



The Messenger

Newsletter for the Alabama Bicycle Coalition
Fighting for Cyclists' Rights on the Roads and in Public Policy

The Alabama Bicycle Coalition
P.O. Box 240924, Montgomery, AL 36124

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AlaBike Meets With ALDOT

Safe Routes to School and Tourism are the Topics in Productive Meeting

Janie Miernik, President

On Monday, Nov 28, 2006, three members of the board of directors of AlaBike, Mike Holderer, Morgan Andriulli, and Jamie Miernik, met with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Dep. Dir. of Operations - Chief Engineer, Mr. Don Vaughn. ALDOT recently named their full-time Safe Routes to School (SR2S) coordinator and they seem ready to get down to the business of spending Alabama's recently allocated \$1 million dollars for SR2S! The new coordinator is Bill Luckerson, a 25-year ALDOT employee who has worked with AlaBike in the past on safety projects.

First up - Bike Tourism in Alabama

Also at the meeting at AlaBike's invitation was Grey Brennan, Marketing Manager/Regional Director of the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel. Morgan had just completed a 3-month contract to document bike routes and mountain bike trails throughout the state (See page 2). AlaBike offered these well-researched routes and maps to ALDOT for inclusion in the Alabama State Bike/Pedestrian Plan. Brennan emphasized that the largest, most utilized tourism facility in Alabama are the paved roads. The potential for cycling tourism in Alabama is essentially untapped.

Getting Down to Business – SR2S

AlaBike's SR2S presentation emphasized the split in funding mandated by law in the new Transportation Bill passed in August. Ten percent to thirty percent of the appropriation must be spent on non-infrastructure programs. This would be the last three "E's" of the five keys elements of all SR2S programs: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement, and Evaluation. ALDOT is familiar with infrastructure projects, but is unsure how to handle the

non-infrastructure portion. The AlaBike delegation must have caught them on a good day or they were just ready to listen. They were engaged and asked many questions.

I presented the idea to contract the non-infrastructure portion to the only non-profit state bicycle advocacy group in Alabama...that would be AlaBike. I explained that 14 other states have had contracts for SR2S programs with their state DOTs, all before the federal set-aside, and most of them with non-profit groups. Since we have contacts with many of the project administrators of these SR2S programs through the Thunderhead Alliance, I assured them that AlaBike could provide information for their Request for Proposals (RFP) and would provide a proposal for a non-infrastructure contract based on strategies and curriculum already established in other states. ALDOT is expecting us to help and we do not intend to let them down.

ALDOT also agreed to endorse or sponsor our Four Hill Century Fundraising Weekend, May 18-21, 2006 in Huntsville. I explained the planned expanded format including the SR2S workshop and League of American Bicyclists (LAB) certified cycling classes.

The meeting went better than any of us expected. They asked for our help. I have already requested information from the bike advocacy non-profit groups Maine, Texas, Chicago and Arizona who have worked extensive contracts with their state DOTs. Responses came in the following day from all directions, so we will be able to provide concrete direction for the program we'd like to see developed for SR2S in Alabama. We will then need to submit a proposal that can be implemented, possibly by the 2006-2007 school year.

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Silly Newsflash! AlaBike enters cycling "Float" in Huntsville's WAAY Christmas Parade

Nine hardy Huntsville riders dressed up as Santa's helpers, "dec'd" their bikes and braved some cold, damp weather in the annual Christmas parade. In 2004, the group was voted Crowd Favorite.

"Never Doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed individuals can change the world. It is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

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Alabama Tourism and AlaBike Documents "Best" Bike Routes

The Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel has documented the "Twenty Best Road Bike Routes" and "10 Best Mountain Bike Trails" in Alabama. It is part of their 2006 Year of Alabama Outdoors campaign. The bureau is also documenting other major activities such as birding, canoeing and hiking in a similar way for distribution from the web site, www.800alabama.com and in published guide books available from the Tourism Bureau and the Visitor's Centers at 8 locations around the state.

