



## Making Illinois better through biking



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- Celebrating 30 Years of Advocacy
- Education and Ride Illinois Safely
- Learn About Our RATs
- Making Illinois More Bike-Friendly
- Invitations to Ride Illinois Events
- Summer Membership Challenge

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

## First Gear

Each opportunity to connect with our members and supporters is meaningful for Ride Illinois – and this issue of Upshift is no exception. As Illinois' statewide bike advocacy organization, we have plenty of updates to share about our advocacy efforts, education campaigns, and community outreach. We hope you enjoy Upshift.



Take a moment to search online for the “four types of cyclists.” You’ll learn about a study that was conducted by Roger Geller. Read the descriptions and decide which type describes you: strong and fearless, enthused and confident, interested but concerned, or no way no how. This survey has been conducted many times and 60-65% of people consistently choose “interested but concerned”. As advocates, this is our target audience!

Imagine the possibilities if through education, improved infrastructure, and supportive legislation, just 20% of the “interested but concerned” crowd choose to incorporate riding a bike into their lifestyle. The positive impact on their physical health alone would be significant. Additional results would include less wear and tear on infrastructure, a reduction in planet-warming emissions, and a decreased financial burden on individuals, families, and municipalities. We encourage you to speak to your elected officials and remind them of the power of the simple bicycle!

As Ride Illinois develops our next strategic plan, we will focus on goals, programs, and initiatives that can tip the balance and make a bicycle the logical choice to get from point A to point B for millions of Illinois residents. The next time you're leaving the house to run an errand, ask yourself “can I bike there?” You'll be surprised by how often the answer is yes! If you need some incentive, join our Drive Less, Bike More Challenge. Learn more on page 5 of this newsletter.

Your bicycle truly is a vehicle for change! E-mail us at [community@rideillinois.org](mailto:community@rideillinois.org) to share how bicycles are bringing about positive change in your community.

Dave Simmons  
Executive Director  
[dave@rideillinois.org](mailto:dave@rideillinois.org)

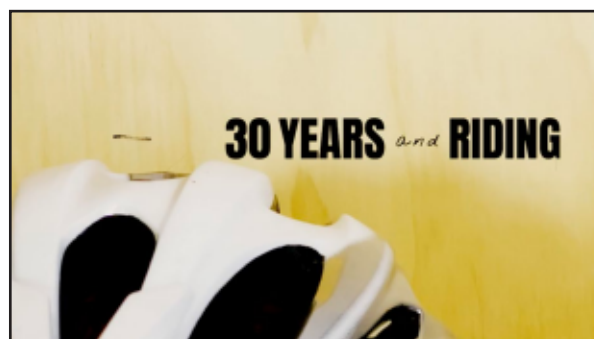
## Celebrating 30 Years of Bike Advocacy!



Ride Illinois held our annual member meeting on April 13th. Thank you to those who attended via Zoom and to the nearly 400 Ride Illinois members who completed our member survey! We are thrilled to report that 99% of our members are very satisfied (63%) or satisfied (36%) with Ride Illinois! Member input is important since the board of directors is beginning work on the next, multi-year strategic plan.

Nearly 92% of members want Ride Illinois to work with state and local officials to increase investment in bike/ped infrastructure and programs. 51% chose promoting bicycle-friendly policies at the state and federal level and 44% chose working with IDOT to develop and implement policy improvements.

The top education and encouragement initiatives chosen by members were 1) working with cities and towns to improve their bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, 2) educating motorists to improve their compliance with traffic laws and awareness of people on bikes; and 3) educating people on bikes to improve their compliance with traffic laws.



Ride Illinois' mission is to “make Illinois better through biking” and we're excited to celebrate 30 years of statewide, nonprofit bike advocacy in 2022! To mark the occasion, we created a video that is part celebration, part interview, and part fun! Check out the video at [rideillinois.org/30th-anniversary-video](https://rideillinois.org/30th-anniversary-video).

## Advocacy Matters

Ride Illinois continues to advocate for people who ride a bike in Illinois at the local, state, and national levels.



