



# Active Michigan Communities

2008 Issue 1

## Welcome



I've been hearing (and even dishing out) a lot of grumping about the weather lately. Many are ready for a break from grey clouds and snow. But as I think about past Michigan winters, I remember how much more snow we had when I was a kid. Snow banks swallowed up our windows, and schools were closed for days. And what did we do when that happened? We ran outside to build snowmen, went sledding, had snowball fights and made snow angels. We played until we were completely wet and shivering and then we came in for hot cocoa and waited for our snow pants and coats to dry so we could go out and do it again. Very soon (believe it or not) the snow will melt and the days will be warmer. But until then, let's capture the beauty of the end of this winter. Take a walk and let a snowflake melt on your tongue. Go cross-country skiing and let the endorphins of exercise melt away those winter blues. Staying active will usher in the spring in no time flat. Until then...read on and enjoy some Active Michigan Community news.

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## Community Spotlight: Portage

The city of Portage has made enormous strides in designing an active living community. Currently the city boasts 50 miles of bikeways to accommodate bicycle commuters and more than 60 linear trail miles for biking, hiking, and pedestrian use. Additionally, there are many natural resources in Portage, from Portage Creek Bicentennial Park to West Lake Nature Preserve that encourage people to go out and be active. The city provides multiple cultural and recreational activities, such as softball leagues and park appreciation days, and is working to maintain environmentally-friendly initiatives.



In 2007, the Portage City Council decided to step up its efforts to become an active living community. They developed the *Portage 2025 Vision Statement* as a framework for creating a sustainable, safe, and active environment for the future. Through community participation and dialogue, community leaders designated seven improvement areas: (1) culture and leisure, (2) human services, (3) transportation, (4) economic development, (5) municipal services, (6) environment and natural resources, and (7) neighborhoods. The community plans to enhance and improve current facilities and natural resources to create a safe, environmentally-friendly community that encourages physical activity among all community members. By the end of 2007, the city had increased efforts to create safe routes throughout the city by applying more efficient debris and snow removal programs on sidewalks, bikeways, trails, and increasing safety by collaborating with neighborhood watch groups and police forces. The city is also using small incentives to get community members to be more active, such as offering snack and drink concessions and a warming house at the Millennium Park Ice Rink.

For more information regarding Portage 2025, please contact Sean McBride, Assistant City Manager, at [mcbrides@portagemi.com](mailto:mcbrides@portagemi.com) or at (269) 329-4403.

## Michigan Announces *Safe Routes to School (SR2S)* Recipients

This January, the Granholm administration announced that nine Michigan elementary and middle schools will receive more than \$1.6 million in federal "Safe Routes to School" funding for safety improvements and education programs that will encourage students to safely walk or bicycle between home and school.



The schools receiving Safe Routes to Schools funding are:

Christa McAuliffe Middle School, Bangor Charter Township, Bay County;  
Winans Elementary School, Delta Township, Eaton County;  
George Long Elementary School, village of Grass Lake, Jackson County;  
Frost and Cascades Elementary Complex, city of Jackson, Jackson County;  
Jackson Arts and Technology Academy, city of Jackson, Jackson County;  
Northeast Elementary School, city of Jackson, Jackson County;  
Springport Elementary and Middle School, village of Springport, Jackson County;  
Clear Lake Elementary School, Oxford Charter Township, Oakland County, and  
Lincoln Elementary School, city of Cadillac, Wexford County.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports coordinate the SR2S program in Michigan, in collaboration with the Michigan departments of Community Health and Education, and several non-profit organizations and universities.

This announcement of Michigan SR2S recipients was the first wave of Safe Routes to School funding; three additional rounds of grants will be announced this spring, next winter, and in the spring of 2009. The federal program will provide a total of \$16 million to Michigan through 2009. Funding for schools was established by Congress under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU). Safe Routes funding is 100 percent federal, with no local match required. To be eligible for the funding, schools must complete a "Handbook Planning Process," which results in an action plan tailored to meet the specific needs of the school. If you are interested in seeing Safe Routes to School (SR2S) implemented in your community, please visit: [www.saferoutesmichigan.org](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org).

## Free "Safe Routes to School" Webinars

**Looking for more resources to help your community advance SR2S efforts?** America Walks and the National Center for Safe Routes to School have developed the Safe Routes Coaching Action Network, which will offer Safe Routes to School Webinars. The free, hour-long Webinars are designed to educate individuals and organizations on topics that will assist with successful outreach efforts. The Safe Routes Coaching Action Network will also offer Webinar participants the option to receive a coaching session from America Walks for assistance with their local outreach efforts. By offering follow-up coaching and education, the Network aims to increase the priority of and resources dedicated towards improving Safe Routes to School efforts.

