

## Sturgis 2024 Trip Recap

On Monday, 29 September, a small group of Tidewater HOGs set out for a trip to Sturgis South Dakota for the annual motorcycle rally. This was planned as a 14-day event; 3 1/2 days to get there, seven nights of stay, and 3 1/2 days for the return trip. Because we HOGs are scattered all over Tidewater, rather than start in one central location, we had one group (three bikes one passenger) meet at Southside Harley-Davidson.



We would rendezvous with another bike and passenger in Zion Crossroads. This group of four bikes and two passengers pressed on and reluctantly got into rain gear in Waynesboro, which of course, prevented the rain from falling. We finally did run into rain after we left I-81/64 and rode I-64 westward. It was a light rain which brought the temperature down, so it was very welcome. We met up with the last of our group at a Love's Travel Stop in Covington, VA. Continuing now as five bikes and three passengers, the eight of us hit a light patch of rain lasting about 15 minutes after we crossed into Kentucky. The day ended in Lexington, 586 miles from SSHD, with dinner at Cracker Barrel.

Next day, KSU at 9AM with a stop about four hours down the road at Roadhouse Harley-Davidson. Poker chip! (Before we left for this trip, I purchased 14 SSHD poker chips to trade with other dealers. I left them in my truck. They are still in my truck). Shorter mileage than yesterday but long day because of a rainstorm forcing a sit-down lunch at Denny's while waiting for storm to pass.



Some traffic in St Louis and another rain gear stop and slight wait. Today we rode 456 miles for our Columbia, MO stop.

The third day started with KSU at 9AM. It was a HOT day, but the last 80 miles a front approached from the west and brought temperatures down a little. Sailed through Kansas City traffic easily! No bumper-to-bumper or precipitation all day on this 489-mile leg. Although we have seen our fair share of bikes and trailers along the way, it really picked up yesterday. And the dynamics have changed at the hotel, it is completely taken over by bikers. Looks like a HOG rally!

Day 4, August 1st, started with a stop at J & L Harley-Davidson, about a 1/4 mile from the hotel. We managed to make a stop at Dignity of Earth and Sky.



One of our bikes would not start after a gas stop. That bike got a tow to Black Hills Harley-Davidson and the couple grabbed a hotel in Rapid City.

The rest of us made it too Larson's Creek Crooked Campground, a 369-mile day.



August 2, our first full day in South Dakota. We are staying in Hill City, which is fifty miles south of Sturgis, not that far away and a beautiful ride if you take Nemo Road. Hill City is central to the best riding in the Black Hills, and unlike the small town of Sturgis, Hill City is a year-round hot spot due to its proximity to the Black Hills, to include Mount Rushmore, Custer State Park, and the Crazy Horse memorial. I will write about the town of Sturgis in a moment, but there is much more to "going to Sturgis" than the town itself. Our bike casualty was at Black Hills Harley-Davidson early this morning, more about that a little later. At the campground, we did laundry and then made a supermarket run before leaving as a group at 11:30. We rode to the Sturgis Coffee Company and had a photo op at the Welcome to Sturgis sign.



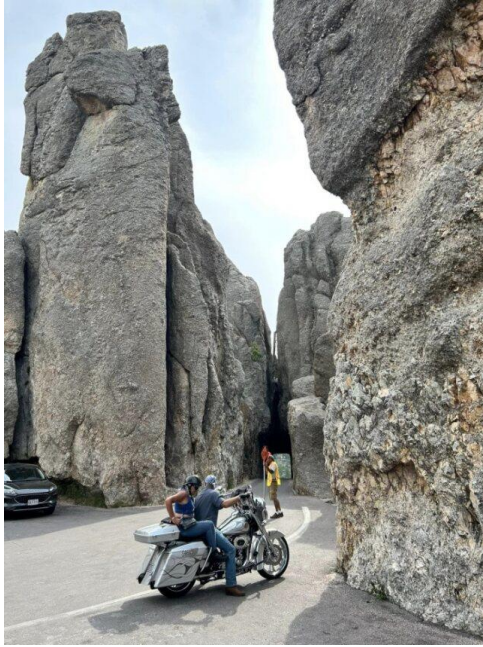
From there, a ride down Main Street and then on to Full Throttle Saloon and then the Buffalo Chip. Leaving Buffalo Chip, we avoided the downtown Sturgis traffic by taking a COOL route of hard packed dirt roads with light gravel; 132nd Avenue - 207th street- Ft Meade Way - Pleasant Valley Road to I-90. Missed Sturgis traffic, beautiful route. Arrived at Black-Hills Harley-Davidson looking for our bike casualty - we just missed him. He returned my call and caught me up to his repair - problem with a fuel line, they still have the room in Rapid City and will join us at the campground tomorrow.

