



# Active Michigan Communities

Spring 2007

## Welcome

Some friends and I have been running and walking on local trails throughout the winter months. Lately, as the weather has warmed up, we've noticed a definite increase in traffic every time we exercise. We usually take our dogs when we go and even they've noticed more friends on the trails. Brighter, warmer days are certainly a great motivator to be more active! So...I encourage you, as community leaders, to take advantage of this natural phenomenon and promote an Active Michigan throughout the summer months. There are a lot of ideas in this newsletter that will get you started. Read on to hear about the One in a Million Campaign, the activities of May as National Fitness Month and more. And as always...we're here to help. Call us if there's anything we can do to assist you in your work to create the most active state in the nation!!

Stay active!

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## Community Spotlight: Battle Creek

Battle Creek is one of many Michigan communities using innovative approaches to improve quality of life in the community. They are using planning strategies and development approaches that will result in community design that is good for the local economy and environment, and will also encourage residents to participate in physical activity. To implement creative community design, it is essential that planning documents (e.g., the master plan) contain goals and objectives that highlight the creation and maintenance of a walking and bicycling network and support "smart" land use. This is important because planning documents guide a community's vision. Battle Creek's master plan was updated in 1997 and contains goals and objectives to:

- Prevent sprawl and reinvest in older areas of the city
- Protect natural resources
- Link greenways
- Provide travel alternatives to the automobile
- Encourage mixed use

In line with the City's vision, the Battle Creek Downtown Partnership was awarded a grant to assist in the conversion of three historic structures located at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Carlyle Street that have stood vacant for more than 20 years. The Carlyle Building, the former Anson Hotel and the Ratti Building will be converted into 24 high-end residential condominiums, creating a unique blend of historic housing and advantages of condo living. The Battle Creek Downtown Partnership believes that the Riverfront Condominium Project will invigorate the deteriorated downtown area with a vibrant energy that will attract jobs, people and opportunity.



## One In A Million – A Campaign to Get Michigan Moving



The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness is teaming with Governor Jennifer M. Granholm to challenge one million Michigan residents to be physically active! This year, Governor Granholm has made a commitment to participate in the Detroit Marathon. With the governor as the state's role model, Michiganders can follow her lead in setting a goal and training to achieve it.

Governor Granholm urges Michiganders, "I challenge you to set a physical activity goal this year and train to achieve it! I have set a goal of participating in this fall's Detroit Marathon – but you don't have to run a marathon. Your goal could be to walk a mile, run a 5K or be physically active 30 minutes a day. I'll be cheering you on, and I hope you'll help cheer me on too! Each of us can be One In A Million Michigan residents being physically active in 2007!"

The Governor also challenged community leaders to get involved and encourage residents in their communities to participate in physical activity. A community campaign to sponsor activities such as a Labor Day Community Walk (see page 5) or to promote hometown recreation facilities, parks, and trails can help residents become more physically active. This will ensure that each community can be part of One in a Million.

A major component of the campaign is the One In A Million web site, [www.michigan.gov/oneinamillion](http://www.michigan.gov/oneinamillion). The campaign includes access to fun and helpful resources, like the Surgeon General's Michigan Steps Up website, that will help participants track their progress and stay motivated to complete their personal physical activity goals. Links, web logs, and stories help provide the all-important social support that many people need to keep moving.

Visit the One In A Million web site and sign up for the listserv for updates and information. Be One In A Million working for a healthier Michigan!

## May is National Fitness Month

Mark the month of May on your calendar and join the celebration!

Since 1983, May has been observed as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. Individuals and organizations everywhere have joined in the fun to promote awareness of the value of physical activity in the pursuit of happier, healthier, more productive lives. Encourage your community leaders to issue a proclamation that recognizes May as Fitness Month in your community. That way the entire community can join together to raise awareness about health and fitness. There are many activities you can participate in to be active in May and to be counted as One in a Million. Some simple things you can do to get moving include:



- Set a feasible goal to increase your physical activity, whether it is walking around the block or bicycling 10 miles three days a week, and stick with it
- Walk during you lunch break
- Walk or bicycle to work, school or to run daily errands
- Join the company softball, baseball, or basketball team
- Take a 10-15 minute physical activity break during your day
- Get outside and garden

## 1,000 Michigan Schools Participate In ACES



On Wednesday, May 2, more than 1,000 Michigan schools (over 400,000 children) will exercise in a symbolic gesture of fitness and unity. This non-competitive program has proven to be educational, motivational, and fun.

