

Lights ‘n Sirens: Bicycle Safety

By Flo Lennox

There are so many great reasons to ride your bike: it offers fun, freedom, and exercise, and it's good for the environment. We want kids and families to ride their bikes as much as possible. Here are a few tips so you'll be safe while you do.

The Hard Facts: Properly fitted helmets can reduce the risk of head injuries by at least 45%, yet less than half of children 14 and under usually wear a bike helmet. Make sure your child has the right size helmet and wears it every time when riding, skating, or scooting. Your children's helmet should meet the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) standards. When it's time to buy a new helmet, let your children pick out their own; they'll be more likely to wear them for every ride.

Top Tip: Wear a properly fitted helmet. It is the best way to prevent head injuries and death. A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward, backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled, but not too tightly.

Helmet Fit Test:

- **EYES CHECK:** Position the helmet on your head. Look up and you should see the bottom rim of the helmet. The rim should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows.
- **EARS CHECK:** Make sure the straps of the helmet form a "V" under your ears when buckled. The strap should be snug but comfortable.
- **MOUTH CHECK:** Open your mouth as wide as you can. Do you feel the helmet hug your head? If not, tighten those straps and make sure the buckle is flat against your skin.

Proper Equipment and Maintenance Are Important: Ensure proper bike fit by bringing the child along when shopping for a bike. Select one that is the right size for the child, not one he or she will grow into in a year or two. When children are sitting on a properly

adjusted seat of the bicycle, their feet should be able to touch the ground. Before the ride, make sure the reflectors are secure, brakes work properly, gears shift smoothly, and tires are tightly secured and properly inflated.

Keep an Eye Out: Actively supervise children until you're comfortable that they are responsible to ride on their own. Every child is different, but developmentally, it can be hard for kids to judge speed and distance of cars until age 10, so limit riding to parks, bike paths, or sidewalks where allowed (the City of Vernonia prohibits riding on sidewalks in certain areas), until age 10. No matter where you ride, teach your child to stay alert and watch for cars and trucks. Children should be able to demonstrate riding competence and knowledge of the rules of the road before cycling with traffic.

Use Hand Signals: Know how to signal your intention to others on the road and follow the rules of the road. Be predictable by making sure you ride in a straight line and don't swerve between cars.

Be Bright, Use Lights: Wear bright colors and use lights when riding at night and in the morning. It's also smart to wear clothes and accessories that have reflective materials to improve biker visibility to motorists. Oregon law requires that bicycles must be equipped with a front white light visible from 500 feet and a rear red light or reflector visible from 600 feet when riding between dusk and dawn or in poor visibility. Headlights aren't so much for bicyclists to see where they are going but for others to see them. Riding without a headlight means drivers won't see you, and surprising motorists is never a good idea.

Meet Your Volunteers

Every month we are going to introduce you to one of our Vernonia Volunteer Ambulance Association members:

Hello, I am Kristina McCord. I was born in St. Vincent's hospital in Portland. Growing up in Aloha,

my parents and family moved to Vernonia when I was in 5th grade. As a 34 year resident of Columbia County, I am proud to call Vernonia home. I met Dan McCord at Rose Festival in 1993 and we were married on September 10th 1994. We have four children (Matt, Nikita, Makayla, and Jordan), our daughter-in-law Julie, and our one granddaughter Madison.

I have dedicated 13 years to the Vernonia Volunteer Ambulance Association. I also volunteer with Vernonia Rural Fire District, 4-H, OHSET, Columbia County Rodeo Committee, River City Speedway, Providence Hospital, and the Vernonia Police Department. I worked for Metro West Ambulance as a full-time EMT. In 2007 I received a unit citation award from the Oregon State EMS office for my work during the flood. As an EMT, I responded as part of the 2008 hurricane relief efforts in Galveston, Texas.

I now work at Providence St. Vincent as a medical assistant helping patients in the diabetes and endocrinology clinic. I am looking forward to judging the 2020 Columbia County Rodeo Court pageant.

