

More than a ride in the park

HUMAN-POWERED TRANSPORTATION HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Many of us recognize the value of bicycling. It's fun (especially under the sun), it's good for the health of the cyclist and it's good for the health of the planet that we're all a part of.

We appreciate the organizations that promote cycling and all the awesome bike shops that sell and maintain the bikes we ride. Some of us are even aware of local businesses that design and build cycles, such as Co-Motion, Bike Friday and Human Powered Machines. But when thinking of cycling, how many of us think of it as something beyond a way to get from point A to point B?

Those of us who are concerned about the health of people and the planet need to start thinking outside of the box, and bikes play a key role. Focusing on other means of transportation is important, but our dependency on fossil-fuel-based transportation goes much deeper than that.

Almost every material product (as well as many living items such as plants) has reached you via the consumption of fossil fuels. For example, the average American meal travels 1,500 miles to go from farm to plate.

Traveling 1,500 miles by cycle to deliver food is not something being proposed here. Buying local is a first step. But part of buying local is thinking about how that local product was delivered to the store and to your door.

In the battle to fight climate change and all the other damages caused by our dependency on fossil fuels, bikes need to and can play a bigger role. This applies to the personal and business communities.

Much is happening right here and now in Eugene, and so much more could happen.

Just last year, one local business delivered more than 300,000 pounds of organic food products to local stores and restaurants via cycles. Another business likely delivered the very paper you're reading. Yes, *Eugene Weekly* has a good portion of its papers delivered by bike. And if you're living in Eugene, you can get food delivered to your door, by bike.

The honor of cycling 300,000 pounds in 2016 goes to Hummingbird Wholesale. That's 150 tons of organic food that most of us have eaten one way or another. They did it via two trikes (built locally by Human Powered Machines) and trailers.

Food to your door is a service provided by the Cascadian Courier Collective. They have been delivering for Eugene's best restaurants since 2013. Every delivery they do is by bike.

Pedalers Express (PedEx) — the business I work for — performs a lot of delivery services, including hopping on a bike at 6 o'clock every Thursday morning, rain or shine, to deliver *EW*.

Pedalers Express mostly delivers documents, but via our tri-hauler and trailer, we can deliver up to 1,200

pounds in one ride. In fact, on one fateful snowy day, we delivered 6,500 pounds of flour, honey and other GloryBee products. We average six tons a week of GloryBee deliveries to a variety of local businesses including The Kiva, Morning Glory and Marché Provisions.

Buying local is an added bonus to the bike delivery service. Most businesses that use it value purchasing their products locally. Every business listed here has a focus on local, organic products.

By the way, all the cycles used by PedEx were designed and built locally by Human Powered Machines.

Bikes are much better than automobiles for the health of our planet. There are many reasons for this, but an obvious one is air pollution — and, more specifically, climate change.

Based on PedEx miles and the EPA's average CO2 emissions per gallon of fuel, our services decreased CO2 emissions by six tons for the year 2016. That does not include the decrease of many other harmful pollutants emitted from fossil-fuel-dependent vehicles, such as methane, nitrous oxide and hydro-fluorocarbons.

It also does not include the amount of time, money and blood spent for oil.

If our society is going to take the steps to foster living on a healthy planet, cycles could and should play a bigger role. Not just for individuals, but for businesses, for communities and for the planet we live on.

John Herberg is general manager of Pedalers Express.

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