

CITIES LINE UP TO PROMOTE BICYCLE SAFETY AND AWARENESS



By Richard A. Cahlin and the Bicycle Action Committee

An ever-increasing number of people choose to ride bicycles in our South Florida communities as both a form of exercise and a means of commuting.

Unfortunately headlines in South Florida center on injuries and deaths from bicycle accidents—accidents that are preventable through bike-safety education and awareness, as well as through the construction of bike lanes.

Nonetheless, the road to safety is slow and long. All involved—the city, the county, the Florida Department of Transportation, homeowners, business owners, planning departments and zoning officials—have good intentions. Unfortunately, though, progress is stalled because of decision-making red tape and, sometimes, conflicting city agendas.

The demand for biking, coupled with more people choosing to incorporate biking in their daily lives, has outpaced the city planners to make our streets safer for cyclists.

Both the safety of our community and the health of our environment depend on a bicycle-friendly future for our towns and cities, which is why the Bicycle Action Committee (BAC), a not-for-profit entity that promotes bike safety and awareness through joint-venture relationships with participating cities, is working towards this goal.

Founded in 2008 by accountant and avid cyclist Richard A. Cahlin, BAC raises money by selling bike apparel featuring a city's seal and colors. Cahlin presents at various city council meetings for permission to use a particular city's seal and colors.

BAC's jerseys and shorts, manufactured by Velocé Speedwear and sold by Mack Cycle & Fitness, display visual safety monikers to alert oncoming automobiles to use caution as they approach cyclists. The clothing also exhibits the names of corporate sponsors, including BAC's main sponsor, Mallah Furman, CPAs.

Additionally, BAC's apparel prominently displays an education-patented depiction of two bike-riders—male and female—that BAC intends to be the brand associated with bike safety and awareness. Proceeds go directly to the participating cities to fund various city bicycle initiatives.

So far, BAC has partnered with eight South Florida cities and one South Florida village. These municipalities, realizing the difficulty in retrofitting their roads to construct more bicycle paths, support BAC'S cause.

Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Aventura, Coral Gables, South Miami, Miami Beach, Sunny Isles Beach, the City of Doral, Hollywood and Pinecrest all have granted BAC permission to use their seals and colors. BAC already has funded a mountain bike

trail in Virginia Key for Miami, as well as bicycle racks for Coral Gables.

Future partnering municipalities include the cities of North Miami, the Town of Miami Lakes and the Village of Palmetto Bay. BAC relies on these public- and private-sector partnerships to further its objective.

Cahlin, also BAC's CEO, describes the effort: "Bike safety and awareness are analogous to school lunches. Everyone is for it. However, trying to get a bike lane is a bureaucratic traffic jam."

In addition to purchasing BAC apparel, you can support BAC while simultaneously promoting your own business by sponsoring the Committee and having your logo placed on its clothing. These logos will be seen not only here in South Florida, but in cities across the country as cyclists network outside the state.

Besides potentially gaining national exposure, sponsors receive a jersey and shorts, as well as recognition in the BAC newsletter. Also, because BAC is a Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, all donations are tax deductible.

It is time to seriously embrace bicycle safety and awareness and the need for bike lanes in our communities. Visit BicycleActionCommittee.com to join this venture.