AlaBike Board Member Morgan Andriulli was privately contracted to research, collect, verify road routes and document the selected trails. This involved much travel throughout Alabama from late August through October and the direct personal involvement of 26 cyclists from all over the state.

"It was a huge effort to coordinate contacting the local road and experts, organizing meet-ups for rides or scouting sessions and then verification of the final product. Alabama is blessed with a lot of good roads and many enthusiasts who are willing to share their best 'secret stash' of roads and trails," says Andriulli.

The hard work, says Andriulli, was in evaluating the proposed routes in terms of navigability, safety, proximity to towns, extracurricular activity and good barbecue. "I gained weight on this gig. Barbecue is important because it's the one regional cuisine we get right in Alabama," quipped Morgan.

The real challenge, according to Andriulli was coming up with ONLY 20 road rides and 10 trails that represented each of the four major tourism regions of Alabama: Mountains (north), Metro (north central), River Heritage (south central) and Gulf Coast. He says to be fair, each region could easily produce ten or more rides and trails from easy beginner loops to epic centuries and mountain bike adventures

"Alabama is one of the best kept secrets in cycling. This guide we hope will go a ways toward revealing these secrets to the rest of the cycling world," says Andriulli.

Look for the Alabama Tourism Bureau Ride Guide on the web site (www.800alabama.com) in 2006.

Bike Shorts – News 'Briefs' for Bikers



501c3 Submitted, Finally!

After a couple of false starts and a complete re-do, AlaBike submitted its application for Recognition of Tax Exempt Status submitted to the IRS in mid-November. **This means that contributions to AlaBike will be deductible from federal income tax.** Known as "501c3" status, this designation will enable AlaBike to seek larger private, business and government funding sources.

Four-Hills Planning Moves Ahead

It seems incredible, but we are again in planning mode for the 2006 Four Hills Century in Huntsville. The 2006 edition will be May 20, so as to be closer to the other "Big Hill" rides, Three-State in Chattanooga and the Cheaha Challenge in Piedmont. We are expanding the event to include cycling and Safe Routes workshops and possibly dinner speakers. So far, we have our date locked in with the city and are re-signing last year's sponsors.

AlaBike Starts Biological Membership Drive

Board Member Brandy Ezelle of Auburn kicked off the latest AlaBike membership campaign by personally delivering Mason Ezelle on Sunday, October 31.

"At the moment, he is a vocal advocate for two-hour feedings and regular diaper changes," says the proud committee chairperson, Ezelle.

At 7 lb. 12 oz, AlaBike's smallest member is not quite ready to jump into the bicycle advocacy game.

"Walking, first words, riding a bike and loyalty to the Auburn Tigers are his highest priorities," says Ezelle.

AlaBike congratulates Brandy on a successful membership drive and hopes all members follow her example.

Absolutely the Last Chance to Renew for 2006

If you have not renewed your AlaBike membership for 2005/6, this will be your last newsletter. AlaBike has grown over the last year and is becoming involved in more projects that will need the input and influence of Alabama's cyclists.

Our plans for 2006 include:

- An improved web site and better, more frequent communications with members
- Competing for and winning Safe Routes to School contracts

- A bigger Second Annual Four-Hills Century/SR2S Workshop Weekend.

We need to retain our charter members and to bring in new members to keep our hard-earned momentum. It's a cheap, fun and easy way to help AlaBike to make Alabama a bike-friendlier state. Fill out the application on the last page of this newsletter and mail it in soon! You'll be part of the pack racing towards a bike-friendly state and you'll receive this nifty renewal incentive, a sweat-resistant ID wallet and key chain.

New Board Members

Now that AlaBike is two years old, it is rotating membership of the Board of Directors. Here is some background on our two newest board members; both of whom were voted onto the board in November.

