

October 2008

Program for Alternative Transportation and Health (PATH)

Monthly Drawing Reminder and News Update

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Hello PATH members!

This is a reminder to reply to this email if you have carpoled, bicycled, walked, or ridden transit at least 10 times or about twice a week during the month of October. We have a variety of prizes to give away in the next few months, so don't forget to participate!

Bicycle commuting in Winter? It might not be as difficult as it seems.



John Corrigan, an employee at the Department of Transportation, is a dedicated bicycle commuter who shares his story and some advice.

Attitude is more important than age or athleticism when it comes to bicycle commuting.

My job is to enable and encourage elementary school children to safely walk and ride bicycles to school. When I was hired in November 2006 to coordinate the Safe Routes to School program for the N.H. Department of Transportation, I decided I should set a good example and gain the health benefits by cycling to work. The round trip from my home in Penacook to Hazen Drive in Concord is about 17 miles, and takes about an hour and 15 minutes.

I ride through the winter, trying to average four days a week. Not bad for a fifty-something guy who doesn't like his ranking on the BMI (body mass index) scale and starts each morning with medications for high blood pressure and cholesterol.

By turning commuting time into workout time, raising the heart rate instead of the blood pressure, I dropped 20 pounds. Last spring, my doctor removed a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes.

I'll admit that I sometimes have to explain to my colleagues that I'm stubborn, not reckless. That happens when I arrive at the John O. Morton Building after a ride in drenching rain. No such thing as bad weather, I sometimes declare, just inadequate clothing.

Although the middle-age spread caught up with me, I have always been physically active. Extensive downhill and cross-country skiing taught me how to dress in layers for the cold and wind. On many winter mornings, I start with long johns and a heavyweight shirt fabricated from a wicking material. Synthetic fleece traps the body heat, and a windbreaker completes the outfit. On the absolute worst days, I resort to my ski parka.

The right bike makes a big difference. Following the advice received at S&W Sports in Concord, I bought a Trek Navigator that uses a "unisex" or "European" design. It would have been called a "girls' model" when I was growing up. Losing the crossbar makes emergency dismounts much easier. Because I ride pavement that has seen the ravages of seasonal changes and frost heaves, I like the fat tires found on mountain bikes. Studs are a big help for the occasional patches of slush and ice - I don't ride when the roads are covered with snow.

Fenders deflect water and crud back to the pavement. On the Navigator, cables are routed inside the frame tubes to protect them from the elements. One problem I have not yet solved is that the brake and shift cables can stick when moisture freezes on them.

Because too many drivers don't follow the rules of the road or are distracted by their cell phone conversations, visibility is a high priority. No cyclist should be out after dark without a red taillight and white headlight. I add a small light to the back of my helmet. I also wear a chartreuse cycling windbreaker with retroreflective highlights.

Fortunately for my co-workers, the DOT has a shower and a place where I can store enough office clothes to maintain that all-important professional appearance.

I pedaled more than 2000 miles to finish sixth on the Granite State Wheelmen's list of bicycle commuters. Next year, I hope to break into the top five.

There are plenty of good reasons to carpool, and NH RideShare can help.

It saves gas, saves money, improves the environment, and is a great way to drive less when the weather doesn't cooperate with bicycle commuting! There has been a huge surge of interest in carpooling in the last several months. With so many people ready to share travel costs, finding a match for your daily commute is easier than ever. Register today to receive a potential list of carpool matches so you can keep a little more cash in your pocket!

To learn more and sign up for a match list, visit www.nh.gov/dot/nhrideshare/.



Request your PATH Membership Card!

We have a stack of PATH cards to give out that can be used for discounts at local businesses. PATH has arranged with several retailers in Concord to offer discounted prices to all PATH members (details to come). The cards will also contain useful information about how to take advantage of the Emergency Ride Home service in case you are stuck without a ride home in the event of an emergency.

To have your PATH card sent to you by mail, simply reply to this email requesting one. We recommend giving us your mailing address in case we don't already have it.

PATH's mission is to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and increase societal emphasis on personal fitness through the creation of services and materials which promote transportation options to the single occupancy vehicle.

Craig Tufts
CNHRPC

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