

SPOKES-PEOPLE



Issue 2 • Fall 2012

Whether on the road, mountain or trail, fall is one of the best times of the year for avid cyclists to enjoy their ride. Organized rides are popping up as the Pennsylvania fall foliage starts to paint the countryside. Though the colorful trees and the cool temperatures make this season special, extending your time in the woods, on the trail, or on the road this time of year presents some dangers which every biker needs to be aware of.

Because of the cooler weather, attention to hydration is relaxed and riders can find themselves suffering from cramps and other symptoms of dehydration. You must hydrate even though you may not be thirsty.

Consideration needs to be given to shorter daylight hours and plans for light colored clothing and other reflective gear need to be made before departing on a fall evening ride. Equip your bike with reflectors and lights in case you misjudge your countdown to sunset.

Avoid line paint and leaves as they can present a slippery condition following rain or heavy morning dew. Watch for wash outs from intersecting driveways and small roads as they become more prevalent after heavy fall rains.

Remember to always ride safely and be visible.

Fall Riding



PennDOT Secretary Barry Schoch rides the Lebanon Valley Rail Trail. Photo courtesy of Jeremy Long - Lebanon Daily News.

In This Issue:

Mapping for the future.....	2
Safe Routes to School.....	3
Ride Right	4

Explore PA	5
MUniing	6
Legacy of Dedication.....	7
Trail Spotlight.....	8

Mapping for the Future

Jeffrey J. Kupko, P.E., PTOE

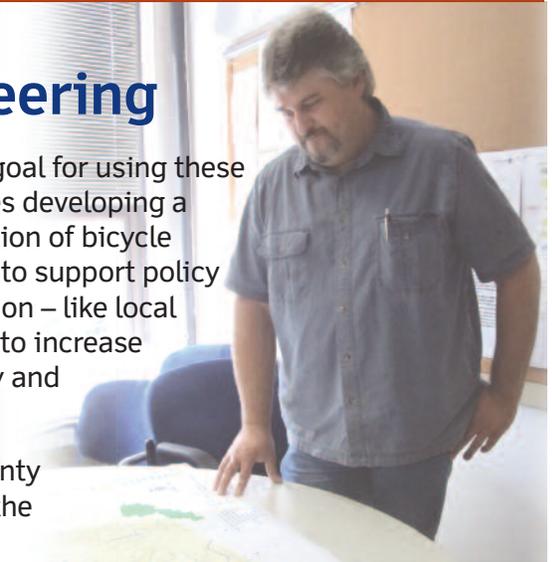
Highway Safety and Traffic Engineering

Harrisburg metropolitan-area planning partners working with PennDOT are in the process of meeting with bicycle enthusiasts at the county level to prepare county-wide bicycle transportation maps. The purpose of these bicycle maps is to identify roads which are heavily utilized by cyclists and determine their road classifications (collector, regional, or scenic).

Once collected, this information will be referenced by PennDOT, Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations, municipalities, planners and transit and commuter services when road reconstruction, rehabilitation, or resurfacing is under consideration or scheduled. Proponents of future land development, such as subdivisions and commercial developments, will need to consider how their proposals will impact bicyclists' use of the affected roads. It is critical that existing roads that are presently good for travel by bike not be made less safe and that roads important for cyclists but are not presently safe be prioritized for improvements.

An eventual goal for using these maps includes developing a long-term vision of bicycle facilities and to support policy implementation – like local ordinances – to increase bicycle safety and mobility.

Lebanon County was used as the pilot and is complete and available for viewing on the internet at <http://www.lebcounty.org/Planning/Documents/MPO%20documents/LVBCBicycleMap1.pdf>. Cumberland County is complete and approved, Dauphin is expected to be finished in October 2012, and Perry County should be complete by November 2012. For more information please contact Daryl St. Clair at: dstclair@pa.gov



Scott Wolfe, PennDOT
Lebanon County Manager

In recent years, PennDOT has turned its eye to design concepts that improve mobility and safety for all transportation modes. In June, the road from Palmyra to Campbeltown became the focus of such a project. Previously, this stretch of road had little or no shoulder and much of that was crumbling. Bicyclists and pedestrians travel this road daily visiting banks, grocery stores, libraries, restaurants and more.

The photos below show the same road segment before and after repaving with increased road width and narrowed travel lanes. Some other benefits realized in this process are police, EMS staff and postal workers have room to operate more safely.



