

THE OHIO SIERRAN

A Publication of the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club

<http://ohio.sierraclub.org>



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet

November/December 2007

Study Affirms Economic Benefits of Ohio Hub Plan Passenger Rail Would Bring Jobs, Save Energy

By Ellen Hawkey Carmichael, Chapter Conservation Program Manager

Ohio citizens, policy makers and community leaders are debating how to address rising energy costs, global warming, and a loss of Ohio jobs. A solution that is often left out of the debate is the need for an investment in mass transportation. The Ohio Rail Development Commission has developed the Ohio Hub proposal, a proposal to construct a statewide passenger train system.

The Ohio Hub, the Ohio and Lake Erie Regional Rail System, will not only provide transportation choice for Ohio. It will also help to reduce greenhouse gases, improve air quality, create Ohio jobs and spur our economy.

The Ohio Hub proposal is analyzing the feasibility of developing a passenger rail system which will serve over 22 million people in five states and southern Ontario. The seven corridors under consideration include:

- Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati

- Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit
- Cleveland-Pittsburgh
- Cleveland-Buffalo-Niagara Falls-Toronto
- Columbus-Pittsburgh
- Columbus-Toledo-Detroit
- Columbus-Lima-Ft. Wayne-Chicago

Ohio has weighed the possibility of constructing an intercity rail system to move people and freight more efficiently between Ohio's metropolitan areas for at least the last ten years. While it will take a huge capital investment to build the Ohio Hub, the project will have real and measurable impacts to our economy and environment.

The Economic Impact Study on the Ohio Hub was completed in June 2007 confirmed earlier estimates that the project will spur the economy and create Ohio jobs. Key findings of the study include:

- Create 16,700 permanent jobs which is equivalent to more than 500,000 person years of work;
- Raise the region's income by over \$1 billion over the life of the project
- Generate more than \$3 billion in development activity near stations;
- Create an annual \$80 million impact on state tourism by generating 320,000 overnight trips;
- Create a potential benefit for freight operations in the range of \$3 to \$6 billion; and

- Generate an annual fuel savings of approximately 9.4 million gallons of fuel.¹

There are many steps that Ohio will need to take over the next decade to address global warming. Transportation produces one-third of all CO₂ emissions in the United States. Investments in effective and affordable transportation are essential to reducing our contribution to global warming. By enhancing Ohio's rail system we will begin to shift freight and intercity travel away from high energy intensive transportation modes.

The next step for the Ohio Hub proposal is the first phase of the Environmental Impact Study, the completion of this phase will move the project closer to becoming a reality. For more information on the progress of this proposal please visit:

www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail

¹ Ohio Rail Development Commission, The Ohio & Lake Erie Regional Rail Ohio Hub Study. Executive Summary. July, 2007.

Sierran Index

Page 2

- Chapter contact information

Page 3

- Chapter Leadership Training Coming in Early 2008
- Join the Chapter Nuclear Committee

Pages 4-5

- Chapter Executive Committee Ballot 2007

Page 6

- Sierra Club's True Cost of Food Campaign
- Help Needed - Chapter Secretary

Page 7

- Cool Cities, Counties Taking Off Around Ohio
- Skin Deep: Cosmetics Safety Database

Page 8

- Evening on Environmental Justice Coming to Piketon

Chapter Executive Committee Election 2007

All Ohio Sierra Club members are encouraged to participate in the election of the Chapter's governing body. See pages 4-5 for ballot and candidate information.

Cool Cities, Counties Take-Off Around Ohio

By Sarah Topy, Building Environmental Communities Coordinator

As summer heated up, the Cool Cities campaign scored some major victories in the past few months and also has some new twists in store for the fall.

In September, Miami Group leaders helped pass the Cool Counties Agreement in Hamilton County, making it only the 13th county nationwide to sign the agreement, which pledges that the county will reduce its emissions by 2% per year or 80% by 2050. Also in September, leaders in the Appalachian Ohio Group will take part in the Cool Cities signing in Athens, Ohio.

Meanwhile, Sierra Club activists in other counties around the state, including

Lucas (Toledo), Franklin (Columbus), Cuyahoga (Cleveland), and Summit (Akron) are gearing up to pass the Cool County Agreements in these areas and encourage their County Commissioners to implement regional approaches on conservation.

