

**Youth on Bikes**

Kids seem to be spending more and more hours with electronic games or in front of the TV. Many organizations around the state are working to reverse these trends. For our August Back-to-School issue, we hope to highlight more of the educational and youth programs that are encouraging kids and families to bicycle more. On this page we present a brief preview of some of those efforts. We hope readers will send us reports from their own communities of local efforts to get kids and adults riding their bikes, including bicycle donation programs for kids, like those of the Optimists Club and others. -Ed.

**Albuquerque Bicycle Recycling**

Richard Rivas, president of Vecinos del Bosque Neighborhood Association, in the South Valley of Albuquerque has a passion for bicycles. He has built up a network of colleagues to put together bikes that he then distributes through schools and several other programs to kids around Albuquerque. First Richard puts the lucky new bicycle owners through a brief safety course, and then he fits them with a new helmet. Finally he gives the bike a tune-up, and sends the kids home to enjoy their new activity. Based out of the

former La Esperanza Community Center, Richard is able to provide about 25 kids/month with refurbished bicycles.

Richard is always looking for bikes and bike parts, especially in sizes for kids 7-12. He holds periodic repair meetings with members of the neighborhood association and others. Congresswoman Wilson's aide, Tito Madrid, is a supporter who comes out to help when he can. Contact Richard via his pager at 968-3444.



Richard Rivas gives Berenice, 3rd grade, Manuel, 5th grade, and Gabe Garcia, the principal of Duranes Elementary a lesson in turn signals.

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS**

Joanne McEntire

Albuquerque Alliance for Active Living Safe Routes to Schools is a popular program spreading across Canada and the U.S. designed to decrease traffic and pollution and increase the health of children and the community. "Safe Routes to Schools," or SR2S, became a familiar term to many bicycle and pedestrian advocates in New Mexico in 2003, when we worked with Senator Linda Lopez and Representative Dan Silva to sponsor Safe Routes legislation. SB 556 was approved and signed by the Governor, but no funding for community based programs was appropriated by the state.

Despite a lack of state funds to date, at least two organizations have embarked on local Safe Routes programs, in Farmington and Albuquerque. These programs, sponsored by the City of Farmington and the Albuquerque Alliance for Active Living, are working toward achieving the 5 Es of Safe Routes in their locales: Encouragement, Education, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation. This spring, the Farmington MPO sponsored a one-day

workshop with trainers from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. Participants included a bicycle advocate, safety personnel, planners, a traffic engineer, school teachers, and parents of students.

On August 10, 2005, the President signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or SAFETEA-LU. Section 1101(a)(17), 1404 provides for a federally funded Safe Routes to School Program. Approximately one million dollars per year will be disbursed to the NMDOT for a five year period. The new program is 100% federally funded, which means there will be no required match from state or local governments. A minimum of 10% and a maximum of 30% of the state's allocation must be used for non-infrastructure related activities (such as education, encouragement and enforcement). The other funds will be directed toward engineering, or design and physical infrastructure improvements, in areas surrounding a school.

As required by the federal program, NMDOT is in the process of hiring a full-time Safe Routes to School Coordinator.

Meanwhile, school and neighborhood based groups can begin to plan for an encouragement type of activity, such as Walk To School Day (October 4), or form a Walking School Bus for



Berenice is intrigued with the bicycle tune-up that Richard provides.

**Recycle a Bicycle**

Back in 1999, Jennifer Tobin got together a group of friends to repair bikes and paint them green. She released 20 or so "green bikes" into Albuquerque, leaving them on street corners for anyone to pick up and ride. Eventually the bicycles disappeared, but the concept of "free bikes" has continued to evolve in communities around the world. In addition, groups are working to involve community members in refurbishing bicycles and providing them as low-cost transportation options to other community members. Please write to us if you have a bicycle recycling program or a "yellow bike" program in your community. In New Mexico, check out the following programs that we know about so far:

**Santa Fe:** [www.recycleabicycle.com](http://www.recycleabicycle.com) Bike collective is open noon-4 pm on Sundays.

**Silver City:** Contact Jamie Thomson, [gilamonsterbikes@yahoo.com](mailto:gilamonsterbikes@yahoo.com)



New Mexico Xtreme Sports Association, aka NMX Sports, is giving kids between the ages of 12 and 20 the opportunities to get into the sports they want: snowboarding, skiing, skateboarding, BMX, wake-boarding and mountain biking. They have trips and events around the region. Check out [www.nmxsports.org](http://www.nmxsports.org) and sign up.

**Bike/Bus Commute - Intercity buses**

Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Espanola, Las Vegas

It's easy. Just pop the cargo bay doors, set your bike inside, and ride the commuter bus for \$3.00 each way (or less with monthly pass.) This option is starting to be so popular, that there are routinely 3

bikes under these luxury buses. Check [www.allboardamerica.com/santafe/index.html](http://www.allboardamerica.com/santafe/index.html) for schedules. And call the NM DOT to ask them to add more buses!



Enrique M. unloads his bike from the Park N Ride bus. He and a half dozen other Santa Fe students regularly commute to UNM using a combination of bicycling and buses. They would like more frequent bus service.

**What about Bike/Train?**

Pete Stirbis, New Mexico Touring Society

The Railrunner Train set to open between Belen and Bernalillo in Summer 2006 promises to allow for bicycles. Tony Sylvester (MRCOG), Carol Earp (MRCOG), Jim Arrowsmith (City of Albuquerque bicycle planner) and I met up at one of the new train cars downtown a few weeks ago, and we tested out the bike racks. There will be two bike

positions per train car, and two train cars per train to start. Tony, Carol and Jim all brought their bikes, as well, and I found these staff people to be very helpful and interested in multi-modal bike/train transportation. MRCOG (Mid-Region Council of Governments) is the agency overseeing Railrunner service, as part of its transportation planning duties.

**L & N Hoppin Hydros & Lowrider Bike**

Leonard (505) 873-8460 (505) 969-1610 "Hydraulics for Model Cars"/Homies/Mad Dogs

Julian 2035 Isleta S.W. Albuq., NM, 87105 "Lowrider Bike Parts"