



# The Squeaky Wheel

Issue No. 18

Newsletter of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates

September 2004

## *From the President* **It's Not Always Easy Being a Bike Commuter**

*By Lea Brooks*

I'm starting this month's column by thanking every one of you for bicycling for transportation. After being a bike commuter for so many years, sometimes I forget how much tenacity it takes to choose the bike and leave the vehicle parked at home.

The benefits of bicycle commuting are many, including exercise, saving money and being kind to Mother Nature. So why aren't more people using their bikes for transportation? Any number of obstacles — including an inconvenient and unsafe route, an encounter with a rude motorist and lack of secure parking — can discourage a beginner from ever trying again.

Although the state and local governments give lip service to bike commuting, the lack of continuous, safe and convenient bike routes speaks volumes about the weak political will to balance the transportation system. Yes, politicians are paying more attention to the needs of bicy-

clists and pedestrians. But the amount of work ahead to make a significant difference in this car-obsessed society is staggering.

I was recently reminded of this challenge when contacted by a new employee at the

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## **"Transportation Policy is Health Policy"**

*By Walt Seifert*

State Public Health Officer Dr. Richard Jackson says "transportation policy is health policy."

Jackson made a presentation about the impacts of the built environment and land use on public health to a group of California Environmental Protection Agency employees



by saying that health care costs in the United States are enormous, representing 14 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.

The health aspect of transportation that has been getting the most attention recently is

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## **Membership Milestone**

SABA's membership has reached more than 900. Next goal: 1,000 members — a nice round number. It's a far cry from the days when SABA was a pipsqueak, at least in terms of organization size.

Thank you for your support. Size does matter. We're not quite Godzilla yet, but every member makes a difference in how we are perceived and how effective we are. As we grow, so does our influence and our capabilities.

We continue to rely on volunteers to do much of our work. With more members, we have more interests and skills to draw upon.

We could not have climbed this far without the support of many friends. We've had generous support from The Rest Stop and City Bicycle Works. Kuzins and Kumpany again this year went far beyond the call of duty helping with our largest ever direct mail effort.

Help us to get to 1,000 members. We'll have some special prizes for the lucky 1,000<sup>th</sup>. If you know someone who rides or would like to ride, ask him or her to consider joining. The membership of recreational clubs and staunch supporters such as the Sacramento Bike Hikers, Sacramento Wheelmen,

Davis Bike Club and Sun City Roseville Cycling Club plus our hundreds of family memberships means SABA already speaks for thousands of area cyclists.

It would be great to get to the 1,000 membership plateau technically as well. ☼

## SABA Mission

*SABA represents bicyclists.  
Our aim is more and safer trips by bike.*

## SABA Vision

*Bicycling for everyday transportation is common  
because it is safe, convenient and desirable.*

SABA's Folsom Chapter, the Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates (FABA), meets at 7 p.m. the third Thursday of the month. For more information, call Chapter Chair Tony Powers at (916) 353-1745 or you may e-mail FABA at [faba@tomatoweb.com](mailto:faba@tomatoweb.com).

## The Squeaky Wheel

The Squeaky Wheel is published monthly by the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, 909 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 118, Sacramento, CA 95814. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SABA, P.O. Box 1295, Sacramento CA 95812-1295.

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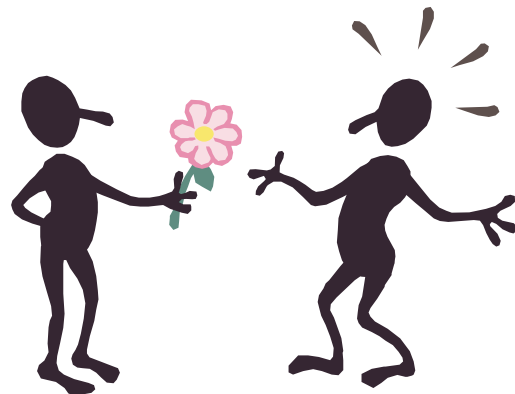
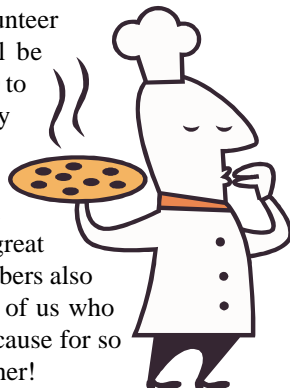
Phone: (916) 444-6600  
E-mail: [saba@sacbike.org](mailto:saba@sacbike.org)  
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## Welcome new members!