In Central Ohio, Cool Cities Campaigns are underway in many cities, including Columbus, Delaware, Dublin, Upper Arlington, Westerville, Gahanna and New Albany. Activists in these cities are working hard to encourage their local governments to sign the Climate Protection Agreement and begin an emissions inventory as soon as possible. In Columbus, where Mayor Coleman signed the agreement several months ago, the inventory is underway, and progress has included changing to more efficient lighting and implementing an anti-idling policy within the city's vehicle fleets.

At the national level, Sierra Club unveiled a retooled and much improved Cool Cities website at www.coolcities.us. This site provides local contacts for Cool Cities Campaigns and also focuses on the progress to date.

The basic course of action of the Cool Cities Campaign includes the city signing the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, partaking in an emissions inventory, recommending steps to city government on ways to conserve and then implementing a Climate Action Plan.

For more information about either running a Cool Cities Campaign or helping on an existing campaign, please contact Sarah Topy at sarah.topy@sierraclub.org or 614/461-0734 x 305. ♦

Create an Environmental Legacy.

Bequests have played a key role in the Sierra Club's environmental successes over the years.

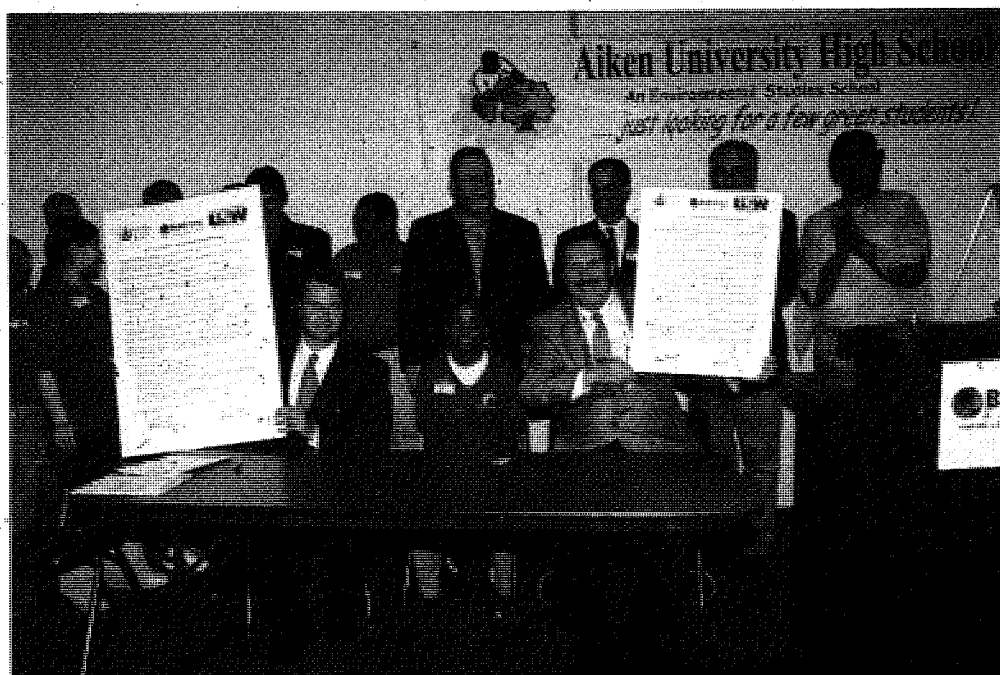
Planning now may make your gift more meaningful and reduce taxes on your estate. We have many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter. For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

Tom H. Nagel
490 City Park Ave Columbus, OH
43215-5780

614-294-6722
tomnagel@iwaynet.net



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Hamilton County Commissioners Todd Portune and David Pepper sign the Cool Counties Agreement in September, becoming Ohio's first county to do so and thanks in large part to the great work of the Sierra Club's Miami Group and the Blue Green Alliance. Photo by S. Topy

Skin Deep: Cosmetics Safety Database

Exactly what is in that sunscreen or makeup you are using? *Skin Deep* is a safety guide to cosmetics and personal care products, brought to you by researchers at the Environmental Working Group. *Skin Deep* pairs ingredients in nearly 25,000 products against 50 definitive toxicity and regulatory databases, making it the largest integrated data resource of its kind. Why did a small nonprofit take on such a big project? Because the FDA doesn't require companies to test their own products for safety! Check it out at www.cosmeticsdatabase.com.

