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LOOKING FORWARD FROM THUNDERHEAD'S ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

From Noah Budnick, Chair, Thunderhead Alliance

At the beginning of October, Thunderhead's board and staff gathered in Washington DC for our annual board meeting. It was a busy and exciting few days! The energy and ideas produced are carrying momentum as we develop our 2008 work plan, consider candidates for executive director and continue to have conversations with Thunderhead members, supporters and allies.

On the morning of day two, after we had spent the previous day attending to the nitty-gritty of organizational logistics, budgets, fundraising and other board responsibilities, Thunderhead's founding-chair, Randy Neufeld of the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, had a simple question for board and staff. "In an ideal world, what is Thunderhead to you? What do you want out of Thunderhead?" he asked.

It is not often that Thunderhead board and staff are all together in one room, and, as anyone who's worked on organizing campaigns or other business with partners spread across ZIP codes and time zones knows, it is amazing how productive groups are when everyone is in one room. "In an ideal world..." the conversation ensued.

The discussion, which has been going on for some time before the gathering in Washington, flushed out how Thunderhead can bolster itself to better serve the array of member organizations and more effectively campaign with partners... [Read the full letter here.](#)

THUNDERHEAD SEEKS PROPOSALS TO HOST A 2008 THUNDERHEAD TRAINING

It's time once again to BID FOR A 2008 THUNDERHEAD TRAINING!

Thunderhead Alliance is requesting proposals from organizations to host a Thunderhead Training in 2008. Thunderhead will host at least two trainings next year, plus our bi-annual retreat.

Here's your chance to bring this invaluable training right into your backyard for your organization and to bring together partners and potential partners. And you can show off your successes for all to use as models when they return to their communities and learn from your fellow advocates. Find info on our Thunderhead Trainings at: <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/trainings.htm>

Thunderhead is seeking creative proposals from organizations desiring to host a Thunderhead training. Trainings will be based on our signature "Winning Campaigns" curriculum. However, Thunderhead is open to special training requests from organizations. Proposals are due by November 30th. For more details and to view the entire RFP visit www.thunderheadalliance.org/pdf/08trainingsRFP.pdf.

For questions contact: kristen "at" thunderheadalliance.org.

COMPLETE STREETS CORNER: 11 DOWN, 39 TO GO

by Dominic Liberatore, Interim Executive Director/Complete Streets Campaign Coordinator

11 down, 39 to go. No, this isn't a scenario for the Cleveland Browns; these numbers represent how many state level complete streets policies have passed and how many more are needed in the USA. While I'm thrilled to read about the recent passage of the state-wide complete streets policy in

Illinois, imagine if the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (CBF) was not able to devote the staff time, resources and lobbying activities into the passage of this bill. Illinois probably would not have a new state-wide policy today.

What if you're from an area where your local member organization does not have the capacity required to run such a large scale campaign? Your chances of getting a policy passed may be reduced. What if you don't have a state level Thunderhead member organization to lobby for bicycling and walking within your state capital? You may not have the ability to reflect the will of the people back to your local municipality.

The moral of the story is this: our ability to make a difference with increased walking and biking in our communities is based upon the capacity of our member organizations. So this month's complete streets tip of the hat goes to all of the mature, powerful, Thunderhead organizations like the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation. You raised the money, opened your offices, hired the staff, and in the case of CBF this month, you made a difference.

Congratulations!

ORGANIZATION TIP: MAKE YOUR MEETINGS MORE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, AND PRODUCTIVE

Have you ever been sitting in a meeting for an hour-and-a-half when it was only supposed to last a half an hour? Have you ever felt like you left a meeting and did not get out of it what you needed to get your work done? Have you ever thought during a meeting, this is such a waste of my time?

As we approach the end of the year, many organizations will be conducting meetings to plan for the next year's work. This means getting together, discussing ideas, and coming to agreement on moving forward in concert. For this reason, I thought it important to use this month's Organizational Tip to describe four tips to make your meetings more effective, efficient, and productive.

1. System-wide Representation—I begin with this tip because it is usually overlooked by most meeting leaders. Simply put, invite the people to your meeting that have the knowledge to help you most effectively get your work done. For example, if you are having a meeting with a new ad hoc marketing committee created to address promoting your organization to members, be sure that your committee includes people that represent both the perspectives of the existing member and a potential member to your organization. A good leader is one that recognizes that the participants of the meeting have the knowledge to get the work done. A leader's job is to facilitate the conversation to allow the sharing of this knowledge.