In March, over 20 individuals from Illinois participated in **Lobby Day at the National Bike Summit in D.C.** During 10 meetings with elected officials, we requested funding for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program and Healthy Streets Program. More recently, when a senator or representative pledges their support for funding these programs, Ride Illinois sends a 'dear colleague' letter to the other elected officials to ask for their support.

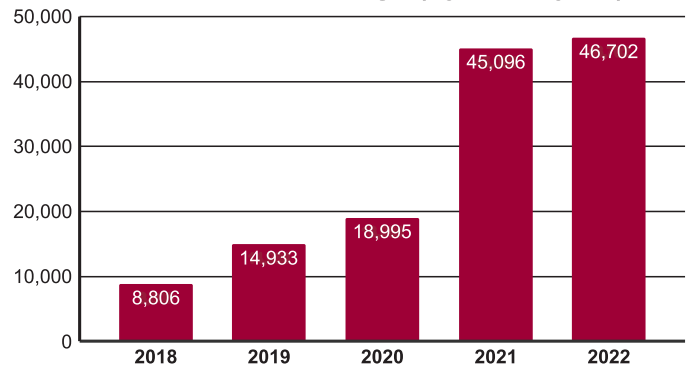
Ride Illinois, Active Transportation Alliance, and Metropolitan Planning Council jointly sent a **survey to all candidates for Illinois secretary of state** prior to the primary election. The secretary of state oversees the Rules of the Road, driver education services and exam, and various traffic safety initiatives. The goal of the survey was to give candidates the opportunity to answer questions about matters relevant to our members and supporters. Survey results can be found at [rideillinois.org/ilsoscandidate-survey-2022](https://rideillinois.org/ilsoscandidate-survey-2022).



Ride Illinois has been collaborating with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy to **close the four gaps on the Great American Rail-Trail in Illinois**. The remaining gaps include the Lansing Greenway, in Joliet, LaSalle to Bureau Junction, and Colona to East Moline. Closing these gaps would make Illinois the first state to have a contiguous route on the Great American Rail-Trail! Strategy conversations continue and we'll be sure to share relevant updates with our members.

## Education Increases Safety

BSQ Mini-Grant Usage (by fiscal year)



Ride Illinois offers bike education to schools in Illinois through our **BikeSafetyQuiz Mini-Grant program**. Since 2018, this program has experienced annual growth, in part due to the incentive to schools of \$2 for each student who completes our quiz. The program is funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) with federal funds. This year to date, nearly 47,000 students have participated and we're edging closer to our goal of 50,000 students.

For the third year in a row, Ride Illinois developed a **public safety campaign for social media**. Ads ran on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn in April, May, and June. More than 2.2 million people viewed the ads. The campaign aims to educate both motorists and bicyclists about the common causes of crashes and how they can be avoided. Learn more at [rideillinois.org/advocacy/public-safety-campaigns](https://rideillinois.org/advocacy/public-safety-campaigns).



Our **Ride Illinois Safely program** makes bike education courses and resources accessible to adults and children across Illinois. Options include live webinars, in-person discussions, and on-bike courses. Course fees vary, with some funding available from generous donations and proceeds from the Share the Road license plates. Learn more at [rideillinois.org/safety/education](https://rideillinois.org/safety/education).

## Ride Illinois Board of Directors Update

This April, the Ride Illinois board welcomed five new directors. Also, Cynthia Hoyle, of Urbana, was selected as the new board president.



Mike Keating, from Glenview, is an attorney focused on cases involving bicyclists. Deborah Liu, from Urbana, is a proponent of safe, connected bike/ped infrastructure. Ripujit Singh, from Naperville, is an IT consultant with experience in technology and security. Linda Warner, from Sigel, has experience with program development and leading bike tours. Ginger Wheeler, from Glen Ellyn, is a staunch advocate for the East Branch DuPage River Trail. Learn more at [rideillinois.org/staff-board](http://rideillinois.org/staff-board).

Unfortunately, we are also mourning the loss of two directors. In February, Ride Illinois was deeply saddened by the passing of Al Sturges, 87, of Park Forest. Over his three decades of service, Al led our organization as executive director, board president, board member, mentor, and volunteer. Al's wisdom, kindness, and friendship will be greatly missed.

