



Bicycle Access Council **News & Digest**

www.BicycleAccess-PA.org

April 2007

It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania!

This issue of the **Bicycle Access Council News & Digest** is a monthly communication with members and supporters. You may view past issues that started in January 2005 by going to the **BAC** website.

STOP – LOOK – LISTEN AND LIVE...

When it's necessary to cross railroad tracks, most competent bicyclists are focused on traversing slippery rails and ruts in the flangeway and road surface. The correct way to cross tracks is to approach as close to perpendicular as possible while rolling through the grade crossing. But, what else is there to consider?

Operation Lifesaver® is a federal safety program that PennDOT conducts to highlight a completely preventable problem--deaths and injury at grade crossings and on railroad property. The Pennsylvania Vehicle Code (Title 75) and Crimes Code (Title 18) include offenses that are applicable to bicyclists as well as pedestrians and motor vehicle operators.

Basically, it is unlawful to cross railroad tracks when a traffic control device (flashing lights, cross arms or audible signals) requires vehicles to stop for an approaching train. Also, it is criminal trespass to go onto railroad property beyond a grade crossing.

When required to stop, vehicles must stop within 50 feet of tracks, but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail if no Stop Line is present.

And, just as motorists often misjudge the speed of a bicyclist, the speed of an approaching train can be difficult to judge when deciding to "beat the train." Another danger for all grade crossings is multiple tracks. Just because a train passes on one track, doesn't mean the way is clear. Watch that second track.

There are 7,974 at-grade crossings in Pennsylvania. If the condition of an at-grade crossing is unsafe for bicyclists, you may contact the Bicycle Access Council to initiate corrective action. This can be for potholes, ruts and/or gaps that can cause a bicyclist to crash. Neither PennDOT nor a municipality may fix the problem--only the railroad that owns the grade crossing may make repairs within its right-of-way. To identify the location and ownership, look for a tag near the crossing (for example: 912965D identifies a crossing in Westmoreland County in the city of Jeannette).

FLYING YOUR BIKE...

Has never been easy. Airline regulations have always been inconsistent at best and the baggage handling abuse is always a concern. Now, besides additional inspections and handling by Transportation Security Administrative (TSA) employees, costs have gone up. For a quick check of rates and regulations, go to the International Bike Fund website: <http://tinyurl.com/yryco3>

PENNSYLVANIA BIKE CLUB CONFERENCE...

The Bicycle Access Council held its 5th annual Pennsylvania Bicycle Club Conference on Saturday, March 24, in York, PA. Nine Bicycle Clubs attended: Berks Bicycle Club; Bicycle Club of Philadelphia; Blair Bicycle

Club (Altoona); Central Bucks Bicycle Club; Hanover Cyclers (York County); Harrisburg Bicycle Club; Lancaster Bicycle Club; West Chester Cycling Club; York Area Mountain Bike Association.

The conference agenda included proposed changes to Pennsylvania's Vehicle Code to improve bicyclists' safety and Group Riding "Rules of the Road" and safety tips for club ride leaders and special event planners. PennDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian program manager Dave Bachman also addressed the group.

NPR PROMOTES THE THOMAS STEVENS BOOK...

Around the World on a Bicycle. In January, BAC described the 120th anniversary when Thomas Stevens completed his historic journey on a high wheeler. The book is in limited supply. National Public Radio recently highlighted the trek and the audio stream may be heard here: <http://tinyurl.com/3c38zo>

PA BIKE CLUB SPECIAL EVENTS RIDES...

May be listed on the BAC website. Submit your club ride with dates, location, fees etc. to the BAC webmaster at: < info@BicycleAccess-PA.org > Charity rides requiring pledges and other fundraising rides not sponsored by a Pennsylvania bike club are not listed.

DIRECTOR CANDIDATES...

The Bicycle Access Council is accepting letters of interest for future director positions. Send a narrative letter indicating your desire to become involved in bicycling advocacy in Pennsylvania. Include your education, any experience serving on a board of directors, fund raising experience, and a summary of your bicycling experience. All letters received will be kept confidential.

Send all letters to:

Bicycle Access Council, P.O. Box 92, Dallastown, PA 17313, or

E-mail to: ED@BicycleAccess-PA.org

Dates to remember:

⇒ **May14-18 Bike to Work Week; May 18, Bike-to-Work Day**

Mission Statement...

The Bicycle Access Council is a non-profit advocacy organization that serves as a forum for Pennsylvania bicyclists and as an ombudsman for bicycling issues.

It is the objective of the Bicycle Access Council to make bicycling on roads throughout the Commonwealth safe, respectable and a transportation choice by educating its members and the motoring public.

All funding for the Bicycle Access Council comes from memberships and donations. Annual membership is \$20 per year. BAC does not share membership information.



Joe Stafford, Executive Director
Bicycle Access Council
Dallastown, PA
www.BicycleAccess-PA.org
(717) 417-1299