All Children Exercising Simultaneously (ACES) takes place annually on the first Wednesday in May. Now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, ACES is an international initiative to increase children's interest in physical activity. ACES has reached millions of children, parents, and teachers from more than 50 countries. Michigan's efforts have been coordinated by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports for the past nine years.

Michigan students are typically joined by community leaders who participate in local ACES events in support of healthy communities. This year the Governor's Council encourages even more local community leaders to participate, following the example of two top Michigan leaders serving as the event's co-chairs.

"The First Gentleman and I are so pleased to serve as co-chairs of ACES again this year to help promote the importance of physical activity to Michigan children and their families," said Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. "We envision strong and vigorous communities in Michigan today and always, and that begins with good physical health for our residents of all ages."

ACES is an important program because it shows children that physical activity is fun, and highlights the need for youth fitness. An increasing percentage of our nation's children are overweight, a risk factor for many chronic diseases including heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Involving children in regular physical activity (at least 60 minutes a day, most days of the week) can significantly lower that risk.

ACES With-a-Friend in Michigan would not be possible without the support of Farm Bureau Insurance, who for the ninth consecutive year will be the statewide sponsor. Their generous support has allowed the Governor's Council to provide free materials to plan the event and to distribute stickers and an educational newsletter for each ACES participant.

## Celebrate National Employee Health and Fitness Day

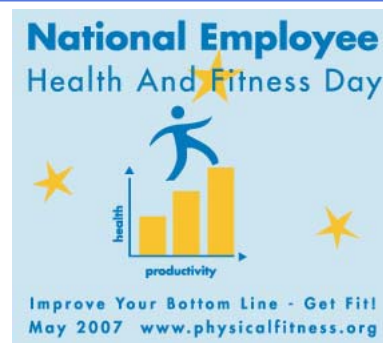
Celebrate your organization's commitment to employee wellness or kick-start a wellness program with National Employee Health & Fitness Day (NEHFD) on Wednesday, May 16, 2007. NEHFD is a national health observance, created to promote the benefits of physical activity for individuals through their worksites. In its 18th consecutive year, NEHFD has enlisted tens of thousands of company participants from around the world. Worksite Health Promotion programs enhance the overall health and productivity of your organization! Benefits include:

### Worksites

- Enhanced employee productivity
- Improved health care costs
- Decrease rates of illness and injuries
- Reduced employee absenteeism

### Employees

- Lower Stress Levels
- Increased well-being
- Improved physical fitness
- Increased stamina



The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and its many partners encourage you to celebrate NEHFD in your worksite. **Celebration of NEHFD can be simple and cost-free.** For ideas to promote health and wellness on **May 16**, or year-round, visit [www.michiganfitness.org](http://www.michiganfitness.org).

## Michigan Communities Embrace “Smart Commute”

Smart Commute is an initiative that encourages people to use alternative ways to get to work and around town. Instead of driving alone, try bicycling, walking, carpooling or public transportation! Smart Commute events often take place during May because it is National Bike Month and can range from a single-day event to a week full of events. There are no set rules for how to celebrate Smart Commute, each community's events are unique and can be held during any month. Some of the most popular types of events include:

- Park at a central location and then walk, bike, or roll to work
- Educational classes such as bicycle commuting, fitting a walking shoe, or foul weather travel tips
- Community gatherings such as a festival, parade, or bike rodeo
- Information sessions such as exhibits or lectures
- Commuter challenges in which local businesses engage in friendly competition to see who has the highest percentage of employees who participate in Smart Commute
- Bicycling or walking buddy programs
- Carpooling programs



Smart Commute in Jackson

There are many communities throughout Michigan that are participating in Smart Commute.

**Ann Arbor:** getDowntown is sponsoring “Curb your Car” Month in May. Visit <http://www.getdowntown.org/> to see a calendar of fun and educational events, or to sign up for the commuter challenge.

