Safety School: Mesa Students Learn Healthy Bike Habits

Two-Wheel Tours in downtown Mesa

An E.R. Doc’s Tips for Safe Riding

Get Social: How to Find Group Rides

Murals in Mesa: Bike Path Tunnel Gets a Makeover
The City of Mesa has proudly ranked a "Silver Status" as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists since 2015. Mesa’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Program provides many services and educational opportunities to enrich the safety of cyclists and pedestrians in the City. The goal of the Bike and Pedestrian Program is to increase the ridership and activity throughout the City so residents can take advantage of this form of affordable and healthy transportation.

Welcome

There’s new things to see as the fall riding season is here! We have added a beautiful mural to the Rio Salado Pathway Tunnel by Mesa-raised artist Mary Schindell. As the pathways become more popular, we’re working to add more public art activations.

Families with young riders are some of the residents who use our protected pathways the most. To help ensure young kids have the safety knowledge of riding, and the property safety equipment, we are excited to have expanded our school education program with Mesa Public Schools to reach hundreds more students. The whole program is featured as our cover story on page 16.

One way you can help ensure the continued growth and support of the Mesa Bike & Pedestrian Team’s efforts to expand biking options for Mesa residents (like more pathways, more safety education classes and great programming like WinterFest and Ride-In Movies at the Park) is participating in the Census. The Census can have a greater positive financial impact on your local community than just about anything else you do. That’s because for every person counted, your community receives approximately $3,195 each year.

Most of this money goes to critical programs that base how much they give to each state on population, like funding for local schools, Medicaid, Medicare part B, and highway planning and construction. However, $330 dollars per person can be used by the City to fund bike trails, bike lanes, parks and many other services Mesans care about. New this year, you can respond to the census online, by phone, and traditional paper mailer. Look for your invitation to participate and show some love for Mesa in early March 2020 and know you are supporting the Bike & Pedestrian Program when you complete it.

We hope to see you this fall at our signature events: CycloMesa WinterFest and three Ride-In Movies in the Park. See a full event listing in the back of the magazine.

Happy Riding!
City of Mesa Bike & Pedestrian Program team
Contributors

Jackie Dishner: mountain bike enthusiast, journalist and author of Backroads & Byways of Arizona (The Countryman Press, 2010), has been riding for 15 years. For one of her assignments for SpokeLife magazine, she finally learned how to change a flat tire. But she’s still not giving up thick inner tubes.

Michelle Turner: an Arizona native who is excited about the idea of biking to a grocery store that is being built down the street. She has already planned a route that will take her along side streets and has bought a bike helmet in anticipation of her grocery store trips.

Meghann Ferrar Segaludes: a local freelance writer and communication professional. A native of New York and ASU grad, Meghann enjoys spending her free time running, cooking and volunteering at the school where her children attend. She lives in the East Valley with her husband and three children.

Gretchen Palmer: an Arizona native and NAU alum. She keeps active by running, working out, playing sports and watching movies with her husband and two kids. Gretchen has been writing in the Valley for more than 15 years and is Principal and Owner of Media by Connection.

Amy McConnell: is a City of Mesa PIO by day and a lover of shopping local, supporting the slow-foods movement and connoisseur of Broadway shows by night. This is SpokeLife’s sixth issue with Amy at the helm.

City of Mesa Bike & Pedestrian Team: Mark Venti, Garret Topham, Al Zubi, Maria Angelica Deeb and Ashley Barinka. (left to right)

Earth-Friendly Programs

- Backyard Composting Program
- Grass-to-Xeriscape Incentive
- Solar Rebates for Mesa Electric Customers
- Water–Use It Wisely
- Prescription Drug Disposal
- Cooking Oil Recycling
- Mesa Urban Garden
- Arbor Day Celebrations & Tree City USA
- Textile Recycling
- Paint Reuse Program
- Living Green Events
- Monthly Sustainability Savings Tips
- Valley Metro Bus & Light Rail
- Bike & Pedestrian Program
- Green Waste Barrel Program
- Household Hazardous Materials Facility
- Amazing City Parks/Pools
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Sign up for e-notifications on Mesa’s Bike & Pedestrian Program at mesaaz.gov/bikeped

Report potholes, graffiti, street light outages and more, download the City’s free mobile app, Search Mesa CityLink to download from the App Store or Google Play.