On August 3rd, one bike and passenger left this morning for Billings Montana to get their son, they will be back tomorrow. Our straggler arrived today on a repaired bike. Light day, just a two-mile visit to Hill City after a change into walking shoes. After some shopping we left four hours later for the Crazy Horse memorial, and an early dinner there.



The weather is getting cooler every day; today's high was 90, tomorrow 89, Monday 80!

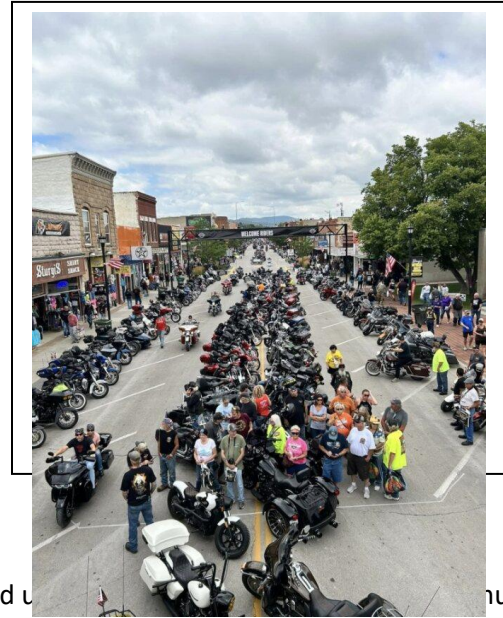
August 4th, our folks are back from Billings. I invited them to breakfast and the ride; they could not make it because they were waiting for their son to arrive. As planned, we rode Needles Highway and Iron Mountain Road.



Those rides are the highlight of the trip!

We visited Mount Rushmore and got back to the campground early. First (and only) afternoon naps of the trip. We had dinner at the 1895 Steakhouse and Saloon, so named because it was built in 1895.

August 5th, day eight. I led a group who missed Sturgis; the bike previously in Billings and the one that was being repaired. We all managed to park on Main Street and changed into walking shoes.



We visited Sturgis HD, the Motorcycle Museum, and picked up the Community Center.



I found the Tidewater HOG brick we had placed on Main Street for the 2019 trip.



A brief stop at the Welcome to Sturgis sign for those who missed it, then on to Deadwood. After paying a Hells Angel prospect for private parking, we visited "No. 10 Saloon" which has a mockup of the bar Wild Bill Hickok was playing poker at when he was shot.



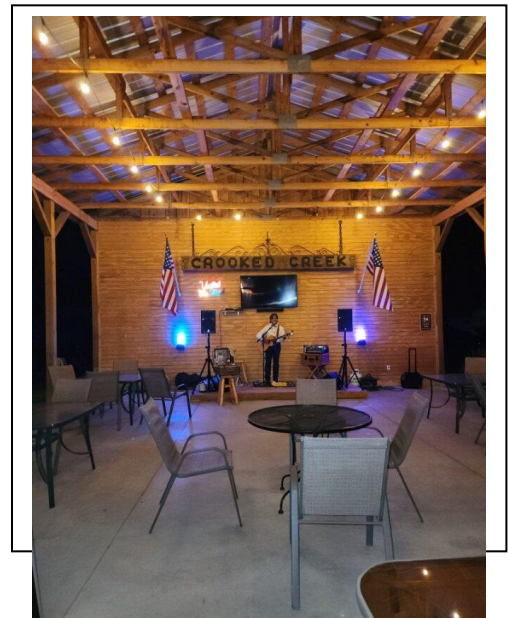
I fed \$20 to a poker machine, most of us had ice cream, and we did a bit of people-watching.

