

MPO Promotes Bicycle Safety at El Sol Resource Center



Bret Baronak speaks about bicycle safety

MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian/Greenways Coordinator, Bret Baronak, met with a group of twenty young men at the El Sol Resource Center in Jupiter to advocate and educate them about bicycle safety. The presentation explained Florida's bicycle laws, and gave bicycle safety tips for riding on the sidewalk, in designated bicycle lanes on the roadway and the safest way to maneuver through busy intersections. Baronak also explained the need for wearing helmets all the time, as well as wearing reflective vests and the importance of lights for night riding. He also pointed out that crossing a roadway at intersections was much safer than crossing in the middle of a busy highway. Since Spanish is not Baronak's native language, a translator was provided by the Center. However, the PowerPoint presentation was done in the Spanish language. Mr. Baronak distributed Spanish language posters and other printed information to those attending so they would have materials in hand to show family members and friends who were not present. During the question and answer period following the presentation, great interest was shown by the bicyclists as to when the bicycle lanes would be completed along Indiantown Road. The Resource Center placed the safety posters throughout their facility and plan to hold another safety workshop in early summer.



Bicycle Transportation Planners Hold “Community Conversations”

Throughout 2010, the Palm Beach MPO will be developing a Countywide Bicycle Transportation Master Plan. The purpose of the Plan generally is to improve conditions primarily on-road bicycle transportation. The Plan will result in a prioritized list of infrastructure improvements, policy recommendations and educational initiatives, that will create a more accommodating and accessible transportation network for choosing to travel by bicycle.

A key ingredient of the Plan is to garner input from stakeholders around the County on their ideas of needed improvements in the County. The MPO recently held the first round of these meetings on April 14 and 15 at four locations throughout the County (Jupiter, Belle Glade, West Palm Beach, and Boca Raton) - Community Conversations to listen to what citizens had to say. The event revolved around work stations where participants could interactively examine maps, graphics and photographic descriptions of existing types of roadway corridors and determine what they feel would be the ideal on-road environment for bicycling. Participants completed a questionnaire, and also were given individual maps of the County, where they had the opportunity to identify and label critical areas for improvements.

While turnout was a bit lighter-than-expected, those who did attend and participate had much to say, and dialogue with staff was very engaging and robust. Participants cited the importance of filling in missing links that exist in the system, so cyclists may have a seamless network in which to ride.

For those wishing to submit input and were unable to attend the meetings, the opportunity to participate via information on the MPO’s website is an option. Questions and input can also be provided by directly contacting Bret Baronak, Bicycle/Greenways/Pedestrian Coordinator.

Be sure to watch for upcoming **Community Conversations** on the MPO’s webpage. As the Bicycle Plan is developed over the next months, MPO staff wants to ensure everyone can become an integral part of that development.

Bruce Landis, Executive Vice-President of Sprinkle Consulting, Inc. explains the workshop process to a visitor at the Vista Center



MPO Participates in Career Day at Pleasant City Elementary School

Patricia Masterman, Public Information Officer, participated in a Career Day sponsored by the Young Lawyers Association at Pleasant City Elementary School in West Palm Beach. The third through fifth graders listened to speakers representing a variety of careers including airline pilot, college basketball coach, lawyers, fire rescue, AT&T and others. The speakers rotated between eight classes as they described what their careers involved. The youth were very excited to learn about the different career paths they might take as they continue their educations. Masterman’s challenge was to explain ‘long range planning’ and how that might affect them twenty-five years in the future! That must have seemed like an eternity to an eight year old. The students had excellent questions for the presenters and the two Pat loved most were “How old are you?” and “Who is your hero?” The first she didn’t answer and the second took a few minutes to think about. It was an uplifting experience and hopefully some of the students will think about working as Public Information Officers as a career path.

PBC Employee Transportation Day

MPO staff joined with Palm Tran, Palm Tran CONNECTION, Tri-Rail, South Florida Commuter Services, South Florida Vanpool and Sun Pass/511 staff downtown at the Palm Beach County Government Center for a very successful Palm Beach County Employee Transportation Day. Employees had an opportunity to speak with representatives and discover the benefits and cost savings of using public transit, carpooling and vanpooling. They also received insight as how the Traffic and Transit Info line - 511 works, and the cost saving benefits of using SunPass when traveling on Florida's Turnpike. There were questions received from the public as they passed by as well. The MPO is the fiscal pass-through agency for most transportation agencies to receive federal and state funds. Even though the MPO does not offer transportation services, it does offer information affecting the county's population regarding the long range plans for the future of bicycle/pedestrian/greenways routes, Intracoastal Waterways water taxis, community transit operations, highway construction and resurfacing projects and all other transportation modes. Even Palm Beach County's Channel 20 stopped by to interview staff members and film the activities!



L to R: Sarah Stanley, FDOT, Patricia Masterman, MPO, RoseAnn LaBella-Voils, Palm Tran and Ellen Ostrowski, SFCS

Area Agency on Aging Holds Training Sessions



It just looked like a bunch of keys thrown into a pile on the table, but in truth it represented a life style change affecting older adults no longer permitted to drive. Putting one's keys aside forever can create, for some, the end of freedom. Freedom to go to the grocery store, doctor's offices, visit family and friends, or their place of worship, has past and a new life style must be adopted in order to continue taking care of oneself.

These points were clearly spelled out during a training module conducted by the Area Agency on Aging recently. The module is an excerpt from the American Society on Aging DriveWell curriculum which focuses on issues associated with what happens to an aging population when behind the wheel of a car. There are five main points in the particular model MPO staff observed that include such areas as being over medicated, not maintaining good health through diet and exercise, not having one's eyes tested on a yearly basis, and recognizing the fact that reaction times are reduced when one becomes older.

The program is one of the products of an MPO/FDOT Joint Participation Agreement whose purpose is to formalize a one-stop Senior Transportation Program in Palm Beach County. The DriveWell curriculum provides education/awareness, information/guidance and direction, and personal assistance to residents regarding alternative transportation options available to an aging population. The course is taught in English and Spanish. For information the public may contact Joan DeVaughn, Project Director of AmeriCorps-Caring Connections at the Area Agency on Aging in West Palm Beach at devaughnj@elderaffairs.org or call 561.684.5885.

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