



Fuji Listens!

by **Ron Burkitt, PCI #488**

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White noise surrounds us; radio traffic, citizens, partners, dispatchers, we often hear it all but do we ever truly listen to any of it? It is always enjoyable when someone listens to us so that consequently we do not develop into white noise ourselves. Steve Harad, the Fuji representative for emergency services products, has spent the last few years listening to you and me. Harad has been visible at the IPMBA conference, answered numerous e-mails, and talked to his fellow vendors about what we want on a bike. The results of his dedication were unveiled in Baton Rouge with the display of Fuji's 2008 Police Special.

I recall observing the Fuji display and thinking, "That is an entirely different design than last year!" It was immediately apparent that Fuji had invested a substantial amount of effort and dedication in the bikes they would deliver to the public safety community. The most noticeable upgrade was the disc brakes. Steve told me this was the upgrade IPMBA members were most adamant about pursuing. I began to talk with Steve in an attempt to get my hands on a bike to test. I wanted to test the bike not only for myself, but also for the ones who had so much to do with its changes, the members of IPMBA.

Later in the spring, I received the bike box and proceeded to get out my tools. As I assembled the bike, I could not help but to notice the new frame design, which Steve told me is unique to Fuji's police bikes. Fuji has installed two gussets on the down tube and top tube to increase the strength of the frame. I can't swear that it is "Al Simpson proof" (he broke two frames in Baton Rouge); however, the importance of bulking up the frame on public safety bikes should not be overlooked. We tend to carry a significant amount of weight around when we ride, some more than others, not to mention all of the equipment.

The Police Special handled great! The new disc brakes were a marked improvement over the previous v-brake system. Fuji also upgraded the fork from a Suntour Axon to a Rockshock Recon Air with a remote lockout. I must admit I was not sure what this extra cable was when I was putting the bike together. However, the lockout turned out to be an extremely beneficial riding feature. It simply takes a flip of the thumb to activate the shock and cushion the ride while off-road. Overall, the Fuji Police Special for 2008 was an impressive ride. It's a production line bike that feels custom made, and these results were a result of Fuji honoring valid customer input.

Fuji completes the package by supplying helmets with lights, gloves, socks, bags and Princeton Tec lights. Steve Harad and Fuji continue to listen to IPMBA members to better our industry. In this time of white noise it is refreshing to have a company listen to customer's concerns and ideas and then act upon them.

For more information about the 2008 Fuji Police Special, contact Steve Harad at 215-824-3854 x 1111 or sharad@advancedsports.com. Fuji participates in the IPMBA Product Purchase Program.

Ron has been with the Hilliard Police Department for 16 years, including 11 on bike patrol. He enjoys off-road riding and has been an IPMBA Instructor since 2001. He is currently serving as IPMBA's Industry Liaison and can be reached at ron_burkitt@hboe.org.

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