Lea Adams	Mark Lacher
John Albert	Lee & Frank Le Fevre
Ron & Noelle Anderson	George Lee
Richard Baker	Susan & John Lindow
Scott & Deborah Baron	Richard Mancina
Lela Bayley	Ann Mansoor
Cameron & Romel Billeci	Barry Marcus
Peggy Blair	Kate Martin
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William Bronte	Brian May
Steve Burrall	George McEnroe
Tim & Marilyn Byquist	Tim McHargue
Chris Calhoun	Marie McLean
Ruthann Biel & Bill Claypool	Stephen M. Miller
Hank Conley	Martin Morgenstern
Michael Cuilla	Neil Nipper
Julie Dehart	Melanie Northrop
Jeff Dibble	Mike O'Connell
John Disney	Jerry Perry
Teri Duarte	Marilyn Peterson
Ken Endelman	Cliff & Deb Popejoy
Mary Finegan	Craig Rakela
Sylvia Fox	Dick Ratliff
Cara Gomes	Richard Robinson
Alan Lukka & Joan Gregg	Jack Sebben
Dianne Gregory	Gordon Sheridan
Jim Gross	Kathy Somerton
Krista Hart	Robert Sommer
John Herrman	Kathy Strickley
Mark Howard	Robert Sullivan
Andrew Howell	Fred Taugher
Nancy Huber	Amy Terrell
Brian R Jones	Judy Tracy
John & Nancy Jungerman	Ron Vengco
Ralph Kasarda	Andrew Walter
Don Knutson	Wayne Weissbecker
Jim Konopka	Buzz & Jan Wiesenfeld
Jim Kotrous	Desiree Wilson
Barbara Kronick	Luke Wilson
	Roland Wooster

## SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

The monthly SABA Volunteer Work and Pizza Party will be Thursday, Oct. 14 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at SABA Planetary HQ, 909 12<sup>th</sup> Street. We have a lot of new members that everyone needs to meet and welcome, and this is a great opportunity! Our new members also need to come meet the rest of us who have been working for our cause for so many years. Let's get together!



## Welcome back

Barrett B. Alexander

*President, from page 1*

California Department of Health Services (DHS) where I work. I have previously vented in this column about DHS' lack of support for bicycle commuters despite its mission to protect and promote public health.

While the situation at DHS has improved considerably under the new administration, this new employee's experience demonstrates why many potential bike commuters find the obstacles insurmountable. It also underscores the key role SABA must continue to play to persuade policymakers and employers to make it easy and convenient for bicycle commuters.

This individual recently moved to Sacramento from the Midwest to work as a contract employee for DHS. She lives in the vicinity of 8<sup>th</sup> and E streets downtown and had primarily been using J, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> streets to pedal to work.

She was shocked and frightened by motorist behavior during her short commute. The motorists showed their displeasure at the presence of a bicyclist by honking, screaming at her to get off "their" road and aggressive driving. She wanted to know if there was a safer route to work and also asked if the worksite had showers, clothing lockers and secure bicycle parking. No one in her office knew.

The employee called after seeing my phone number on an electronic flier advertising a recent DHS Bicycle Users Group (BUG) lunchtime workshop designed to encourage department employees to ride their bikes to work. BUG is comprised of DHS employees who encourage healthy lifestyles, including bicycle commuting. She couldn't make the workshop, but wanted to know if I could answer her questions.

Yes, DHS has showers and locker rooms in two of the four block-size buildings that comprise the East End Complex that fronts Capitol Avenue between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> streets. However, there are no signs indicating their existence or location. Yes, there is a secure bicycle cage. But you have to apply to have the \$2 monthly charge taken out of your paycheck with the state Department of General Services parking division eight blocks away.

On the plus side, she is allowed to use the secure bicycle cage at DHS because BUG successfully lobbied to reverse a policy that prohibited contract employees from using it. Several contract employees had their bicycles stolen from the free bicycle racks in front of the buildings before this discriminatory policy was finally reversed.

