

State center trains 'cycle mechanics

National motorcycle ownership now approaches the 10 million mark, and paralleling this growth is the need for a more efficient and profitable system of keeping the machines on the road.

Grand Rapids-based Kawasaki Midwest (KMW), a distributor of Kawasaki motorcycles in Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana, has designed a service training center to meet the increasing need for more efficiently trained service technicians. Ron Robbins technical services manager in charge of the training center, believes there will soon be a major motorcycle industry campaign toward more comprehensive training facilities. "At this time, only Kawasaki and one other major motorcycle manufacturer are conducting technician training programs in a serious manner," said Robbins, who originated the KMW program.

KMW subsidizes the entire operation and offers the training courses to benefit their dealerships. Courses are open to Kawasaki dealerships and technicians in the above five-state region. Nearly 1,000 Kawasaki technicians have attended the training center since it began in 1972.

This turnout is attributed by Robbins to "training programs and instructors

accepted to be the best anywhere."

To insure one-to-one personal attention for better educational communication, classes are limited to 10 students per session and are divided into five two-man teams. Teams are supplied with a complete set of tools, engines and test equipment so that "hands on," practical work experience can be stimulated.

Classroom activities use videotape, film, 35mm slide and sound cassettes and component mock-ups.

KMW class schedules are constantly modified to keep pace with the latest technology. Classes are currently offered in a basic and advanced format in three areas—general, engine and electric systems maintenance.

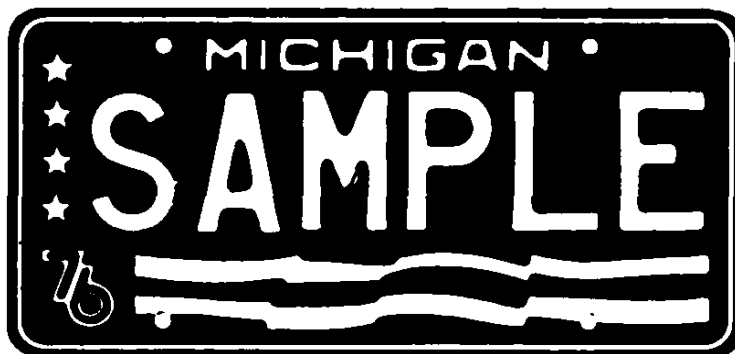
The total program now covers about six weeks of training and soon will expand into operations and administration.

According to Robbins, KMW classes teach not only the fundamentals of motorcycle servicing, but also an awareness of their positions. "We try to make the Kawasaki technician feel proud of his work, and instill in him the desire to learn everything he can about motorcycles," he explained.



Electrical expert Doug Vander Hoff gives the signal to connect the circuitry during an electrical maintenance class at the Kawasaki Midwest Service Training Center in Grand Rapids. The school offers training in advanced motorcycle technology to Kawasaki mechanics through use of "hands on" and video educational systems.

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