Bicycle Commuting and the Community Oriented Employer

1. Why Implement a Bicycle Commute Program?

Employee Health. Bicycle commuting enables office workers to fit regular exercise into their busy, but often sedentary, work routines. People who exercise, including those who do it on the way to work, are healthier and more energetic. This translates to employer cost savings: Greater productivity, less sick leave time, fewer workman's compensation claims, and lower overall health care costs.

Employee Morale. Employees who arrive at work by bicycle are more alert and relaxed, having exercised during their commute. They avoid the stress of driving through rush-hour congestion and delays, and don't need to worry about finding parking. Bicycle commuters will recognize and appreciate employer support for their transportation and exercise mode.

Reduced Traffic Congestion. Bicycling enhances the transportation system upon which all businesses depend. Increasing the number of trips made by bicycle expands the carrying capacity of our existing infrastructure, and lessens the demand for costly roadway expansions. Cyclists can easily maneuver through and around snarled traffic, covering short distances in equal or less time than car drivers, and arriving at work on time more often.

Zero Pollution. Bicycles are 100% non-polluting since they are powered by people and not fossil fuels. Every trip made by a bike instead of a car reduces the burden of low-level ozone, nitrous oxides, carbon dioxide, soot and noise on our environment and our health. Since short (0-5 miles) car-trips are the most polluting type of trip, encouraging employees who live within five miles of work to commute by bicycle can make a huge difference in everyone's quality of life.

Good Corporate Citizenship. Support for bicycle commuting promotes your company's public image as a community-oriented and environmentally responsible employer. It says to the public that your company is concerned about pollution, traffic congestion, energy use, overall public health, and the well-being of your employees.

Getting Started

Launching a successful bicycle commute program that's tailored to your business may seem daunting at first, but it is as easy as 1,2,3...

Appoint an on-site Bicycle Commuting Coordinator.

This is the individual responsible for planning and carrying out project goals, and for acting as a liaison between project participants and company administration. Choose a person whose other job responsibilities provide a logical tie-in to employee bicycle commuting promotions, such as your company's human services, community relations, wellness or employee transportation coordinator. It is helpful if this individual is a cyclist, but even more importantly, they should have enthusiasm, autonomy, and time to develop the program.

Assess current commuter habits and bicycle commuting potential at your business.

Begin by taking inventory of facilities and programs that already exist at or near your business related to bicycle commuting. Are showers, lockers, changing facilities, and/or bicycle parking already provided on site? Is there already an employee wellness program to which a bicycle commuting component could be added?

Conduct an Employee Transportation Survey.

This will help you learn about your employee's demographics (how far away do they live?) transportation habits and preferences (who bicycle commutes or would like to try?), and determine what facilities, incentives, or types of education would encourage more employees at your business to bicycle. Why worry about installing showers if your employees tell you that what they really want is more secure bicycle parking?

Methods for survey distribution/collection:

Distribute at payday, in employee paycheck envelopes or at payroll window.

Set up a table in the employee lunchroom.

Post on company website.

Distribute via company-wide e-mail or newsletter.

Offer freebies or incentives for completing and returning surveys

Establish a Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)

The BAC's purpose is to assist the Bicycle Commuting Coordinator in developing ideas, implementing and evaluating strategies, maximizing participation and sustaining interest in your bicycle commute program. Its mission should be sanctioned by company administration. Composition of your BAC should be representative of your company, containing cyclists and other interested persons. BAC members can provide one-on-one assistance to novice bicycle commuters by answering their questions, assisting with route finding, even accompanying them on their first bicycle ride to work. Your BAC can also be a liaison to public entities' issues that affect bicycle access to your company, but are beyond the company's direct control, such as necessary road improvement projects and bike route maintenance.

