NORTHERN COLORADO

Informer

INDIAN MOTORCYCLE RIDERS GROUP®
#2036



NOVEMBER 2026

RIDE, SEEK, AND EXPLORE

Informer

NORTHERN COLORADO IMRG UPCOMING EVENTS

November 21st (Saturday) — Chapter Meeting

Chapter meeting. **9:30 a.m.** at **Indian Motorcycle of Fort Collins**.



Kick off your weekend with fellow members and motorcycle enthusiasts! Whether you're a long-time regular or thinking about attending your very first meeting, we'd love to see you there. Mark your calendar, bring your riding stories, and come join the fun!

December 19th (Saturday) — Wreaths Across America

Attending Wreaths Across America is a long-standing Northern Colorado IMRG tradition, and we invite all members to join us. The solemn ceremony begins at **10:00 a.m.,** with wreath placement following.



Wreaths Across America is a national nonprofit dedicated to honoring our nation's heroes with the mission to "Remember the fallen, Honor those who serve, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom." Paying tribute to our veterans by placing wreaths on their final resting places is a deeply humbling experience.

Learn more about the national event at WreathsAcrossAmerica.org. Please consider sponsoring a wreath for **Grandview Cemetery (COGVFC), Fort Collins, CO**, or a location close to your heart.





NORTHERN COLORADO
CHAPTER 2036

UPCOMING EVENTS

November – December 2026

11/21 Chapter Membership Meeting

12/19 Wreaths Across America

12/19 Annual Chapter Christmas Celebration

RESOURCES

Going on NoCo IMRG Group Rides

Ride guidance & waiver forms

NoCo IMRG YouTube Channel

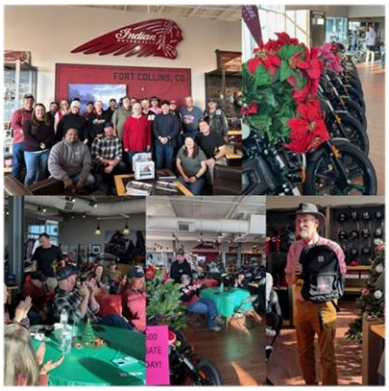
NoCo IMRG Instagram

NoCo IMRG Facebook Group

nocoimrg@gmail.com

About Northern Colorado IMRG

December 19th (Saturday) — Annual Chapter Christmas Celebration



After Wreaths Across America, join us as we close out another incredible year of riding with good food and great company! We're celebrating the season with a delicious catered lunch, reflecting on our 2026 road adventures, and looking ahead to next year's great adventures.

Whether you're brand new to the chapter, or a long-time member, come celebrate our shared passion for riding and the enduring bonds of friendship.

Keep a watch out for a PunchBowl evite, and please RSVP (including your +1 if bringing a guest) so we can get an accurate head count for catering.

📌 **Please Note:** The Christmas Celebration takes the place of our regular monthly chapter meeting.

For up-to-date information on all Northern Colorado IMRG rides and events, visit our Events Calendar.

Please visit Going on NoCo IMRG Group Motorcycle Rides for ride waivers, ride level ratings, and other detailed information about going on our group rides.

CROSSING THE SUMMIT: CAMERON PASS ON TWO WHEELS

High in north-central Colorado, just a few miles north of Rocky Mountain National Park, is Cameron Pass at an elevation of 10,276 feet. It bridges the rugged southern tip of the Medicine Bow Mountains and the northern boundary of the Never Summer Range. This mountain pass offers sweeping alpine vistas, evergreen forests, and a rich western history, making it a premier riding destination in Northern Colorado.

Rich Mountain History

The pass carries a historic past dating back well before modern highway travel. Way before paved roads were constructed, Native American tribes, early fur trappers, and 19th-century freight wagons traversed the natural gap to move between the Front Range plains and the high-desert basin of North Park. In 1870, the pass was officially named after General Robert Alexander Cameron, a Union Civil War officer and prominent leader who helped found the Fort Collins Agricultural Colony.



As the region expanded, major rail companies including the Union Pacific Railroad surveyed Cameron Pass in the late 19th century as a potential transcontinental rail corridor through the Rockies. However, the combination of steep eastern grades and heavy winter snowpack ultimately forced engineers to abandon the route in favor of gentler passes further north in Wyoming. Decades later, winter sports enthusiasts discovered the slope's potential, leading to the installation of a 950-foot rope tow near the summit in 1946. While commercial ski operations ended around 1951, Cameron Pass remains a legendary sanctuary for backcountry skiing and snowshoeing.