To register and for a detailed Webinar description, please visit:

[www.americawalks.org/Content/10081/Webinar\\_Registration\\_Coaching\\_Action\\_Network.html](http://www.americawalks.org/Content/10081/Webinar_Registration_Coaching_Action_Network.html)

Future topics within the Safe Routes Coaching Action Network Webinar Series include:

- Starting a Safe Routes to School Program with Zero Funds
- Working in Latino Communities
- SRTS Education in Schools

## The Healthy School Action Tools



**How well do schools in your community promote healthy, physically active lifestyles for students?** The Healthy School Action Tools (HSAT) are a set of online tools to help Michigan schools create healthier environments. The suite of tools consists of an assessment to evaluate the school environment, an action plan tool, and mechanisms to share successes. The HSAT helps schools to assess whether their school environment offers consistent messages about the importance of healthy eating, physical activity and a tobacco-free lifestyle and provides opportunities for students to make healthy choices; thus, using the HSAT can help to establish positive health habits and to create an active living community. The HSAT can also be used as a planning instrument because it is designed to help schools take positive action in creating a healthy environment for their students.

The HSAT was developed through collaboration between the Michigan Department of Community Health, the Michigan Department of Education, Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Team Nutrition, and United Dairy Industry of Michigan. The original online HSAT was launched in 2004 and since then nearly 800 Michigan schools have registered and completed the HSAT Assessment. The tool was recently revised to include questions about Safe Routes to School. For more information about HSAT, please visit: <http://mihealthtools.org/hsat/>

## Successful Aging in Place through Elder-Friendly Community Development

In the United States, demographic patterns show an aging population, where people are living longer and remaining active and independent. These changes make it essential to create a community that is “elder-friendly,” which is a community that provides opportunities for people to age in place by making resources available for day-to-day living. The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (MOSA) strives to help create these communities that are livable for all ages and allow individuals to successfully “age in place,” where residents can continue to live in a community that is accessible for basic needs and provides community outlets for an enriched, active lifestyle. For example, grocery stores, pharmacies, medical care, transportation, social supports, and churches are accessible to older citizens so that they may continue to live in and make contributions to their community.



As a first step, the MOSA developed an elder-friendly community assessment. Elder-friendly communities are assessed in ten categories: (1) walkability, (2) supportive community systems, (3) access to health care, (4) safety and security, (5) housing: affordability and availability, (6) housing: modification and maintenance, (7) transportation, (8) commerce, (9) enrichment, and (10) inclusion. Similar to the Promoting Active Communities (PAC) program, a community completes the assessment and is then eligible for recognition as a *Community for a Lifetime*. The Elder-Friendly Community assessment also provides action plan worksheets as a framework for communities interested in becoming a *Community for a Lifetime*.

There are numerous benefits to implementing an elder-friendly program outside of the safety, security, and independence provided to the older population. All members of a community can benefit from increased walkability and community activities, as well as the increase in safety and enrichment through intergenerational participation. As more individuals age beyond 50, active, elder-friendly community development is necessary to allow for healthy, fulfilled aging. Currently, five Michigan cities are recognized as elder-friendly: Battle Creek, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, and Gaylord.

For more information about elder-friendly communities and to preview the assessment, visit: <http://www.michigan.gov/miseniors>.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Upcoming Events

### The 4th Annual Designing Healthy Livable Communities Conference: *The Power of Policy*



#### Designing Healthy Livable Communities Conference

Date: May 29th-30th

Time: All Day Events

Place: Lansing Center, Lansing, MI

The fourth Designing Healthy Livable Communities (DHLC) Conference: *The Power of Policy* is May 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> at the Lansing Center in downtown Lansing, MI. This year's conference will be comprised of both national and Michigan experts to discuss how the *Power of Policy* can help policy makers and communities create policies that will enable community members to lead healthy, active lives. The conference and training session will provide:

- A place to network and learn from other professionals working to develop active communities
- An opportunity to learn about public policies that have helped to enhance healthy nutrition and physical activity in communities
- Useful tools and resources to accomplish the goal of healthy communities particularly in regards to the development of public policy
- Specific ideas for land use, community design, physical activity, nutrition, and transportation choices
- Action plans of healthy communities that you can use to enhance your community

The conference will include presentations from three keynote speakers: **Dean Sienko**, MD., Health Officer/Director at the Ingham County Health Department, **Reid Ewing**, Associate and Research Professor at the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland, and **Robert McKinnon**, the founder of YELLOWBRICKROAD.

Various individuals and organizations are encouraged to attend this conference; from bicycle and pedestrian advocates to faith-based organizations to economic development specialists. Early registration must be received by May 5<sup>th</sup>. This event is presented by the Michigan Department of Community Health, with support from the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports.

For full conference agendas and registration information, please visit: <http://www.mdch.gov/cvh>. We look forward to seeing you there!

## SAVE THE DATES!

### Healthy Schools, Healthy Students 2008 Conference

Learn how to use policies and coordinated school health teams to create a healthy school environment through healthy eating and physical activity.

