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The Weather Report

The official newsletter of
Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking
Strengthening and Uniting Coalitions Across North America

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CDC AWARDS CONTRACT TO ADVANCE BENCHMARKING PROJECT

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will pay \$50,000 to advance [Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking's Benchmarking Project](#), which collects and analyzes bicycling and walking data from 50 states and the 50 most-populous U.S. cities. CDC also worked with Thunderhead Alliance on the first Benchmarking Report released in August of 2007.

The 2007 Benchmarking Report was the first effort to collect and analyze data on bicycling and walking in all 50 states and 50 cities. Data included funding, staffing, and policies for biking and walking as well as bicycle and pedestrian mode share, safety, facilities, bike-transit integration, public health indicators, and demographics. The report has been widely distributed among The Alliance's network of advocacy organizations, government agencies, and the media.

Thunderhead Alliance continues to seek additional funding and partners to strengthen the Benchmarking Project with additional data, a greater number of cities, and an online searchable database of project findings. The Alliance is scheduled to release surveys for the 2009 Benchmarking Report this fall. For more information on the Benchmarking Project and how you can get involved visit www.thunderheadalliance.org/benchmarking.

LEADERSHIP RETREAT BRINGS NEW CONTACTS, NEW IDEAS

Nearly seventy bicycle and pedestrian advocates from across North America converged on Bainbridge Island, WA in late August for the 2008 Thunderhead Alliance Leadership Retreat. If you weren't able to attend, then you missed what Scott Bricker—[Bicycle Transportation Alliance](#)—described as, "an excellent experience from start to finish. The energy I got from being around other cycling and walking advocates alone was worth every penny. Add the [beautiful setting](#) and the fantastic workshops on top of that, and it made for a weekend I won't forget any time soon."

Sixteen small-group workshops supplemented the larger group discussions around topics including technology, fundraising, complete streets, Safe Routes to School, staffing, and membership development. For instance, one popular workshop full of take-away ideas was by Kate McCarthy from the [San Francisco Bicycle Coalition](#) (SFBC) on Advanced Membership Development. Participants learned how the SFBC is engaging their members and building their membership to one of the largest of all Alliance organizations. In addition to the knowledge and experience shared at workshops, larger group discussions focused on topics including the New Transportation Bill, retail membership programs, and the growth of the Alliance.

"The workshops and meetings were extremely helpful, but even more important was to get to know the Alliance leaders from throughout the continent," writes Dorian Grilley—Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota. There were plenty of opportunities to connect with other Alliance leaders.

Thunderhead Alliance would like to thank the retreat committee, workshop facilitators and panelists, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, and Island Wood staff. The retreat would not have been a success without your support. We'd also like to thank our [retreat sponsors](#)—Planet

Bike, Trek, Rickshaw Bagworks, Spitzer Family Foundation, Cascade Bicycle Club, and Saris, as well as partners including League of American Bicyclists, the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, National Safe Routes to School Partnership, Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, Island Wood, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, and the Squeaky Wheels Bicycle Club. They make it possible for us to deliver such an outstanding gathering for our members. And, to our participants, the retreat would not have happened without you. Thanks for sharing your wisdom and inspiring each other.

Stay tuned to The Alliance homepage—www.thunderheadalliance.org—for links to pictures and resources shared at the retreat, including a special clip of Susie Stephens. Thank you to Susie's mom for sharing this and other memories with the Thunderhead Alliance.

TRAINING FOR TRAINERS-APPLICATIONS DUE OCTOBER 31st

RESERVE YOUR SPOT FOR THIS UNIQUE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

This December, Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking is partnering with Chicagoland Bicycle Federation to hold a four-day intensive advanced leadership training. The Training for Trainers workshop will give participants:

- The ability to conduct hands-on training workshops for adults using small groups;
- An interactive experience with direct feedback on your facilitation skills;
- And, assistance with developing your curriculum.

What: Training for Trainers—An Advanced Leadership Training Workshop

When: Monday, December 1st - Thursday, December 4th : 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Where: Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, Chicago, IL

A limited number of spots are available, so be sure to get your applications in as quickly as possible. Visit www.thunderheadalliance.org/chicago for more information.

The Alliance looks forward to bringing more Winning Campaigns and other customized trainings to you in the future. Be sure to contact jeremy "at" thunderheadalliance.org with questions on this training or to express interest in hosting a training in the future.

ORGANIZATION TIP: NETWORKING WITH WEB 2.0

Web 2.0 is a term describing the trend in the use of Internet technology and web design that enhances creativity, information sharing, and, collaboration among users. These concepts have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities and hosted services such as social-networking sites, wikis, and blogs.