Distinctive Features & High-Country Geography

Cameron Pass acts as a critical hydrological divide for Colorado's water system. Precipitation falling on the north side feeds Joe Wright Creek and the Cache la Poudre River on its path toward the Mississippi River, while runoff on the south side flows into the Michigan River and down through the North Platte basin. Just off the pass is the historic Michigan Ditch, an impressive early 1900s engineering feat diverting mountain runoff across the Continental Divide into Joe Wright Reservoir to help supply municipal drinking water for Northern Colorado communities.

The surrounding landscape features geological landmarks. Towering dramatically just south of the pass are the Nokhu Crags, reaching 12,485 feet as jagged rock pinnacles guarding Lake Agnes inside State Forest State Park. The name "Nokhu" is the native term meaning "Eagles' Nest." Additionally, the pass area sits near the origin point of the historic 2020 Cameron Peak Fire, which scorched over 208,000 acres to become the largest wildfire in Colorado history. Passing through today you'll view natural forest regeneration taking hold alongside post-fire burn scars.

The Gateway to North Park and Beyond

Carved out by State Highway 14, Cameron Pass serves as the primary link connecting Fort Collins to Walden. Beyond Walden, Highway 14 opens up connections to points further west across the Divide, leading riders over Rabbit Ears Pass into Steamboat Springs and continuing along the Yampa River valley out toward Craig.

For the Northern Colorado IMRG, Cameron Pass stands out as a cornerstone for many of our rides. Whether the chapter is rolling out for a day trip into North Park for lunch in Walden or embarking on longer journeys further west into Steamboat and Craig, the climb up through Poudre Canyon and over Cameron Pass delivers a mix of smooth pavement, mountain sweepers, and elevation changes.

A Favorite NoCo IMRG Pit Stop: Cameron Pass Picnic Area

Climbing above 10,000 feet gives riders a true high-altitude experience, and a regular tradition on these western runs is pulling our bikes into the Cameron Pass Picnic Area right at the crest. Set within a subalpine forest with views of the surrounding peaks, this rest stop provides the ideal place for the group to pull off Highway 14 after navigating the long, winding stretches of Poudre Canyon. It gives everyone a chance to get off their bikes, check gear, stretch their legs, and regroup before descending into the open expanse of North Park.

At 10,276 feet, the pass gives us a cool alpine breeze, sweeping views, and perhaps most importantly, a very necessary restroom break. By the time the pack navigates the turns up from Ted's Place, all that pre-ride coffee has definitely worked its way through the system, making this scenic forest pit stop an absolute lifesaver. This picnic area is also a favorite location for members to snap group photos against the backdrop of the Medicine Bow and Never Summer peaks.

Once the chapter leaves the picnic area and crosses the summit, the ride transitions dramatically from dense canyon pine forests to wide-open, big-sky country. The first major stop is Walden, the heart of North Park, which makes for an ideal lunch destination or refueling point before continuing west or turning north toward Wyoming.

Tips for Riding Cameron Pass

Riding over high mountain passes requires a bit of extra preparation to ensure a smooth trip. High elevation brings rapid temperature shifts, meaning it can drop significantly at the summit even during peak summer months, so wearing layered riding gear is always recommended. Riders should also maintain a sharp lookout for wildlife along tree lines and marshy pull-offs, as moose, elk, and deer are frequently active near the roadway. Finally, because cell service drops off through large sections of Poudre Canyon and around the pass itself, using established group riding protocols and downloading navigation routes ahead of time is essential for a safe run.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MOTORCYCLE INSTRUCTOR?

Whether you are swinging your leg over a bike for the first time or refining your skills after years in the saddle, the person leading your training can make all the difference. Riding a motorcycle requires a blend of physical coordination, mental sharpness, and risk management, and teaching those skills demands a distinct set of qualities.

So, what makes a good motorcycle instructor? It demands more than teaching basic technical proficiency. A good instructor also instills judgment, awareness, and mindset to help build the rider.



Mastery of the Fundamentals (and the Mechanics Behind Them)

Being an expert rider doesn't automatically make someone a good instructor. Good instructors don't just demonstrate perfect low-speed friction zone control. They break down complex motor skills into simple, digestible steps. They understand the mechanics behind why a technique works and can explain eye and head placement in ways that click for every learning style.