Before

State Route 3019 in Lebanon County, also known as Palmyra Road

Photos courtesy of Pat Krebs -
Lebanon Valley Bicycle Coalition



After

Safe Routes to School Program Promotes Safe Bicycling for Students

By Chris Metka, PennDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator

PennDOT continually works with schools and communities to emphasize the benefits of non-motorized, active commuting. Allowing students to walk or bike to school provides exercise, which is an important way to help maintain healthy lifestyles. And, by getting students out of vehicles, both traffic congestion and air pollution are reduced.

- Attending training to teach proper bicycle safety and riding technique to children. Municipal police, school representatives and youth leaders who attend the training can then go home and set up similar training geared to young people in their community. Free training is scheduled at six sites around the state in September and October.
- Participating in a walkability audit with a local school. In this two-day assessment, a traffic expert helps to evaluate student walking routes to identify barriers to walking and bicycling and then recommends solutions. Townships can use audits as a foundation for creating safe pedestrian and bicycle routes around schools, or when applying for infrastructure funding or grants.
- Encouraging schools to apply for a noninfrastructure grant to fund activities that promote, encourage and enhance their walking and biking efforts. Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Safe Routes to School Resource Center awarded \$66,000 to 11 schools to fund a variety of activities focused on walking, biking and safe routes, including assemblies, bike rallies and rodeos, teacher and crossing-guard training, safety equipment and promotional materials.

Aside from making commuting healthier and more efficient, walking and bicycling has another important benefit: cost. Most families do not realize the added cost of driving students to and from school, but with gas prices hovering around \$4 a gallon, idling and sitting in stop-and-go traffic around schools can put a huge dent in household budgets. Schools also have a lot to gain by reducing bussing and allowing students to actively commute when safe walking and bicycling corridors exist. During the 2009-10 school year, Pennsylvania schools paid an average of \$447 per student to bus them to and from school.

According to PennDOT's crash data, over the last 10 years, an average of 1,450 injuries occurred to cyclists in motor vehicle accidents each year – an average of four per day. The data also reveals that more than 50 percent of these injuries are incurred by student-aged cyclists (ages 5-18).

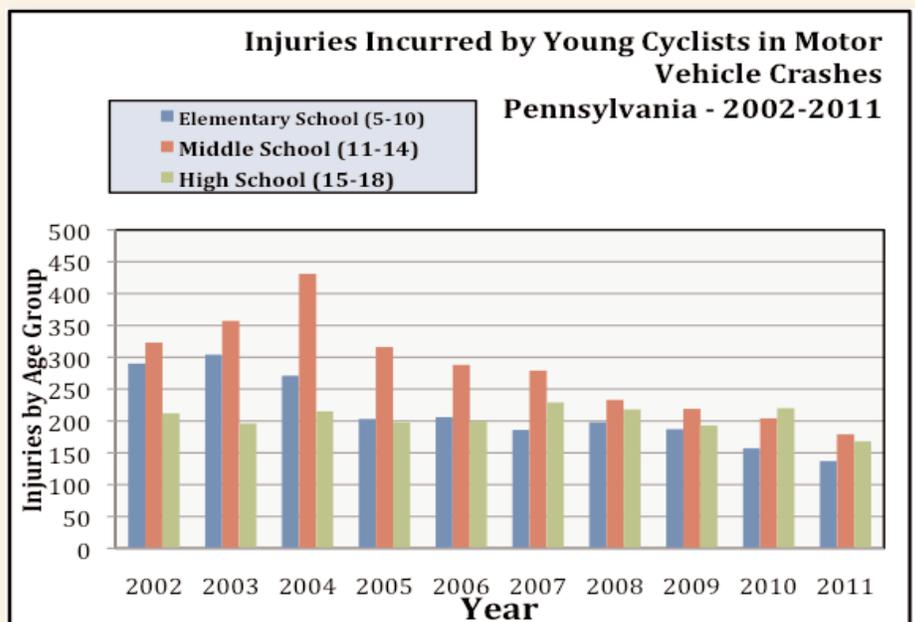
Since these young cyclists are disproportionately represented in the data, embracing bicycle safety education and enforcing safety laws benefits communities, motorists and cyclists alike.

Some ideas for how you can get involved include:

- Participating in Walk or Roll to School Day on Oct. 3 this year. This internationally recognized day celebrates the benefits of walking by encouraging children to walk and bicycle to school, and drawing attention to the need for safe routes to school.