MesaBikePedProgram@cityofmesa@cityofmesa

mesaaz.gov/sustainability

Keeping You Green in Mesa!
When I first started riding my bicycle as an adult, it was for stress relief. I rode solo. Recently, however, I started going out with a small group of cyclists to explore trails and neighborhoods I wouldn't normally ride alone. I've also made new friends. Interested? Aside from asking family, friends and colleagues to ride with you, here's where you can go to ride social.

**Bike Shops**

Local bike shops often schedule weekly rides. Depending on the popularity, you'll find one for all ages, abilities and interests. Stops for coffee or breakfast give cyclists a chance to socialize more.

**Mobile Apps and Social Media Sites**

Strava fans know they can find fellow roadies online, but there's also an app called Ride Alert that lets you find local rides. On social media sites like Facebook, connect with other cyclists through groups, including North Phoenix Dirt Ladies, Hawesaholics and Mountain Biking Over Fifty.

**Clubs and Organizations**

Sign up for annual events and charity rides. One I enjoy takes me to Northern Arizona every September for Pedal the Petrified: Closer to home, consider El Tour de Mesa in April. The Tempe Bicycle Action Group puts on the annual Bunny Hop, an Easter egg hunt by bike. Too bad it's just for kids.

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**Who’s Who on our Paths & Trails?**

**Bicycling background:** I have been riding around Mesa since 1968. I was a licensed racer in New Mexico in the mid 80’s, though I only did that for fun. I do most of my own maintenance and help others with their bicycles as needed.

**Where do you ride?** For commuting, mostly on the streets. For recreation, a general mix of neighborhood streets and canal paths.

**How many miles do you ride or commute each year?** Usually around 600 commuting and 600 recreation.

**Average length of ride?** 12 miles

**How often do you ride or commute?** I commute roughly 48 times a year. During the non-summer months, two to four times a week.

**What do you like most about riding in Mesa?** I love it all too well, since I have been doing it so long. So, I know the quieter back routes for recreation rides.

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**Ashley Keen**

**Age: 32**

Production Supervisor at the Mesa Arts Center

**Bicycling background:** I actually don’t have much of a bicycling background. I went to ASU and rode a bike daily to get to class, but I hadn’t ridden much since then until this February, when my husband and I decided to buy new bikes. He had cycled in the past and we thought it would be something that we would enjoy doing together, and we do! Now we enjoy riding our bikes to dinner or taking long Sunday rides together.

**Where do you ride?** I love riding along canal paths. They’re beautiful and they go for miles!

**How many miles do you ride or commute each year?** I’ve ridden 350 miles this year so far and bought the bike in February.

**Average length of ride?** About 8 miles

**How often do you ride or commute?** 2-3 days a week in the spring, before it starts getting too hot.

**What do you like most about riding in Mesa?** It’s very bike friendly. I really like working in a city that makes it so easy to commute to work on my bike.

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**Dennis Benzer**

**Age: 58**

Information Technology Manager

**Bicycling background:** I have been riding around Mesa since 1968. I was a licensed racer in New Mexico in the mid 80’s, though I only did that for fun. I do most of my own maintenance and help others with their bicycles as needed.

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**Where to Find Out if Group Rides Are For You**

By Jackie Dishner

When I first started riding my bicycle as an adult, it was for stress relief. I rode solo. Recently, however, I started going out with a small group of cyclists to explore trails and neighborhoods I wouldn’t normally ride alone. I’ve also made new friends. Interested? Aside from asking family, friends and colleagues to ride with you, here’s where you can go to ride social.

