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**Johnson City Offers Adventurous Motorcycle Routes With History,
Natural Wonders and Challenging Terrain**

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.— When local Harley Owner’s Group (HOG) member Randall Sutherland gets on his bike, he leaves behind all of life’s stresses as he takes on the open road. For Sutherland, and the more than 3,000 Tri-City HOG members, East Tennessee provides the best riding opportunity in the state with its mountain routes and breathtaking scenery. Johnson City, located in the heart of East Tennessee, provides 12 popular motorcycle routes with a variety of themes and ability levels.

“From historical sites and challenging terrain to the calm, cooling sensation accompanied with the rivers and caverns of Northeast Tennessee, there’s a route bound to tickle just about anyone’s fancy,” said Brenda Whitson, executive director for the Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau. “With four million motorcycles purchased last year in the United States alone, motorcycle riding has become more mainstream, and people are always looking for new, interesting and challenging routes.”

Historic Adventure Rides:

For those looking for a historic adventure, the *Eighth Wonder of the World*, *The Longest Dam Ride* or the *East Tennessee Snake* ride offers a challenging terrain coupled with a little history and adventure.

Motorcycle enthusiasts can make their way through Daniel Boone territory on the *Eighth Wonder of the World* ride, which leads to a million-year-old landmark, the Natural Tunnel, formed

naturally from the seeping of water. Take I-26 W. to Kingsport, Tennessee into Virginia on Route 23N, then to route 871 to Natural Tunnel State Park.

Once referred to as the *Eighth Wonder of the World*, the Natural Tunnel has attracted visitors for hundreds of years. Located in Duffield, VA, the Natural Tunnel is a huge limestone basin with walls vertically rising to heights over 400 feet tall. While you are there, take a chairlift ride down into the tunnel area and Stock Creek Gorge to view the deep, semicircular basin excavated in the limestone.

The East Tennessee Snake path takes riders through the battlegrounds of the Revolutionary War in the historical towns of Elizabethton, along the rushing waters of Stoney Creek, through the pastures of Shady Valley. Take N. Roan Street to Hwy. Exit 394 to 421S to Shady Valley. The road is very long and curvy, which is where the name “snaky” comes from.

The Longest Dam Ride offers rugged gorges, roller coaster dips and rocky cliffs for those looking for an adventure. There are many stopping points along the way where riders can eat, shop or take a dip in a pool of mountain water. Take I-26W to Boones Creek Road-Exit 38, then to Rt. 38N on to Rt. 75N to Boone Dam Road. On your way to Holston View Dam Road, stop at Shelly’s Chicken House.

Easy Rides:

For those looking for a relaxing journey, the *Places of the Past* ride includes scenic, wooded back roads, old farmhouses, quaint towns and landmarks unique to Northeast Tennessee.

As you travel downtown Historic Jonesborough, Tennessee’s oldest town, admire the beautifully preserved buildings as you pass the International Storytelling Center. Turn right on College Street to 11E toward Greeneville; follow signage to Davy Crockett State Park, left on State Route #9. President Andrew Johnson’s National Historic Site is in downtown Greeneville at the visitor’s center on Main Street. Also make sure to stop at the Bean Barn in Greeneville.

The Vinegar Pie ride takes a leisurely drive along 11E to Morristown that ends in Clinch Mountain Tennessee where you can experience a taste of the infamous vinegar pie at the Clinch Mountain Lookout Restaurant. Resting at the top of Clinch Mountain, you will have a panoramic view of 34,000 acres covered by Norris Lake nestled in the heart of the Great Smokies.

Cool Rides:

If you’re looking for some peaceful and refreshing rides on a hot summer’s day, make note of these “cool” rides through Roan Mountain, the Appalachian Caverns and the Cherokee National Forest.

The *Top of the Roan* ride begins out of Elizabethton on 19E Bypass and takes riders to the top of Roan Mountain where riders can bask in cool, refreshing air at 6,285 feet above sea level and can take time to meditate, enjoy the cleansing cool breeze and listen to the beautiful sounds of nature below. Other beauty spots along the way are the Catawba Rhododendron Gardens at Carver's Gap.

“On the descent from the top, you will have the opportunity to enjoy some of East Tennessee's most magnificent scenery, leaving you feeling nothing less than invigorated at the end of your ride,” said Whitson.

