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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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December 2008

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## REFLECTING ON 2008

Reflecting over the past year and looking ahead to the coming new year, I, the staff, and the board of the Thunderhead Alliance would like to thank you for your incredible commitment and hard work to make your communities better places for people to bike and walk. We are inspired by your dedication and thrilled by your successes...indeed, it makes us all the more committed to serving you and to strengthening and uniting our movement.

This past year has seen a lot of changes for the Alliance and next year looks to be a year of remarkable opportunities and offerings. We are all fortunate to be working for a cause that solves so many of our world's challenges and can bring so much fun and joy to so many. A real highlight of the year for me was spending several days with so many of you at our Leadership Retreat at IslandWood near Seattle. Previous retreats have always been memorable and motivating experiences for me when I headed up the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. Seeing it from a new perspective, it is awesome to see the remarkable passion and commitment you all have. Whether you were able to join us at the retreat or not, we should all take comfort in knowing that none of us are alone – we all have hundreds of colleagues and friends who are facing similar challenges.

To each of you, we wish you peace, health and great success in the coming year. Thanks for your support!  
- Jeffrey Miller, President/CEO

## APPLY TO HOST A WINNING CAMPAIGNS® TRAINING IN 2009

Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking is accepting applications from organizations wishing to host a [Winning Campaigns® Training](#) in 2009. The Alliance plans to host between 4 to 6 trainings throughout North America in the next year. Thanks to the strong support from Planet Bike, Bikes Belong, and Cannondale Sports Group these trainings will be largely underwritten.

New for 2009:

- We will be offering up to six trainings across North America in 2009;
- Organizations participating in [Winning Campaigns® Trainings](#) will score favorably in our new grant selection process;
- Participant registration will be an affordable \$50 with scholarships available; and
- A stipend will be available to hosting organizations to help with local assistance.

Here's your chance to bring this very valuable training right into your region, providing a remarkable opportunity to train your staff, board, volunteers bring together partners and potential partners. You can show off your successes or address your challenges while sharing and learning from and with your fellow advocates. Find more info on our trainings at: <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/trainings>. If you are interested in bringing a training to your community, please complete our easy online application at [www.thunderheadalliance.org/applyforatraining](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/applyforatraining).

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS - 2009 ADVOCACY AWARDS

The Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking is launching our new annual Awards for Excellence in Bicycling and Walking Advocacy. We invite you to nominate a person or organization for any of the six award categories:

1. "Advocate of the Year"
2. "Advocacy Organization of the Year"
3. "Innovation Award"
4. "Winning Campaign Award"
5. "Business Advocate Award"
6. "Best Practices Award"

The deadline for nominations is January 31st, 2009. Awards will be presented in March in Washington, DC to coincide with the timing of the National Bike Summit. For full descriptions of the awards, more information on the process, and to make your nominations, visit [www.thunderheadalliance.org/awards](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/awards).

## CHICAGO T4T TRAINING BUILD LEADERS' TOOLSETS

For the first time this December, Thunderhead Alliance co-hosted a Training for Trainers (T4T) workshop with the Active Transportation Alliance (formally known as Chicagoland Bicycle Federation). This intensive advanced leadership training brought together a small group of bicycle and pedestrian advocacy leaders for four days of hands-on work.

According to Mark Wyatt of the Iowa Bicycle Coalition, "The T4T method gives you a skill to facilitate people to learn from themselves. Imagine the information you need could be engaged and produced by your members and organized in a meaningful way. I have done small group activities before, but never with this focus and output."

Participants learned how to develop curriculum that is both engaging for participants and effective for delivering instruction. In addition, a hands-on component of the training created an opportunity for participants to develop and lead a workshop for thirteen additional staff of the Active Transportation Alliance geared to improving communications with visually impaired people.

According to Wyatt, "This training is important for organizations at all levels. I hope it is repeated regionally because the skills you learn will not only benefit your organization, but there is a level of sharing that could benefit activities at all organizations."

Thunderhead Alliance does anticipate continuing to offer this training as possible. Special thanks to Rob and Melody of the Active Transportation Alliance for leading the training. Stay tuned to [www.thunderheadalliance.org](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org) for upcoming 2009 training opportunities.

## NEWSLETTER CUT-AND-PASTE: WHERE DOES ALL THAT MONEY GO? URGE WASHINGTON TO PUT MORE \$\$\$ TO BIKING AND WALKING

*This column is a service to our member organizations. Feel free to cut and paste this into your organization's e-news.*

You know that feeling when you look in your wallet and think, "where did all that money go?" That familiar feeling is also common with our taxes. Most people tend not to even think of taxes as their money. But if you get a paycheck, then you pay taxes and you might wonder: where does all that money go?

Here's a few things you're taxes are buying:

- In 2008, \$1,721 to pay for the war in Iraq
- The Wallstreet bailout passed this year will cost you \$2,295.
- When it comes to transportation infrastructure, in 2008 you'll have spent \$400
- Of this, \$100 will go to building highways.
- \$1.50 will go to biking and walking facilities.