On June 19th, Ride Illinois board member, Ramón Escapa, was struck and killed by the driver of a motor vehicle while biking. Ramón was a deeply-valued member of our organization and his community. Our thoughts and sympathy are with his wife, children, family, and friends.



Al Sturges, 1934-2022



Ramón Escapa, 1979-2022

## Regional Action Teams Make Connections

Thank you to the nearly 50 individuals who have joined our new program – Regional Action Teams (RATs). The goal of the RATs program is to empower volunteers to share the many benefits of biking in communities in their region. Ride Illinois staff support the RATs by providing the knowledge and materials necessary to make an impact at the local level.



RAT volunteers have been present at many events and some have offered additional assistance on important tasks. Friendly volunteers have shared information about Ride Illinois, our advocacy work, education programs, and available resources throughout Illinois – from Glen Ellyn to Medina, Kewanee to Springfield, and more. The time and energy that volunteers offer help to expand Ride Illinois' reach and bring the benefits of biking to communities of all sizes. We are thankful to have such dedicated volunteers!



We'd love to increase the number of volunteers involved in our RAT program. It's a fun way to chat with people, make connections, and have an impact. Visit [rideillinois.org/advocacy/regional-action-teams](http://rideillinois.org/advocacy/regional-action-teams) to learn more and volunteer.

## Bicycle Friendly Recognition in Illinois

Did you know that League of American Bicyclists (LAB) Bicycle Friendly America recognition has increased in Illinois? We're pleased to report the number of Bicycle Friendly *Communities*, *Businesses* and *Universities* in Illinois continues to grow.

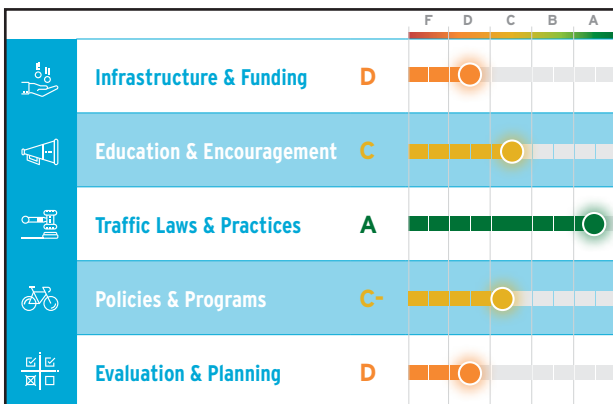
As of July 2022, Illinois has 17 Bicycle Friendly Communities, 11 Bicycle Friendly Universities and 25 Bicycle Friendly Businesses. To view the full list of award recipients in Illinois and across the United States, visit [bikeleague.org/bfa](http://bikeleague.org/bfa).

Ride Illinois encourages communities, universities, and businesses in Illinois to apply for this distinct recognition. Upcoming application deadlines are:

- September 29: Bicycle Friendly Community
- November 3: Bicycle Friendly Business

League of American Bicyclists recently launched a new Bicycle Friendly Community application. To learn about the updated application, visit [bikeleague.org/community](http://bikeleague.org/community).

## Let's Improve Illinois' Bicycle Friendly State Ranking



Illinois ranked 15th in LAB's most recent Bicycle Friendly State Ranking. We moved up from 16th. Grades that Illinois received in key areas are shown above. As you can see, there's room for improvement. Ride Illinois has set a moonshot goal to crack the top 5 in the near future. We'll need your assistance to achieve that goal, so please get involved with our programs, events, and initiatives.

To read Illinois' report card, as well as report cards from all 50 states (including the 14 states ahead of IL), visit [bikeleague.org/content/state-report-cards](http://bikeleague.org/content/state-report-cards).

## Join or Attend a Ride Illinois Event

Ride Illinois encourages Illinoisans to bike more this year and engage with our advocacy efforts! We're excited to share a few ways to get involved.



The **Drive Less, Bike More Challenge** runs through the end of September. It's easy to join. Through the Challenge, League of American Bicyclists and Ride Illinois encourage all Americans to experience the practicality of biking for transportation. Ride Illinois set a goal for Illinois residents to bike 10,000 miles or more for transportation by the end of September. Learn more at [rideillinois.org/events/driveless-bikemore](http://rideillinois.org/events/driveless-bikemore).



