

Tips for Winter Cycling

by I. W. Housinger

Eugene is a wonderful mecca for bicyclists all year. Miles of bike routes throughout the city make bicycle commuting easy, enjoyable, and often quicker than driving or taking the bus. Large numbers of active bicyclists mean bicycles are not a novelty when encountered by motorists on city streets and surrounding county roads. As a result bicycles are probably better accepted in the general traffic mix around Eugene/Springfield than anywhere else in the United States. However, as bicyclists, there are a few steps we can take to enhance our acceptance as legitimate users of the city, county and state roads.

Safety

Awareness of our rights and responsibilities as outlined in the Oregon State Motor Vehicle Code is important. Bicyclists have all the rights and responsibilities of motor vehicle operators under this code. This means we have the right to use the roads with the attendant responsibility to respect the other legitimate road users. Safe, efficient use of roads can be achieved by following a few common sense rules:

1. **Be visible.** Wear light-colored clothing. Equip bicycles with legal lights and supplemental reflectors for riding after dark. Lights are a legal requirement after dark and immeasurably enhance visibility while riding at dawn, dusk, or in rain or fog. Other visibility aids are reflective leg bands, fluorescent flags, and "fanny bumpers" (slow moving vehicle triangles).
2. **Ride defensively.** As a vehicle, a bicycle and rider are probably the lightest and most vulnerable road user. The obvious

risk potential in sharing the road with motor vehicles makes a very strong case for developing defensive riding habits. Choose lane position in accordance with traffic and road conditions. When the roadway is too narrow for cyclists and motorists to travel side by side, establish a mid-lane position so that motorists must actively pass by entering the oncoming traffic lane. Learn and practice emergency maneuvers to help avoid collisions.

3. **Ride consistently.** Maintain consistent lane position without weaving in and out of parked cars and traffic. Allow space to maneuver around unexpected obstacles like opening doors and broken glass. Signal turns and obey traffic controls like stop signs and signal lights just like when driving a car.

4. **Be prepared.** Wear a helmet. Carry rain gear. Carry a flat tire repair kit. Keep the bicycle in good working order. Lights and fenders are especially appropriate during these wet months with short daylight hours.

Leg lights are good supplemental lighting but should not be considered adequate primary lighting. Reflectors are also good supplements to generator or battery lights that meet the state visibility minimums of a white front light visible from 500 feet ahead of the bicycle and a red rear light visible from 600 feet behind the bicycle. Remember, these are minimum criteria, not maximum criteria.

Hypothermia is a real threat that should be considered whenever riding in cool, wet weather. Learn to recognize the early stages and take appropriate action to raise body core temperature before becoming seriously affected.

Destinations

The number and variety of rides that can be enjoyed in and around the Eugene/Springfield area are only limited by the rider's imagination. Historic rides, fall color rides, hill rides, flat rides, training rides, brunch rides, social rides, jams, cruises, by whatever name, they are all right here to enjoy. Maps to help plan new rides and variations of old favorites are available from several sources:

- Many area bicycle shops handle the Lane County Bicycling Map and the Eugene City Bicycle Map.

- The Bureau of Land Management at 1255 Pearl Street has a number of free maps of interest to bicyclists.

- The U.S. Forest Service in the Federal Building, 211 E. 7th, sells maps of national forests which have some great cycling roads.

- The Oregon State Dept. of Transportation in Salem has several publications of interest to cyclists.

Some destinations to consider for day rides might be any of the small towns around the upper Willamette Valley like Franklin, Lorane, London, Marcola, Fall Creek, Dexter, or Walden. All of these offer at least one grocery store to purchase fuel for the ride home and in which to find warmth and temporary shelter should the weather turn really nasty.

Other destinations are covered bridges, or places listed on maps as towns, which are really only the intersection of two roads like Hurp Hollow, Alma, and Gillespie Corner. Covered bridges are located on Row River, Mosby Creek, Coyote Creek, and Wendling Creek to name just a few.

A number of parks and wildlife refuges are also within riding distance like Armistage Park, Alsea Falls, Findley Wildlife Refuge, Ankenny Wildlife Refuge, Wildwood Falls and Siuslaw Falls.

All of these areas are day rides within the capabilities of most cyclists. Longer rides involving more planning can take intrepid bicyclists from Eugene to all parts of the

world. Imagination and commitment are the only limiting factors.

Cycling Clubs

To help keep cycling enthusiasm high, groups of cyclists band together in clubs. These clubs offer a good format to share experiences and knowledge as well as promote the sport and camaraderie of cycling. In the Eugene/Springfield area, there are a number of active cycling clubs. Contact them if you are interested in bicycle racing, sharing cycling experiences, or are looking for companions to share day rides, training rides, or trips.

Christian Velo Club
Brad Koekkoek
726-6347

Eugene Cycling Club
Rob Craft
343-7197

McKenzie Riders Bicycle Club
Susan Baxter
345-7159

Spokefolk
Dick Moffitt
746-5130

U of O Cycling Club
Don Dysart
343-2955

or check the Club Sports Office in the EMU

Some national organizations cyclists may find of interest are:

American Youth Hostels
Oregon Council Office
650 W. 12th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97402

Bicycle USA
Suite 209-BU
6707 Whitestone Road
Baltimore, MD 21207

Bikecentennial
P.O. Box 8308
Missoula, MT 59807

United States Cycling Federation
1750 E. Boulder
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

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ARABLE Loan Program

After many months of planning, a dream has come true. Based on a working model in Massachusetts, the ARABLE goal of an urban-rural partnership in which local funds can be invested in the local agriculture economy is now under way.

The idea, says Tom Forster, ARABLE Board member, is that a "non-profit association of people [agree] to pool their capital resources in an existing institution for specific uses." Briefly, the goals of ARABLE are: to encourage the flow of capital into the

local production, distribution and consumption of food and fiber; increase employment; improve the economic position of those involved in agriculture; enhance and sustain local agriculture; promote the mutual inter-dependence of producers and consumers of food; provide the highest quality farm products.

In short, if you have investment capital, you can deposit it into the ARABLE fund, receive competitive interest rates and know that your money is being spent in a socially responsible way to improve the local economy. Or, if you're dedicated to high quality food and your business needs financial help, you can look to ARABLE for it.

The Association for Regional Agriculture Building a Better Economy (ARABLE) invites the public to a grand opening reception and press conference on Thursday, Nov. 15 at 7 pm in the Extension Service Hall, 950 W 13th. The program will be described, charter deposits will be presented, and a slide show entitled *Urban-Rural Partnership in the Willamette Valley* will be shown (8:15). Music by The Biz, a recently formed acoustic folk trio will start at 8:30. Refreshments will be served by local farms and wineries. Any questions? Call Tom Forster at 345-1218, 686-3684.



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