



The Alabama Bicycle Coalition
P.O. Box 18984, Huntsville, AL 35804

The Messenger

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

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"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

AlaBike Stages Legislative Bike Commute in Montgomery March 16

How do you get more bike-friendly laws rolling through the legislature? Why not start by getting more legislators rolling on bikes. This is the plan on March 16 when AlaBike leads the first Legislative Bike Commute starting at 8 AM from the **State House at the corner of Washington and Union Streets.**

The Legislative Commute will be a brief jaunt for cyclists, commuters and, most importantly, legislators that will start at the Capitol and follow an easy 5-mile route through the scenic, historic Old Cloverdale neighborhood, then back to the Capitol. The pace will be a leisurely 10 mph.

The intent of the commute is to inform legislators of the need for good legislation that supports good road design and encourages cycling. This is especially important during a time of high gas prices. The harder gas prices hit on family budgets, the more demand will increase for safe and affordable transportation alternatives. The ride is designed demonstrate that there *are* safe

routes to bicycle in Alabama and AlaBike would like to see many more of them.

Speaking of safe routes, legislators will get to hear about Safe Routes to School for possibly the first time. Alabama will receive \$1.5 million initially to establish programs and infrastructure to encourage children to bike and walk to school. This allocation will increase over the next five years. In other states, SR2S programs are proven effective in reducing school traffic congestion and increasing kids' level of physical activity. They should be interested in this way to improve streets in their districts and to address Alabama's nation-leading obesity statistics.

David Stone, League of American Bicyclists (LAB) Cycling Instructor (LCI), will lead the "commute" through the Cloverdale neighborhood, then return to the Capitol by 9 AM. The ride has the sanction of the Montgomery Police Department and Bicycle Patrol. For more information, contact David Stone at (256) 348-6414 or dlstone@knology.net.

Four Hill Century Fundraising Weekend – May 19-21



The Weekend of May 20 will be quite busy for AlaBike. One top of running our classically epic Four Hill Century, we are staging the first-ever Safe Routes to School Workshop on May 19 and a Road 1 Class on Sunday, May 21. New this year is our Host Hotel, the Holiday Inn, downtown Huntsville. The convenient location will host the Workshop, the Four Hill Packet Pickup and is offering a **special room rate for Four Hill Century participants**. Sign up now for the workshop, ride or class at www.alabike.org.

Friday, May 19, 8AM-4PM – Safe Routes to School Workshop

Join Alabama's first Safe Routes Workshop at the Holiday Inn in Downtown Huntsville from 8 AM to 4 PM. The lineup of presenters includes representatives from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, ALDOT, the Alabama Department of Public Health, UAH Physical Education and the Florida Bicycle Coalition. This is your best chance to learn all about the benefits of a well executed Safe Routes program. Sign up at http://alabike.org/SR2S_Works/.

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Four Hill Century Fundraising Weekend – May 19-21

Four Hill Century Packet Pickup – 6-9PM

Beat the rush and pick up your ride bag early at the host Holiday Inn Downtown Huntsville. To sweeten the deal, you get a discount on the special “High Energy” Buffet at the top notch Lofton’s Restaurant. We are bringing back live Jazz this year. Chill out to the fine arrangements of the Taylor-Chambers Quartet.

Saturday, May 20, 8 AM - Four Hill Century Ride

Do your training and eat your Wheaties because you will need everything to pull off 100 of the most scenic and challenging miles in the Southeast. The 2006 course has been altered slightly to offer better roads and more scenery. Route options run from 36 to 100 miles. As advertised, you can have as many as four tough climbs, or choose one of the shorter routes with one, two or three climbs.

New this year is the 6-mile Family Fun Ride. We hope to see lots of kids trying out their wheels. NO TRAINING WHEELS and No hills!

Sign up now! <http://alabike.org/fourhills/>

We may have a special guest starter for the event. AlaBike President Jamie Miernik personally asked U.S. Representative Bud Cramer to be the honorary starter for the event when visiting his office during the National Bike Summit. His schedule looked clear at the time. Stay tuned.

Sunday, May 21 – Road 1 Class

AlaBike member and League Certified Cycling Instructor is offering the League of American Cyclists Road 1 Class on Sunday, May 21. This is a good way to spend an easy afternoon learning some excellent techniques to be a safer, more effective cyclist. Details at www.alabike.org.

Volunteers! Volunteers! Volunteers! Did we mention we need volunteers?