The deadline to apply for the next round of grants is Nov. 15. As an application prerequisite, schools must conduct a student tally and parent survey this fall to gauge current walking and biking habits and attitudes.

To learn more about these opportunities and about Pennsylvania's Safe Routes to School program, visit www.saferoutespa.org.



Ride Right: PennDOT's Bicycle Efforts Aim to Improve Safety for Two Wheels and Four

Across PennDOT's Engineering District 2 covering McKean, Potter, Elk, Cameron, Clinton, Clearfield, Centre, Mifflin and Juniata counties, young users of the state's highway system have been receiving a primer on how to be safe on the road. These students new to the world of signs, signals and safety information aren't who you think they might be.

They're not 16 year olds set to take their Pennsylvania Driver's License permit test. Instead, they're elementary students ready to learn about how to be safe on their bicycles.

Dawn Roussey, the district's safety press officer, has instructed more than 1,000 youth bicyclists in the past year.

"Riding a bicycle is often the first time we get a feel for the 'open road,'" said Roussey. "It's a great opportunity for us to step in, help them to understand how to cycle safely and foster a culture of safety in transportation."

The curriculum for "Ride Right" was developed through work with many safety partners including the Central PA Highway Safety Network, the Traffic Injury Prevention Project, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Participants in "Ride Right" learn about all aspects of bicycle safety. Proper helmet fitting is demonstrated, and students take part in an experiment to learn why wearing a helmet is important for their safety.

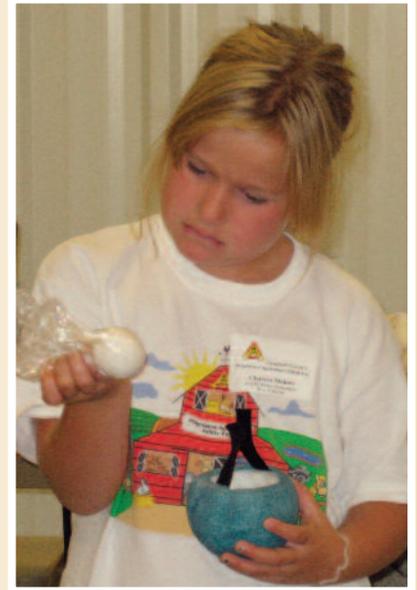
When Roussey receives an invitation to present to students, she brings "Eggie," an egg used to

demonstrate bicycle safety and the necessity of helmets. The students are shown how Eggie straps into his specially designed helmet and tumbles to the floor. They learn that because Eggie knew the importance of helmets and how to wear them properly, he escapes relatively unharmed and students can examine the egg after it makes the drop.

The students also see what happens when Eggie is dropped without a helmet on.

Students also receive a demonstration of how to properly "fit" a bicycle to its rider and how to check a bicycle for problems before the ride. Students are also introduced to the basics of becoming a vehicular cyclist, which is being a bicyclist who rides on the road. Vehicular cyclists follow the same set of rules that drivers of motorized vehicles must follow. Hand signals are introduced, as well as some of Pennsylvania's road signs.

For more information on bicycle safety programs in your area, contact your district's Safety Press Officer.



A student examines Eggie after the helmet demonstration. (Photo submitted by Dawn Roussey)

A-B-C Quick Check

• A: Air

- o Squeeze tire to feel if the air is low
- o Inflate tires to the pressure listed on the sidewall
- o Check for tire damage

• B: Brakes

- o For coaster breaks, flip bike upside down and crank pedal; apply brakes and check to see that the wheels stop spinning
- o For hand brakes, squeeze and watch to see that the caliper hits the tire

• C: Chain

- o Examine the chain; you should not see any rust
- o With a geared bike, it should shift through the gears smoothly

• Quick

- o If your bicycle's tires have quick releases, be sure they are in the locked position
- o Check the quick release on the seat post of a child's bicycle to see it is locked; also check to see that the post isn't pulled past its "Minimum Insertion Point" stamped on the post

• Check

- o Stand so that the front wheel of the bicycle is between your feet and grasp the handlebars. Turn the handlebars and note any movement. If the handlebars turn without the wheel pushing on your feet, your handlebars need to be tightened
- o Inspect bicycle for broken or loose parts
- o Take a slow, short ride to see if everything appears to be in working order

ExplorePAtrails.com is Your One-Stop for Trails

By Kent Taylor, GIS Specialist, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



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If you're looking for something new to do with friends or family, www.ExplorePAtrails.com is the place to get up-to-date information about how to try and find trails, and what to expect when you get there.