**Flint:** This is the first year that Flint has participated in Smart Commute. May 14-20 is Smart Commute Week. Join in fun, free events such as an information fair, a parade, and a bike tour of Flint. For more information, contact (810) 235-7894.

**Lansing:** May is Smart Commute Month in Lansing. Visit <http://www.midmeac.org/smartcommute.html> to learn more about bicycle commuting lessons, the Smart Commute festival, and the commuter challenge.

**Jackson:** May 18 is Smart Commute Day in Jackson. Participants can park their car, enjoy breakfast and then walk or bicycle to work. Visit <http://www.fitnesscouncil.org/smartcommute.htm> for more information or to sign up for the commuter challenge.

**Traverse City:** June 4-8 is Smart Commute week in Traverse City to ensure great weather. Visit <http://www.traversetrails.org/smartcommute/about.php> to learn more about the Commuter Cup Challenge and to see a schedule of activities.

If your community does not already participate in Smart Commute, encourage your community leaders and fellow residents to explore Smart Commute. One way to get started is to look at the Traverse City “cookbook” developed to help other communities plan Smart Commute. Visit: <http://www.traversetrails.org/smartcommute/about.php> to download a copy. Or to learn more about Smart Commute, contact the Governor’s Council at (800) 434-8642.

### What are the benefits?

#### Improved Health

An average person will burn about 500 calories riding a bike at a leisurely pace. Just three hours of riding per week can cut your risk of heart disease and stroke in half.

#### Economic Savings

With gas prices continuing to increase the cost of owning and operating a bike and/or using public transit can mean significant cost savings per household.

#### Environmental Protection

Auto emissions contribute directly to smog, acid rain and global warming.

## Connecting Michigan Trails



Michigan's state trailways system could see some major improvements in the years ahead with the wrap-up of the year-long project: "Connecting Michigan: A State Trails Planning Partnership", spearheaded by Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA) in collaboration with Michigan Recreation and Park Association and National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. A 50-page vision and action plan details the year-long work and recommendations of twelve task forces. Trail promotion and programming, easements, funding, regional cooperation, multi-use conflict between trail uses, interdepartmental coordination, building advocacy, law enforcement and security, on-road connections to trails, and developing a statewide vision are the issues that the task forces have defined and researched with the assistance of expert testimony and formulated goals and action steps for resolution. Once the report is released, it will be MTGA's role to implement some of the key actions, assist other stakeholders to take charge of others, and generally shepherd the plan through implementation over the next few years. Serendipitously, the timing and contents of the plan dovetail nicely with the Governor's new state trails initiative. MTGA has been invited to discuss the details of the Connecting Michigan plan with her office upon its release. With both plans in place, there should be some major positive changes in the trails world in the near future!

Connecting Michigan: Plan Release and Celebration. The plan highlighting the statewide trails vision and action plan will be unveiled on May 15 at the Michigan Historical Museum. Join the MTGA for education, inspiration, and celebration from 9:00am to 2:00pm. Space is limited, so to sign-up, visit: <http://www.michigantrails.org/>.

## Bridging Communities to Encourage Physical Activity

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports invites communities to showcase their vitality and splendor by hosting a 2007 Labor Day Walk. Labor Day Community Walks are held throughout the state in conjunction with the Mackinac Bridge Labor Day Walk to support "Getting Michigan Moving". These walks link communities together in the name of health, fitness and active living similar to the way the Mighty Mac links Michigan's two peninsulas. The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports invites every Michigan community to organize a Labor Day walk, incorporating a bridge if possible, to tie in with the five-mile Mackinac Bridge Walk. Michigan has nearly 10 million people and about 50,000 walk in the traditional Mackinac Bridge Labor Day Walk each year.

The aim of the Governor's Council is to double or triple the number of Michigan residents walking on Labor Day by promoting physical activity and fitness. "By holding local events all across the state, we hope to increase the number of walkers on Labor Day and bring attention to the importance of physical activity for the health of Michigan," explains Marilyn Lieber, President and CEO of the Governor's Council. "More than 55 percent of our adult population is classified as inactive, and because most Michigan residents are aware of the traditional Mackinac Bridge Walk, we would like to encourage all residents to join this tradition and improve their health at the same time." Anyone can organize a community walk which can be any distance, though five miles is encouraged. For more information on how you can plan a community Labor Day walk, visit <http://www.michiganfitness.org/LDComBridgeWalk.htm>.