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The ABC's of Bike Riding Safety

Mesa is a beautiful biking city with lots of places to go. Know the ABC Quick Check you need before you even hit the road (or trail).

According to the City of Mesa, there is an easy way you can make sure your bike is in good working order prior to any ride, called an ABC Quick Check—which means “Air, Brakes, Chain.”

Air – Be sure you have enough air in your tires before you leave.

Brakes – Make sure your brake pads are in good working condition, not worn out.

Chain & Cranks – Pull on your cranks to ensure they aren’t loose and make sure your chain is free and clear from debris and dirt.

A few other quick reminders for riders is to make sure if you have any Quick Release axles on your bike, that they are closed and locked. Also, it is always a good idea to take a slow, quick little test ride in the area around you before you take off for a long ride.

“Safety should always be a top priority for bike riders across the city,” says Ashley Barinka, Safety Educator for the Bike and Pedestrian Program. “The best thing you can do is to make sure you are ready for a pleasant and injury free ride is to just take a couple moments to review and prepare before you take any ride.”

An E.R. Doctor's Tips for Safe Riding

By: Michelle Turner

You love it when your bike takes you places—just make sure your cycling doesn’t land you in an emergency room.

Banner Desert Medical Center’s emergency department, the fifth busiest in the United States, sees plenty of bike-related accidents, says Zach Bair, DO, assistant director of the Emergency Department.

“We see a bit of everything,” Bair says. “People falling from their bike or crashing into something and there are always accidents involving vehicles and bikes. Some can be very serious; others can be minor.”

Many crash injuries happen to people above the waist. As riders fall from their bikes, they try to brace themselves for impact and break their arms, twist their shoulders or mangle up their hands.

“The most serious injuries can occur when people don’t wear a helmet while riding,” Bair says. “Not using a helmet can lead to traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries and even paralysis.”

Bair remembers treating an experienced cyclist who just decided to take a quick spin without his helmet. He landed up in the Emergency Department with a traumatic brain injury, faced with a long recovery time.

“Y ou’ve got to wear that helmet,” Bair says. “You have to protect yourself out there.”

Cyclists also may want to wear gloves to protect their hands in case of a fall. In addition, Bair suggests taking plenty of water and sunscreen—the Emergency Department also treats many cases of people coming in for heat exhaustion and dehydration.
Ride-in Movies Returns this Fall

Lights.. Camera.. Action! Movie lovers: Time to grab the blankets, and picnic dinners as the Saturday night movies in the park are returning to Mesa. Families, friends and even your well-behaved pets are welcome to this year’s events. Presented by The City of Mesa’s Bike and Pedestrian Program, visitors are encouraged to ride their bikes or walk to the movies.

Movie-goers are encouraged to arrive early to save the best seats in the park, have time for kids to play at the playground and grab a bag of free kettlekorn (thanks to SRP!) before the feature film begins.

This year’s movie line-up includes Beetlejuice, Elf and How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World.

For the most up-to-date information, or to invite your friends and neighbors to the movies, check out the Bike and Pedestrian’s page on Facebook (Facebook.com/mesabikepedprogram) where they’ll share reminders about each showing.

Two-Wheeled Tours

Downtown Mesa bike tours highlight hidden historical gems

By: Michelle Turner

One of the best ways to discover downtown Mesa’s hidden gems is behind the bars of a bicycle.

Lori Ann Mecham can be your guide. Mecham owns Arizona “ING” Tours, which provides bicycle and walking tours of downtown Mesa and other metro Phoenix locations.

“I can’t tell you how many times I have heard people on the tour say “I never knew that was here’,” says Mecham. “So many people live in areas farther out in Mesa that they don’t venture downtown unless they go to court.”

Mecham takes riders on leisurely, safe tours through downtown Mesa that not only cover distance but different eras as well. There’s the Joel Sirrine House, Mesa’s only fully restored Victorian home, or the Mesa Arizona Temple, an internationally known Mormon temple built in 1927.

