

Celebrate National Bike Month with fun on wheels in Portage

May is National Bike Month. According to the League of American Bicyclists, it is "an opportunity to celebrate the unique power of the bicycle and the many reasons we ride. Whether you bike to work or school to save money or time, to preserve your health or the environment, to explore your community, or just to get to your destination, get involved in Bike Month in your city or state — and help get more people in your community out riding, too!"

TransPortage, a citizens sector organization working on sustainable prosperity for Portage County and our region, has been working with the Portage Park District, the Kent and Ravenna Parks and Recreation departments, and with local bicycle shops and businesses to promote National Bike Month.

Saturday, May 5, at 10 a.m., a 12-mile family fun ride begins at the Franklin Township Portage trail head at Beckwith's Orchard and ends at the Ravenna Athletic Center. Participants can then return to the beginning for refreshments and goodie bags. You can register for the ride by calling Portage Cyclery at 330-839-8429 or email eric@portagecyclery.org.

Monday, May 7, at 6:30 p.m., join in a discussion on Bicycle-Friendly Communities at the Kent Free Library. It is a chance to learn about local plans to extend our current bike path and lane system and to discuss what we can do to improve safety and awareness of bicycles in our communities. Bring your ideas and join the discussion.

Saturday, May 12, at noon, Pedal to the Parks will explore Fred Fuller Park by bicycle with Cathy Ricks, the Kent Parks and Recreation naturalist. We will meet at Dr. GreenBee on Burdick Way (behind Last Exit Books, East Main Street, in downtown Kent) and ride with marshals from Kent Cycle. After the ride we will meet at Kent Cycle for refreshments and family-friendly entertainment.

The week of May 13-18 is Bike to Work Week. Pick a day, plan a safe route, check your gear,

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Rick Hawksley



wear a helmet, and park your car. On May 18, Kent State University will host a Fuelless Friday, a day when everyone who is able is encouraged to bicycle to work.

On Saturday, May 19, why not ride your bike to River Day events that are happening along the Cuyahoga? More information can be found at www.cuyahogariver.net. For the more adventurous and skilled riders, we will meet at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. at Portage Cyclery, located between Kent and Ravenna at 2645 S.R. 59, for 25-mile road rides, both if you want to do a 50-mile ride. Refreshments and entertainment will be provided at 5 p.m. Call 330-839-8429 to register.

On Tuesday, May 22, at 6:30 p.m., join us at the Kent Free Library to learn about the benefits of bicycling. Representatives from planning agencies, health departments, parks and recreation departments, and TransPortage will discuss the health, economic, and ecological benefits of embracing a bicycling lifestyle. Come share your thoughts and experiences.

As more people, especially children, take to the streets, sidewalks, and paths on their bicycles, National Bike Month is a good time to remember the rules of the road and be extra cautious. Get out your bike map, pick a route, and enjoy.

Rick Hawksley is a Kent-based architect and interim executive director of TransPortage, a citizens-based organization working on building sustainable prosperity for the Portage region. He may be reached at rick@designwithavision.com or transportage@gmail.com. Green Portage is a monthly feature of the Record-Courier in cooperation with the Portage Park District.

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