2. Outcomes & Purpose—The outcomes of your meeting are most important, as they define whether your meeting will meet its objectives. Outcomes are the achievements or objectives that need to be accomplished to make the meeting worth the participants' time. After defining the meeting outcomes, determine the overall purpose of your meeting, by asking, "What will be different because we accomplished our objectives?" As the leader or facilitator of the meeting, it is a good idea to prepare a draft of the meeting's purpose and outcomes in advance of the meeting. Then, at the beginning of the meeting, ask the participants to work for five minutes to ensure that the proposed purpose and outcomes represent everyone's needs from the meeting. This increases the buy-in of the participants as they help to craft the overall strategy for the meeting.

3. Agenda—Now that you have defined the outcomes and purpose for your meeting, defining the agenda for the meeting is as simple as defining the discussion that must take place to accomplish the objectives. Again, coming with a draft of the agenda, and opening the agenda to feedback from participants at the beginning of the meeting, allows you to save time by getting all participants on the same page for discussion.

4. Next steps—At the end of your meeting, take five minutes to determine the next steps or actions that are needed to further the work you have done together. For each, be sure to discuss what action needs to be taken, who needs to lead that action, and if there is anyone else that needs to be involved in making the action successful. In addition, be sure to have your group determine if more meetings are needed to make your work successful, to touch base on outstanding items, and so forth.

As you prepare for those discussions about next year's goals and work plan, try the four easy tricks above, and take that first step in making your meetings more effective, efficient, and productive. Next month, we'll talk about more specific activities for planning and strategizing about your organization's future.

For more organizational advice contact me at [jeremy "at" thunderheadalliance.org](mailto:jeremy@thunderheadalliance.org)

NEWSLETTER CUT-AND-PASTE: YEAR END APPEAL

The Cut and Paste column is back by popular demand! Your November newsletter is great timing for a year-end fundraising appeal to your supporters. All you need to do is fill in a few of the areas which are marked with [fill me in]. Take a few moments and fill in the needed information; it could be worth quite a bit of untapped support!

[Organization Name] Needs Your Support!

As a supporter of [Organization Name] you know that the work that we're doing is important to both you and our community. We want to take a few moments and remind you of some of our important accomplishments this past year and ask that you support us with an end-of-year [tax-deductible (only if your organization is a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 charity)] gift of your financial support. Your contribution will help us to maintain our current efforts in to 2008, and is our most important source of income.

Our 2007 accomplishments include:

- [List 4-6 important things]
- [in a bulleted format,]
- [1-2 sentences]
- [for each item]

You can help [Organization Name] continue to win victories for [bicycling, walking, bicycling and walking] in [the area you serve]. Many employers offer a matching gift program; check to see if your employer will match your gift. This is a great way to stretch your contribution to us even farther! Please be sure to include your mailing address, phone number, and email address so that we may send you a receipt. Click here to donate now online or send your year-end gift to:

[Organization Name]
Year-End Appeal
[Address]
[City, State, Zip Code]

Thank you for your continued support!

If you have ideas for future Newsletter Cut-and-Pastes or articles you'd like to share, send them to: [kristen "at" thunderheadalliance.org](mailto:kristen@thunderheadalliance.org)

MEMBER NEWS

Cycling in L.A. -- Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC)

LACBC, Monica Howe, makes international news, discussing the advantages of cycling in a BBC Interview. Visit the LACBC News Page to [play the interview](#).

Looking Forward 20 Years - Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

By 2027, Chicagoland residents will make half of all local trips by bicycling, walking or mass transit, under a plan unveiled Oct. 22 by the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation. [More](#).

Complete Streets Becomes Law in Illinois - The League of Illinois Bicyclists

Complete Streets is now Illinois law for IDOT road designs! A 109-3 vote in the Illinois House on October 10 completed an override of a Gov. Blagojevich amendatory veto. IDOT reconstruction and expansion roadwork in urban areas must now include provision for people who walk or bike. Read more about the new law and policy background [here](#)!

Thunderhead Organizations Are Hiring!

Our member organizations are hiring! Check out all of the fantastic job opportunities on the [Thunderhead Jobs page](#). If your organization is hiring, be sure to let us know! We'll list your job posting. Simply send an email to: [jobs "at" thunderheadalliance.org](mailto:jobs@thunderheadalliance.org).

Upcoming Events at Thunderhead Alliance

November 7, 2007 (Wednesday): Membership Development and Retention Mutual Aid Conference Call - [more here](#)

November 30, 2007 (Friday): Deadline for proposals to host a 2008 Thunderhead Training - [view the RFP here](#).

December 5, 2007 (Wednesday): Fundraising Strategies Mutual Aid Conference Call - [more here](#)

We want your news!

Thunderhead 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! Send your news items to [jeremy "at" thunderheadalliance.org](mailto:jeremy@thunderheadalliance.org).

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 in unison to break down the barriers to safe bicycling and walking in North American communities. Find more info at: www.thunderheadalliance.org.

Weather mailing list

Weather@thunderheadalliance.org

http://thunderheadalliance.org/mailman/listinfo/weather_thunderheadalliance.org