

# Upshift – Summer 2021



## Making Illinois better through biking!



## What's Inside

- Ride Illinois Safely program
- Grand Illinois Bike Tour
- BikeSafetyQuiz updates
- Successful digital ad campaign
- Funding for Rumble Strip Study
- The Ride Illinois community

Learn more at [rideillinois.org](https://rideillinois.org)



## First Gear

We hope you enjoy this issue of Upshift. It's full of relevant information, recent successes, and opportunities for you to get involved with Ride Illinois' bike advocacy efforts in Illinois. Ride Illinois' goal is to engage with and empower a diverse set of individuals, groups, and organizations around the state. Our collective goal is to make Illinois better through biking!



Education, infrastructure, and legislation continue to be the focus of our statewide, nonprofit advocacy efforts. Making progress on these topics requires a lot of time, sweat, effort...and sometimes tears! Membership dues is our largest source of revenue and helps fund this important work.

Ride Illinois staff and board members remain committed to existing programs and events, such as our BikeSafetyQuiz Mini-Grants and Grand Illinois Bike Tour. We are also excited to offer new programs, such as Ride Illinois Safely.

Bike-friendly legislation and policy is an area we've had success in the past. HB270, which is headed to the governor's desk is a recent example. We're already discussing 2022 legislative priorities and will be sure to keep you informed.

Keep on biking for both recreation and transportation. Encourage others to join you. Thank you for your continued support of Ride Illinois. Let's ride, Illinois!

Dave Simmons  
Executive Director

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## Ride Illinois Safely



Riding a bike for recreation and transportation has many benefits for individuals and their community! This summer, we launched the Ride Illinois Safely program, a new program that offers more in-depth bicycle education to Illinois residents. The foundation of this program is the League of American Bicyclists' Smart Cycling curriculum.

The goal of the Ride Illinois Safely program is to make bicycle education courses and resources accessible to adults and children across Illinois. All courses are taught by League Cycling Instructors (LCIs), certified by the League of American Bicyclists.

The Ride Illinois Safely program simplifies the delivery of bicycle education courses, making it easier for individuals and organizations to connect with LCIs who offer bicycle education.

Through this new program, Ride Illinois aims to reach a diverse audience, including schools, scout troops, libraries, after-school programs, community organizations, senior centers, driver's education classes, and others.

To request a course, fill out this Course Request Form at [rideillinois.org/safety/education](https://rideillinois.org/safety/education). The fee for each course will vary. Some funding is available from a donation in memory of Margaret Virginia Williams and proceeds from the Share the Road license plates. In the end, Ride Illinois wants to ensure that cost is not a barrier to quality bike education.



## Grand Illinois Bike Tour



Thank you to everyone who made this year's Grand Illinois Bike Tour a success! More than 190 participants enjoyed the Metro East area of Illinois, including the wonderful trails of Madison County! This event is Ride Illinois' largest annual fundraiser. It is also a lot of fun and is a great way to experience different parts of the state by bike.

We were fortunate to have a small army of friendly volunteers who greatly contributed to the success of this year's GIBT. Our volunteers helped with everything from loading and unloading luggage to rest stops to SAG support. Thank you, volunteers!

Join us for next year's GIBT which will take place June 12-17, 2022. The fundraiser bike tour will start and end at Comlara County Park north of Bloomington-Normal. There will be one overnight stay in East Peoria, two overnights in Normal, and two overnights in Pontiac - with both camping and hotel options available. Registration will open on Nov. 1.



## Annual Ride Guide

For 20 years, Ride Illinois has been coordinating mailings of information about organized rides as an easy and affordable way for bike clubs to promote their events. In the past, we mailed a large envelope with individual brochures. In 2019, we debuted a new format of a Ride Guide "keeper" magazine. The Ride Guide format was well-received by individuals and bike shops.

In 2020, the pandemic caused the cancelation of many rides, including our Grand Illinois Bike Tour. Due to uncertainty of 2021 events, this year's Ride Guide was distributed as a digital PDF. This decision reduced the cost for both Ride Illinois and bike clubs and has been effective in promoting rides around the state. Also, the change in format makes the Ride Guide available to wider audience.