The Practical Art of Intervention: Knowing When to Step In

Good teaching on motorcycle skills is rarely passive, nor is it overbearing. A good instructor understands precisely when to step in to prevent disaster and when to step back and let the student find their own way forward. Over-instructing prevents riders from developing their own instincts, yet lack of guidance leaves them vulnerable to hazards. Striking that exact balance is what turns a training lot supervisor into a good mentor.

Patience and Psychological Safety

Practicing motorcycle skills in front of an instructor or group of other riders can be intimidating. Stalling out, turning wide, or dropping a bike during a tight turn can instantly trigger frustration or embarrassment. Good instructors create an environment where mistakes are viewed as essential teaching moments rather than failures. They maintain a calm, encouraging demeanor that helps lower a rider's anxiety, allowing them to relax, focus, and build genuine confidence.

Laser Focused Observation Skills

A good instructor can spot the subtle mistake a student is making, such as eyes looking down toward the front tire instead of through the turn, or improper brake lever engagement. More importantly, their feedback is immediate, direct, and constructive, which gives riders practical corrections they can apply on the next try.

Prioritizing Strategy and Mindset Over Mechanics

Control inputs are only half the battle. A truly impactful instructor emphasizes the mental side of motorcycling as well by educating the rider on hazard perception, situational awareness, managing space cushions, and understanding personal risk limits. They teach riders how to scan traffic, anticipate potential dangers, and make smart decisions long before a critical situation arises on the open road.

Adaptability to Different Learners

Every rider brings a different background, level of physical comfort, and learning speed. Good instructors adapt their communication style accordingly. Whether explaining a concept through visual demonstration, detailed technical descriptions, or hands-on practice, they meet the student where they are.

A Passion for Continuous Learning

The best instructors remain perpetual students themselves. They continuously update their knowledge on modern safety gear, helmet technology, emerging rider-aid systems (like cornering ABS and traction control), and evolving their instructional techniques. Their passion for motorcycling and teaching is infectious, inspiring students to pursue ongoing training throughout their riding journey.

A Local Asset: Paul Carroll, Certified Police Motorcycle Instructor

We are exceptionally fortunate in our chapter to have Paul, a certified police motorcycle instructor, who leads training sessions for us several times a year. Paul truly embodies every one of these qualities.

His deep background in motor enforcement brings real-world precision to our training sessions. Whether he is coaching low-speed maneuvers, or threshold braking, Paul's active instruction and sharp observation help every rider build genuine confidence.

Best of all, Paul fosters a complete **no-judgment zone**. No matter your current skill level or years in the saddle, there is zero reason to feel intimidated. **These training sessions are offered to our members at no cost**, and everyone in the chapter is strongly encouraged to take advantage of them. Having access to top-tier training instruction right within our group is an incredible opportunity to keep our skills sharp and stay safe on every ride.

The Bottom Line: A good motorcycle instructor doesn't just show you how to operate the controls. They instill the judgment, awareness, and confidence needed to inspire you to keep practicing, improving, and mastering your motorcycle skills long after the training session is over.

THE RISK OF STOPPING: WHY HANGING UP THE HELMET MAY COST MORE THAN YOU THINK?

Has someone told you it's time to hang it up?



Half of all motorcycle riders in America are now over 50. The Motorcycle Industry Council reports the median age of an American rider has climbed from 27 in 1985 to 50 by 2018, and it has kept rising since. Riders in their 50s, 60s, and 70s are the ones holding the motorcycle riding community together.

They are also the ones hearing the same message from every direction. A neighbor cites the statistics. A spouse points to a news story. A son says, "Dad, you're not as quick as you used to be." Some riders listen and sell the bike, but nobody explains what often happens next.

What Stopping Does

The research on active older adults who give up a demanding activity is hard to ignore.

- **The brain**. The Whitehall II study from University College London tracked workers for decades. After retirement, memory recall declined 38% faster than before. When the daily demand to stay sharp disappears, the brain adjusts downward.
- **The body**. After 50, we lose roughly 1 to 2% of muscle mass a year. How fast depends heavily on what we do. When active older adults stop regular activity, even for a few weeks, balance worsens, fall risk climbs, and years of built-up fitness erodes faster than it was built.
- **The mood**. Research suggests the risk of depressive symptoms can more than double for men who were highly active and then stopped.

The people urging an older rider off the bike think they are removing a danger. However, they may be replacing with a different one.