Online social networking allows organizations to create a community of engaged members. Members can post messages, upload pictures, link to other people, and share information with a broader audience. These sites can act as an add-on to the organization's web site or they can be used as an inexpensive alternative. Groups can recruit over the net and spread the word about events or actions much faster than with snail mail.

Some Alliance organizations choose to host these tools on their web site, while others use Yahoo Groups, My Space, and other social networking sites as a main outreach tool or in conjunction with their web site. No need getting bogged down with a social networking strategy; the key is to be realistic and allow your strategy to be driven by your membership. When you start a site like this, the members will help you shape the offerings of the site; you have to be able to change it as you go. Here are some social networking possibilities:

- Meet colleagues and enthusiasts from around the world.
- Learn about upcoming events and join other Thunderhead Alliance groups.
- View photos, images, and links from other group members.
- Upload your own photos and videos to share with the group.
- Ask questions of other group members in the discussion area.
- Post items of interest to the group.
- Send personal messages to other group members.
- Send invitations to join the group.
- Circulate petitions to a nationwide audience.

These tools, along with other web 2.0 technologies, are designed to assist your organization with engaging membership and funders. Over the coming months, we will be posting several resources to the [library](#) and will host a [Mutual Aid Call](#) on technology tools including blogging, shopping carts, syndicating content, and other ways technology can engage your members.

Does Thunderhead Alliance use this technology? If you have registered online for the retreat, posted a job announcement or your organization's news to our site, or added a resource to the library, then you have been using web 2.0 technologies.

FEATURED RESOURCE: THUNDERHEAD ALLIANCE PUBLICATIONS

Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking offers a plethora of resources for our member organizations. But many leaders of advocacy organizations are too busy to explore all we have to offer. This is why we are introducing a new column featuring resources to help strengthen and grow your organization.

Thunderhead Alliance is the only organization publishing books and reports geared specifically towards leaders of bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations. In the last four years, we have published three books in a series of *Thunderhead Alliance Guides* and *Bicycling and Walking in the U.S., the 2007 Benchmarking Report*. You can find the *Thunderhead Alliance Guide to Fundraising Galas*, *Thunderhead Alliance Guide to Complete Streets Campaigns*, *Thunderhead Alliance Guide to Fundraising Rides*, and *Bicycling and Walking in the U.S.* for purchase on our [website](#). Thunderhead Alliance member organizations receive a discount on all publications. Additional discounts for bulk orders of 25 or more are available on request. Members can also download the electronic version of any of our publications for free by visiting the [Online Bike & Ped Advocacy Resource Library](#).

These publications are geared toward helping organizations grow and succeed. They share innovations and best practice models around topics important to our members. We are currently planning for upcoming publications in the Thunderhead Alliance Guide series. Possible topics include:

- a *Guide to Winning Proposals for Biking and Walking* that would share examples of winning grant and contract proposals from Alliance organizations and explore the ins and outs of getting government funding,
- a *Guide to Winning Campaigns* that would expand upon our signature Winning Campaigns training curriculum, by providing more examples of winning campaigns in the context of campaign planning and strategy,
- a *Guide to Safe Routes to School Programs* that would cover everything related to starting and running a Safe Routes program, and
- a *Guide to University Bike Initiatives* that would cover how to start a bike sharing program, get colleges organized around green transportation initiatives, and include examples of how college organizations can connect with community organizations on these issues.

If you have suggestions for topics and resources you would like to see us explore, or have thoughts on the ones above, please e-mail your ideas to kristen "at" [thunderheadalliance.org](mailto:kristen@thunderheadalliance.org). Thunderhead Alliance publications are made possible by the involvement of advocacy leaders like you who take the time to share their resources and experiences. We make every effort to acknowledge all contributors in our publications and reward them with a complimentary copy. Please be sure to [check out our publications](#) and consider sharing your expertise with future projects.

THUNDERHEAD ALLIANCE HIRING RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking is seeking a Research Assistant to work with the Alliance's National Bicycling and Walking Benchmarking Project. The Research Assistant will report to the Benchmarking Project Coordinator. The Benchmarking Project collects and analyzes data from all 50 states and the top 50 cities (by population) on bicycling, walking, and health. Find more info on the project at: <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/benchmarking>

The ideal candidate can dedicate up to 20 hours a week from October 2008 through September 2009. Some key responsibilities include:

- Outreach to government officials and advocates to complete Benchmarking surveys
- Input data received from Benchmarking surveys
- Research national data sets and enter data into our system
- Perform data calculations and analysis
- Coordinate with Benchmarking Project Coordinator and Project Team on needed calculations and analysis
- Additional research as needed in support of the project: might include research into new data sets, reviewing related reports and studies, researching contacts for sharing report findings, researching new funding opportunities, and other research as needed
- Additional outreach as needed in support of the project

This is a part time, temporary, contract position. For the complete job description, including more details on responsibilities, qualifications, and applications procedures, visit <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/jobs>.

