

Support For Moped Operators

In the wake of the 1970s gas crisis, Willis Brown Jr., and his business partner found themselves at the forefront of an environmentally friendly industry, selling mopeds out of their garage with unprecedented demand. Their entrepreneurial spirit led them to establish the first moped rental location on Block Island, Rhode Island, in 1979, igniting a trend that would shape tourism on the island for decades to come.

The success of The Moped Man, as their venture came to be known, is a testament to the enduring appeal and utility of mopeds as a mode of transportation. Unlike cars, mopeds offer a unique and immersive experience, allowing tourists to traverse the island's picturesque landscapes with unparalleled freedom and flexibility. Whether exploring hidden gems or soaking in the island's natural beauty, the moped experience remains unmatched in its ability to provide an authentic Block Island adventure. In addition, mopeds are easy to drive without the shifting requirement and speed that motorcycles contain.

Beyond its role in shaping the tourism landscape, The Moped Man has also been a stalwart pillar of the local community, providing not only transportation but also jobs and housing. During its tenure, the Moped Man has worked with the city of Providence to bring disadvantaged youths over for the summer to work in its shop, providing hands on experience and mentorship to those who may not receive it elsewhere. The Moped Man is invested in the Town of New Shoreham, purchasing land and a home, contributing to utilities, taxes and not for profit entities. The Moped Man has participated in the annual July

4th parade, donated to the Block Island Historical Society, as well as to the Block Island Volunteer Fire and Rescue and its Annual Steak Fry. In fact, for years, the Moped Man has sponsored sports teams on the mainland, helping children while bringing recognition to our small Island. In an era marked by economic uncertainty, The Moped Man stands as a beacon of stability and opportunity for the community it serves.

However, the journey of The Moped Man has not been without its challenges. From acts of vandalism that left 150 mopeds beyond repair to fraudulent tax sales and discriminatory practices by local residents, including being handed a card, along with his teenage children, that read, "The BINA" which stood for " The Block Island N*# Association". The business has faced numerous obstacles in its quest to thrive. Perhaps most concerning is the persistent efforts by the Town Council to stifle the business's growth and viability, exemplified by the arbitrary reduction of moped rentals from 150 to 34.

Despite these adversities, The Moped Man remained resilient. After all, when Willis Brown Jr. , a Vietnam Veteran understands adversity, navigating through the turbulent waters of bureaucracy and opposition with unwavering determination. While all along supporting the charitable entities on the Island, and greeting everyone with a smile. The ongoing battle with the Town Council underscores the need for greater recognition of the value that mopeds bring to Block Island's economy and community. Rather than viewing

them as a nuisance or a threat, policymakers should embrace mopeds as a vital component of the island's identity and prosperity. This can be witnessed by the number of Town residents that enjoy the use of their personal mopeds on the island.

In conclusion, The Moped Man stands as a shining example of the positive impact that mopeds can have on both a local economy and a community, and how a business can increase employment and opportunities. From its humble beginnings in a garage to its status as a beloved institution on Block Island, the journey of The Moped Man is a testament to the enduring appeal and resilience of this iconic mode of transportation. As we celebrate its 45th year of operation, let us not only recognize the past achievements of The Moped Man and other moped operators but also advocate for a future where mopeds continue to thrive as a symbol of adventure, accessibility, and community spirit.