Regarding a safe route: Downtown Sacramento is dominated by one-way, three-lane "freeway" streets without bike lanes like J, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> that are as bicycle-unfriendly as roadways can be. Although the choices for bicycling downtown are dismal, some routes are better than others.

I encouraged her to try 14<sup>th</sup> Street, a north-south route that runs by the Sacramento Convention Center, and then use the sidewalk around Capitol Park. Although it's illegal to ride on most sidewalks, state police allow bicyclists on the sidewalk around the park because there is no other safe bike route downtown.

With a safer route and information about bicycle facilities at East End, DHS' new employee will hopefully continue to ride her bike to work. She has already shown great tenacity. Lessons learned:

- DHS and all employers need to do a better job informing their workforce about the availability of secure bicycle parking and shower and locker room facilities. Signing up to use a bike cage should not require a 16-block round trip. Employers who do not have such facilities need to accommodate their employees who want to pedal to work to improve the health of the workforce and to reduce traffic congestion, air pollution and the need for more parking lots.
  - SABA must continue to support the efforts of Bicycle User Groups like the one at DHS to lobby their employers for better bicycle accommodations. BUGs are invaluable to help new commuters get started by offering support and encouragement.
  - SABA must continue to lobby the city of Sacramento to convert some downtown streets and other local governments to expand and improve their existing facilities for bicycling. The capital of California should be a showcase for a balanced transportation system that includes a regional network of on- and off-street safe and convenient bicycle routes to all destinations, including work, school and shopping areas.
- Finally, SABA is initiating a Share the Road program that has been successful in other counties by asking area cyclists to recommend roads where signs should be posted to remind all users of the road to follow the rules and treat others with respect. (A nominating form is provided in this issue of *The Squeaky Wheel* on page 5, and is also posted on the SABA Web site at <http://www.sacbike.org>). The signs are an important first step in a comprehensive effort that will include education and enforcement to make our roads safer for all users. ☸

## Department of Corrections

In the August 2004 issue of *The Squeaky Wheel*, we failed to credit the three photos in the Tip of the Month article as having been taken by Natalie Morris. Natalie is also featured in our Member Profile on page 4 of this issue.

## SABActions

### Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- Caltrans District 3 Bicycle Focus Group
- Sacramento Transportation and Air Quality Collaborative Funding Team
- American Lung Association Sacramento Emigrant-Trails on Measure A

### Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Sacramento Area Council of Governments regarding the Draft Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian & Trails Master Plan
- California Department of Parks and Recreation in support of the Ninos Parkway bike trail
- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger supporting SB 1087 (Soto) Safe Routes to School

## Community Design Grants

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) announced its first Community Design grants. Almost \$13 million in grant funding was allocated to proposals that best met smart growth principles. The winning projects ranged from creating a city center in Rancho Cordova to restoring a historic hotel in Marysville.

We can hope that all the projects in some way will encourage more trips by bike. The project with the most clear linkage to cycling is probably the Hurley Way revitalization. It will plan the revitalization of a two-mile segment of Hurley Way from Watt Avenue to the American River Parkway. The resulting plan will include the analysis, design and planning of sidewalk infrastructure, pedestrian crosswalks, transit facilities, intersection and drainage improvements, landscaping and bicycle lanes.

SACOG has \$500 million in Community Design funding to distribute over the next 20 years. More information on the projects and Community Design program is at [www.sacog.org](http://www.sacog.org). ☉

## Safe Routes to School renewed

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 1087 (Soto) into state law on September 9. As a result, California's award-winning Safe Routes to School program will continue for another three years with an annual allocation of \$20-25 million dollars. Since its inception in 1999, the popular Safe Routes to School program has funded \$90 million worth of traffic safety projects near schools in almost all of California's 58 counties. The Safe Routes to School program has been instrumental in both making communities safer for families and encouraging healthy transportation choices for children, who are highly vulnerable to injuries and deaths caused by motor vehicles and increasingly at-risk for diseases related to physical inactivity.