Education

Employees may be hesitant to try bicycle commuting because they feel they don't know enough about how to do it. They may need help finding a comfortable bike route to work, or they may want to learn more about buying and maintaining a bike, dressing, carrying gear and navigating traffic effectively. To the novice, bicycle commuting may seem complex and mysterious. In fact, it's as easy as, well, riding a bike! Here are some ways to provide information about bicycle commuting:

Schedule a brown bag workshop series.

No doubt, there are seasoned bicycle commuters at your business who would be happy to share their expertise for an hour. Local bike shops might be willing to send an employee to talk about buying or maintaining a bike, and many individuals are willing to lead workshop sessions as well. Provide door prizes and encourage a sense of camaraderie among regular attendees.

Sponsor an Effective Cycling Course.

Effective Cycling is a national curriculum that teaches bicyclists how to be safe, predictable and effective roadway users. The core course consists of nine hours of classroom and on-bike

instruction, taught by nationally certified instructors. Additional courses are available on bicycle commuting and children's cycling.

Coordinate a Bike Buddy Program.

First, identify a handful of experienced bicycle commuters at your business who would be willing to spend a little time mentoring a novice. Note where they live. Some members of your BAC might also be willing to serve as Bike Buddies. Then advertise that hands-on help is available to new bike commuters if they'd like it. Try and match Bike Buddies with new commuters who live in the same part of town. Their job is to provide new bicycle commuters with information, advice and moral support. They can even offer to meet new commuters before work and accompany them on their first ride.

Incentives and Promotional Activities

A successful bicycle commuting program has the commitment of the top management and is promoted on a regular basis. By backing up their endorsement with financial or other incentives, employers can demonstrate that their commitment is sincere, and that they regard bicycling as a legitimate and professionally acceptable mode of transportation.

There are many ways of promoting bicycle commuting at your business. Consider the following list to be a springboard, and let your imagination run wild!

Giveaways

Offer a free "starter kit" to bicycle commute program recruits. Include such items as; a patch kit, reflective stickers, water bottle, bike map, and a copy of the Bicycle Commuter's Handbook.

Hold monthly prize drawings for program participants, perhaps in conjunction with brown-bag workshops.

Have t-shirts made featuring your company logo and a bike-friendly design or slogan. Then give these away to bicycle action committee members, or bicycle commute program participants.

Offer free or subsidized tune-ups at a local bicycle shop.

Special Events

Participate in the citywide Bike to Work Week event. Appoint a worksite coordinator to handle registration. Offer free food, prizes, or on-site bicycle adjustments to employees who participate.

Implement a commuter challenge contest with other area businesses.

Hold a "Pedal with the CEO" day.

Stage a bike rodeo for employee's children.

Sponsor recreational rides and fitness races.

Subsidize an Effective Cycling class.

Acknowledgements

Recognize bicycle commuters in your company newsletter or on a bulletin board display. Give awards to "dedicated bicycle commuters" who ride more than 50% of the workdays in a specified period.

Other Programs and Incentives

Provide discounts or subsidies on the purchase of bicycles, helmets, or other commuting equipment.

Provide financing or payroll deduction for bicycle purchases.

Offer cash back to cyclists who agree not to use employee parking spaces.

Provide travel reimbursement (.10/mile) to bicyclists.

Allow employees to earn .25 hour vacation time per day of bicycle commuting.

Offer flextime or a fifteen-minute grace period for bicycle commuters.

Program Maintenance

If you determine what it might take to get your employees to commute by bicycle, install the necessary facilities, distribute information on bicycle commuting, sponsor incentive programs and stage promotional events, then you will have gotten your bicycle commute program off to a great start. However, your work is not quite finished. How will you maintain employee interest in bicycle commuting? How will you monitor progress? Here are a few final suggestions.

Publish program updates on a regular basis in company publications.

Continue to meet with your Bicycle Action Committee on a regular basis.

Stay in contact with new bicycle commuters. A published interview or commuter profile could be an interesting way to draw attention to the program.

Conduct a follow-up survey at the conclusion of the bicycling season (fall) to measure the success of the program and obtain feedback for improvement.



