

Monday, October 27, 2008 6p.m.
Rogue Room, University of Oregon EMU

Attending the October 2008 GEARS Advocacy Committee meeting were Howard Bonnett, Paul Adkins, Eric Selker, Jim Colbert, Paul Moore, Briana Orr, Richard Hughes, Jackie Murdoff, and Sue Wolling.

The meeting started with an update on the November 10 GEARS Annual Meeting/Bike Swap. The event will be held on November 10 at the Vets Club, 1626 Willamette. The Annual Meeting, which will include election of new GEARS Board members and consideration of an amendment to GEARS by-laws, will take place from 7-7:30 p.m., with the Bike Swap following from 7:30-9 p.m. The Swap will allow bicyclists to buy/sell/exchange bikes and bike parts/accessories, and is open to the public. Richard has sent out a press release to publicize the event. There will be announcements in the Register-Guard and Eugene Weekly, and Richard will be interviewed on several radio stations.

Paul Adkins then updated us on GEARS Board elections. Since GEARS by-laws limit Board members to two consecutive terms, most of the current Board members will be “term-limited” out, and volunteers have stepped forward to fill most of their positions. Since no one has volunteered to serve as Ride Coordinator, Carlyn Watson will retain that position provided that members support a by-laws amendment that would allow Board members to serve more than two terms if no one else is available to replace them.

Various members then provided an update on GEARS Advocacy activities during the past six month. These include:

bRamble/Jamboree: Another successful Blackberry bRamble took

place in August, accompanied this year by the Jamboree—a family-oriented ride that attracted around 150 participants in its first year.

Bike Safety Education: Bike Safety Classes have just concluded at Hamlin, Monroe and Shasta Middle Schools. The BTA's Colette Ramirez is the instructor, and several GEARS members volunteered to help lead the students' community rides.

Safe Routes to School: Safe Routes to School has expanded greatly, thanks to its first year of employing a paid coordinator (Shane Rhodes). Shane has recently obtained a two-year grant that will help to expand the program further in the coming years.

Bike Rewards: The Bike Rewards Program (which offers discounts to GEARS members) now includes 28 businesses, including all Eugene-area bike shops. The Bike Rewards program has contributed significantly to a doubling of GEARS' paid memberships in the past six months.

Bike Education: Over 100 people have attended Bike Education classes (Skills I and II, Bike Commute Workshops, etc.). We're still hoping to increase enrollment, but this is a good start. In addition, Richard has taught Bike Education at Driver's Ed classes at local high schools, and at several Senior Centers.

University of Oregon Programs: A Bike Loan program has begun at the University of Oregon. The program currently has 30 bikes, obtained primarily from the Department of Public Safety as well as a few donations. These bikes are on long-term loan, primarily to international students. The students pay a \$65 deposit, which is refunded when they return the bike in working order at the end of the term. The program already has a long waiting list, and other

universities have expressed interest in establishing similar programs. The University also has a Bike Maintenance Shop, with 2 complete sets of tools and bike stands, and mechanics available to help with bike repairs. The Shop is available to students and other Outdoor Program members.

(Note: Eric expressed his interest in a short-term (i.e., an hour or two) bike loan program at the University, similar in concept to those in Paris, Washington D.C., and Stockholm, among other cities. He is researching the idea, and may apply for grants to get it started)

Eye-to-Eye: The Eye-to-Eye Campaign, which promotes safe behavior on public roads/paths, was launched in August in cooperation with the BTA, City of Eugene, Commuter Solutions, and other partners. For more information, see <http://www.seeingeyetoeye.org>.

Other: GEARS has also organized or participated in monthly Kidical Mass rides, the Bike Lights parade, the Bike Fair at the Science Factory, and Breakfast on the Bridges.

In response to a question about the Crest Drive streets, which many GEARS members have been involved in, Paul Moore reported that the plans for 18-foot streets without designated space for bicyclists have been approved, and engineering work is underway. Paul is interested in trying to meet with a small group of bicyclists and Crest Drive residents to see if there is any possibility of improving safety for bicyclists. The option of an appeal of the Crest Drive plans to the Land Use Board of Appeals and/or the Oregon State Court of Appeals remains a possibility.

Request for Projects: The group then discussed a request from the Thunderhead Alliance (a nation-wide consortium of bike

advocacy groups) for a list of bike projects that have been planned and approved, and are ready to build when funding is available. Since it's possible that Congress will pass a major infrastructure bill in the weeks after the election as a means of creating jobs, the Thunderhead Alliance wants to have a list of bikeway projects to propose as part of that bill. David Roth (City of Eugene Public Works-Engineering) provided a list of projects that he considers appropriate for the request. These include the Westmoreland Path Project, the West Bank Trail from River Avenue to the existing trail at Formac Avenue, the Commerce Connector Path (from the Fern Ridge Path to West 11th near the Target store), the Spring Boulevard Path, the Jessen Path (from Green Hill Road to Beltline near Golden Gardens Park in west Eugene), and the Delta Ponds Overpass (between Goodpasture Island Road and Robin Hood Lane, including a bridge over Delta Highway). Other members expressed support for two additional projects: an extension of the West Bank Trail to Beaver/Hunsaker north of Beltline, and an extension of the riverbank trail from Glenwood to Seavey Loop. Paul Moore and Paul Adkins will seek missing information about these projects, and submit this list of projects to the Thunderhead Alliance.

Advocacy Meetings: The group then discussed the future of Advocacy meetings. There was a general consensus that regular meetings would be advantageous, but that people lead busy lives and have limited time available for meetings. After considering various alternatives, the group decided to try combining the monthly GEARS Board meeting with meetings for Advocacy and Recreational Riding. For example, there might be a 30-minute GEARS Board meeting followed by a 30-minute general meeting for GEARS members (both advocacy and recreation), followed by a 30-minute breakout meeting (separate groups for advocacy and recreation) for brainstorming and discussing new ideas. Eric agreed to reserve rooms at the University beginning on the second

Tuesday of December, after the Board elections in November.

In the meantime, Jim Colbert offered his time to help keep the Web site more up-to-date with information about ongoing projects.

Announcements: Paul Adkins mentioned three upcoming opportunities:

Members are invited to join in the “Bike Move” to help a young woman move from her apartment to her new home six blocks away, entirely by bicycle. To join in, come to 1443 West 11th, Apt. 2 at 11 a.m. on Saturday, November 1. Bring any trailers/baskets/bungees etc. you have to help with the move.

A donor has offered a donation to establish a bicycle assembly area at the Eugene Airport. Paul has spoken with officials at the airport, who are eager to make this happen and establish Eugene as the first airport in Oregon to provide a space for bicyclists to assemble the bikes they have transported.

Oregon Cycling magazine is willing to publish a monthly column about bicycling issues/events in Eugene. Anyone interested in writing such a column should contact Karl at Oregon Cycling at ocycling@efn.org.