Created by the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the one-stop trails website is a community resource for searching, mapping and sharing information about trails of all kinds anywhere in Pennsylvania.

DCNR, in partnership with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Keystone Trails Association, and more than a thousand trail stewards and volunteers, have helped power www.ExplorePAtrails.com by uploading photos, descriptions, reviews, maps and events for sharing with others about the state's rich network of trails.

Launched three years ago with 5,500 miles and 191 trails, the website today contains 10,570 miles and 450 trails. The increase is due mostly to the participation of 1,300 "reporters" who have voluntarily registered with the site and added content such as new trails, trail updates, reviews, photos and calendar events.

The website also displays more than 1,100 trail photos with captions, reviews and descriptions. Users can query lists of trails by county, or they can launch a statewide map and zoom in for a closer view. Site visitors can request trails of specified lengths or distances from home. For each trail, a printable map that shows parking areas and other details, like driving directions, is available. Users can choose from road maps, satellite views, or topographic images that display the trails' terrain.

Whatever the platform or device used, www.ExplorePAtrails.com is your resource to find and share trail information.

To find out more about how to participate or to locate trails in your area, visit and register online at www.ExplorePAtrails.com or contact c-ketaylor@pa.gov.

MUniing with a PennDOT Senior Civil Engineer

Some bicyclists find exhilaration pedaling over the back roads near their home while others love tearing up a rocky single track at the local park. Matt Kasunick with PennDOT's Bureau of Project Delivery likes hitting the trails as well, but when this Senior Civil Engineer carves his way down a single-track he's on one wheel.

Since Kasunick's wife purchased his first mountain unicycle two years ago he's been hooked, though he admits "I'm not hardcore like some of the people you see on YouTube." An example of one of these mountain unicyclists is 2002 World Unicycle Trials champion Kris Holm, who has accomplished such feats as unicycling on the third tallest mountain summit in the world as well as China's Great Wall.

"I've always been drawn to recreational activities that require balance and technical proficiency. I also like the outdoors. So, after wife bought me my first unicycle for Christmas several years ago and after watching some YouTube videos, I knew that this would be perfect for me," Kasunick said.

Amateur mountain unicycling, or "MUniing," takes skill and is physically challenging as it combines the finesse and precision required to stay on one wheel with the sheer power and endurance required to ride over rough terrain such as grass, dirt, ice and rocks. It teaches balance, concentration and quick decision making to perhaps an even greater extent than mountain biking.



Matt Kasunick rides a trail on his unicycle.

Aside from the obvious a mountain unicycle differs from an ordinary mountain bike in several ways. For one, unicycles only have one speed and there is no coasting which means that the rider is pedaling both uphill and down and, as a result, can only travel as fast as they pedal. There is a hand brake handle on the front of the seat to help slow the rider but stopping is done by slowing the pedals. To MUnicyclists, balance is essential. The direction in which the MUni travels is often dependent upon the direction in which the cyclist is leaning. It is also necessary for the rider to learn to "read the trail" ahead of him and recognize the characteristics of upcoming obstacles or rough spots so that he may slow his pedaling, lean or otherwise adjust accordingly.

Safety equipment includes wrist protection, knee and shin pads and a helmet. Best of all there is no need for a bike rack. Just through your unicycle in your trunk and you can go MUniing any time you feel the urge.

Kasunick had hopes to someday ride in the Moab MUnifest, which was held in southern Utah and became a popular mountain unicycling festival which attracted more than 300 attendees annually to ride and celebrate the MUni. Unfortunately the Moab MUniFest was discontinued a few years ago, but he anticipates a trip to Utah next year where he'll get to step it up a notch on trails in the Rocky Mountains.

