably more often since I have a place to stay and it is also closer to Georgia & Emerald Coast than my home in Florida. I can use it as a base for all 3 club's events.

Ironically, my first opportunity to meet and ride with the Alabama club is during the Emerald Coast/Alabama weekend meet-up in Pensacola. The event is planned for March 13-15. There will be aviation museum tours, self-directed rides, low-country boil dinner and a couple of tire-kicking social gatherings. I'm registered to attend and will be covering the festivities in the Emerald Coast section of this publication. ■



East Alabama Adventure Loop Map



## Auburn's Hideaway AirBnB



Auburn's Hideaway is an AirBnB, ideal for small motorcycle groups, located in Auburn Alabama. Motorcycling guests are provided access to Southeast Beemer Magazine where they can link to information and GPX files for local rides. There are many scenic routes, including routes to Barber Museum and Talladega National Forest.

A photograph of a museum gallery filled with various BMW motorcycles. The bikes are displayed on a raised wooden platform. In the foreground, a blue and white BMW motorcycle is prominent. Behind it, several other models in red, white, and yellow are visible. The background shows more motorcycles and museum lighting. A large grey pillar is on the left side of the frame.

**BMW Owners Of Alabama Club  
One-Of-A-Kind - Behind-The-Scenes  
Museum Tour**

**Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum  
April 1 2026 - 2PM to 6PM approx  
Led by Jack Goertz**

**Meet For Lunch Before Tour  
12PM - “The Backyard” @  
The Shops at Grand River Outlet Center**

**Contact Philip Ager About Space Availability  
[phil.ager@verizon.net](mailto:phil.ager@verizon.net)**



**Photos & Story  
In 3rd Quarter Issue  
Or  
A Southeast Beemer Single**

# daytona



BMW Motorrad Dealership In Ormond Beach, FL - New Facility and RiderMarket Ownership

## BMW's New Daytona Home

By Steve Wishard

This is the new dealership in Ormond Beach, FL. Actually, the BMW dealership, which was previously located on Main Street in Daytona, moved to this location over a year ago. Recently, RiderMarket purchased the business.

The Ormond Beach dealership is very supportive of the Daytona BMW club. They fund the club website, have offered their facilities for monthly meetings and offered to provide the pizzas for all club meetings. They hold monthly rides which are loop rides back to the dealership where they have the grill up and running to provide lunch for participants (donations for food are accepted). They are very committed to growing the rider community.

This is a beautiful facility with a VERY friendly and supportive staff. A serious upgrade from their previous location.

The Daytona club's February monthly meeting took place at the dealership. Turnout was much higher than usual or expected. Time will tell if that was a result of the Ormond Beach location or the chance to see the facility. It gave me an opportunity to speak with General Manager, Dennis Pyles.

Dennis previously worked at the BMW dealership in Jacksonville. I purchased and farked my last four BMWs in Jacksonville. So I have known Dennis for many years. I explain this publication and my hope that it will foster increased club participation, membership & multi-club events. He was very supportive.

Since our respective goals are so closely aligned, I offered to lead additional rides for the dealership. Dennis happily accepted. We plan to get together after Bike Week to discuss it further. ■





## Daytona 200 In Pictures

By Steve Wishard

February 27 - March 8 2026 was the 85th Daytona Bike Week. The final weekend of Bike Week, March 5-7 2026, saw the 84th running of the Daytona 200 "Great American Motorcycle Race. In addition to the Daytona 200, The Mission King Of The Baggers Championship, Twins Cup Championship, and Mission Super Hooligan National Championship were also held.

While Daytona Bike Week is always marked by special events around the city and at the Speedway, This year was particularly interesting to BMW enthusiasts as well.

This year, BMW celebrated the 50th anniversary of their 1st & 2nd place finishes in the first ever AMA Superbike Championship Race, held at the Daytona Speedway, March 5th, 1976. The 3 BMW R90S motorcycles from the 1976 race were brought back to running condition, shipped to Daytona, and led the parade lap prior to the Daytona 200 race. Steve McLaughlin, The winning 1976 rider and FIM Superbike World Championship founder, was present along with several other prominent figures involved in the 1976 event.

The full details of this years events have been and will be covered far more extensively than I am capable, in other publications. So I will leave that to them. However, I took my cameras to the vent so I thought I'd give you a look at the event from my perspective. ■



[Click To See Photo Gallery](#)



# emerald coast



## MREC/MOAL March Moto Meeting

March 12-15 2026

By Steve Wishard

BMW Motorcycle Riders of the Emerald Coast (MREC) & BMW Motorcycle Owners of Alabama (MOAL) joined forces, during the mid-March weekend, for fun, food and fellowship. The list of activities ensured that everyone who wanted, could stay as busy as they wanted, for the entire event.