## Upcoming Events

### May 3: CATA Clean Commute Day

High pollution levels are no longer just a big city problem. They are affecting communities like the Greater Lansing area, with ground-level ozone pollution at its highest May thru September. To mark the beginning of ozone season and highlight Air Quality Awareness Week, CATA will hold its Clean Commute Challenge on Thursday, May 3, 2007. On this day, the entire community and those traveling into the area are asked to leave their cars at home for just one day. Instead of driving alone, try riding the bus, carpool, vanpool, bike or walk. For more information visit: <http://www.cata.org/news/releases/cleancommute2007.html>.

### May 16: Ride of Silence

You are invited to participate in a bike ride coming up on May 16th called the "Ride of Silence." It is an annual ride that happens all over the world at the same day/time to honor bicyclists hit or killed by motorists. Many communities throughout Michigan are participating in this ride. For more information or to determine whether there is a "Ride of Silence" in your community, visit: <http://www.lmb.org/pages/Events/RideofSilence.htm>.

### May 24: Creating A Culture of Healthy Lifestyles in Our Community

Join professionals and community members from the tri-county area for a free symposium on approaches to encourage healthy lifestyles. Through exhibits, networking and formal discussion groups, participants will learn about community resources and programs. For more information, visit: [http://www.re-news.net/moch/up/Healthy\\_Lifestyles\\_Symposium.pdf](http://www.re-news.net/moch/up/Healthy_Lifestyles_Symposium.pdf).

### May 30: 3rd Annual Lucinda Means Advocacy Day

Join the League of Michigan Bicyclists in demonstrating that Michigan has a strong bicycle constituency that can ride responsibly. Enjoy a 20-mile ride through the countryside south of the MSU campus. Tour the MSU Bikes Service Center and join our bicycle parade from the MSU Bikes Service Center to the State Capitol Building. Local bike police will escort us as we travel Michigan Avenue to the Capitol where we will have lunch. Finally, help us deliver bicycling information to Michigan Legislators. For more information, visit: <http://www.lmb.org/>

## Save the Date!

Michigan is proud to host the 1st Safe Routes to School National Conference: Creating, Building and Sustaining Momentum on November 5-7, 2007 in Dearborn. The Conference is presented by the National Center for Safe Routes to School and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

Everyone interested in the health and safety of children should attend. The conference will address the unique needs of those in urban, suburban and rural settings and will be of interest to those working in education, transportation, enforcement, design, health, community advocacy, and government.

Currently, the Michigan Fitness Foundation is soliciting presentation proposals for conference. The submission deadline is **June 8, 2007**.

For more information about registration, conference schedule and accommodations, visit: <http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/nationalconference.htm>.



## 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 (MICS 11523).

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## 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.

## Resources

**"Eleven Principles for Transforming Public Spaces into Great Community Places,"** Project for Public Spaces. Available at <http://www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/casesforplaces/11steps>. This article identifies eleven steps you can take to transform public spaces into vibrant community places.

**Neighborhood Associations of Michigan (NAM).** NAM is a statewide organization of neighborhood associations and community-based organizations. Its purposes are to educate, empower, and advocate for community members to upgrade their quality of life; and to improve their communities through neighborhood organizations. Visit: <http://www.cj.msu.edu/~outreach/namich/>.

**"Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Creation,"** League of Michigan Bicyclists. Available at <http://www.lmb.org>. This document provides information on how to start a non-motorized advisory committee as well as sample charter and bylaws.

**The Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse.** This site provides free assistance to trail and greenway advocates. Information includes technical assistance, references, referrals to local resources, and more. Visit: <http://trailsandgreenways.org>.

**Encourage your community to participate in the *Promoting Active Communities Program!*** Use the online self-assessment tool to examine how your community's built environment, policies, and programs encourage residents to be active. Communities that complete the assessment are eligible to earn one of five award levels. For more information, visit: [www.mihealthtools.org/communities](http://www.mihealthtools.org/communities).