Medical Kits update:

We are still hoping to purchase a new bag for each volunteer, allowing each member to respond from home with a standardized kit. Decreasing our response times and ensuring high-quality medical care to our neighbors is vital during medical emergencies. Having these bags will also allow us to better respond to a natural disaster by ensuring everyone who can respond will have the supplies to do so. Each bag costs \$150 and we hope to equip 20 of our team members.

We would also like to thank the 4th of July fireworks guests. We raised \$218 at our booth and received contributions towards Medical Kits from Holce Logging, KLS Surveying, Vernonia Dental, Payroll Plus, Black Iron Grill, and Jeffrey Walton.

Salem Report

By Representative Brad Witt



It has been a busy couple of weeks as the 2019 Legislative Session ended and we moved into the interim period.

It is so great to be back in the district, and I was pleased to attend the grand opening of a 16-unit low-income housing project in St. Helens. The 18th Street Apartments feature 400 square foot units which will be rented to those who are low income or homeless. The total project cost was \$1.633 million and was made possible by a partnership with Community Action Team and Self Help, a nonprofit real estate holding company. Funding came from the Oregon Legislature, loans, and grants. A recent study identified the need for 1,900 additional low-income housing units in Columbia County, but this is a step in the right direction.

Recently I traveled to Calgary in Alberta, Canada to attend the 2019 State Agriculture Rural Leaders (SARL) Summit. This International association is dedicated to promoting and fostering cooperation, leadership, and educational

opportunities among, and for, state and provincial legislators who are passionate about agriculture and rural communities. I serve on SARL's 6-member Legislative Board and spoke to conference attendees about transportation needs. We need a well-funded, stable transportation network to effectively and efficiently move our agricultural products which are key to the economic well being of our rural communities.

The future of agriculture in our area looks to be in good hands, as evidenced by the youth participating at the Columbia County Fair this year. One of the highlights of the summer is always the Columbia County Fair and Rodeo, and I had a great time connecting with friends and many constituents. I think my favorite part of the fair is visiting with

the youth who participate in the Future Farmers of America and 4-H programs, and hearing about their projects. Many of these students will be taking their award-winning entries to the State Fair later this summer. The Columbia County Fair and Rodeo is a tremendous undertaking, overseen by the Fair Board and operated by a huge network of amazing volunteers. Great job, everyone!

I'll be holding several Town Hall meetings, including one in Vernonia, where I will have a chance to talk about the 2019 Legislative Session and take questions from constituents. I hope to see you there. Here is the schedule:
Scappoose: Saturday, Sept. 7, 10:30 am - Noon / Library - 52469 SE 2nd Street
Rainier: Saturday, Sept. 7, 3:30 - 5 pm / Senior Center - 48 West 7th Street

Bethany: Sunday, Sept. 8, 2 - 3:30 pm / TVF&R Station 68 - 13545 NW Evergreen Street

Vernonia: Saturday, Sept. 21, 10:30 am - Noon / Scout Cabin - 901 Park Drive

Even when the Legislature is not in session, it is my honor to represent you and work on your behalf. If you have an issue or concern with a State agency, please contact my office. We check the emails and phone messages regularly and will see what we can do to help.

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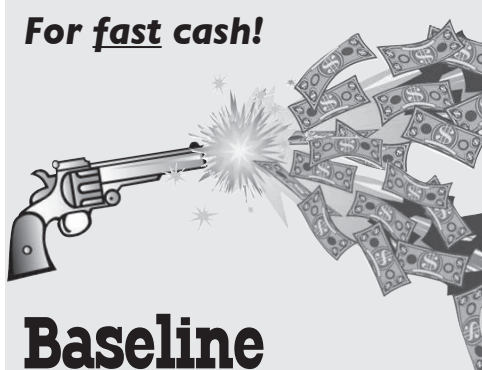
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