A resident of Mesa for the past 34 years, Mecham did her homework with local historians to get her facts straight as she teaches on the trail.

During the “Magical Mix Mesa Tour”, Mecham also spotlights local art and culture, showing riders the eclectic Jarrod's Coffee, Tea & Gallery, urban gardens, murals and a great place to get empanadas.

Arizona “ING” Tours puts a 12-person limit on the number of riders to help ensure their safety. “Riding through downtown Mesa is a piece of cake,” she says.

The tour company can provide bikes to those who don’t have them.

Mecham’s scholarship about Mesa and passion for revealing the city’s most interesting stories is paying off. Social-media reviews are overwhelmingly positive as people praise her for giving friendly, informative, one-of-a-kind tours.

Mecham started Arizona “ING” out of her own love of travel. After having enjoyed similar tours through bike-friendly European cities, she realized that they provide a unique way for people to understand different cultures — all from on top of a bike seat.

Shape your future START HERE >

United States Census 2020

Every Person Counted in the 2020 Census BRINGS $3,195 to Mesa each year

Article I Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution requires a count of all persons every ten years, also known as the Census. The 2020 Census will direct federal funds to services Mesans value:

Education
- Title I Grants to Local Schools
- Pell Grants for College
- Head Start Early Education Programs
- National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program

Healthcare
- Medicare Part B
- Medicaid
- State Children's Health Insurance Program

Economy
- Highway Planning and Construction
- Federal Prime Contracts with Small Businesses

Safety
- Assistance to Firefighters Grant
- Crime Victim Assistance
- And many more...

Take the Pledge and Respond to the 2020 Census!

Outreach Program Aims to Keep Kids Safe on Bikes

Bike safety is a top priority for the City of Mesa. Last year, the City of Mesa Bicycle and Pedestrian Program partnered with Mesa Public Schools to implement a program to teach school-aged children about bike safety. This year, the program will expand its reach and educate even more students at local elementary schools.

Identifying the need

The City of Mesa’s Bike and Pedestrian Program worked closely with Mesa Public Schools, the largest public-school district in Arizona, to select the school locations for bike safety education.

“First we narrowed down our target audience to fourth through sixth graders because those are typically the students who ride their bike to and from school,” said Laurie Struna, media communications specialist at Mesa Public Schools. “We then went out to elementary and junior high schools and counted the number of bicycles on campus and evaluated the traffic in the neighborhood.”

The City of Mesa worked with eight elementary schools and two junior high schools to roll out the program in 2018.

“We developed a 30-minute presentation and connected with principals and physical education teachers to schedule the visits,” said Ashley Barinka, safety educator for the City of Mesa Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.

Teaching valuable skills

During the assembly, students learned about proper bike gear including the importance of wearing bright and reflective clothing, closed toe shoes and a helmet.

“We not only talked about how wearing a helmet is crucial when you ride a bike, but we also demonstrated by using a raw egg,” Barinka said. “That helped the students visualize what could happen to our brain if it isn’t protected.”

Barinka and her team also brought a bike on stage and gave a quick overview of how to perform basic safety checks on different parts of a bike, and discussed the rules of the road.

Following the presentation, each school provided a list of students who were in need of a helmet, and Barinka returned at a later date to properly fit those students.

“Our budget allows us to provide helmets to kids who don’t have the means to purchase one on their own,” Barinka explained. “We also partnered with Phoenix Children’s Hospital which graciously gave us extra helmets and allowed us to accommodate even more students.”

Expanding the reach

During the 2018-2019 school year, the City of Mesa’s Bike and Pedestrian Program was able to educate nearly 4,000 kids and gave out 479 helmets.

“This year we hope to accommodate between 13 and 15 elementary schools,” Barinka said. “Our goal is to continuously rotate schools and ultimately educate every student.”

The program, which is built on the foundation of safety, has been well received.