Of course, running this event requires a standing army of happy, bike-smart people who are willing to give up a day (or a few hours) to help stage a great event. Your compensation will be an event goody bag with all the swag and food discounts, a free lunch (if you work over lunchtime) or a free ride entry for some key pre-ride volunteers. **Please contact Michael Holderer to volunteer: moh@knology.net (256) 883-9982.**

We are looking for:

- **SAG Drivers (2)** – We need a couple of mechanically competent drivers. (New Honda Vehicles will be provided!) It’s an all-day job, but fun.
- **Rest Stop 7** – This is the final rest stop on the ride. It is open for a long time (9AM to 5 PM or so), so it needs two shifts.
- **Parking** – Three people to direct traffic from about 6:30 AM ‘til 8 AM.
- **Friday SR2S Workshop Facilitators** – Help register and set up the SR2S workshop on Friday, May 19.
- **Promotion** – Bring flyers to your local and regional rides and shops.

Bike Shorts – News ‘Briefs’ for Bikers



Limestone County Two-Wheel Tour Secures \$400K in Phase I Funding

Two recent news articles highlight the potential for bicycle tourism in Alabama. The Decatur Daily ran an article in early March (March 2) about Limestone County getting grant money to mark and sign the “2-Wheel Tour” Bicycle and Motorcycle route around and through the

county. This project is the impetus of Richard Martin of Greater Limestone County Tourism, who came to the Spring City Cycling club about four years ago looking for help with finding bicycle routes around the county. He has since convinced the Chamber of Commerce, Limestone County Commission and the Mayors of Athens, Elkmont and

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Bike Shorts – Continued



Ardmore that a signed series of Scenic bicycle and motorcycle loops and routes around the county would be a tourism draw. Once local politicians realized that federal matching money was available to purchase signs and improve some asphalt in their district, the ball really got rolling. After a couple of iterations, AlaBike helped finalize the final routes, maps and outlined the phases by which the work would progress. (If you are interested in finding, mapping and documenting bike routes in your county, contact AlaBike. Our services are available.)

If the project goes as planned, Limestone county will have completely signed series of scenic bike (and motorcycle) tour routes reaching all corners of the county, plus some physical improvements on the busier roads in the eastern part of the county.

As more county commissioners got on board, the “Two-Wheel Tour” routes grew into a de facto bicycle plan for Limestone County. Every county needs someone like Richard Martin. On the Web: <http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/news/060302/trail.shtml>

Welcome to Ramer, Cycling Capital of the South?

Another article appeared in the Montgomery Advertiser about a bicycle racing training camp in Ramer, AL. It attracts over a dozen northern cyclists a week from November through May. The camp gained notice last year when it began running an ad on the VeloNews web site. It is run by Canadian-based Italian racing coaches and is marketed to snowbound North Americans as an affordable, but intensive and comprehensive training camp for fast enthusiasts up to elite racers. They found Ramer, AL to possess the perfect combination of good pavement, low traffic, mild weather and inexpensive property for start-up. Italy, it ain't; but for the serious roadie looking for a high-value package for training or just a vacation, the enthusiastic coaching, pampering and price are hard to beat.

On the Web: <http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060305/NEWS/603050324/1001/ARCHIVES>

Alabama is a good place to ride bikes. It now appears that others inside and outside the state are taking notice.

National Bike Summit in DC – Feb 28 - March 3

Low-Budget Bike Advocacy takes over The Hill

Two members of the AlaBike board, George Hamilton, and Jamie Miernik, and the Education Chair, Dave Stone, attended the LAB National Bike Summit in Washington DC. In classic jet-setting Washington lobbyist style, they drove their own vehicles and stayed with relatives or in youth hostels to avoid \$250/night lodging.

Dave, George and Jamie attended seminars and visited all nine Alabama legislative offices on The Hill; speaking directly with four real, live Congressmen. The subject was the Safe Routes to School program in Alabama, and regional cycling concerns.

One particular local cycling concern was the Adventure Cycling Association's Underground Railroad Bike Tour. It grabbed the attention of the office of 7th District Rep. Artur Davis. The route starts in his district and has the potential to draw some tourism.

It was during this session that Bud Cramer received the official invitation to be the kickoff speaker at the SR2S Workshop on May 19 and the Honorary Century Ride Starter on May 20. Stay tuned!!!



Find the Alabama Cycling Advocates. George Hamilton (L), Dave Stone, AlaBike Education Chair, (R) rolled into DC for the 2006 National Bike Summit with AlaBike President Jamie Miernik

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