

# Easier rides are a website away

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By Larry Walsh

One million of anything usually attracts attention.

And the Bikes Belong Foundation hopes at least 1 million pledges from members of the nation's bicycling community will encourage local, state and federal government leaders to support legislation that will improve bicycle paths, lanes, trails and other facilities.

Taking the pledge is easy and free. Go to [www.peopleforbikes.org](http://www.peopleforbikes.org) and click on "Sign the pledge."

It reads:

"I am for bikes. I'm for long rides and short rides. I'm for commuting to work, weekend rides, racing, riding to school or just a quick spin around the block. I believe that no matter how I ride, biking makes me happy and is great for my health, my community and the environment we all share. That is why I am pledging my name in support of a better future for bicycling -- one that is safe and fun for everyone.

"By uniting my voice with a million others, I believe that we can make our world a better place to ride."

If you agree, enter your name, address and e-mail address and submit it. If you do it by May 30, you will be eligible to win a new black or khaki Trek Allant.

It is also an easy way to show your support for National Bike Month.

**Tim Blumenthal**, president of the Bikes Belong Foundation, said more than 26,000 bicyclists, including **Lance Armstrong**, already have taken the pledge. "As more Americans show interest in biking, and affirm their support by [taking the] pledge, our leaders should respond to this movement by making biking conditions in the U.S. better."

He said the pledge campaign will continue through April 2011.

Blumenthal, 54, a former editor of *Bicycling* magazine, enjoys some of the nation's best biking conditions. The foundation is based in Boulder, Colo. which is rated the third-best biking community in the country. Portland, Ore. and Davis, Calif., are rated first and second.

He said interest in bicycling "is growing stronger by the day." As proof, he cited New York and Washington, D.C.'s "large investments in expanding bike lanes and facilities," and Google's decision to add bike directions to its maps.

There has been a significant increase in short bike trips, he added. "Whether it's biking to work, the grocery store or simple, relaxing outdoor recreation, Americans are embracing bicycling to lower their carbon footprint, save money, improve their health and have fun."

According to a variety of studies compiled by the Bikes Belong Foundation:

- Bicyclists who commute 10 miles round trip can save \$10 a day compared to those who use four wheels. The cyclists also "spare the air" 10 pounds of carbon-dioxide emissions. The average annual cost to own and operate a car is \$8,000; the average annual cost to own and operate a bicycle is \$308.
- Bicycling three hours a week reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke by 50 percent.
- Men who cycle to work are significantly less likely to be overweight and obese (39.8 percent) than those who drive to work (60.8 percent).
- Cyclists, on average, live two years longer than non-cyclists and take off 15 percent fewer sick days from work.

More people will choose bike transportation when safe, convenient options to ride are available, Blumenthal said.

He said that was shown in a study by Transportation Alternatives, a New York City advocacy group, which found that bicycle ridership in that city increased by 28 percent last year after New York improved its bike lanes and other bicycling facilities.

For more information, go to [www.bikesbelong.org](http://www.bikesbelong.org) or call 1-303-449-4893.

*Larry Walsh writes about recreational bicycling for the Post-Gazette.*