What the Bike Gives Back

Japanese neuroscientist Dr. Ryuta Kawashima led a controlled study of men in their 40s and 50s who held motorcycle licenses but hadn't ridden in years. Half began riding to work daily for two months. The riders showed dramatic gains on memory tests, and on one measure their scores more than doubled. The non-riders slipped slightly. Riding engages the prefrontal cortex, which handles concentration, working memory, and spatial reasoning, at a level that driving a car doesn't.

Consider what riding a motorcycle demands. Two hands doing different jobs, two feet on separate controls, core body braced against the wind, eyes scanning ahead for hazards, and constant tracking of traffic and road surface. Your brain doesn't get to check out.

A separate UCLA study measured a 28% drop in cortisol (the body's main stress hormone) during a ride, along with higher heart rate and adrenaline. Researchers describe a flow state, with dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine, and endorphins released together. It's why the stress of the week seems to fade somewhere between the first mile and the last when riding.

The Connection Factor

In 2023 the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on loneliness. Social isolation is linked to a 26 to 29% higher risk of premature death, and its health impact has been compared to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. About 15% of American men report having no close friends.

Riders have a built-in antidote. You pull into a gas station, another rider rolls in, and five minutes later you're swapping bike stories like old friends. Two fingers drop off the bars on the highway, and it's recognition - you're one of us. For many of us, that is exactly what this chapter is about; riding and camaraderie.

Being Honest About Risk

Per mile traveled, motorcyclists are roughly 27 times more likely to die in a crash than car occupants, and older bodies break more easily and heal more slowly. That's real.

But the details matter. In 2023 NHTSA data, 36% of motorcyclists in fatal crashes were speeding, about 26% were legally alcohol impaired, and 34% had no valid motorcycle endorsement. Those are choices, not bad luck waiting for the careful, sober, experienced rider. Technology also helps. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found ABS-equipped bikes have a 22% lower fatal crash rate overall. With larger cruiser and touring bikes with ABS, the drop is bigger at 32%.

How to Keep Riding

Riding at 65 shouldn't look identical to riding at 35. The goal is to adapt, not quit.

- **Fit the bike to the body you have now**. A lighter bike or lower seat isn't a downgrade. A bike you can fully control in a parking lot is the one that keeps you riding another 20 years.
- **Stay physically ready**. Core strength, grip endurance, and shoulder stability keep fatigue from eroding your judgment on a long ride. Twenty minutes with dumbbells, three times a week, makes a real difference.
- **Keep your skills sharp**. If you've been off the bike a while, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Returning Rider Course takes half a day and is a fast route back to confidence. Also, participating in one of Northern Colorado IMRG's Ride Ready Skills training sessions can help you to hone your skills.
- **Choose your conditions**. Skip rides when you're exhausted or the weather doesn't make sense. That isn't fear, it's planning so that you are able to ride on the next one.
- **Ride your own ride**. The buddy who wants to take you on a mountain road with tight twisties going as fast as they can, and beyond your current abilities, isn't doing you any favors.
- **Gear up properly**. Use a certified helmet and a jacket with CE-rated armor.

The Last Word

Riders like Gloria Struck, who started riding in 1941, has logged over 650,000 miles, and was still riding into her late 90s, never gave anyone permission to take the bike away. The men and women who age well aren't the ones who stop taking risks. They're the ones who learn which risks are worth taking.

If someone who loves you is building a case for quitting, hear them out and thank them for caring. Then adapt, ride smarter, and keep going.

The road isn't done with you yet.

HONORING OUR FALLEN: SUPPORT WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA AT GRANDVIEW CEMETERY



For years, members of the Northern Colorado IMRG have carried on a proud tradition started by longtime member **Susan Neiman** where we come together at **Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins** to honor our nation's heroes through **Wreaths Across America**.

Each December, members gather at the cemetery for a quiet memorial service followed by the laying of remembrance wreaths. It is always a deeply somber and moving experience to stand among the graves of those who served, ensuring their sacrifices are remembered.

The Need Is Urgent

In earlier years, volunteers always had plenty of wreaths on hand to cover the resting places of veterans. However, over the past few years, contributions have fallen far short. Hundreds of veteran gravesites at Grandview Cemetery are left without a wreath each season simply because there are not enough to go around.

The goal is simple—Make sure every single veteran resting at Grandview Cemetery receives a wreath.

How You Can Help

Please consider sponsoring a wreath this year to help bring honor to every hero laid to rest at Grandview Cemetery.