The 2021 Ride Guide is available in English and Spanish at [rideillinois.org/events/ride-guide](http://rideillinois.org/events/ride-guide). And there are many rides taking place through October.



## Ride & Advocacy Calendar

Looking for a fun ride or bike event? Our Ride & Advocacy Calendar lists upcoming organized/charity rides, speaking engagements, and Ride Illinois appearances. We enjoy meeting with our members, supporters, bike clubs, and others to discuss the many benefits of biking for recreation and transportation.

Feel free to contact us at [info@rideillinois.org](mailto:info@rideillinois.org) to have your ride or event that aligns with Ride Illinois' mission added to our Ride & Advocacy Calendar.



## Digital Ad Campaign on Social Media



2021 marked the second year that Ride Illinois developed a digital ad campaign for social media. We're fortunate to have generous support from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for this campaign. The digital ads ran on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn in April, May, and June.

The goal of this campaign is to educate both motorists and cyclists about the common causes of crashes and how they can be avoided. Ads focused on not riding against traffic, avoiding the "No Zone" for trucks, and safely biking across railroad tracks garnered a lot of attention. Educating motorists and cyclists to safely share the same space is one way to reduce cyclist fatalities and serious injuries in Illinois.

We are excited to report that over 2 million people viewed our ads on social media! The topics addressed by this campaign are included in our free, online resource. Go to [BikeSafetyQuiz.com](https://BikeSafetyQuiz.com) to take the quizzes today!



**Everybody on a bike  
is Somebody!**

## BikeSafetyQuiz Mini-Grants

Since 2018, Ride Illinois' BikeSafetyQuiz mini-grant program has been shared with schools in Illinois as a means of offering bike education to their students. We are pleased to say that the program has experienced growth each year since its launch, in part due to the incentive for schools to receive \$2 per student for completing the quiz. Our program is funded by IDOT with federal 405(h) funding.

In 2018, we reached 8,800 students. That number increased to nearly 19,000 students in 2020 and climbed to 41,000 students to date in 2021. 160 high school driver education programs, 82 elementary schools, and nearly 40 high school physical education/health programs have participated this year. We're thrilled that this program continues to grow!

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## Spanish Bike Education Materials

BikeSafetyQuiz quizzes, Bike Law Wallet Cards, and Kids Activity sheets are now available in Spanish! Please contact us at [info@rideillinois.org](mailto:info@rideillinois.org) to request any of our educational materials.

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## BikeSafetyQuiz Reaching Other States

[BikeSafetyQuiz.com](https://BikeSafetyQuiz.com), our free educational resource, has offered practical content to more than 145,000 adults and children in Illinois since it launched in 2013. Four interactive online quizzes – Adult Bicyclist, Child Bicyclist, Motorist, and Truck Driver – cover safety techniques and relevant state laws using images and short explanations for each answer.

This valuable resource is now being used by other states as well. BikeOklahoma, Georgia Bikes, Florida Bicycle Association, BikeWalk North Carolina, and BikeWalk Mississippi have all contracted with Ride Illinois for copies of BikeSafetyQuiz for their states.

A small fee covers our time to prepare BikeSafetyQuiz for use in other states, setting up their Google Form-based quiz modules, and helping the organization get started. Our quiz questions can also be tailored to other states and cover relevant laws, crash avoidance, other situational skills, and more.

## HB270: State Local Match Bill Passes

House Bill 270 has passed the state legislature and awaits Governor Pritzker’s signature. The new law will eliminate past IDOT policy that required local governments to pay 20% of the cost of new bicycle and pedestrian accommodations added during a state road project.

A more cost-effective time to add bike/ped features to roadways is when the roads are being built or reconstructed, but the local cost share requirement has often been an obstacle. Past Ride Illinois research found that top-performing states with Complete Streets laws or policies fully funded bike/ped just as they did for the other parts of their road projects. However, the 2010 implementation of Illinois’ Complete Streets law retained a local match requirement. During the law’s implementation and since, we sought to rectify the policy administratively.

Our thanks to Active Transportation Alliance for initiating and leading the way on HB270, which solved the issue legislatively. Ride Illinois closely partnered with Active Trans and Metropolitan Planning Council on many aspects of the effort. We also would like to thank Rep. Anna Moeller, Sen. Christopher Belt, and Sen. Ram Villivalam for their key roles. And thanks to all the supporters who added their voices to this effort!