Longtime PennDOT Employee, Safety Advocate Leaves Legacy of Dedication, Determination



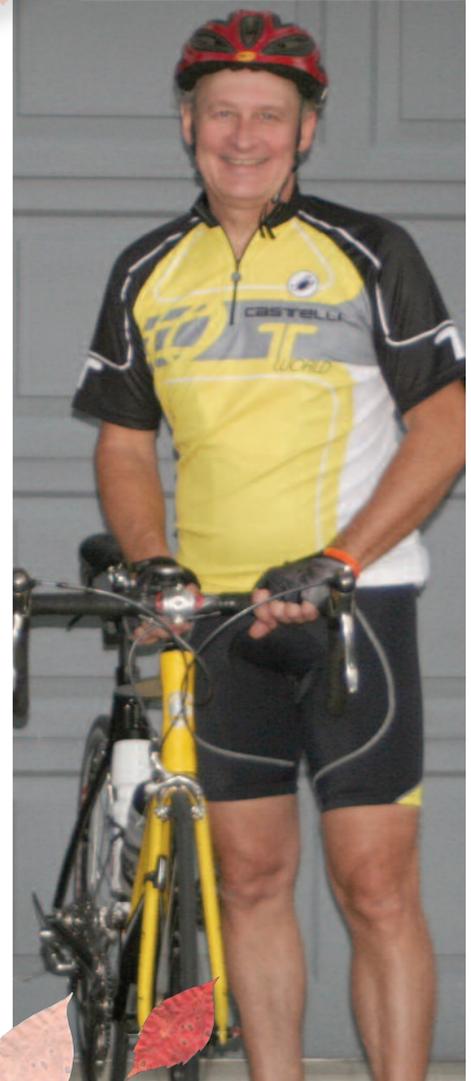
It is with a heavy heart that many in PennDOT said goodbye to a respected colleague and inspiration. Dave Bachman, a Transportation Planning Specialist Supervisor in Central Office, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, July 7. Bachman had spent many years as a statewide bicycle coordinator and was the go-to expert on cycling and pedestrian safety even when he became Local Safety Programs Manager.

Dave's love of bicycling and dedication to enhancing Pennsylvania's bicycling and pedestrian programs even extended into his personal life. Bachman was very involved in the community and was a member of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals and the Transportation Research Board. Weather permitting Dave commuted 34 miles round-trip to and from work on his bike. Dave also set a personal goal to bicycle 100,000 miles – he reached 80,000 miles the week before he passed. In an effort to make his dream a reality, co-workers created a Facebook page, "The Last 20K– In Memory of Dave Bachman," and have encouraged friends and loved ones to log their cycling miles to collectively reach Bachman's goal. If you are interested in participating during non-work hours, you can join in to log your cycling mileage by visiting the form on your home computer at

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHY1VoJQS2pSTHZXYmVDdj3bVNlb1E6MQ>.

You can also follow along with the initiative's progress through the tracking spreadsheet, which is automatically fed by form submissions at

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AoPPFUq0IcpOdHY1VoJQS2pSTHZXYmVDdj3bVNlb1E>.



Trail Spotlight

Conewago Recreation Trail

By Kent Taylor

Constructed in the late 1970s, the Conewago Recreation Trail is one of south-central Pennsylvania's oldest rail trails. Thanks to improvements made over the past several years, it is now a state-of-the-art multi-use trail with a smooth, crushed stone surface. Starting at a trailhead northwest of Elizabethtown in northwestern Lancaster County, the trail continues east through serene, picturesque valleys, past bucolic farmlands, shady woodlands and rural hamlets to the Lebanon County border, where it continues northeast as the Lebanon Valley Rail Trail. Together with that latter trail, the Conewago Recreation Trail forms a scenic greenway that is perfect for a summer outing.



Entrance to the Conewago Recreation Trail at Route 230, Elizabethtown
(Photo courtesy of DCNR)

Running along the quiet, meandering Conewago Creek and through rich Lancaster County farmland, most of this trail is shaded by trees that edge fields and meadows. The trail occupies the corridor of the Cornwall-Lebanon Railroad, a private railroad that operated for nearly 100 years. From the trailhead on Pennsylvania Route 230, the path goes northeast.

There are six, well-marked road crossings; the Mill Street crossing is a bit tricky, featuring ramps and a curve. At the Lebanon County line, the Conewago Recreation Trail joins the Lebanon Valley Rail Trail which continues for another 14 miles to Lebanon. Signs and a slight change of surface mark the transition from one trail to the other.



Geocaching on the Conewago Recreation Trail offers a family-friendly fun activity. Check out www.geocaching.com and get started seeking/hiding caches along the trail. (Photo courtesy of DCNR)

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Your feedback and suggestions are welcome at RA-penndotpress@pa.gov.