This important victory for walking, bicycling, child safety and physical activity promotion can be attributed to the dedicated efforts of many organizations and individuals. Senator Nell Soto authored the Safe Routes to School legislation. The California Alliance for Transportation Choices, the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP), the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, California Bicycle Coalition, Odyssey, Marin County Bicycle Coalition and many others have played key roles in the reauthorization of California's Safe Routes to School program and in building the Safe Routes to School movement. SABA offered its support of the program's renewal in a letter to Governor Schwarzenegger.

To learn more about Safe Routes to School, see <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoute2.htm>. ☉

## Member Profile: Natalie Morris

By Rachel Showstack

The Squeaky Wheel would like to recognize the work of our volunteer photographer Natalie Morris, a recent graduate of California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), with a passion for bicycles and photography.

Natalie took photos for the CSUS newspaper, the State Hornet, for three semesters and graduated with a degree in photography. Now she does freelance photography for magazines in addition to working as a naturalist at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael.

She commutes to work by bike every day and also goes mountain biking on a regular basis. "I love the sense of freedom and self-reliance I get from riding my bike," she said. "You can go where cars can't go, and you don't have to rely on something you can't fix."

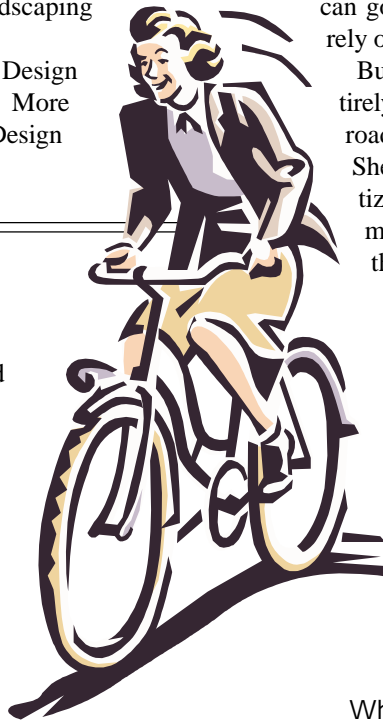
But her commute to Effie Yeaw is not always entirely pleasant. She takes El Camino Avenue, a busy road that's missing a bike lane in several places. She argues that local government should prioritize making El Camino safer for cyclists because many middle school and high school students use the road to get to school.

According to Natalie, educating Sacramento drivers on cyclists' rights would also make the area much safer.

"When there is no bike lane, drivers tell me to use the sidewalk. That's not right," she said. Cyclists are actually supposed to ride on the road with cars and observe all of the same laws that cars do.

In her free time, Natalie rides with the Folsom Breakouts, a mountain biking team in Folsom, and has attended several local races.

Natalie's contribution to The Squeaky Wheel includes the dooring photos in the August Squeaky Wheel. ☉



## Davis Bicycle Auction October 9

More than 350 bicycles will be available for sale to the highest bidder at the biannual University of California, Davis (UCD), bicycle auction on Saturday, October 9. The auction is open to the public. The bicycles may be viewed from 8 - 9 a.m., with bidding getting underway at 9 a.m. and lasting until all items are sold. The auction takes place behind the UCD Office of Transportation & Parking Services on Extension Center Drive, off of Hutchison Drive between Highway 113 and La Rue Road. Bicycles of many sizes, types and conditions are available for sale. Bicycles may be licensed at time of sale.

Purchases may be made with cash or check.

For further information, call the UCD Transportation & Parking Services Bicycle Program Coordinator at (530) 752-BIKE (752-2453) or visit <http://www.taps.ucdavis.edu/bicycles.htm>. ☉



*You may have seen these "SHARE THE ROAD" signs around California....*

*....Now the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA) wants to know where YOU would like to see them in OUR area.*

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*Think about those places you ride, or would like to ride, where you might feel more comfortable on your bicycle if a "SHARE THE ROAD" sign was up nearby. It could be a narrow lane, a stretch of road with little or no shoulder, a merge spot, a bad road or trail intersection, a freeway interchange – we know there are plenty of places to choose from.*

*So please, take a minute to fill out this short form and return it to SABA. We'll compile the results, rank locations and work with local agencies to have signs installed. If you have questions, please call us at 444-6600.*

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Street, Road or Highway (and address of block if known):

Nearest cross-street(s):

Start and end points of problem area (as close as you can describe):

Direction(s) of travel (describe N/S/E/W, or otherwise):

Describe the problem:

(The following information is optional, but it will help us follow up if we need to.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fold this survey in thirds at the ----- lines on other side, add postage and drop it in the mail by September 30.  
Or, you can fax it to us at 444-6661. SABA thanks you for your input.