**LEGISLATIVE VICTORY!**

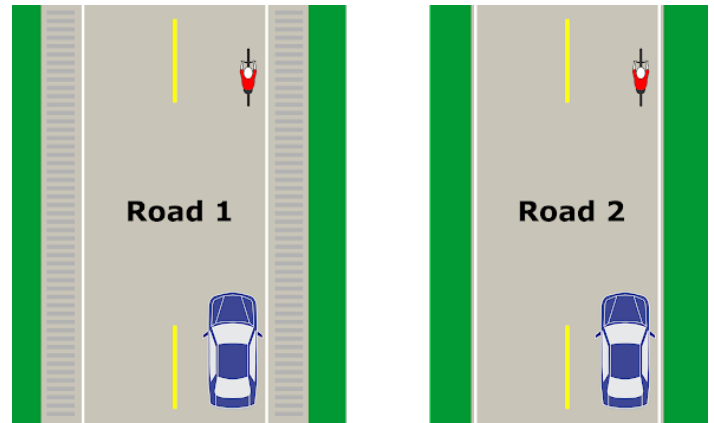


ACTIVE  
TRANSPORTATION  
ALLIANCE



**HB270 Eliminates  
20% Local Match for  
Bike/Ped Infrastructure**

## Ride Illinois-proposed Rumble Strip Study Funded



“Rumble strips” on paved shoulders help keep drifting drivers on the road, but can render a shoulder unusable by bicyclists if designed without adequate space free of these jarring grooves in the pavement. Now, a nationally-funded study will quantify their safety impacts on bicyclists, after a research idea was submitted by Ride Illinois and Adventure Cycling Association.

A Ride Illinois survey of 882 cyclists found that shoulder rumble strips without an adequate clear zone are perceived as more dangerous for bicyclists compared to having no paved shoulder at all. These and other scenarios will be studied. To learn more about this study, visit [bit.ly/3eMWN4f](http://bit.ly/3eMWN4f),

Research results might force better state design policies on rumble strips. In Illinois, IDOT does have a narrow rumble strip design standard with occasional gaps, but an adequate clear zone to the right of rumbles is only required in a limited number of cases. Ride Illinois contends that this restriction violates federal law on the main funding source for rumble strip projects, which - without limit - prohibit the use of those funds on rumble strips worsening safety for bicyclists. The study should answer the question definitively, hopefully with positive policy results for Illinois and elsewhere.

This is one example of how Ride Illinois focuses on policy changes for improved conditions for cyclists in Illinois. If we achieve our goals, this change will have a profound impact in the years to come.

## Our Members are Second to None!

Become a Ride Illinois member or renew your membership to support our efforts to make Illinois better through biking. We advocate for better road design, develop bike plans, push for favorable legislation, and educate tens of thousands of Illinois cyclists and motorists on ways to safely share the same space so you can get out and ride Illinois!

Ride Illinois members receive the following benefits:

- Our member newsletter, Upshift
- Our annual Ride Guide with info about organized and charity rides around the Midwest
- Registration discounts to events such as the Illinois Bike Summit and the Grand Illinois Bike Tour
- Choice of great membership thank-you gifts: Ride Illinois merchandise, Planet Bike accessories, and artisan-roasted coffee
- Updates and action alerts on local and statewide issues that impact cyclists
- A strong, consistent advocacy voice in Springfield, Washington D.C., and your community!

Visit [rideillinois.org/membership](http://rideillinois.org/membership) to learn more about member benefits...and to join or renew! Contact us at [info@rideillinois.org](mailto:info@rideillinois.org) with any questions or comments related to our membership program.

## Ride Illinois Corporate Memberships



**Making Illinois better through biking!**

In an effort to engage with companies of all sizes that believe in the work we do, Ride Illinois offers a Corporate Membership program.

Financial support from Corporate Members allows us to expand existing programs and explore additional programs that make Illinois better through biking. These companies bolster our ongoing efforts to encourage more adults and children in Illinois to ride a bike for recreation and transportation!