Our **second annual Let's Ride, Illinois** event will take place from September 9-18 with casual, family-friendly rides around the state. 2022 Let's Ride, Illinois is a celebration of the freedom and benefits that riding a bike offers. Learn more and register a ride at [rideillinois.org/events/lets-ride-illinois-2022](http://rideillinois.org/events/lets-ride-illinois-2022).



The **2022 Illinois Bike Summit**, scheduled for October 12 in Champaign, is the state's most important bicycle-related conference. The theme for the Summit is: Pedaling Forward Together. Professionals and advocates are invited to attend to learn, network, and collaborate. Register at [rideillinois.org/events/2022-illinois-bike-summit](http://rideillinois.org/events/2022-illinois-bike-summit).

## 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. This outreach is an important focus for our statewide, nonprofit advocacy organization because more adults and children riding bikes increases the safety of all cyclists.

Simply put, we want you to be part of the 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](https://rideillinois.org/rideil-community). Use and follow the hashtag #rideILcommunity on social media to help us build community centered on riding a bike.

## What's Happening Near You?

When searching for a fun ride, bike-themed event, or bike education course – look no further than our Ride, Advocacy & Education Calendar which can be found at [rideillinois.org/events/calendar](https://rideillinois.org/events/calendar).



Our calendar includes organized/charity rides, bike education courses, and Ride Illinois staff and volunteer events. It's packed with good, clean bike fun!

Contact us at [community@rideillinois.org](mailto:community@rideillinois.org) to add a ride or event to this informative calendar! Events must align with Ride Illinois' mission in order to be listed.

## Corporate Membership Program

To engage with companies of all sizes that believe in our work, Ride Illinois offers a Corporate Membership program. Learn about our Corporate Members and member benefits at [rideillinois.org/corporate-members](https://rideillinois.org/corporate-members).

## Generous Corporate Members

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

## Support Bike Education with the ‘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, safety brochures, and the Ride Illinois Safely program.



Nearly 2,000 motorists in over 70 Illinois counties proudly display the ‘Share the Road’ license plates on their vehicles. We’d love to double this number in the near future. Help us increase awareness by swapping out the license plates on your vehicle today.

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

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## Purchase Your Ride Illinois Merch

Support Ride Illinois’ advocacy efforts by purchasing some quality merchandise from our online store. From jerseys to neck gaiters to car magnets, there’s something for everyone. Click the **Shop** link in the top left corner of our website to pick up some merch today!



## Let’s Keep in Touch

There are many ways to contact Ride Illinois staff and keep tabs on our year-round efforts to make bicycling 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

**YouTube:** search for ‘Ride Illinois’

## Win a Prize in Our Summer Membership Challenge

Memberships support our advocacy and education efforts that make Illinois better through biking. To celebrate our 30th anniversary, we’re asking you to join Ride Illinois and share information about the organization with your personal and professional networks. Use the discount code **Upshift2022** to save \$5 off any membership level!

**New members will be entered into a raffle to win some Ride Illinois merch.**

Invite others to join too and make sure they enter your name in the “invited by” field when joining. The more new members you recruit, the better your chances to win. Ask your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and others to join today!

Memberships can be purchased at [rideillinois.org/membership](http://rideillinois.org/membership). Offer ends September 30, 2022.





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**2022**  
**Illinois  
Bike  
Summit**  
Champaign



## 2022 Illinois Bike Summit

Plan to attend the 2022 Illinois Bike Summit, on Wednesday, October 12, in Champaign, IL. **The Summit is the state's most important bicycle-related conference!** Professionals and advocates will learn, network, and collaborate. Sessions will focus on increasing safety and accessibility for adults and children who ride a bike for recreation or transportation.

**The theme for the Summit is: *Pedaling Forward Together*.** Everyone with an interest in riding a bike and making biking safer and better in Illinois is encouraged to attend the 2022 Illinois Bike Summit.

Learn more and register at [rideillinois.org/events/2022-illinois-bike-summit](https://rideillinois.org/events/2022-illinois-bike-summit).