If you're like the Average American, this probably isn't how you'd choose to spend your tax dollars. According to a [recent report](http://www.railstotrails.org/whatwedo/trailadvocacy/ATFA/index.html) (link to <http://www.railstotrails.org/whatwedo/trailadvocacy/ATFA/index.html>) by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, when asked, the average American would spend 22 percent of transportation funding on biking and walking – about 15 times the current funding. The spending reality is far from the ideal. Not until the year 2000 did the U.S. spend more than \$1/person/year on biking and walking. Since 1992, the U.S. has invested just \$4.5 billion in biking and walking. That may seem like a lot, but it's 1,000 times less than the total investment in highways over that time.

If you want to see more of your tax dollars funding biking and walking, take a minute to sign this national petition to urge President-Elect Obama and congressional leaders to include explicit funding for trails, walking and biking in the upcoming economic recovery package. Sign the petition today at [RailstoTrails.org](http://RailstoTrails.org) (link to [http://support.railstotrails.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Economic\\_Recovery\\_to\\_BP](http://support.railstotrails.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Economic_Recovery_to_BP)).

## CONGRATS TO ALLIANCE MEMBERS!

*As 2008 comes to an end, we want to use this month's Member News Column to congratulate a few Alliance members on their successes.*

### CONGRATS Trailnet!: Trailnet Wins Complete Streets Policies for MO!

A big congrats to Thunderhead Alliance member organization [Trailnet](http://Trailnet.org) for winning complete streets policies in two Missouri cities. Trailnet worked with the cities of DeSoto and Ferguson, Missouri to develop Complete Streets ordinances, and now these communities have adopted these policies. According to a Trailnet press release, "The policy adopted states that each community will design, build, and maintain streets in a manner that accommodates safe and contiguous travel for all users – seniors, persons with disabilities, children, pedestrians, cyclists, transit-users, and cars." For more information on Trailnet's Healthy & Active Communities initiative, visit [www.trailnet.org/p\\_healthyaactive.php#completestreets](http://www.trailnet.org/p_healthyaactive.php#completestreets).

### CONGRATS Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia: Philly Bicycling Doubles in Three Years

According to the [Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia](#) (BCGP), bicycling in Philadelphia has doubled over the last three years. BCGP conducted counts as part of their Bicycle Ambassadors program, a new outreach and education program that encourage adults to ride more often and more safely. The counts, conducted at key intersections and the Schuylkill River bridges, found that bicycling increased 104% since 2005, or 35% per year. According to BCGP, "Yearly bicycle counts are an important way to understand the current patterns and needs within the bicycle community; as such, the counts will directly influence the design and focus of the Bicycle Ambassadors program each year." To learn more about the counts and this exciting new program visit BCGP's website at <http://www.bicyclecoalition.org/>.

**CONGRATS San Francisco Bicycle Coalition! SFBC Celebrates 10,000 Members**

At the [San Francisco Bicycle Coalition](#) (SFBC)'s annual Winterfest fundraising gala, there was plenty to celebrate. But top on this list was that the SFBC's membership reached a landmark 10,000 members! This makes the SFBC the largest local bicycle advocacy group in the U.S. According to the SFBC, "Over 1,000 members, new members, bike supporters, sponsors, artists, and local politicians gathered at the SFBC's 2008 Winterfest Auction, Art Show, Party and Fundraiser celebrate a record-setting year for bicycling and the SFBC's huge milestone of reaching 10,000 members." Congrats SFBC! To see pictures of Winterfest visit <http://www.sfbike.org/?winterfest>.

**CONGRATS Consider Biking! Columbus Set to Implement Bicentennial Bikeways Plan**

A December 2008 [Consider Biking](#) press release announced that the City of Columbus passed another major landmark on the road toward becoming a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly city. According to Consider Biking, "Now City Council will incorporate key provisions of the Bicentennial Bikeways Plan, including most notably the "Complete Streets" provisions of the plan, into City Ordinances to pave the way for all Columbus-area citizens to make bicycling a part of their everyday lives." The [bike plan](#) includes the construction of a 538-mile network of bikeways including on-street bike lanes and off-road shared use paths. To learn more about Consider Biking visit <http://www.considerbiking.org>.

**CONGRATS Bike Pittsburgh! Bike PGH's Pittsburgh Bike Map Honored by Print Magazine**

The first bike map of Pittsburgh produced in 15 years was honored in Print Magazine as one of the Mid Atlantic region's best designs of 2008. Unlike in most other cities where the government produces the city's bike map, [Bike Pittsburgh](#) (BikePGH) took on the duty in their city. According to Bike Pittsburgh's Scott Bricker, "Not having to get the City's ok really allowed us to be creative. This map features call-outs describing tricky sections, landmarks by which to orient oneself, bike shops, and a comic strip illustrating a Pittsburgh bike commute complete with avoiding the 'Pittsburgh Left'." To read more about their award and Print Magazine visit [www.bikepgh.org](http://www.bikepgh.org).

**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](#).

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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](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org).

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