Current Corporate Members include Union Pacific Railroad, Freeman Kevenides Law Firm, Keating Law Offices, Epstein, Maple Leaf Coffee Roasters and more! Learn about all Ride Illinois Corporate Members at [rideillinois.org/corporate-members](http://rideillinois.org/corporate-members). Please support these generous companies that truly value Ride Illinois' advocacy efforts!

Annual Corporate Membership levels begin at just \$125. Learn about the benefits of Corporate Membership at [rideillinois.org/corporate-membership](http://rideillinois.org/corporate-membership).

## Generous Corporate Members

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Learn more at [rideillinois.org/corporate-members](http://rideillinois.org/corporate-members)



## ‘Share the Road’ License Plates

Support safe bicycling even when you drive! Most of the incremental fee for these state-approved specialty license plates fund Ride Illinois’ education programs, such as BikeSafetyQuiz and the recently-announced Ride Illinois Safely program.

Nearly 2,000 motorists in over 100 Illinois counties proudly display the ‘Share the Road’ license plates on their vehicles. We would love to double this number! Help us increase awareness that cyclists can legally ride on most Illinois roads by swapping out the license plates on your vehicle!

Learn more about ‘Share the Road’ license plates at [rideillinois.org/share-the-road-license-plates](http://rideillinois.org/share-the-road-license-plates).



## Faster Website and New Membership System

Ride Illinois recently completed a major website upgrade and migrated to a new membership system.

Our website, [rideillinois.org](http://rideillinois.org), was slow and frustrating! Chances are that you agree. The upgrade means pages will load faster for everything from BikeSafetyQuiz and safety resources to advocacy tools and becoming a member. We’re very excited about this much-anticipated improvement!

The new membership system offers options to update contact information, check and/or renew membership, donate, register for events (with a member discount), view giving history, etc. A log-in screen appears when joining/renewing or registering for an event.

We are excited to have improved methods to communicate and share information with members and supporters. Let us know what you think!

## The Ride Illinois Community

# #rideILcommunity



## Pedaling forward together!

Ride Illinois aspires to connect with and advocate for Illinois residents who ride a bike for recreation and/or transportation – regardless of age, race, ability, sex, gender, or socio-economic status. More adults and children riding bikes increases the safety of all cyclists.

Simply put, we want you to be part of our Ride Illinois community! We don’t care how far or often you ride, whether you ride a bike for recreation or transportation (or both), what kind of bike(s) you own, where you ride, or your Strava stats. Just ride!

Learn more at [rideillinois.org/rideil-community](http://rideillinois.org/rideil-community). Use and follow the hashtag #rideILcommunity on social media.

## Contact Info and Social Media

There are many ways to contact Ride Illinois staff and keep tabs on our year-round efforts to make cycling for recreation and transportation better and safer in Illinois.

**E-mail:** [info@rideillinois.org](mailto:info@rideillinois.org)

**Phone:** (630) 216-9282

**Website:** [rideillinois.org](http://rideillinois.org)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/rideillinois](https://facebook.com/rideillinois)

**Instagram:** [@rideillinois](https://instagram.com/rideillinois)

**Twitter:** [@rideillinois](https://twitter.com/rideillinois)

**LinkedIn:** [Ride Illinois](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ride-illinois)

We love hearing from our members and supporters. Send us an e-mail, give us a call, or comment on our social media posts. Be sure to tag us (#rideillinois) on your social media posts too. Be safe out there!



**ride**  
ILLINOIS

815 Leicester Rd #314  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

Let's  ride,  
**ILLINOIS!**

**September 10-19**

## **2021 Let's Ride, Illinois!**

Taking place from September 10 through 19 with casual, family-friendly rides around the state, **Let's Ride, Illinois is a celebration of the freedom and benefits that riding a bike offers.** The affiliated, community bike rides are free of charge and open to all. This event encourages adults and children from Rockford to Cairo (and all places in between) to enjoy a casual bike ride with their neighbors and to experience their community by bike.

Want to help Ride Illinois promote the many benefits of biking for recreation and transportation in your community? If so, you can register a ride today!

Learn more and register a ride at [rideillinois.org/events/lets-ride-illinois-2021](https://rideillinois.org/events/lets-ride-illinois-2021).