BIKE, WALK, BUS WEEK 2007

In celebration of *National Bike to Work Week* May 14th - May 18th, Billings hosted its first ***Bike, Walk, Bus Week***. The idea was to encourage businesses and organizations to entice people to use alternate transportation modes during that week by providing incentives to their employees and/or the public to participate. This has been a successful campaign in the Missoula community for the past 16 years so Billings patterned some of the activities from Missoula's years of experience. We're hoping to get more folks on board next year and grow this event and in so doing also help in changing some people's lifestyles so that they lead a more active, healthy and car free life.

One of the fun events during the week that got considerable media coverage was the Sneakers, Spokes and Sparkplug Challenge that Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council hosted along with a free barbecue for the public that used alternate transportation to come to the event. By the way, the bikers won the event and even most of the walkers/runners came in before the car drivers. YES! for people power.



The following list of activities was provided during this initial Bike, Walk, Bus Week. A special "Thanks" to everyone that helped make this such a successful undertaking.

- **RIDE FREE ALL WEEK ON THE MET TRANSIT** The City of Billings Met Transit buses will provide FREE bus service on all routes during Bike Walk Bus Week. Sponsored by Met Transit. Ron Wenger 657-8218
- **DOWNTOWN ARCHITECTURAL TREASURE HUNT** Participants get a free pass to the Western Heritage Center if they correctly identify all the architectural elements in the self-guided treasure hunt in Billings downtown. Pick up your treasure hunt game sheet at the Western Heritage Center, 2822 Montana Ave.



- **SNEAKERS, SPOKES & SPARK PLUG CHALLENGE** Noon, May 16th Multiple-stop errands run competition between teams of walkers/runners, bicyclists and motorists to demonstrate viability of getting around town without a car. Start and finish at the Northern Plains Resource Council at 220 S. 27th. Barbecue for the public from 11 am - 2 pm. during the competition. Discount provided for patrons using alternate transportation to the event. Come cheer on your favorite competitors and have lunch. Sponsored by Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council. Merry Ann Peters 248-1154
- **OPEN SHOWERS** for anyone during the week that bikes or runs/walks to work. Activate America YMCA 402 N. 32nd 248-1685
- **10 % DISCOUNT ON HELMETS & LIGHTS** during Bike Walk Bus Week if you bike to the Spoke Shop, 1910 Broadwater Ave. 656-8342

- **ONE FREE BEER** on Thursday evening for those who bike or walk to work and over to the Yellowstone Valley Brewing Company, 2123 1st. Ave. N., George Moncure 245-0918
- **MAGIC CITY TRAIL TREK** Family oriented fun run, walk, bike on the trail with entertainment and barbecue at Earl Guss Park, Sunday, May 20th 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Registration forms at local bike shops and at the Parks Department. In honor of National Trails Day and the GO Play Campaign.
- **MAYOR RON TUSSING** will ride his bike to work or to any of his meetings from Tuesday through Friday during BWBW. He is also participating in the Sneakers, Spokes & Spark Plug Challenge as one of the bikers.
- **DONATION BIKES** will be accepted to fix up or use for parts to provide underprivileged kids with a bike. Call Derek Stone at 208-3405 if you can help or donate a bike.



