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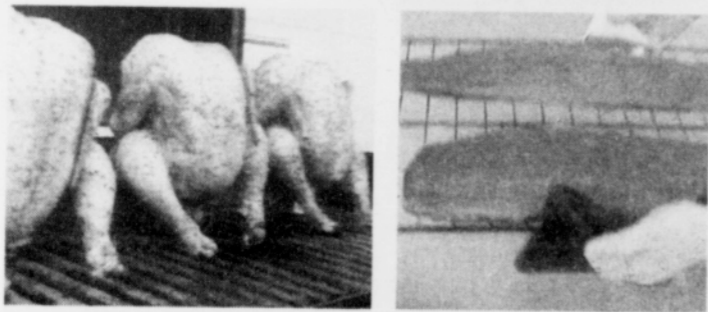
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What's on your list today?

LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO BY CARI HACHMANN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

With all modes of transportation sharing the same space, drivers and cyclists must be equally alert and follow all rules of the road.

Safety by the Numbers

Added bikes increase driver awareness

BY CARI HACHMANN THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

With sunny skies, dry pavement and high gas prices, its little surprise that more and more bicyclists are seen riding about the city and inevitably sharing roads with cars, trucks, and all other modes of transport.

While the summer months bring out cyclists of all maturity—from family peddlers and sun-glassed cruisers to fixed-gear fanatics and rush hour riders—more folks on bikes is hardly a seasonal trend.

According to the 2010 Bicycle Count, conducted each year by Portland's Bureau of Transportation since the early 1990s, bicycle traffic has nearly tripled over the last 10 years with a 190 percent increase since 2001, while city-wide, bicycle trips are up 8 percent since 2009.

As more bicyclists ride alongside their two-ton metal counterparts on commercial and residential roads, many fear a greater probability for conflict.

However, safety experts expect the opposite.

"As the number of bicyclists goes up, the likelihood of a crash on any given trip goes down," said Greg Raisman, PBOT's chief traffic safety expert.

Raisman explains that with more bicyclists on the road, motor ve-

hicles have to be more attentive, drive cautiously and slower and thus, lessen the chance for crashes.

Safety in numbers, a common-sense theory used widely in the human and natural realm to lessen the risk of a solo traveler falling victim to a predator, also applies to bike traffic.

Jonathon Maus, editor and publisher of BikePortland.org, confirms that roads are safer with more bikes. He says that as cars begin to get used to seeing bikes, they adapt their driving behavior accordingly and operate their cars more safely.

"[Cars] begin to expect the presence of bike traffic," said Maus. He points out that a majority of bicyclists also drive and having that

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