For those so inclined, club member guided tours of both Air Force Armament Museum and the Pensacola Naval Air Museum had been arranged.

When the event weekend arrived, world events made base, and thereby museum, access more challenging than usual. So a led street ride was added for those who preferred riding and seeing the Pensacola area sights.

More adventurous riders, who prefer riding Roads Less Paved, were afforded the opportunity to join Jon Kagan on, what was promised to be, a more challenging tour of the less frequented sights the Pensacola area has to offer.



American Legion Post 240 provided the facilities for those opting for camping over the comforts of a hotel. Plus, the post's outdoor pavilion proved to be an excellent location for the low country boil and joint club meeting which wrapped up the weekends activities.



# Let's Eat!



Saturday evening the two clubs came together to reconnect with old friends, to meet and get to know new friends, and to share their experiences with those who chose different activities. There is no better way to share those experiences with friends than breaking bread together. Especially at a low country boil.





# Come To Order!



Click For Gallery

**STEVE WISHARD**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

Click To See Complete  
Photo Gallery

At the post dinner meeting, Reece Mullins orchestrated multiple member award ceremonies, volunteer recognitions, American Legion appreciation and donation and guest speakers introductions.



# georgia



## Georgia's On My Mind

By Steve Wishard



Click Image For Details & Registration

My planning for the Georgia Mountain Rally began several months ago. This is an event I look forward to each year. Obviously the riding is amazing. The Georgia/North Carolina mountains provide the best of everything for street and off-road riders alike.

As for the rally itself, this year I was conflicted. I couldn't decide if I wanted to take a shot at having a booth for this publication, my photography and some merchandise - or - stay free & easy so I could fully enjoy everything the rally has to offer. The friends, food, presentations,

Georgia Mountain Rally  
Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds  
Hiawassee, GA  
May 1-3 2026

[bmwmcoga.org](http://bmwmcoga.org)  
Questions???  
[rally@bmwmcoga.org](mailto:rally@bmwmcoga.org)



A break during a led off-road ride at GMR 2024

and yes, the riding. I didn't want to miss a single opportunity. In the end, I decide that I would put the booth off until 2027 and simply enjoy the rally one more year.

With that decision finally made, the group ride planning started. Each May, for the past few years, we have put together a small group to ride up and visit a friend in the area. Three years ago I started including the GMR in that trip. This year I'm adding a new dynamic.

For 2026 I am making an effort to increase participation and membership in 6 BMW clubs in the southeast. This effort is being pursued in three ways.

First, to expand the activities offer by Florida clubs by creating opportunities for unpaved or mixed surface rides.

Second, is to increase awareness of, and interest in, the activities and opportunities offered by other southeast clubs, in the hopes that new relationships and

riding opportunities will be joined by the members of all clubs. This is the primary objective of this publication.

Third, to actively identify and invite non-club-members to participate in club rides and activities in an effort to inspire a desire to join the club in their area.

It's a small beginning, but I have a couple of GS riding friends who, aren't club members, have never ridden in the GMR area, are very interested in riding forest service roads, and have asked me to go with them. So, this year I'm bringing them along with the usual group of street riders. In doing so, I can introduce them to the GMR, BMW clubs, the beauty of the GMR area, and take them on some great unpaved road rides.

I'd like to develop a good multi-club adventure group which gets together multiple times a year. I'll see how it goes and make adjustments as necessary. ■

# northeast florida



## Outreach

### Taking The Growth Challenge Head On

By John Brueggemann, BMWNEF President

BMWNEF has devoted significant effort to member development over the past few years. As a result, we now have 250 truly active members. Members who look forward to presenting the Winter Rally each January, which requires months of careful preparation, and Club Rides which are posted months in advance and provide complete route and destination information, including downloadable GPX files.

We have also introduced a monthly meet-up, which has been well received and is consistently well attended. And, continued our very popular, long standing, Quarterly Socials with spouses.

Over the past year, we have incorporated a Club Ambassador who mentors a team dedicated to welcoming new members and visitors to our meetings and events.

BMWNEF now has an official Ride Captain. This role has formalized our group rides, ensuring everyone knows the plan, expectations, and group policies. As a result, our rides are more enjoyable for all participants.

We have also been fortunate to add a videographer to our team. He documents rides, meet-ups, and rallies and posts the resulting videos on YouTube as well as our website.

Our message is getting out on Facebook as well with a volunteer coordinating the effort there.

The group rides, skill workshops, and monthly socials have all helped club members bond and become better riders. Attendance has been fantastic, with well attended rides, meetings, and socials.