Peter Wolf - Auburn, AL

Peter Wolf has been a cyclist for 22 years and a veteran of many cross-state tours, including the Annual Bicycling Adventure Along the Wisconsin River (19 times), the Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) (2 times), Cycle Zydeco (2 times), and once each for Cycle North Carolina, and BAMA.

Wolf is a founding member of AlaBike and attended at the incorporation meeting at Huntington College in 2003. He is a three-year member of Auburn's Bike Committee and a founding member and former Vice President of East Alabama Cycling Club.

Through the Bike Committee, Wolf has been deeply involved with organizing Auburn's annual Bike Bash each spring, the moonlight rides during the year and was active in the Committee's effort to earn Auburn's Bicycle Friendly Community status from the League of American Bicyclists in 2004.

Wolf has also written subdivision regulations for Auburn that require new developments to be bike and pedestrian friendly. Most notably, Peter created The Auburn Bicycle Tours book that showcases different neighborhoods in Auburn. This was published and is distributed through

the Auburn Convention and Visitor's Bureau and is due for a second printing in spring.

James Spagnola - Huntsville, AL

James Spagnola moved to Huntsville from the Chicago area four years ago. He is a social worker for the SWOOP program, interfacing with and educating at-risk youth on the risks of homelessness and street life.

His social work and love of cycling has led him to initiate Project Life Cycles in 2005. Life Cycles' mission is to provide bicycles, education and maintenance support for underserved citizens who cannot operate or afford motor vehicles. AlaBike has adopted Project Life Cycles under its umbrella as a program that shares the goal of transportation access for underserved portions of the community. Spagnola is currently working on grant applications to fully fund Project Life Cycles for 2006.

When not working for the public good, Spagnola enjoys making sculptures from old, "over-used" bikes. He feels that starting Project Life Cycles and Working with AlaBike will help make it possible for "everyone to ride bikes," regardless of age or financial condition. "Bicycle riding," says Spagnola, "is an honor to the planet."

Clearly the idealist member of the board, Spagnola is a full-time community activist.

Both Peter Wolf and James Spagnola are active cycling advocates to the highest degree and are welcome members to the Board.

Bringing your ID along on a ride is now "no sweat" with the Official AlaBike ID Wallet.



2005 AlaBike Board

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AlaBike Membership Application & Renewal

(Make check payable to "AlaBike", Mail to: AlaBike P O Box 240924 Montgomery, AL 36124)

Active, \$25.00 Family, \$40.00 Student, \$10.00 Corporate, \$50.00 or _____ Non-Profit, \$ _____

Contribution Levels

- Domestique, \$50.00 - \$99.00 Gold, \$250.00 - \$499.00
 Silver, \$100.00 - \$249.00 Elite, \$500.00 - \$999.00
 Champion, \$1,000.00 plus

Name: _____

[] Male [] Female

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Date of Birth: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Contact Phone: (____) _____

Email: _____

May we release your name and address to bicycle clubs and other non-commercial cycling-related entities? Yes _____ No _____

We never publish e-mail or phone numbers.

I am on my local Citizen's Advisory Committee or Bike/Ped Committee _____

I can help with May 20th, 2006 fund-raising ride in Huntsville _____

This is a renewal, I completed the survey before _____

How many cyclists ___ and drivers ___ in household?

Estimated annual household cycling related spending: \$ _____

Type of cyclists in household:

- ___ Commuter Competitive/Racing
___ Fitness Off-Road
___ Recreational Road Touring
___ Utilitarian (errands...) Other

I would like to help Alabike by:

- ___ Staff a booth or volunteer at regional events
___ Contacting government/legislative officials
___ Education
___ Administrative/mailing
___ Local leadership or coordination

Club Affiliation (Please circle your club, if applicable.):

- Northeast Alabama Bicycle Club
- Spring City Cycling Club (Huntsville)
- Birmingham Bicycle Club
- GCC (Birmingham)
- Birmingham Urban Mountain Peddlers (BUMP)
- Montgomery Bicycle Club
- Druid City Bicycle Club
- East Alabama Bicycle Club

ALABIKE

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