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Redmond's commute champions

Twelve people honored for 'using alternative forms of transportation'

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For the third year, Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association (GRTMA) has selected a number of "Commute Champions" who have made commitments to bike, carpool or ride public transportation whenever possible — and have encouraged peers to do likewise.

"The 12 people honored were nominated by their companies," said GRTMA executive director Linda Ballew. "They pick someone who exemplifies the behavior we're trying to promote, for using alternative forms of transportation — and should also be exemplary in other ways. They're the kind of person we all want to be."

Among the 2009 Commute Champions, Paul Hope, a warehouse supervisor for Micropower Electronics said he's always been an avid mountain biker and "when gas prices were high, that was the spark" to start riding his bike from his home in Shoreline to his job in Redmond and back.

"Now I just do it for my sanity," said Hope.

His morning ride time is around one hour and 15 minutes. The ride home takes about an hour and 20 minutes. He explained that the difference is "a big hill going home."

The greatest challenge is getting up at 4 a.m., but on the plus side, "my doctor said my blood pressure is lower," Hope noted.

With 90 percent of his route taking place on the Burke-Gilman and Sammamish River Trails, there's lots to see, including owls, deer, bald eagles, coyotes, herons, rabbits — and once, a man who was naked except for running shoes and a yellow backpack. He believes the nude hiker was mentioned in the Redmond Reporter Police Blotter a week later.

With our wet and wild Pacific Northwest weather, Hope suggests that year-round bicycle commuters should use fenders and a waterproof backpack. And if you can't or don't want to ride your bike every day, even once a week helps the environment and your health.

Other GRTMA Commute Champions are:



Paul Hope, a warehouse supervisor for Micropower Electronics, was one of 12 people honored as "Commute Champions" by the Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association. JENNIFER AU, Redmond Reporter

- **Tom Trombley**, a senior marketing manager for AT&T, who first discovered the benefits of biking when participating in Team in Training for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. He bikes a 54-mile round-trip three or four days a week.

- **Erin Kelley**, a senior field assistant administrator at AT&T. She takes a Vanpool to work an average of four times a week or vanpools one-way and rides a bike home.

- **Fergus Stewart**, part of Microsoft's Solutions Accelerators team. He was nominated by seven of his colleagues because he's such a supportive mentor for bicycle commuters.

- **Gary Soliday**, a senior design technician at PhysioControl. He said he loves that he's "not sitting in traffic, getting frustrated" while biking 20 miles to and from work. He also enjoys the smells along the way — such as soil, rain or beer while riding past the Redhook Brewery in Woodinville.

- **Steve Faiks**, a software development engineer at Microsoft. His nickname is "Mass Transit Steve" because he's such an advocate for walking, biking and biking.

- **Dave Poole**, software development engineer at Microsoft. He's been carpooling four days a week from North Seattle for six years.

- **Clay Dawson**, an engineer at Honeywell. He's been biking to work

for 10 years and said, "It's almost as fast to ride home as to drive, faster to ride some days."

- **Barb Angell**, a procurement quality engineer for Aerojet. Before moving to this area, she and her husband rode from the Arctic Circle north of Fairbanks to the southern tip of Florida on a tandem bicycle, a trip that took five-and-a-half months to complete. Now, biking to work three days a week is a piece of cake.

- **Jim Bevan**, Web producer for Microsoft's Internal IT site. He's been vanpooling four days a week from Olympia since 2000.

- **Kiran Gadepalli**, a senior programmer/analyst for the City of Redmond. Words of wisdom are "driving alone to work is not a smart choice for two reasons: environmental and financial. Try commuting by bus for three months and track the money you've saved."

- **Candace Horton**, a senior HR business partner for Concur in the Millennium Business Park. For the last two years, she has biked to work year-round and said she's lost 15 pounds, finds she arrives at home more relaxed and saves money on gas. Seeing Mount Rainier on a clear day "makes up for the rainy days," she said.

For more information about alternative transportation, visit www.grtma.org.

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