

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE FALK ANNOUNCES GRANT
TO IMPROVE BICYCLE SAFETY**

SAFE COMMUNITY COALITION AND ITS PARTNERS AWARDED \$50,000

**PROJECT FEATURES
“SHARE THE ROAD” MESSAGE,
EDUCATION**

On a beautiful fall day perfect for a bike ride, Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk announced a grant award aimed at improving bicycle safety.

Falk announced the award of a \$52,000 grant to Safe Community Coalition and its partners to improve traffic safety in rural and urban areas where bicyclists and motorists share the road. Dane County received funds to provide this grant from Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

During 2003 – 2004, three bicyclists were killed and 16 hospitalized for serious injuries in Dane County. In 2002, 72 bicyclists received emergency room care for injuries. These figures underestimate the number of bicycle-involved crashes and close calls, according to the project’s law enforcement partners.

Falk noted that education and a share the road message is key now, given the growing popularity of bicycling locally. Thanks to its beauty and terrain, rural Dane County has become a mecca for recreational bicycling events. Dane County is home to such an event nearly every weekend during the riding season. Bicyclists and motorists also share the road to commute to Madison’s downtown and on University of Wisconsin campus. In both rural and urban settings, for everyone’s safety, cyclists and motorists need to follow the rules of the road, Falk said. This project is an exciting partnership to educate both groups on how to co-exist safely, she added.

Safe Community Coalition has pulled together a broad-based partnership of law enforcement, bicycling and traffic safety advocates and local officials to conduct this project. Project activities include development of public service announcements; bicycle safety education for middle school students, for children just learning to ride, and for adult cyclists; increased communication to local communities and their residents about upcoming bicycling events; and law enforcement training and overtime grants to local police departments.

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FACT SHEET
Bicycle Safety Education Collaboration
Safe Community Coalition

Purpose: To improve traffic safety in rural and urban areas of Dane County where bicyclist and motorists share the road.

Partners: Dane County Executive's Office, Dane County Highway Department, Dane County Sheriffs Office, Dane County Police Chiefs Association/Safe Community Coalition Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Coordinating Committee, Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, WE BIKE, MADD of Dane County

Approaches

1) Public Education

Public Service Announcement: Produce, find sponsor for and air a "share the road" message that features cyclists in rural and urban settings, and provides safety tips for both motorists and cyclists. Feature all project partners on the PSA as collaborating in the public education effort.

Timeframe: PSAs to begin airing in April, 2006.

Releases to cable access channels, weekly community newspapers and neighborhood newsletters: Create and send messages to cable access stations throughout Dane County with 1) share the road message; 2) safety tips for motorists and cyclists; 3) announcements of bicycling events happening locally. Write short articles with the same content and release to local papers.

Timeframe: Begin releasing information in spring, 2006 and continue through the bicycling season.

Earned Media: Hold news conferences 1) to announce public education project launch (April); 2) to announce enforcement effort (May); 3) to announce Safe Routes to School project (September).

2) Enforcement

Provide Dane County Sheriff's Office and other interested agencies who participate in a Bicycle Safety Enforcement Course with **overtime enforcement grants to fund stepped up enforcement** of 1) impaired and aggressive driving at targeted locations with frequented by cyclist; 2) bicyclist compliance with traffic laws.

Develop and conduct Law Enforcement Bicycle Safety Enforcement Course for area law enforcement agency staff. This course will include a classroom module and an on-the-road component.

3) Targeted Education

Children: Expand bicycle safety offerings at Safe Community Coalition's Safety Town, a half-day, two week day camp for young children offered through Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR).

Timeframe: July and August, 2006.

Middle School Youth: Select one middle school in need of assistance developing and promoting safe biking routes (includes creation of map and brochure).

Timeframe: Launch in September/October 2006.

Outreach to bicycling community: In Dane County, disseminate bicycle safety and etiquette information via flyers to bicycle shops; as part of outreach for Bicycle Federation's Bike to Work Week; through e-mail and listserves and other means.

Timeframe: Launch April, 2006, and continue through fall.

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