So, what's missing? Real outreach—meaning efforts that go beyond our current membership circles to connect with riders who may not even know about BMWNEF. Despite our club's many activities and strengths, it is challenging to attract new riders because our events are not widely advertised outside our existing community. We often rely on word of mouth, and as a result, potential members may never hear about the fun, camaraderie, and skill-building we offer.

While our members are mainly retired professionals with impressive backgrounds, none of us are trained in marketing—and I'm beginning to realize just how crucial that expertise is for growth. Although I don't have all the answers yet, I'm confident with a concentrated effort and persistence, we can find creative ways to reach new riders, increase member involvement and grow our club.

In the July 2025 issue of BMWMOA's BMW Owners News, Ray Moss wrote a very good article on "Club Life." He described the typical established club (or any organization for that matter) and challenges they face. These include difficulties in engaging new members, maintaining active participation, and fostering a welcoming atmosphere.

Our club could have been one he described. He outlined the importance of simple things that mean a lot. Everyone wearing their name badge for example opens the door to conversation with the new member or visitor. For example, wearing name badges led to several new members striking up conversations and quickly feeling at home. "Don't let that new rider leave without knowing their name, what they ride, where they live, what kind of work they do, and their riding preferences. Help them feel connected to the club."

If you are a MOA member, I encourage you to go back to that edition and read the article. It is excellent information that doesn't take too much effort to implement and can turn bad habits into good ones. If you don't have the hard copy, they still have electronic versions on the website. The article starts on page 18.

That is why I'm genuinely excited about Steve Wishard's recent initiative to join multiple clubs and establish a regional community through a quarterly digital publication. A publication which will provide links to the websites, calendars, and social media of all six included clubs, in addition to articles featuring club members and activities.

This is a fantastic opportunity for all our clubs to share best practices, swap event ideas, and boost participation—not just within our own groups, but across the entire BMW motorcycle community. By collaborating and attending each other's events, we can create new friendships, expand our support networks, and make our clubs even stronger and more welcoming.

If you're interested in contributing to the regional publication or joining the editorial team, please reach out to Steve Wishard or your club leader. Together, by listening, learning, and teaching, we can help everyone in the BMW motorcycle community grow and get just a little bit better. ■

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STEVE  
WISHARD  
PHOTOGRAPHY



 YouTube  
wheelman555

*Official  
Videographer  
Of  
BMWNEF*



My G310 GS On The Old Brick Road Just North Of Espanola

# Dixie Highway

## Riding The Old Brick Road

By Steve Wishard

While the automobile was invented in the late 19th century in Europe, it remained primarily a rich man's hobby for many years. By the end of 1913, the year Henry Ford implemented his assembly line, he had his factory turning out 1000 "Tin Lizzies" per day. Ford's Model T, introduced in 1908, was simple in design, easily maintained, very reliable, affordable for the everyman, and, able to operate successfully in the most challenging terrain. That last characteristic was almost equal in importance to the affordability, due to the roads, or lack thereof, at the time.

World War I supercharged the production of a wide variety of vehicles. Vehicles

which would be sold as surplus, at very low prices, following that conflict. While people around the world purchased military vehicles post war, the United States led their adoption by a wide margin. We turned tanks into tractors, ambulances into cargo trucks, and staff cars into family cars. So much so that the automobile manufacturers started producing special use vehicles for sale.

In fact, the pickup truck was actually invented by farmers modifying Model T's. They replace the rear seats with wooden boxes for hauling produce and equipment. They proved so popular that in 1925 Ford delivered the first factory-produced "pickup":

## Dixie Highway System

While Henry Ford was figuring out how to speed production and reduce cost, Americans were figuring out how to use their “Tin Lizzies” to get out of Dodge.

The automobile became the symbol of the “New Generation” of Americans that seized upon the mobility and anonymity it provided. Millions of teens saw the automobile as a freedom machine. It was a means of going your own way, becoming your own person, exploring new horizons, and yes, working on your night moves.

When the teens of those early years advanced into their 20’s and beyond, they they never lost that sense of adventure and discovery the automobile provided. No longer was casual travel only for the wealthy. They began strapping tents, canned food, gas, water and tires to their Lizzies and heading out for bigger adventures. Frequently those adventures resembled what we today would call snowbirds and spring-breakers. People escaping the cold climate of the north for the warm beaches of Florida.

It didn’t take Florida long to recognize the economic potential of tourism. It also recognized the difficulty of traveling on rutted or sugar sand roads. In the mid 1920’s Florida had roughly 900 miles of roads. A decade later it had over 3000. A significant number of those miles consisted of the Dixie Highway.