MEMBER NEWS

Iowa Bicycle Coalition Launches Safe Routes to School Curriculum

According to the [Iowa Bicycle Coalition](#) (IBC), "Teachers or communities hoping to implement more bicycling and walking education into the classroom, the before and after school program, or recreation programs have a new resource." IBC has just released "Iowa Kids on the Move", a new curriculum for Iowa schools. The curriculum is based upon models from Portland and Fort Collins that integrate walking and bicycling into the school day.

You can get a copy of this new resource at <http://www.iowasaferoutes.org> or check the [Thunderhead Alliance Online Bike & Ped Advocacy Resource Library](#).

New Yorkers Can't Get Enough of Summer Streets

Thousands of New Yorkers turned out to participate in the first two installments of Summer Streets, a ciclovía-style event presented by the City of New York. A temporary street closure spanning 90 consecutive blocks, Summer Streets provides a car-free, recreational route between Central Park and the Brooklyn Bridge. Along this car-free route, the Department of Transportation and sponsors host art, dance and fitness classes, musical performances and bike-related activities. Many adjacent side streets host citizen-organized activities ranging from double-dutch tournaments to scooter races.

Summer Streets is the culmination of a season of unprecedented pedestrian-oriented street events, spearheaded by community coalitions and [Transportation Alternatives](#), and made possible by City agencies. While raising the profile of public space is a primary goal of Summer

Streets, the timing for this event has much to do with the City's interest in reducing motor vehicle traffic, improving public health through urban design and meeting its own sustainability goals, and bringing us some summer-time fun too.

San Francisco's First Sunday Streets a Success!

According to the [San Francisco Bicycle Coalition](#), "Thousands of adults and kids took to the streets to play during the first very successful [Sunday Streets](#) event! The route from Chinatown along the Embarcadero all the way down Third Street to the Bayview became a huge playground full of hoola hooping, yoga, dancing, rollerskating and of course bicycling. It was fantastic to see so many people participating, especially so many parents and kids--we lost count of the number of kids out learning to ride their bicycles on the car-free streets." San Francisco's first Sunday Streets events, where four miles of downtown streets were closed to cars, took place August 31st and September 14th. You can [check out a video from this event here](#).

Transportation Alternatives Release New Study on Livable Streets

On August 6th, New York City's [Transportation Alternatives](#) (T.A.) released a new report titled *Streets to Live By: How livable street design can bring economic, health and quality-of-life benefits to New York City*. According to T.A., the report, "compiles and analyses the most recent data on the benefits of great streets. The study reveals outcomes of livable streets projects around the world. According to T.A., the report "finds that street designs that make people comfortable and draw them in are, in fact, the very groundwork for a healthy community and local economy. The study also details the benchmarks of livable streets, including physical activity, better air quality, more social cohesion and increased economic activity; benchmarks that City agencies can use to measure the livability of any given street or neighborhood." You can [download the report at T.A.'s website here](#).

Thunderhead Alliance Organizations Are Hiring!

Our member organizations are hiring! Check out all of the fantastic job opportunities on the [Alliance Job Board](#). If your organization is hiring, be sure to [post your job to the job board](#).

Upcoming Events at Thunderhead Alliance

October 16: Mutual Aid Call: Media Relations, 4-5 EST - [more here](#)

November 13: Mutual Aid Call: Benchmarking - The Next Step, 1-2 EST - [more here](#)

December 1-4: Training for Trainers, Chicago, IL - [more here](#)

December 11: Mutual Aid Call: Bike, Walk, Plan: How to Engage and Build Relationships with Planners - [more here](#)

We Want Your News!

Thunderhead Alliance wants to publish your good news! Our coalition is our members and your peers want to hear about your success and innovations. Have you had a recent success? A winning campaign? A creative event? Has your organization used innovative methods for attracting members or earning media attention? We want to know about it! [Tell us your news here](#).

This monthly Thunderhead Alliance Weather Report is for the leaders of our member organizations and our supporters. The Thunderhead Alliance, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the only coalition of state and local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations working together to promote bicycling and walking in North American communities. Find more info at: www.thunderheadalliance.org.

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