Cemetery Location

Grandview Cemetery (COGVFC)

1900 W Mountain Ave

Fort Collins, CO 80521

Sponsor a Wreath Online

Visit the Grandview Cemetery (COGVFC) web page on the Wreaths Across America website to sponsor one or more wreaths.

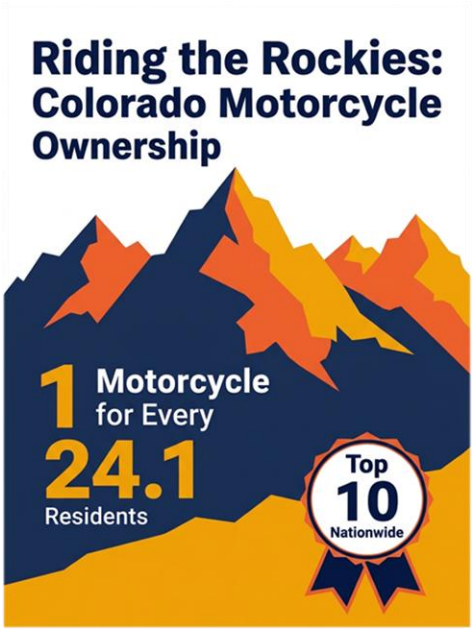
Whether you sponsor a single wreath or several, your support helps to ensure the service and sacrifice of veterans laid to rest at the Fort Collins Grandview Cemetery will not be forgotten. Join Northern Colorado IMRG in continuing this meaningful effort.

This year's Wreaths Across America at the **Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins, CO,** is on **December 19, 2026**, with the ceremony starting at **10:00 a.m.** with wreath placement immediately following the ceremony.

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE: WHICH STATES HAVE THE HIGHEST MOTORCYCLE DENSITY?

Ever pulled up to a red light, looked around at the sea of sedans and SUVs, and wondered *how many people around here are actually riding on two wheels?*

Digging into the latest state-by-state data from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA Table MV-1) and U.S. Census Bureau answers a fun question. *How many residents are there for every street-legal motorcycle in each state?*



Across all 50 states, there are over 8.5 million registered street bikes for roughly 334 million people. On average nationally, that works out to about **1 motorcycle for every 39 residents**.

But depending on where you live, the odds of your neighbor having a bike in their garage vary wildly. Let's look at the extremes and see where **Colorado** fits into the mix.

Quick Guide: Understanding "Motorcycle Density"

Before we jump into the rankings, here is how to read the numbers:

- **High Motorcycle Density (Fewer Residents per Bike):** Motorcycles are everywhere! A low ratio (e.g. 8 to 25 people per bike) means bikes make up a higher percentage of vehicles on the road, and you don't have to gather many people before finding a rider.
- **Low Motorcycle Density (More Residents per Bike):** Cars and trucks completely dominate. A high ratio (e.g. 50 to 68 people per bike) means street bikes are statistically rare relative to the local population.

The High-Density Champions: Open Roads & Rally Country

If you want to feel surrounded by fellow riders, head north toward the Big Sky country and the Great Plains. These states have the highest concentration of motorcycles per capita in the nation.

The top spot goes, unsurprisingly, to **South Dakota**, home of the world-famous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

- **South Dakota:** 8.6 residents per motorcycle
- **Montana:** 9.5 residents per motorcycle
- **Wyoming:** 11.0 residents per motorcycle
- **New Hampshire:** 17.7 residents per motorcycle
- **Iowa:** 18.5 residents per motorcycle

In South Dakota, if you gather a small group of 9 or 10 people for dinner, statistically at least one person owns a street-legal bike! Low populations combined with sprawling scenic highways and deeply rooted riding cultures push these states far above the national average.

The Low-Density States: Car Dominance & Urban Sprawl

On the other end of the spectrum, some of the most populous or transit-heavy states have the lowest concentration of motorcycles per capita.

The state with the lowest motorcycle density in the nation? **Mississippi.**

- **Mississippi:** 60.1 residents per motorcycle
- **Louisiana:** 53.9 residents per motorcycle
- **New York:** 56.5 residents per motorcycle
- **Texas:** 67.8 residents per motorcycle
- **Maryland:** 54.8 residents per motorcycle

In states like Texas or Mississippi, you'd have to gather 60 to 68 people before finding a registered motorcycle owner. Despite warm southern weather in places like Texas or Louisiana, long highway commutes, massive pickup truck fleets, and high urban concentrations mean far lower per-capita motorcycle ownership.