EMPLOYEE INCENTIVES

- **GOOD EARTH MARKET** Provide Lunch for any employees at GEM that use alternate transportation during the week. 259-2622
 - **MONTANA CONSERVATION VOTERS** If employees use alternate transportation all week they will receive two bus ride pass card (10 punches on each card) Theresa Keaveny 254-1593
 - **YMCA** Employees will be rewarded as part of the Activate America Campaign if they bike walk or bus to work that week.
 - **ST. JOHNS MINISTRIES** Employees will get additional bonus points towards their Wellness program which provides cash bonuses.
 - **HDR INC.** Bike rack from Spoke Shop. Each day
- that an employee participates using alternate transportation, they get another entry into the drawing for a chance for a great prize.
 - **CITY OF BILLINGS** For those employees biking to work during BWBW, they will receive double their miles for the Wellness Program for the chance for three grand prize drawings
 - **MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BILLINGS** Campus competition for employees to Bike/Walk/Bus or Carpool. MSUB's goal is to save 500 miles during the week. Employee participants will track the miles saved during the week and there will be a healthy lunch provided at noon on Friday, May 18th with a lunch time speaker to celebrate the miles saved.
 - **YELLOWSTONE DERMATOLOGY & SKIN CANCER CLINIC** Employees will receive movie passes as incentives to Bike, Walk or Bus to work.
 - **BILLINGS CLINIC** Providing incentives through their Wellness Program for the BWBW.
 - **ST.VINCENT HEALTHCARE** Supports BWBW by encouraging employees to be environmentally friendly & green and Bike, Walk, Bus to work. Numerous walking activities available to employees.
 - Walk-n-Talk with the Doc, Tuesdays at 5:30pm at YMCA
 - Walk-n-Talk with the Doc, Wednesday noon at SVH campus
 - Heart and Sole Run (walk) June 9
 - Walk with Spirit, team activity through Spirit of Women with prizes and other incentives.
 - **YELLOWSTONE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT** will offer:
 - Bottled water to participants each day
 - YCCHD water bottle to anyone who participates at least one day
 - Sunscreen packet to anyone who participates at least one day
 - Entry into a drawing for a gift certificate to a sporting goods place for anyone who participates at least 2 days. Those who participate all 5 days will have their name entered in the drawing twice.

Riders crowd public transit systems

Highest use since the 1950s t more than 10 billion trips

By Barbara Hagenbaugh
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Ridership on public transportation jumped to the highest level in nearly five decades in 2006 as high gas prices and expanded bus and train service enticed people to park their cars.

More than 10 billion trips were taken on buses and rail lines last year, the American Public Transportation Association says in a report to be released today.

That's up 2.9% from 2005 and the highest level since 1957. Ridership rose three consecutive years through 2006 and increased 28% in the 10 years since 1996.

The rise in 2006 came as gasoline prices increased, coming within pennies of the all-time record, not adjusted for inflation, reached following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. "Certainly, a lot of the growth last year was with the high gas prices," APTA President William Miller says.

But Miller says a number of other factors, such as in-

creased road congestion and improved transit service, were also likely in play. Ridership was up 4% in the fourth quarter from the same period a year earlier, even though gas prices had fallen from their earlier peaks, APTA says.

Kim Little, 51, of Tulsa started taking the bus to work in May. While she expected it to be a temporary solution to higher gas prices, she has stuck with the bus.

"I just love it, I absolutely love it," says Little, who works in human resources for the city of Tulsa.

Not only is she saving gas money, but taking the bus for her 13-mile trip to work has cut commuting stress. Plus, she's made some new friends: "I've met some great people on the bus. That's been a fun, unexpected benefit."

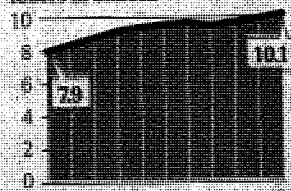
The increase in ridership has put some strains on local transit systems. Around the USA, systems say they are trying to find ways to reduce crowding:

► **Salt Lake City.** The number of trips taken on Salt Lake City's light rail rose 14% in 2006 to a record. The

More riders

Transit ridership rose to its highest level in 49 years last year.

Riders in billions



Source: American Public Transportation Association

By Nancy K. Malachuk, USA TODAY

rising demand led the Utah Transit Authority to buy 29 used rail cars from San Jose, Calif. Officials haven't had time even to paint the new cars that have gone into service. Instead, they plastered stickers over the old labeling to get the cars on the rails as soon as possible.

"They're not pretty," spokesman Justin Jones says. But "it's a ride and people don't mind."

► **Washington.** Ridership on Metrorail in the nation's capital rose 5.3% to a record in the 2006 fiscal year, which ended June 30. The transit system is buying new cars to meet passenger demand.

► **San Francisco.** The number of trips on the Bay Area Rapid Transit train system also rose to a record last year. BART also has been increasing the number of cars, lengthening trains in the system.

► **Tulsa.** Ridership rose 17% on local buses and 43% on park-and-ride bus service last year. Tulsa Transit has added a bus on one route and is considering adding a commuter rail line, spokeswoman Cynthia Staab says.