

Deb Hubsmith and Susan Adams: Bike to Work Day is Thursday

Staff Report

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Deb Hubsmith and Susan Adams

MAY IS National Bike Month and Thursday marks the Bay Area's 14th Bike to Work Day, a grand celebration of bicycling as a healthy, fun and viable form of transportation.

On Thursday morning, volunteers will be stationed at 18 Energizer Stations along bicycle commute routes in Marin to provide cyclists with complimentary treats, a reusable goodie bag, bicycle information and good cheer. We encourage you to get your bicycle tuned up and get ready for this fun event.

There are many reasons why bicycle commuting is a good choice for your health and the health of the planet. For one, bicycling is a great way to reduce your personal carbon footprint. One of the predominant human activities worsening climate change is something that most people do every day - drive a car. How many of us in Marin call ourselves environmentalists but drive our cars everywhere? Through bicycle commuting, you can become more connected to your community, and know that each time you leave the car at home, you are doing something good for the environment. Even one trip each week by bicycle instead of by car makes a difference.

Another compelling reason to try bicycling is for public health reasons. The surgeon general recommends 30 minutes of moderate physical

activity each day. Bicycling can burn up to 500 calories an hour and provides a fun means of exercise while you are getting where you need to go.

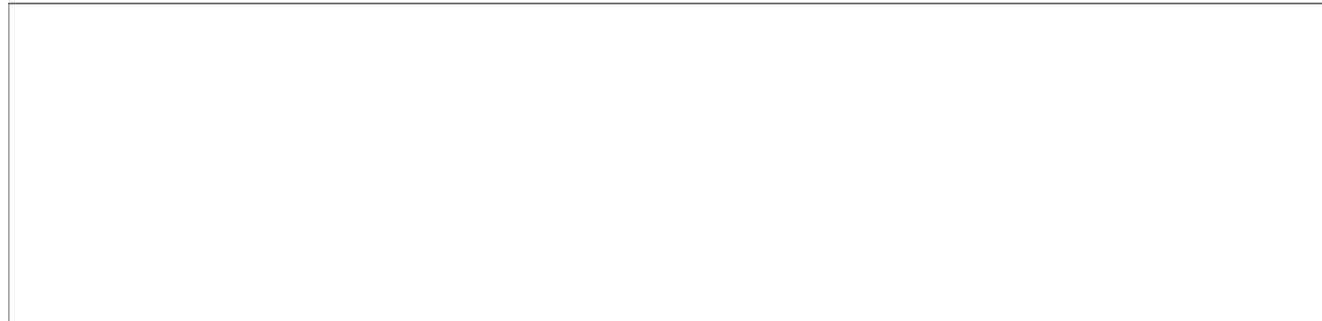
Already, thousands of Marin residents choose to ride a bicycle as their primary means of getting to work every day. As regular bicycle commuters (who are definitely not Olympic athletes) we encourage Marin residents to give bicycle commuting a try. Ride your bike to work, to class, to errands or to play. In California, 43 percent of trips are two miles or less. Instead of automatically using a car for all short trips, think about bicycling instead. Pedaling can take you there.

Because of its success last year, Bike to Work Day organizers are bringing back the popular "Team Bike Challenge" again this year to encourage existing bicycle commuters to recruit their colleagues, friends, neighbors and local 'honorary' figures to ride their bicycles to work, school and other destinations during the month of May. Participants in the Team Bike Challenge form teams of five individuals and register on the bicycling page at www.511.org. During May, participants track their trips made by bike as they compete against other teams.

This year, Marin has several teams participating in the Team Bike Challenge including the Marin All Stars with Supervisors Susan Adams and Charles McGlashan, county Administrator Matthew Hymel, Jerry Kay and Max Kroner Dale.

While you're out on the roads, remember that bicyclists need to follow the same rules, and have the same responsibilities, as automobile drivers. Wear your helmet, stop at stop signs, be safe, and become a bicycle ambassador. In addition to reducing carbon emissions, you might just loose a few pounds and save a few bucks at the same time.

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Supervisor Susan Adams represents the 1st District in Marin. Deb Hubsmith is advocacy director for the Marin County Bicycle Coalition.

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For more information about Bike to Work Day or bicycling in Marin, go to www.marinbike.org and www.walkbikemarin.org.

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