Day 9 recap. Went back to Needles and Iron Mountain so our Billings MT travelers could experience it. At the end, they took a left to Rushmore, I took a right to check out the construction and paving on 385. U.S. 385 road conditions were very over exaggerated on FB postings. It has 1.9 miles of hard packed gravel. All the photos I saw in a Sturgis FB group had deep gouging roads full of big, loose gravel; those photos were of the NEW construction that is not even opened yet. Made it to Deadwood and turned around, taking 385 to Nemo Road to Rapid City and a UPS store to send stuff home. Instead of taking

sixteen to Hill City, I took Sheridan Lake Road to 385. One couple rode separately to Custer State Park and got lots of Bison photos and a video.



Tonight, we sat at the community center and listened to a guy singing and playing guitar. He liked that we clapped after every song, but we clapped because we were glad it was over.



Day 10, visited Devils Tower through U.S. 85 in WY. Beautiful landscape caught on video.



At DT, we all agreed to get back as fast as possible and prepare for the ride home tomorrow. First leg home tomorrow, and the longest leg, six hundred miles. 9:48PM my time, no alcohol, retiring for a 6AM alarm.

Day 11 recap. KSU 8AM, long day - 600 miles and we lost an hour due to time change. It was hot on the way to Sturgis and all throughout, except the last two days when the high was 81. When we left Hill City it was 50 degrees, high for the day was 70. Stopped for the night in Percival Iowa. No issues. Tomorrow is a shorter day, KSU 8:30.

Day 12. Left wearing heated gear. Shorter day, good weather, sailed through St Louis no problem. We stopped for lunch at Subway. Good ride and weather. Mexican restaurant next to the hotel in Mt Vernon, Illinois.

Day 13. Late start because someone overslept. Not bad considering the number of people and hotel stays. Fred led the group to the first gas stop, a planned HD stop. I waited on and led the straggler (we missed the HD stop) and we all met at lunch. Late afternoon, about ninety miles from the hotel, everything went wrong with my bike; ABS, Traction Control, MAF sensor, no response on throttle. I was Sweep and limped off to the shoulder on I-64 in the WV. Told Fred to take the group to an exit with a gas station and I would call after troubleshooting. It did not make sense that unrelated issues came up... air sensor, ABS, throttle response, so I took off the air filter and back plate, found a loose harness. Unplugged, plugged back in, all errors disappeared. Cleared the codes, the never reappeared and bike ran fine. So, what made it a great day was helping someone, not getting stuck and leaving the ride, and making it to the hotel, and a Mexican restaurant was across the street.

Day 14, August 11. It was a short day of only 357 miles home, so got to sleep in and KSU at 9. No issues. The first gas stop was the goodbye stop. One couple stayed at the Loves for lunch, the rest left in a group. At the 81/64 split a trike left the group and continued north. At Skyline Drive another couple split off. Now we are down to two bikes and three people, and we had lunch at Five Guys off I-295. I had never eaten there before. I also never paid \$32 for a cheeseburger, fries, and vanilla shake before. We caught traffic on I-64, detoured at exit 205 for three miles on Route 60 before taking Emmaus Church



Road to jump back on, missing the 64 traffic. Sailed through the HRBT. The couple wanted the HOV, but it was closed. We stayed together until I jumped off at Robin Hood Road. No issues with people or the bike. Of the 3600-mile round trip, I put a total of 4800 miles on my bike; the least of any rider.