“The experts from the City of Mesa Bicycle and Pedestrian Program have done a great job of taking bike safety information and making it relevant and interesting to our students,” Struna said. “We love the community support.”

Learn more about the City of Mesa’s upcoming community bike safety education opportunities at mesaaz.gov.
esa has a new mural – and this one's for cyclists. Walkers and joggers, too.

To see it, follow the Rio Salado Pathway underneath the Loop 202 freeway and enter the tunnel heading south toward Riverview Park. It’s meant to emotionally transport you in and out of an imaginary swimming pool of turquoise water and bright blue sky. As you pass through the “water,” bold and colorfully painted imagery inside the tunnel – egrets landing, hawks soaring, mountains flanking, bubbles floating, oranges hanging and hummingbirds feeding – also features glimpses of actual surrounding landscape. The scenery, some stenciled in, changes from a mesquite bosque in the wild desert on one end to a blooming orange grove (reminiscent of Mesa’s past) on the other. Leaves appear to blow in the wind throughout.

Playful, vibrant and lifesize it’s a cool respite in more than one way.

“Public art, in general, is a great way to engage others in public spaces,” says Robert Schultz, assistant director of Arts and Culture at the Mesa Arts Center, “But [mural art, in particular] is something that can involve just about anyone. It’s easily accessible to people. You can walk up and touch, see and feel it.”

Schultz saw the early renderings and was part of the team that helped choose Phoenix-based, mixed media artist Mary Shindell to create the mural. She was commissioned by the City of Mesa’s Transportation Department.

Inspired by youthful days spent learning how to swim at the public pool, Shindell, who grew up in Mesa, created the mural to mimic her memories. She says, prior to design, when she first visited the site and walked down into the tunnel, the first thing she noticed was how cool it felt, just like getting in the pool on a hot day. She added lines of blue mosaic glass tiles down the tunnel walls for the full effect.

With help from a friend and an assistant, she finished the project in mid-July. As people came through the tunnel while they worked, she says they’d ask, “Am I supposed to see underwater?”

Locals who fish in the river stopped to suggest she add fish. Others suggested deer. But she wanted to leave space for imagination.

“This [project] came out of the blue to us. It was exciting,” Schultz says. “Using art in public spaces is a positive thing in any community. It can help make everyday places more intriguing and encourage more visitation.” Shindell hopes you enjoy it.
There’s no play like snow play, just ask the folks behind the annual CycloMesa WinterFest. The yearly event is a party in the park created to increase helmet safety awareness for winter snow sports and biking.

Great for the entire family, kids and adults alike are invited to come out and play in 20 tons of snow, ride a mechanical snowboard, learn how to properly wear a helmet and get some basic information on concussions. Past attenders like Cortni Enders say the event was an amazing time for her and her family. “My family and I spent all day enjoying the snow and fun activities, not to mention all of the delicious food trucks to choose from. One thing that I enjoyed most about the event was how family friendly and pet friendly it was. It was very nice to see the community come together.”

Those who would like to take part are encouraged to ride bikes to the party where a bike valet will park your two-wheel ride for you. CycloMesa WinterFest is scheduled for Saturday, December 14, 2019. Be sure to wear snow clothes for those playing in the snow—it gets chilly fast! Also, come hungry to taste delicious food trucks from across the Valley who will be serving up treats, hot cocoa and warm food.

To the season be jolly and enjoy community with a good friend. After the annual WinterFest, stick around and hop on your bike to enjoy the holiday lights around the Alta Mesa neighborhood.

The Mesa Bike and Pedestrian program takes riders on a guided tour to check out all the beautiful holiday light displays. Since it is night, to enjoy all the lights, you are encouraged to bring a bike light. Don’t have one? City leaders give away bike lights to all who would like one and you get to keep it at the end of the tour.