Conference details available at:

[http://michigan.gov/documents/mdch/HealthSchflyer2008\\_212680\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/mdch/HealthSchflyer2008_212680_7.pdf)



## 2008 Michigan Bike Summit March 29th, Lansing, MI



**Date: Saturday, March 29, 2008**

**Time: 9AM -4PM**

**Place: Foster Community Center, 200 N. Foster, Lansing**

**Cost: \$25 per person**

The League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB) is hosting a full day of workshops, presentations on bicycle advocacy & education efforts, and discussions about coalition building at the Foster Community Center in downtown Lansing. Come and join other Michigan bicyclists and other non-motorized transportation advocacy to discuss the current state of bicycling in Michigan and efforts to promote cycling and safety through educational programs and coalitions.

The day will consist of three workshop presented by professionals who are working toward a safe, multi-modal transportation system in multiple Michigan communities. The workshops will be lead by **Dante Lanzetta**, Chair of LMB, **Sarah Panken**, Active Communities Coordinator for the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, **John Lindenmayer**, Associate Director of LMB, and **Josh DeBruyn**, Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator for MDOT. These workshops will provide effective tips and techniques for influencing local government and policy makers, present an overview of the growing Complete Streets movement, and provide insight into current facilities to accommodate bicyclists on the road.

There will also be presentations where you can learn more about current educational programs and coalitions: Safe Routes to School (SR2S), Safe and Active Genesee for Everyone (SAGE), and the Boyne City Coalition.

For more information and to register, please visit [www.lmb.org/BikeSummit.html](http://www.lmb.org/BikeSummit.html).

## *Driving Tourism 2008:* Succeeding in Challenging Times

**Ever thought about increasing tourism in your community?** By creating a community that supports and promotes active living, you are also creating a great place to live and visit. To learn tools and skills for using your active community to "drive tourism," check out the *Michigan Lodging & Tourism Conference, Driving Tourism 2008*.

*Driving Tourism 2008* is Michigan's only all industry educational and networking conference for hospitality and tourism leaders. The conference, made possible by the Michigan Hotel, Motel & Resort Association, Travel Michigan, and Michigan State University, attracts tourism industry decision-makers from across Michigan, to network and explore new opportunities for Michigan tourism.



For conference information, please visit: <http://michiganhotels.org/assoc/meetings.html>

## About Us

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports was established in 1992 to improve the health of, and increase physical activity among, Michigan residents. The Michigan Fitness Foundation was created in 1994 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit public charity foundation to expedite Governor's Council policies and programs and provide a broader funding base to pursue its mission of Getting Michigan Moving. The foundation is licensed by the Michigan Attorney General to solicit and receive charitable gifts and grants.



MICHIGAN FITNESS FOUNDATION

## Our Mission

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports envisions a physically educated population with the knowledge and skills to enjoy a healthy, vigorous and safe lifestyle in communities designed to support physical activity.

P.O. Box 27187

Lansing, MI 48909

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## Endorsed Physical Activity Events

Get the Governor's Council's seal of approval on your event! The organization endorses events that encourage physical activity in communities across the state. Physical activity events that range from running races to softball tournaments are eligible to be endorsed by the Governor's Council. Having your event endorsed is free, and gives you additional publicity through the Governor's Council website! Do you have an event that you think could be endorsed by the Governor's Council or do you want to find events that have already been endorsed? Visit <http://www.michiganfitness.org/endorsements/index.php>. If you have questions about the endorsement program, contact Tricia Fraas at (800) 434-8642 or [tfraas@michiganfitness.org](mailto:tfraas@michiganfitness.org).

## Additional Resources

**Walk Score.** How walkable is your neighborhood? The Walk Score web-site serves as a useful resource in assessing the walkability of a particular neighborhood. By providing an address, Walk Score provides a map of nearby grocery stores, recreational areas, and other general amenities and uses the proximity of those facilities to assess the neighborhood on a 100 point scale. Available at: <http://www.walkscore.com>.

**Walking and Bicycling Information Web-site Update!** The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center has updated its webpages. Check out the user-friendly format to find all your bicycling and walking information, news, and images. Now available at: <http://www.walkinginfo.org> or <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org>.

**"Complete Streets" Briefing Paper Now Available!** The National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) recently completed a briefing paper on the "complete streets" policy movement. The brief is available for free to NCSL members and for a fee to the general public on the NCSL website. Available now at: [http://www.ncsl.org/programs/pubs/summaries/07LBNovDec\\_Streets-sum.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/pubs/summaries/07LBNovDec_Streets-sum.htm)

**Designing Active Communities, Promoting Healthy Lives.** As of January 1, 2008, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Active Living Network is non-operational, but the Active Communities web-site will now provide a national perspective of active community projects. Visit: <http://www.activeliving.com>.

### To Subscribe to the Active Michigan Communities Newsletter

Contact Sarah Panken at (800) 434-8642 or  
[spanken@michiganfitness.org](mailto:spanken@michiganfitness.org) to provide an e-mail address