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Jeremy Forrest Emerald

As mild weather approaches, more people can be seen using bicycles as a healthy and cheap alternative to driving around the Eugene area.

## 'Tis the season for economical transportation

Eugene bike shops provide inexpensive options for people eager to explore the city sights on two wheels

**Aaron Shakra**  
Pulse Reporter

Eugene is a bike town, and with spring in full gear, there is no better time to ditch the car and propel yourself with your own body.

"I think we take it for granted how easy it is to get across town," said Blue Heron Bicycles owner Susan Kelley. For those unfamiliar with cycling, this might be a good place to start — especially for students, because it's located right on campus.

Kelley said bike shops are unique because they are full of people who have been cycling for a long time.

"Bike shops are the one place where things aren't a commodity," Kelley said. "People rely on the knowledge base that's inside the shop."

Kelley said some advantages of bicycling include lower costs and less stress than driving.

"Once you get used to it, you hate the fact that you have to get in your car," she said.

Kelley said her shop encourages people to commute using bicycles through their enthusiasm and reasonably priced equipment. Blue Heron also loans and rents bicycles. In spite of rain and less appealing temperatures, Kelley said her shop has equipment for people to ride bicycles comfortably, regardless of weather conditions.

Lane Community College student Zeke Kufner has been employed at the Bike Barn — a longtime Eugene business located at 465 Coburg Rd. — for six years.

Kufner recommended the "cruiser" style of bicycle for college students, citing the simplicity and low cost — typically under \$200. Cruis-

ers are made by a variety of manufacturers, such as Schwinn.

"They're kind of Eugenic because they're retro," Kufner said. "Your chin's up, and you're looking around. It's kind of a Sunday drive. The exercise is a side-benefit you don't really realize."

He added that owning a cruiser is beneficial for college students because this bicycle is less likely to be stolen.

Bike mechanic Joe Peck, who works at one of three Paul's Bicycle Way of Life stores, located at 2480 Alder St., made similar remarks about preventing bike theft.

"If you're going to lock up on campus, the less expensive bikes you can find, the better," Peck said. "Bikes are ravaged. Bike theft in Eugene is rabid. You have to buy a nice lock. If you don't, there's a good chance you will lose your bike."

He added that Eugene is one of the best bike riding cities he's been in.

"Just about everywhere I've been, there's good bike paths and bike lanes, and drivers are somewhat aware of the bicyclists," he said.

People interested in learning the intricacies of bike repair can look to the EMU Craft Center, which will offer two different bicycle maintenance classes during spring term. "Whole Bike Health" is a weekly class including 15 total hours of instruction for around \$50. The other is "Bike Doctor," a more economical but smaller-scale class that provides troubleshooting and repair instruction. Two separate, three-hour sections will be taught on April 1 and 2 and cost \$5.

Finally, those looking to explore Eugene's intricate and varied bike routes can find a detailed map at [www.ci.eugene.or.us/pw/bike/bike-site/Eugenemaplink.htm](http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/pw/bike/bike-site/Eugenemaplink.htm).

Contact the Pulse reporter at [aaronshakra@dailymerald.com](mailto:aaronshakra@dailymerald.com).

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