From:

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Place  
Stamp  
Here



PO Box 1295  
Sacramento, CA 95811-1295

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IMPORTANT - "SHARE THE ROAD" INFORMATION

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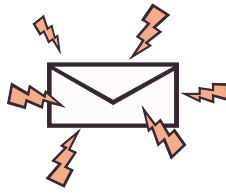
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## Letters to the Editor

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### We want to hear from you!

Preferably e-mail your letter to: [saba@sacbike.org](mailto:saba@sacbike.org)

or mail it to: **SABA**

**P.O. Box 1295**

**Sacramento, CA 95812-1295**

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

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#### *Policy, from page 1*

how little physical activity Americans get as a result of driving virtually everywhere. Kids don't walk or bike to school. Adults live in sprawling suburbs where driving is a necessity. At the same time, obesity rates are soaring. Diabetes is related to obesity and inactivity. Jackson said the lifetime risk of contracting diabetes for a boy born in 2000 is 33 percent. For a girl, the risk is 38 percent.

Jackson's statistics tumbled forth. One third of some cancers are linked to obesity and inactivity. The fastest growing type of surgery in the United States is bariatric — stomach stapling — for the morbidly obese.

Depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States and worldwide. The treatment for depression is medication, social contact and exercise. According to Jackson, exercise works as well as meds.

Air pollution from automobile use also affects health. Jackson cited a study that showed when traffic restrictions dramatically decreased auto travel during the Atlanta Olympics, acute care visits for asthma dropped by more than 40 percent.

The health impacts of transportation aren't just related to exercise and air pollution. Jackson said there is one vehicle fatality per 66 million miles driven in the United States. "For every 66 miles you drive, you are buying a one-in-a-million lottery ticket for death," he said. The more people drive, the more automobile deaths there are. In car-dependent Dallas, there are 11.3 auto crash deaths per 100,000 population annually. In New York City, the rate is 2.5 deaths per 100,000.

Women today, pressed into duty as chauffeurs, are driving twice as much as their mothers.

Jackson's book, *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*, written with Howard Frumkin and Lawrence Frank, details their findings and conclusions about the significant and sobering relationships between health, the built environment and transportation. ☼

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## Bigger Digs for SABA

SABA's Intergalactic HQ has moved, but we didn't stray out of the solar system. We merely traversed the hallway, occupying two new rooms in Suites 110 and 114, at 909 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Many thanks to the American Lung Association Sacramento Emigrant-Trails for continuing to give us a home. ☼

## Measure Your Bike Chain for Stretch and Wear

*By Matt Colonius*

Safe routes to schools, clean roads, bike path maintenance and signage, new and improved access and facilities as our region continues to grow, lighter wheels or a lighter bike, time to ride — cycling advocates have a lot of things to consider.

But don't forget about your bike chain — at least once a month ought to take care of it.

After an early spring and long summer, a chain that was in brand new condition can be ready to wreak havoc on a bike. Drivetrain components — the derailleurs, chainrings, cassette and chain — are some of the most expensive components on a bike. These components can last for years if they are only used with chains that haven't worn past a 1/16" tolerance. Miles, hours, weather, rider strength, speed and maintenance all contribute to chain wear.

However, the only accurate way to tell if a chain is worn is to measure it. A worn chain can quickly wear out these components and ruin the shifting accuracy and sometimes the safety of a bicycle. A simple measurement of the bike chain after a summer of riding can save hundreds of dollars in maintenance costs and parts and keep the bike's shifting accurate and predictable. The distance between each segment of a bike chain is 1/2" — that's important to know because if the edge of the link rivet head at one end of the ruler is 12-1/16 inch or more from the identical rivet head edge 24 segments away, the chain is wearing out. If the measurement is 12-1/4", the chain has stretched far enough to begin creating severe wear in the drivetrain. There are tools costing between \$5 and \$20 to gauge chain wear, but a ruler works quite well.

