



Partnering for Safety

THE BICYCLE ACTION COMMITTEE TEAMS WITH SOUTH FLORIDA CITIES TO FUND BIKE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES

In 2008, certified public accountant and avid bicyclist **Richard Cahlin** founded the not-for-profit **Bicycle Action Committee (BAC)**, which so far has partnered with 14 South Florida cities to promote bike safety and awareness in a unique way: The BAC raises money by selling bicycle apparel featuring participating cities' seals and colors, and the proceeds go back to those cities to help fund their bicycle safety initiatives and projects, such as adding bike racks. The clothing displays visual safety monikers that alert oncoming vehicles to use caution when approaching cyclists. "The more people see that city logo and the safety moniker (on the apparel) . . ." Cahlin said, "the more people will say, 'Hey, let's slow down. Let's give them their three feet.'"

Participating cities include **Coral Gables, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Miami Beach** and the **Village of Pinecrest**. To learn more about the BAC, visit <http://bicycleactioncommittee.com/>.

Between the city and TEAM, we are committed to providing the resources for that to happen."

Run by volunteers, Punta Gorda's Bicycle Loaner Program fully pays for itself. Each bicycle is sponsored, and those sponsorships allow the city and TEAM Punta Gorda to replace the bicycles every few years. More than 5,000 people took advantage of the program last year, and many of them were visitors, Johnson said.

Local bike riders can also take advantage of Punta Gorda Pathways, an 18-mile system of bike and pedestrian trails connecting neighborhoods, parks and commercial areas. City Manager **Howard Kunik** sets a prominent example by leading a leisurely bicycle tour through the city during the annual Pedal

and Play spring event, which draws more than 600 riders. During Kunik's tour, cyclists get an education about local history as well as information about projects taking place in Punta Gorda.

"It's so popular," Johnson said about the tour. "This year, there were 70 people who signed up for it."

Baird said that visitors to the city not only respond enthusiastically to the local pro-bicycle ethos, but they also spread the word.

"People just love it, and then they go home and tell their friends," he said. "I would not be surprised if the record showed that we had perhaps 40 states represented last year and at least a dozen foreign countries. It's a very popular program."

Erika D. Peterman is a freelance writer. 

City of Lakeland



Lakeland Mayor **Howard Wiggs** (third from left) during Cyclemania.