How Does Colorado Stack Up?

So where does the Centennial State sit on the spectrum?

Colorado firmly lands in the High-Density Tier!

- **Colorado Rank:** #10 Nationwide
- **Total Registered Street Bikes:** 242,100
- **Total State Population:** ~5.84 million
- **Density Ratio:** 24.1 residents per motorcycle

What do 24.1 residents per motorcycle actually mean?

It means in Colorado, there is one street-legal motorcycle for every 24 people.

If you picture a typical school bus or a moderately busy coffee shop in Denver, Boulder, or Fort Collins, odds are high that at least one person in that room has a bike key in their pocket.

Compared to the national average of 39 residents per bike, Coloradans are almost **60% more likely** to own a motorcycle than the average American. With world-class mountain passes like Trail Ridge Road, Million-Dollar Highway, and endless canyon roads, it's easy to see why Rockies residents love getting out on two wheels.

Quick Summary Table: At a Glance

Region / State	*Total Population*	*Street Motorcycles*	*Residents per Motorcycle*	*Concentration Level*
South Dakota (#1)	909,824	105,800	**8.6**	Very High Density
Colorado (#10)	5,839,796	242,100	**24.1**	High Density
National Average (50 States)	334,243,092	8,579,168	**39.0**	National Baseline
New York (#48)	19,677,151	348,100	**56.5**	Low Density
Mississippi (#50)	2,940,057	48,900	**60.1**	Very Low Density

What's Your Take? Does your neighborhood feel more like South Dakota or Mississippi?

Ride, Seek, and Explore!

Northern Colorado IMRG #2036

2026 Calendar of Events (Updated 11/15/2026)

For the latest updates visit: nocoimrg.org/events

January	
Sat 1/17	**Chapter Membership Meeting**
February	
Sat 2/14	**2026 Ride Planning Meeting**
Sat 2/21	**Chapter Membership Meeting**
March	
Sat 3/21	**Chapter Membership Meeting**
April	
Sat 4/18	**Chapter Membership Meeting & Post-Meeting Ride**
Thr 4/23	**Dinner Ride (6 pm)**
Sat 4/25	**Road Officer Training (9 am) & Ride Ready Skills Practice (11 am) - Timberline Church**
May	
Sat 5/2	**International Female Ride Day ride** (https://www.facebook.com/InternationalFemaleRideDay)
Sat 5/16	**Chapter Membership Meeting (10 am) & Ride Ready Skills Practice - Timberline Church**
Thr 5/21	**Bikes & Bites Dinner Ride (6 pm)**
Sat 5/23	**Cinnamon Roll & Peak-to-Peak Ride**
June	
Mon 6/8 to Sun 6/14	**Durango Rendezvous - Sky Ute Casino, Ignacio, CO** Chapter group departing Wed 6/10 to Sun 6/14
Sat 6/20	**Chapter Membership Meeting & Post-Meeting Ride**
Thr 6/25	**Dinner Ride (6 pm)**
Sat 6/27	**Cameron Pass Ride** Brown bag lunch (and maybe a pie stop…)
July	
Sat 7/18	**Chapter Membership Meeting & Indian Motorcycle Great Outdoors Cookout**
Thr 7/23	**Dinner Ride (6 pm)**
Sat 7/25	**Granby Loop Ride**
August	
Sat 8/8	**Southern Exposure Ride to the Springs**
Sat 8/15	**Chapter Membership Meeting & Post Meeting Ride**
Thr 8/20	**Dinner Ride (6 pm)**
Fri 8/21 to Sat 8/22	**Demo Days**
September	
Sat 9/5	**Ride Ready Skills Practice**
Wed 9/9 to Sun 9/13	**IMRG South Region Roundup**
Sat 9/19	**Chapter Membership Meeting & Folds of Honor Charity Ride**
Thr 9/24	**Dinner Ride (6 pm)**
October	
Sat 10/17	**Chapter Membership Meeting & Post Meeting Ride**
Thr 10/22	**Dinner Ride (6 pm)**
November	
Sat 11/21	**Chapter Membership Meeting**
December	
Sat 12/19	**Wreaths Across America**
Sat 12/19	**Annual NoCo IMRG Chapter Christmas Celebration**

Board meets first Thursday of every month in 2026



Northern Colorado IMRG Chapter #2036
c/o Indian Motorcycle of Fort Collins
1800 SE Frontage Road
Fort Collins, CO 80525