Come enjoy the Winter Wonderland Ice Rink at Mesa City Plaza, the 4-story Christmas Tree on Macdonald, free visits with Santa, Mesa Christmas Market, and Jack Frost’s Food Truck Forest.
**EVENTS FALL 2019 - SPRING 2020**

**September 25, 2019**
Adult Education Class
RM Library, 6 p.m.
https://events.mesalibrary.org/

**October 5, 2019**
Tour de Fat Tempe 2019
http://www.biketempe.org/
tour-de-fat/

**October 23, 2019**
Kids Education Class
DR Library, 4 p.m.
https://events.mesalibrary.org/

**October 26, 2019**
Ride in Movie
Mountainview Park, 6:30 p.m.
Mesaaz.gov/bikeped

**November 16, 2019**
Ride in Movie
Palo Verde Park, 6 p.m.
Mesaaz.gov/bikeped

**November 23, 2019**
El Tour de Tucson
http://www.perimeterbicycling.com/el-tour-de-tucson/

**January 22, 2020**
Adult Education Class
RM Library, 6 p.m.
https://events.mesalibrary.org/

**March 4, 2020**
KIDS Education Class
RM Library, 4 p.m.
https://events.mesalibrary.org/

**March 7, 2020**
Ride in Movie
Red Mountain Park, 7 p.m.
Mesaaz.gov/bikeped

**April 15, 2020**
Bike2Work Day
Mesaaz.gov/bikeped

**April 18, 2020**
El Tour de Mesa
http://www.perimeterbicycling.com/

**June 3, 2020**
Adult Education Class
MN Library, 6 p.m.
https://events.mesalibrary.org/

**June 10, 2020**
KIDS Education Class
MN Library, 4 p.m.
https://events.mesalibrary.org/

**BIKE CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS**

- **Blazing Saddles Ride Club**
  Group ride and mountain bike rides for all levels. Skills and maintenance clinics.
  meetup.com/bike-masters-bikes-direct-blasting-saddles-rides-club

- **Gravity Riders Organization of Arizona**
  Advocacy, rider education and trail work. The Gravity Rider community includes downhillers, freeriders, all-mountain riders, dirt jumpers and BMX riders of all ages.
  gravityridersaz.com

- **San Tan Shredders**
  Group rides for mountain bikers of all levels.
  meetup.com/santan-shredders

- **Tempe Bicycle Action Group**
  Working to make bicycling a prominent, safe and convenient form of transportation and recreation in the region. Also hosts group rides and events.
  biketempe.org

- **We-Cycle-USA**
  Help kids and adults in need to recycle and refurbish bikes.
  wecycleusa.org

**BIKE SHOPS**

- **ABC Bicycle & Jetski Rentals**
  3655 E. Main Street
  480-645-3653
  abjetski.com

- **Adventure Bicycle Company**
  110 W. Southern Avenue
  480-649-3374
  2336 E. Baseline Road
  480-469-3394
  adventurebicycle.com

- **Archer’s Bikes**
  1520 N. Country Club Drive
  480-275-5848
  archerbikes.com

- **Bikes Direct Mesa**
  15-45S. Power Road
  480-915-8920
  bikesdirectmesa.com

- **Bike Master Gilbert**
  2264 E. Williams Field Road
  480-857-7000
  bikemasteraz.com

- **DNA Cycles**
  2501S. Power Road
  480-504-2453
  dncycles.com

- **E lectric Bike Shop**
  15-45S. Power Road
  480-428-2349

- **Mike's Bike Chalet**
  5505 E. University Drive
  480-807-2944
  mikesbikechalet.com

- **Paragon Cycling**
  1006 N. Gilbert Road
  480-340-1500
  paragoncycling.com

- **Performance Bicycle**
  1555 S. Power Road
  480-925-2044
  performancebike.com

- **Two Wheel Jones**
  2837 N. Power Road #110
  480-880-2922
  twowheeljones.com
Recent trends continue to highlight a strong desire for communities to be bike-friendly, and the City of Mesa’s Transportation Department Bike & Pedestrian Program is continuously working on creating enhanced pedestrian pathways to provide safe connections for residents to travel through the city on two-wheels.