On the *Spelunker Tour ride*, riders will retrace the footsteps of the Indian warriors who attacked frontier settlements, along with nature's artwork within the Bristol Caverns. This ride provides the opportunity to walk along the banks of the ancient Underground River, which carved these caverns from the earth 200 to 400 million years ago. After leaving the caverns, *Spelunker Tour Riders* can cruise alongside the Bristol Motor Speedway, and then to the historical Appalachian Caverns, complete with 135-foot ceilings, beautiful rich colors and fascinating formations. Riders can also explore another aspect of the area's history in caverns that are known for hiding Confederate soldiers during the Civil War.

On the *Rivers and Trout* ride, you will begin in Johnson City on South Roan Street 23E to Unicoi Road to the National Fish Hatchery just inside the city limits of Erwin, you will witness some of the area's largest breeding trout in the rivers of Johnson City. As you travel, Buffalo Valley Golf Course will be on your left and Jones Hardware and other antique shops.

Purely Historic Rides:

For history buffs, Johnson City offers four rides that pass some of the region's most interesting historic sites.

On the *Fiddles, Guitars and Harley's* ride, which passes the Bristol Mall on Piedmont Avenue, riders will pass the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, and the “Burger Bar” diner where Hank Williams Sr. ate his last meal. The route takes A.P. Carter Highway into Carters Valley, home to The Carter Fold, the famous auditorium of legends Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash. Other points of interest along the way are Mount Vernon United Methodist Church and Cemetery, where the family went to church for decades and the A.P. Carter Store, now The Carter Family Museum.

For a route of mountainous ecstasy, take the *Mountains Ribbons* ride, which takes you to the top of Grandfather Mountain on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Visit the Moses H. Cone Memorial Park and the

Linn Cove Viaduct. One of Moses H. Cone Park's main attractions includes the Flat Top Manor, where you can see a beautiful grand staircase made of cherry wood, or take a stroll through the craft shop operated by the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. The Linn Cove Viaduct was created when engineers were trying to decide how to build a road at an elevation of 4,100 feet without damaging Grandfather Mountain, one of the world's oldest mountains.

This route takes riders through several small towns, such as Linville, Elk Park and Roane Mountain, before ending in Boone, NC.

Described by The Audubon Society as "unique for its isolation and quiet freedom from urbanized noise pollution," Bays Mountain Park is a perfect solution to get away from all the hustle and bustle of city life. On the *Howling Wolves, Stars and History* ride on Bays Mountain Road, let the kids enjoy wolves howling at the Nature Center, slimy snakes and other reptiles at the Raptor Center, or take a break to cool off from the heat of the sun in the Planetarium. From The Netherland Inn, the nation's only registered site that was both a stage and a boatyard, cruise on to Kingsport to see the Exchange Place, a living history farm that once served as self-supporting plantation built between 186 and 1851.

On the *East Tennessee History At It's Best* ride, this will be from Johnson City to Hwy. 11E to Hyder Hill Road on your right to explore the grounds of Rocky Mount State Living Museum where you can see the daily live interpretations of the year 1791. Return to 11E and 19W to Elizabethton to visit Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park to visit Fort Watauga and explore the museum. While in downtown Elizabethton, visitors should take a peak at the oldest mansion in East Tennessee dating back to 1775, the historic Carter's Mansion.

"These routes not only provide a great ride, there are interesting sites along the way, and there is a variety of other things to do while in you're in town," said Whitson.

HOG was established in 1983 by the Harley-Davidson Motor Company to give motorcycle riders the chance to show their love for the sport in an organized way. In the 1990s, it went international, and now has a membership totaling a million worldwide, with 1,157 local chapters. To find out more information about HOG, call 1-800-CLUBHOG. For more information about the Johnson City local chapter, contact Smith Brothers Harley-Davidson Sales, Inc at 423-283-0422, or visit their website at www.smithbrosharley.com.

For more information about the routes surrounding Johnson City, email foster@johnsoncitytnchamber.com for the complete ride description and driving directions.

Johnson City is located in Northeast Tennessee and is the fourth largest metropolitan city in the state. Set in a region known as America's First Frontier, Johnson City is “Where the Pioneer Spirit Began”—a historically significant and culturally rich community surrounded by an abundance of unspoiled natural beauty. Johnson City has a history, which dates back more than 200 years, and its culture embraces individual creativity and encourages innovation through expression. The area is world-renowned for its modern and traditional Appalachian and bluegrass music, art and cuisine, and outdoor recreation for the whole family throughout all four seasons. For more information on Johnson City, please visit www.visitjohnsoncitytn.com or call (423) 461-8000 or (800) 852-3392.

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