

September 2007

Volume 3, Issue 6



# Planning Focus

Bureau of Transportation Planning - Chris J. Herrick, P.E., Chief

## Calendar of Events

- ~Sept 3. Labor Day Holiday
- ~Sept 19. Pirate Day Celebration
- ~Sept 23. First Day of Autumn

## Birthdays



## September

- 4 - Thomas Green
- 15 - Cheryl Fisher
- 16 - Danny Bahre
- 22 - Michael Pauly
- 22 - David Gurs
- 30 - John Rosacker

Flower: [Morning Glory](#)  
Gem: [Sapphire](#)

## On this Day in September:

- ~Daniel H. Burnham, American architect, born September 4, 1846
- ~Elias Howe patented his sewing machine, September 10, 1846.
- ~Russians launched first rocket to the moon, September 12, 1959.
- ~Francis Scott Key wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the attack on Fort McHenry, September 14, 1814.
- ~Constitution of the United States signed, September 17, 1787

## Bikes Belong: Commuting

By Elaine Bryant



My friend, Sam, gets up every weekday morning to go to work. However he doesn't always take his car, but sometimes his bicycle. His preferred route of travel is to take the Shunga part of the way. Since the construction of the first phase of the bicycle/pedestrian trail in 1988, the Shunga has continued to grow and the money invested in it by the city and federal governments is substantial. It provides 12 miles of concrete path to be used and enjoyed by bicyclists, walkers, runners, and *commuters*.

I had the opportunity to ride with him one weekend morning recently. I had only been on the part of the trail that runs from Fairlawn to 21<sup>st</sup>, but no further. But that morning, I got to go to the east end. Smiling, I discovered that it was sort of like a miniature road system complete with road centerlines and a round about where the Freedom and Landon trails meet up with it. I view these specialized trails as roads where motor vehicles are prohibited, much like bicycles are prohibited from interstates.

Wildlife can be seen along the trail. We spotted a few animals along the path. A deer was eating leaves off a tree enjoying the morning as much as we were. Unlike motorists, we were thrilled to see a deer along our path. However, like motorists, we weren't too excited about the squirrels that couldn't help but dash in front of our bikes. I don't know what it is about squirrels. Rabbits, snails, and various birds also were found along the route. The trail certainly provides a way to be close to nature in an urban area.

Another person I know that commutes to work by bicycle is my father. My father, who is almost 63 years old, lives in Ulysses, Kansas with a population of 5,650. The distance between home and work is about one mile. So in the course of a day, he gets about 4 miles of riding in as he goes home for lunch. He rides this old orange Schwinn that has been around since before I was born. I rode it for a while when I was still at home. I liked it a lot because while in the saddle I had a comfy upright position and I felt like I was higher off the ground than I was with my other bicycles. So it just goes to show that you don't have to have the most top of the line commuter bike to commute by bicycle.

As we (KDOT) are all about multiple modes of travel, I'd like to encourage all of you to try out commuting to work by bicycle. It can be a very rewarding experience. As you heard in the June Translines, Duane Zimmerman thought it did wonders for his blood pressure. Bicycling is environmentally sustainable and healthy. Another reward is you'd have more money in your pocket from not filling your tank up as often. Planning a bike-friendly route should be a cinch for all the folks in planning. If you live some distance away from work, you could always consider driving to work with your bike, then riding home that night. The next day, ride to work and drive home. The key to commuting by bicycle is the get up early to beat the heat along with taking low traffic routes.

**A bit of bicycle history...**



Bicycle mechanics (Henry Ford, Wright Bros.) invented cars and airplanes using advanced bicycle technology. Neither could exist without pneumatic tires, precision bearings, tension-spoked wheels, chain-drive, rolled steel, and other technology invented for bicycles.



In 1888, John Dunlop invented pneumatic tires.



In 1870's, precision bearings were developed.



In 1870, James Starley and William Hillman invented the wire-spoke wheel.



In 1885, chain drive was introduced on the safety bicycle.



Method for manufacturing seamless pipes was developed in the late 1800s. As bicycle manufacturing gave way to auto manufacturing seamless tubes were still needed for gasoline and oil lines.



In 1880, the League of American Wheelman (later renamed League of American Bicyclists) was founded. It was the leading organization advocating for the improvement of roads and highways in the United States throughout the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Is Your Neighborhood Bikeable?**

By: Lisa Koch, AICP

According to the National Household Travel Survey (2001) only 8% of adults had ridden a bike in the previous week. Some evidence exists that there is a gap between people's current travel behavior and how they wish that they could travel. Research about how people would like to travel shows that biking would be more popular if facilities were put in place to make biking safer and more convenient.