A worn chain won't mesh with cogs on the cassette or the chain ring teeth and the chain will skip and pop under hard pedaling. After 1/16" of stretch, the cogs will begin to wear at a disastrous rate. The square, ramped cog profile becomes narrower at the interface with the chain and won't fully engage with the chain. And with less material to engage the chain, wear accelerates even faster.

Since cassettes and chain rings cost a great deal more than replacing a chain, expenses can quickly mount up. If a worn chain were to be used with several wheels or cassettes — that could be a very expensive consequence for not replacing one chain. A severely worn chain can also contribute to a fall during a hard effort off the saddle by skipping or breaking.

Chain life depends on routine cleaning and lubricating, weather conditions on bike rides, terrain and rider strength. Bigger, stronger, faster riders venturing out in miserable weather go through several chains a year. Those of us who don't get the opportunity to ride as much as the fast riders disappearing out of sight while we pedal along can be comforted. While we may be slower, our bikes are cleaner and our bikes probably won't need a new chain for months and months and months. ☼

**SABA**

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## REMINDER: Share the Road Sign Locations Needed

This issue of The Squeaky Wheel again includes a form on page 5 that we strongly encourage you to fill out to let us know where you think Share the Road Signs should be located in the Sacramento area. The SABA ad hoc Share the Road Committee will compile the results, apply selection criteria and work with local agencies to get signs installed at the selected locations.

Signs are an important first step in a Share the Road program. But SABA envisions a comprehensive program that re-

inforces the message with education of motorists and bicyclists (including school children), enforcement, publicity of bicyclist fatalities and use of other media, including public service announcements, bumper stickers and, potentially, billboards.

Again, if you have additional ideas for the program or if you would like to join the committee's next meeting, please contact Aron Livingston at (916) 457-7973 or [AronL@surewest.net](mailto:AronL@surewest.net). The committee will soon be finalizing the program description and its components for implementation through grants or other funding. ☸

### SABA Business and Organization Members

Business members with an \* offer SABA members a discount.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Resources Board</li> <li>• American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails</li> <li>• American River Bicycle* (Marconi Ave.)</li> <li>• American River Bicycle* (Florin Rd.)</li> <li>• American Warp Drive</li> <li>• The Bicycle Business</li> <li>• Bicycles Plus*</li> <li>• Bob's Cycle Center</li> <li>• Body Concepts</li> <li>• Chaney Chiropractic</li> <li>• City Bicycle Works*</li> <li>• Cycle California! magazine</li> <li>• Davis Bike Club</li> <li>• Fehr &amp; Peers Associates</li> <li>• Leslie T. Fong, DDS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 Corridor TMA</li> <li>• Franchise Tax Board</li> <li>• Gary Brustin, LLP</li> <li>• Gregorini &amp; Associates</li> <li>• Hannan Specialties</li> <li>• Henry B. Starkes, MD</li> <li>• The Hoyt Co.</li> <li>• Hull &amp; Honeycutt Marketing and Design</li> <li>• Inside Publications</li> <li>• Ken's Bike &amp; Ski</li> <li>• Kuzins &amp; Kumpany</li> <li>• LambertWebWorks.com*</li> <li>• Law Offices of K. Greg Petersen</li> <li>• Natomas Bike Shop*</li> <li>• Norcal AIDS Challenge</li> <li>• North Natomas TMA</li> <li>• Pacific Bicycle</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REI</li> <li>• The Rest Stop*</li> <li>• Rex Cycles</li> <li>• Sacramento Air Quality Management District</li> <li>• Sacramento Area Council of Governments</li> <li>• Sacramento Bike Hikers</li> <li>• Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op</li> <li>• Sacramento TMA</li> <li>• Sacramento Wheelmen</li> <li>• Sierra Engineering</li> <li>• SMUD</li> <li>• South Natomas TMA</li> <li>• Sports Rack</li> <li>• Sun City Roseville Cycling Club</li> <li>• Two Rivers Cider Company</li> <li>• UC Davis Transportation &amp; Parking Services</li> </ul> |
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