Many today think of the Dixie Highway as a single road that ran from Chicago to Miami. A main north-south route to go with the Lincoln Highway, which was the first road across the United States. Many more, probably see the Dixie Highway as state road which only exists within their state. In fact, the Dixie Highway was actually a system of highways, consisting of 5,786 miles of, mostly brick, roads. Some brick sections of that highway system still exist.



Here in Florida, the Old Dixie Highway passes the north entrance to my neighborhood as it goes a couple of miles east where it becomes the west side of the Ormond Scenic Loop. A road very familiar to hundreds-of-thousands of Bike Week & Biketoberfest motorcycle riders.

If you take Old Dixie Highway one mile west from my neighborhood entrance, it will merge with US-1, which replaced it, as it turns north. 7 miles north it will split off from US-1 as it again heads west into Espanola. In Espanola, you will come to a stop sign at a “T” in the road. Go left and you are on 205. Go right and you will continue on Old Dixie Highway. At the north edge of town you will enter a 10 mile section of the original, brick, Dixie Highway.

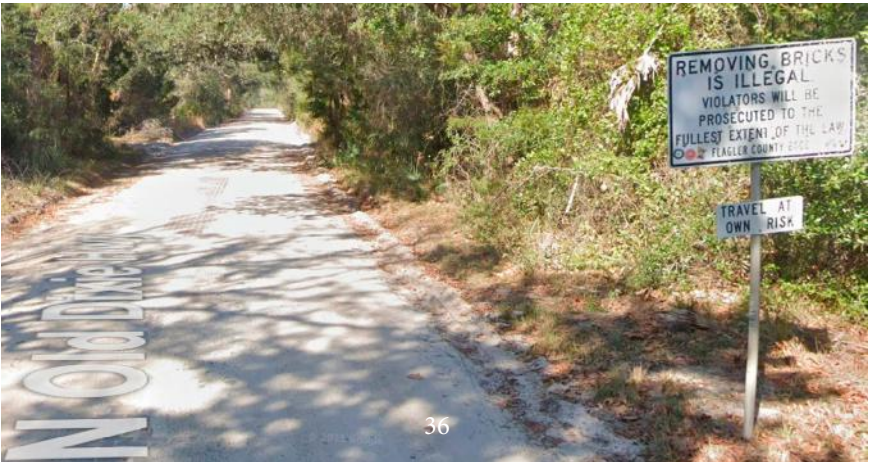
As you approach the beginning of the brick road you may want to take notice of the “Travel At Your Own Risk” sign on your right. It is just below the larger sign which explains that it is illegal to remove bricks. You should take both of these signs seriously.

Yes, the old brick road is flat and straight. However, you never know what you will get on the old brick road. One time you might just cruise along on the bricks. It is much smoother than a cobblestone road since the brick spacing is tight and full of sand. The next time you might not even be able to see the bricks. Imagine riding a motorcycle on an inch of sugar sand covering smooth bricks, polished by decades of tires. It’s sort of like riding on ice. One time you might not meet a single vehicle.

The next time you might meet 5 pickup trucks going the other way. By the way, the road is barely wider than a modern pickup truck and steeply crowned. So, if you do meet a pickup truck you will be forced to move over to the edge of the road. Due to the high crown in the center of the road, the sugar sand gets continually deeper as you get closer to the edge. Get too close and you will just slide into the ditch. Once that happens you will be hoping one or more of 3 things is true. One, you are riding a dual-sport bike that weighs less than 300 lbs. Two that you are in amazingly good condition. Three, that you are with a group of friends.

Once you arrive at the north end of the brick road you will come to another “T”. If you go left you will continue on CR-13. Go right and you are on 204. However, you may want to just spend a minute and realize that you have just ridden a bit of history. Built for and used by people who had a lot in common with adventure bike riders of today. Then, imagine driving 2000 miles of the road you’re on, in a Model T, with food, complete camping gear, extra gas, water & tires all strapped on, or in a trailer. Then imagine meeting other Model Ts going the other way.

No, the Dixie Highway is, and was, not for the faint-of-heart. ■





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# tampa bay



February 28th 2024 Tampa Bay BMW met with BMWNEF at the World Equestrian Center in Ocala, FL. While the Equestrian Center is a beautiful and interesting facility, it turns out that it is not suited to meeting, greeting, and getting to know large groups. Especially when they have a variety of food options, in different buildings, all at the same location.

Recently, another attempt to get together for a picnic was canceled due to arctic-for-Florida temperatures. A meet-up between these clubs will happen in the near future and will be covered in these pages.

Meanwhile, you should consider visiting the Equestrian Center in Ocala. It's free to enter and horses are frequently jumping. ■





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