

PARTY ON WHEELS THIS WEEKEND

Forget cut-offs, streetlights and looking both ways before crossing the street. This weekend the city of Eugene is allowing South Eugene neighborhoods to take back the streets for a day.

Last year's event took place in the Whiteaker and downtown, closing a mile-long stretch of road on 5th Avenue between Pearl and Blair Boulevard. It drew close to 2,000 people and garnered a lot of positive feedback from the community, according to city Transportation Coordinator Lindsay Selser.

This year's Sunday Streets celebration is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 9, and it will close off about three miles of city roadway connecting the Fairmont, South University and Amazon neighborhoods. This free event allows the community access to the roads for just about anything they choose — other than cars.

The idea behind Sunday Streets is to promote healthy, active lifestyles in the community, Selser says. "It's a chance to meet your neighbors by coming together using the community's largest asset, our roads," she says.

The city wants to keep this event moving around Eugene year to year in order to showcase different neighborhoods and local businesses.

According to Selser, the Eugene community kept asking for this event. The 2011 Sunday Streets was supported by a federal Environmental Protection Agency grant. Now lacking that grant money, this year's event needed fundraising. The city raised close to \$15,000 that will go back into Sunday Streets for everything from live music and fitness classes to portable restrooms and, of course, closing the streets, which requires signs and safety officials.



Sunday Streets will present live music, outdoor try-for-free fitness classes, hula hooping, dancing and much more.

The Sunday Street tradition was inspired by those held in Bogota, Colombia, where every Sunday more than 60 miles of roadway are car-free for the people to enjoy.

South Eugene neighborhoods are encouraged to limit or postpone driving during the Sunday of the event from noon to 4 pm. However, the city of Eugene will provide a number of access routes for neighbors with escorts for safe travel through the festivities. — Mike W. Davis

LIGHTEN UP

With the parking meter fee set to rise to \$1.70 an hour in the university area, one bank plans to open a branch there just to make parking loans.

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

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