

Biking: Forum for those who bike to work set for Wednesday

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By Larry Walsh, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Thinking about biking to work, especially now that a gallon of regular gasoline costs about \$4?

Bike Pittsburgh and the Downtown YMCA have a bike commuting forum for you.

The forum, free and open to the public, will be held from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday in the YMCA's Community Room that overlooks Market Square. Enter from the YMCA's Fifth Avenue entrance.

Lou Fineberg, program manager for Bike Pittsburgh, said the event, a prelude to Car Free Fridays and Bike to Work Day (May 20), is designed to answer questions about bike commuting and glean information from veteran cyclists.

"Anyone who already bike commutes or wants to start is encouraged to join us," Fineberg said. "It's an excellent opportunity to share with each other our collective experience of co-existing on the roads."

Fineberg asks Downtown businesses to encourage their employees to attend and to give them "a generous lunch hour so [the employees] can get the most out of it.

"A city's bike friendliness is a key factor of its livability," he said, echoing Bike Pittsburgh's mission statement. "The more bicyclists on the road, the safer it is for everyone."

Bike Pittsburgh also is asking community leaders to celebrate Bike to Work Day by helping to promote bike pools.

"We've found that one of the main reasons people don't ride to work is because they don't feel safe on the roads," Fineberg said. "Riding with others is a good option because it's especially comforting to new and inexperienced riders."

For more information: www.bike-pgh.org; 412-325-4334.

Rails-trails summit

The Montour Trail Council and the REI Settlers Ridge store in Robinson will host a "Rails to Trails Summit" from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday to provide information about trails in Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

In addition to offering table space for groups to promote their respective trails, highlight their accomplishments and recruit new members, REI Outreach Specialist **Peter Greninger** said the store will play host to workshops on trail-side bike repairs and the Great Allegheny Passage.

Don Thobaben, a board member of the Montour Trail Council, said the Montour trail group will be joined by representatives of the Steel Valley Trail Council, Friends of the Riverfront (caretakers of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail), Ohio River Trail, Mon River Trail/Deckers Creek Trail and the Ohio Valley Trail Partners/Wheeling Heritage Trail/Brooke Pioneer Trail.

For more information: www.rei.com; 412-488-9410.

Free clinics

The L.L. Bean store in Ross Park Mall will offer free clinics and workshops on basic bike maintenance and repair at its Bike Weekend Friday through Sunday.

In addition to a 20 percent discount on new bikes this weekend, the store is offering an additional 10 percent discount for used bikes. The latter will be donated to the Pittsburgh police Bike Before Christmas Program.

For more information: www.llbean.com; 412-318-1200.

Tires out

The Pittsburgh Trails Advocacy Group (PTAG) and the Monroeville Girl Scouts joined forces Saturday to remove old car and truck tires from Boyce Park as part of a Great American Cleanup project.

The groups met at 9:30 a.m. at the Boyce Park wave pool on Old Frankstown Road. They were then assigned to one of three sites where the litter has sullied the landscape.

PTAG member **Jim Kapp** said volunteers had to use shovels to dig some tires out of the mud. He said Brownie scouts supplied water and trail mix to the hard-working volunteers.

PTAG was formed in 2001 to protect and encourage access to shared-use trails in Western Pennsylvania, especially with single-track trails used by mountain bikers, hikers, runners, cross-country skiers and equestrians.

For more information: www.ptagtrails.com

Larry Walsh writes about recreational bicycling for the Post-Gazette

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