

Eau Claire Bike/Ped Times

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Local News

BPAC (Bike/Ped Advisory Committee) Update

The Eau Claire City Council will hold a meeting on September 26th at 7 pm in Council Chambers (203 S. Farwell St.) to take public comment on the Comprehensive Plan. If the Plan is approved as written, the City will begin the process of creating a committee to focus on improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Eau Claire. If you are willing to help in this process or are interested in being on the BPAC please contact Brad Henderson at bhndrsn@charter.net or by replying to this message.

CORBA Takes Off in Eau Claire County

"All of the trails are being built according to the design standards developed by IMBA (International Mountain Bike Association). These trails are built to last!"

-Laura Plummer

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the community to the mountain biking opportunities that are now available at Lowes Creek County Park, on S. Lowes Creek Road in Eau Claire. Numerous volunteers worked hard this past spring to build approximately 7 miles of "single track" mountain bike trails on the county owned land. The trails were developed so that a statewide WORS (WI Off Road Series) race could take place on July 3rd. This inaugural event was a huge success with over 800 riders participating.

Single-track trails are narrower bike trails that wind in and around the wider "double track" ski trails. Mountain bikers prefer these types of trails for the added challenge that they provide. The bike trails built at Lowes Creek Park are also available for walking, trail running, and snowshoeing.

The hard working volunteers that designed and built the trails are members of CORBA, Chippewa Off Road Bike Association. CORBA was formed in Spring, 2005 to provide EC County with an organized group who would take responsibility for building and maintaining the trail system. CORBA put over 350 volunteer "hours"

into the trail development. The work involved designing the course, obtaining approval for trails from EC County, and many hours of raking and digging! CORBA also worked with local businesses on the donation of the materials needed for bridges and creek crossings (Eau Claire Bike and Sport; Red Flint Group; TEC Design). Future plans call for trail signage and mapping to be displayed at the park.

Users are reminded that while there are no trail fees, cars must purchase a daily or annual trail pass to park in the lot. Riders at Lowes Creek Park are reminded to always ride within their abilities, yield to pedestrians, wear helmets, and have fun!

For more information on CORBA and the trails please contact Laura Plummer at chippewaoffroad@hotmail.com or visit www.worba.org/corba. Trail maps with names are now available on the website.

Accessing the CORBA Trails via Lorch Ave.

CORBA has also been in contact with the Department of Transportation regarding the installation of crossing "buttons" at the intersection of Hwy 93 and Lorch Avenue for riders who wish to access the trails from the East side of the park. Laura Plummer said she spoke with Greg Helgeson from the Department of Transportation and they are exploring options for a pedestrian/bike push button at the intersection of Hwy 93 and Lorch Ave. As it stands right now, a rider or pedestrian who wants to cross the intersection from the bike trail to Lorch Ave. has to wait for a vehicle to trigger the light or "run the red" which could be hazardous. They will plan to have one of two options available before the end of fall.

State News

Federal Program Intended to Reduce Auto Dependency

According to a recent Milwaukee Journal article, Sheboygan County is one of four regions nationally that will receive \$25 million over the next four years to develop a program intended to reduce its dependency on motor vehicles. In addition, \$15.7 million of Wisconsin's separate \$40 million in trail funds has been earmarked for projects in several communities across the state, including Milwaukee.

Marjorie Ward, executive director of the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, described how other communities may benefit from the funding. Eau Claire County is eligible to apply for the estimated \$18 million a year in federal pedestrian and bike-trail money and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds, and \$2 million in first-time Safe

Routes to School funds. "We were just happy that Wisconsin was selected at all," Ward said of the pilot project. "And hopefully, if the pilot is successful, it will lead to more funding all over."

Sheboygan was selected for the pilot project along with Minneapolis/St. Paul; Columbia, Mo.; and Marin County, Calif. The project was the brainchild of U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar of Minnesota, an avid cyclist and the ranking Democrat on the Transportation Committee.

The following projects were earmarked for funding from the estimated \$40 million that the state will receive in bike and pedestrian trail funds, according to Ward and the state Department of Transportation:

- About \$11 million for several projects in the district of U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-Madison), including Madison Central Park, the Waunakee Bike Path and the Glacial Drumlin Trail.
- Nearly \$3 million in the district of Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Milwaukee), including \$2.08 million for neighborhood connections with the Hank Aaron State Trail; \$640,000 for the marsupial bridge beneath Milwaukee's Holton Ave. viaduct; and \$240,000 to build a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over state Highway 100 in West Allis.
- About \$1 million in the district of Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (R-Menomonee Falls) to reconstruct Highway 33, including a planned pedestrian lane, from Port Washington to Saukville. Sensenbrenner was one of only eight House members and four Senate members to vote against the bill. U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) had pushed for the Highway 33 reconstruction project.

Ward, said responsibility for seeking funding lies with constituents. "Congressmen ask for what their constituents ask for," said Ward, "If people want bike and pedestrian facilities, they need to ask for them."

National News

Experts: Cycling Helps Oregonians Check Obesity

According to an Aug. 24th CNN article, "To shed the pounds that crept around her waistline, Linda Ginenthal began riding her bike to work -- an easy 3 1/2-mile trip. It's not a marathon, nor is it a grueling hike. Yet diet experts say it's the kind of daily activity that could hold the secret to why Oregon is the only state in the nation where the obesity rate did not increase in the past year.

According to a study released Tuesday by the Washington, D.C.-based Trust for America's Health, the percentage of overweight Oregonians held steady at 21

percent last year, a sharp contrast to Alabama, where the rate of obesity increased 1.5 percentage points to 27.7 percent. "What makes Oregon different is its emphasis on urban design, which encourages outdoor activities like biking to work, the study's authors said. Ten percent of Portland residents pedal to the office on a system of bike paths that crisscross the city like arteries, just as they do in Boulder, Colorado -- another bike-friendly metropolis, located in the leanest state in the nation. Only 16.4 percent of Coloradans are obese, according to the study. 'The solution to obesity is not that everyone should run a marathon,' said Michael Earls, co-author of the study. 'It's the little things that begin to make a dent in the problem, like taking the stairs instead of the elevator or riding your bike to work.'..."

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/7tqnv>

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Cost: No

Title: "Experts: Bikes help Oregon check obesity"

Author: AP

Completely Different

Guest Bikes 4,250 Miles to Wedding

NORTH OLMSTED, OH-June 27, 2005 — Paul Kramer took the slow lane to get to his niece's wedding.

Kramer, who lives in Southern California, hopped onto his bicycle on April 12 and pulled into his brother's driveway here on Tuesday – 71 days and 4,250 miles later.

"This is the end of the trail," said Kramer, 61, removing a rearview mirror attached to his glasses. "I'm a little sweaty."

Kramer traveled with about 60 pounds of equipment – a stove, gas bottle, tent, spare inner tubes and bicycle repair tools.

He rode 60 to 65 miles a day and allowed so much time that he arrived ahead of schedule. So he went on to Pittsburgh to visit relatives, then doubled back for Saturday's wedding.

"I took the long way around," he said. "The weather was so nice."

Kramer didn't carry a cell phone because there would be no way to charge it. He sometimes stopped at public libraries to send an e-mail message home.

Kramer plans to pedal home in a few weeks. He says the scenery is worth the effort.

"You are part of the environment," he said. "You are with the birds and animals."

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