Does your neighborhood make the grade? To find out, print off a Bikeability Checklist (<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikabilitychecklist.pdf>), put on your helmet, hop on your bike and take a close look at the facilities and driver behavior in your neighborhood. The Bikeability Checklist also provides ideas for how to make your neighborhood more "bicycle friendly".

Good luck and safe travels!!!



The bicycle is a curious vehicle. Its passenger is its engine.  
~John Howard

**DON'T FORGET!!! DONATE AT KDOT'S LABOR DAY BLOOD DRIVE!**  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH  
8:15 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.  
Please email [dannist@ksdot.org](mailto:dannist@ksdot.org) to reserve a time

**Bicycle News**

Adventure Cycling Association and several other organizations have teamed up with AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) to develop a national interstate route system – for bikes! To read more about this new development, go to this web address:  
<http://www.adventurecycling.org/routes/nbrn/usbikewaysystem.cfm>.

**HEADLINES**

**WELCOME**



Leif Holliday  
into the position  
of Traffic & Field  
Operations  
Engineer

Leslie Spencer-  
Fowler to the  
position of ITS  
Program Manager

Mitch Sothers  
into the Special  
Projects Engineer  
position in the  
GAD Unit

[T]he bicycle is the most efficient machine ever created: Converting calories into gas, a bicycle gets the equivalent of three thousand miles per gallon.  
~ Bill Strickland, *The Quotable Cyclist*

**Random Kansas Facts:**

Morton County sells the most trout fishing stamps of all the Kansas counties.

The world famous fast-food chain of Pizza Hut restaurants opened its first store in Wichita.



**Helen Schultz:  
A Woman in  
Transportation**



The bus transportation industry in the US began in the 1910's and 1920's with small family enterprises. Those venturing out in this business were primarily men. Helen Schultz paved the way in transit by establishing the first woman-owned bus line, Red Ball Transportation Company, in 1922. She secured the capital to purchase one vehicle and pay for her operating costs. She relied on word-of-mouth publicity for her two daily round trips between Charles City and Waterloo, IA. Her clientele were mostly women and traveling salesmen. By the fall of 1923, the Red Ball Transportation Company faced heavy debt. Still, it continued its operations. In June 1930, she sold the company and Schultz retired from the bus business.

Source: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/wit/bus.htm>

**Bicycle Commuting Issues and Solutions**

**Riding a bike in traffic during commute hours is dangerous.**

Actually, arterial roads are the *safest* place to ride. For maximum safety, take your rightful place in traffic and obey all traffic laws. Ride predictably, and don't ride too close to the curb or near enough to parked cars to get "doored." With advance planning, you can find a route that avoids heavy traffic and other potential hazards.

**Biking will make my commute take even longer.**

Most commutes will take longer by bicycle although some people have found it actually cuts down on their transit time. Within a city, cycling is much faster than any other mode of transportation, so driving to the edge of the downtown core and jumping on your bike from there is an option. If it does take longer, consider that the time you spend on your bicycle is probably more relaxing and rewarding.

**I don't own a road bike and my commute is already expensive.**

You may need to make an initial investment, but even if you buy a new road bike and equipment, it should pay off in lower commute costs in no time. It's best to purchase your commuting road bike from a bicycle dealer who will fit the bike to you and provide follow-up adjustments and repair. Some dealers carry used bikes, and really expensive road bikes can be found used for dirt cheap nowadays.

**My clothes will be wrinkled when I get to work.**

On a short, relatively flat ride, you may arrive in good shape and can wear your clothes to work without making them sweaty or wrinkly. For longer rides, you'll find that racks, bike bags and panniers are great for carrying a change of clothes to work wrinkle-free. You can also leave your work clothes at the office, or take the bus when you have special meetings that require dress attire.

Source: <http://www.bicyclesource.com/you/commuting/>



**New U.S. DOT Rule Allows States  
Flexibility to Build Roads and Bridges  
Faster**

"The rule allows certain design work to begin while the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is under way, still ensuring that the full range of alternatives is considered. Using this process, states are able to expedite the contract award process and start preliminary design while ensuring the objectivity of the NEPA decision-making process."

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/pressroom/fhwa0714.htm>

**HOW WELL DO YOU  
KNOW HOW TO RIDE?**

Take this brief quiz on the KDOT website to test your safe cycling knowledge!

<http://www.ksdot.org/burra/il/bike/biking/safecycle/quiz.asp>