

THE ECONOMICS OF RIDING

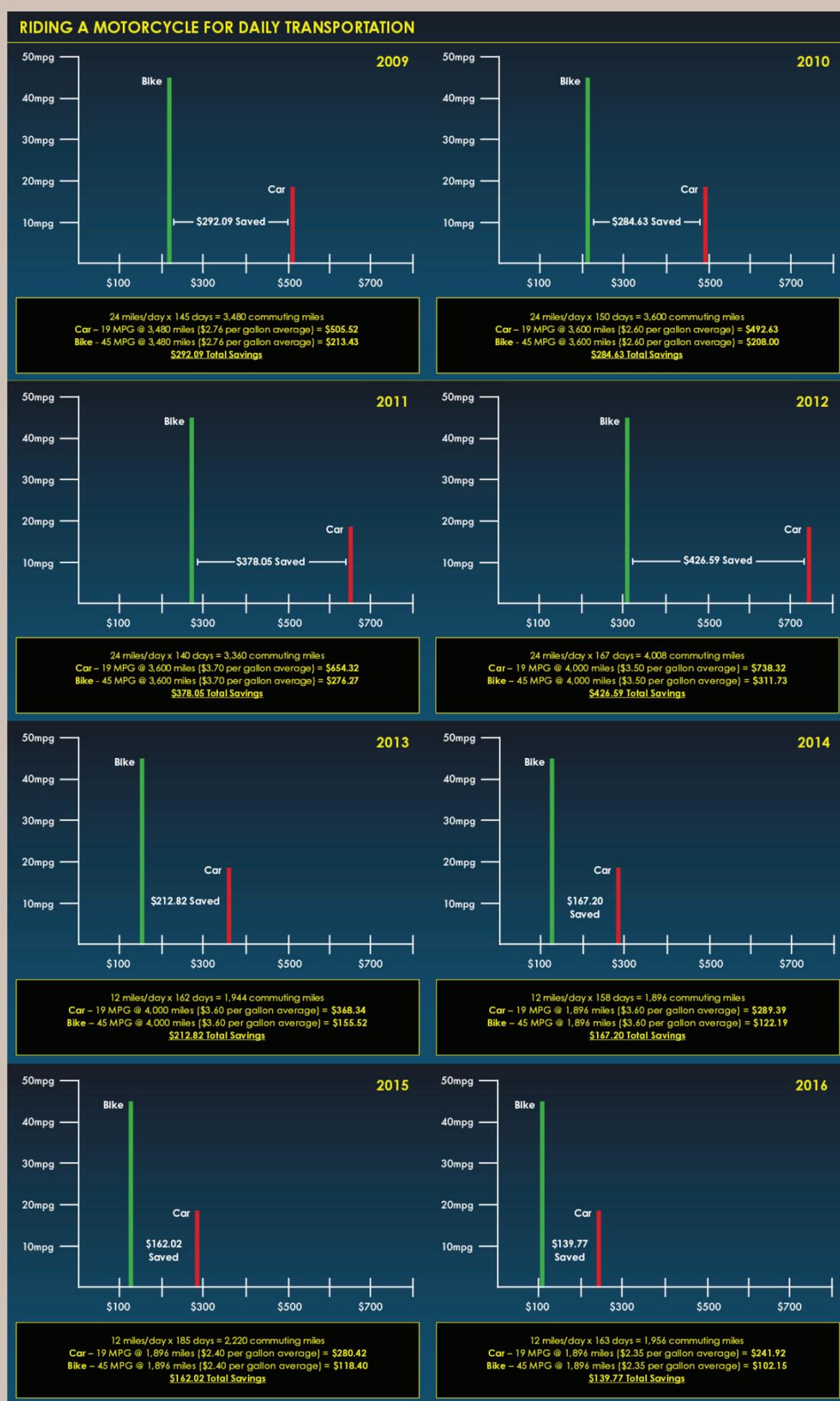
Motorcycles ridden for everyday transportation was a normal part of my life growing up in the 70's and 80's. With high gas prices playing a factor, I have fond memories of both of my parents riding. Dad had a 500 Yamaha with an aftermarket fairing that he'd ride rain or shine to work everyday, and on weekends would let me swing a leg over the passenger seat for a scenic afternoon cruise on the backroads. Mom rode a Honda 125 that was formerly used by the Shriner's to put on riding agility displays at local parades. She would use it to ride back and forth to her part-time job while us kids were in school, or to pick up a few groceries or run some errands. As a kid, I viewed riding a motorcycle as just a normal part of everyday life.

By the time I was old enough to drive, my parents had sold both bikes (I suppose the logistics of shuttling 3 kids around played a part in that decision, but my Mom also said she felt like drivers were not paying attention to riders), and I ended up learning to drive on 4-wheels, but always with a thought about wanting to ride a motorcycle...someday.

Someday came when I started working as part of the marketing team here at Aerostich. After some training and practice, I got my motorcycle endorsement in the Spring of 2009. Donning a new Hi-Viz Roadcrafter Classic one piece, I threw my leg over a borrowed 1971 Honda CB350 and never looked back as I established my roots as a dedicated daily rider.

In the early Spring of 2010, I was offered a great deal on a lightly used, '08 Kawasaki Versys, (that fit into the 'bike budget' I had been saving for) and logged the first ride of the season on March 11th, continuing to commute nearly every day that year through the end of November. Out of about 165 workdays during that timeframe, commuting on the new bike accounted for 145 of those days (with a few longer day trips and vacation riding days mixed in too). A quick run of the math proved that after the investment in the bike and riding gear, I was saving a fairly significant (to me anyway) amount of money by choosing to ride over driving a car too!

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With my Aerostich gear and a determined mind-set, 2012 allowed me to ride (at least a few days) every month this year – not always easily, but enjoyable every time – from below zero Duluth, MN temps in January and February to sweltering heat and humidity in July and August. Riding (anywhere), for me, is always the most versatile, practical and economical (not to mention fun), way to get from point A to B. Gas prices were jacked-up most of that year too, creating an even bigger savings.

Flash forward another 5 years and I'm still riding the same Kawasaki (have changed the oil annually and put 2 sets of new tires and brake pads on it over the years) and wearing the same (road grimed) Hi-Viz one piece Roadcrafter Classic. The bike and gear have gotten very comfortable after over 7 years of use, not to mention that every mile and every day that I ride further adds to the long-term value of the investment in the motorcycle and riding gear. Every ride continues to save money over driving the car too. Looking at just the gas savings over the last several years, the economic benefits of riding become pretty easily apparent. The fact that riding gets me from A to B more efficiently, allows easier and more readily available parking options and is better on the environment is nice too. But the personal benefits from riding are where the real reward is. Anytime I ride somewhere, I arrive more alert, aware and ready to take on tasks at hand. If you choose to ride more I'm pretty sure that you would find similar results. Save money, feel energized and healthy and have way more fun!