



Reporter



Omro walk and bike to school day.
Photo by ECWRPC

Welcome!

Welcome to the seventh edition of the Safe Routes Reporter.

SRTS projects are underway, more communities have SRTS plans, and the third round of funding has been completed.

It's exciting to see such a large interest in making it safer and more appealing for kids to walk and bike to school.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Safe Routes Reporter and we welcome your feedback.

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Representative Tom Petri
accompanies two Omro
students on their way to school.
Photo by ECWRPC

Local Highlights

Omro Walk to School Day

THE WISCONSIN SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL State Network Project, East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, the city of Omro and the Omro Area School District celebrated *Walk to School Day* on Monday, October 11. Omro Middle School students walked and biked with U.S. Representative Tom Petri, local city council members, local school board members, parents, faculty and staff from downtown Omro across a pedestrian bridge over the Fox River. Principal Paul Williams and physical education teacher Joe Horvath gave a tour of the bicycle maintenance program and the trail on the school grounds. Mr. Williams and Mr. Horvath emphasized the importance of funding to help support programs that keep students active.

A press conference included speakers such as Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin Executive Director Kevin Hardman; East Central *Safe Routes to School* Coordinator Melissa Kraemer Badtke, and Representative Petri emphasizing the importance of the *Safe Routes to School* Program. The program concluded with an unofficial ground breaking for a new bicycle shop and storage area. ▶

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Safe Routes to School Program

APPROXIMATELY 40 SCHOOLS WITHIN THE EAST CENTRAL REGION joined schools across the country to celebrate *International Walk to School Day*. At Richmond Elementary School in Appleton, teachers reviewed pedestrian safety in their



Elementary school students carry signs and walk with high school football players during *Walk to School Day*. Photo by: ECWRPC.

classroom the week before *Walk to School Day*. To prepare for the events students made signs to carry. In addition, parents were encouraged to attend and walk with their children. Students who walked or biked to school had their pictures taken at various stops along the route and parents signed walk to school pledge forms. Participating students were entered in raffle drawings. The event received publicity, with the local NBC affiliate doing a segment on the benefits of walking to school as part of their *Growing Healthy Series*. ▶



Students in Ashland walk to school and hold signs during the Safe Routes to School kick-off event. Photo by Kelly Westlund

Ashland Walk to School Day and Safe Routes to School Kick-off

FOR MANY YEARS, ELEMENTARY school students walking or riding their bikes to Lake Superior Elementary School haven't had a safe route to take to their campus. Their only choices have been to take busy Binsfield Road, a street without sidewalks, an unofficial lane on the 9th Avenue West right-of-way, or unpaved Trogan Road.

None of these choices had adequate lighting, or could remotely be called a safe route to school.

Beginning Wednesday, October 6, that situation changed dramatically. Amid the cheers of 150 students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and local dentist Dr. Fred Tidstrom cut a ribbon inaugurating the School District of Ashland's new "Safe Route To School," which connects Beaser Avenue to Lake Superior Elementary, and also adds a second paved pathway along 9th Avenue West. When finished, the new routes will be lighted, and will expose students to far lower risks from traffic than they faced before the route was constructed.

Dr. Tidstrom was given the honor of cutting the ribbon because he has been a tireless advocate for the pathway for many years. "This has been a long time coming," he said. "This is more than a safe route, it's symbolic of an era where education will lead us into the 21st century," he said.

School Superintendent Keith Hilts said the pathway was not just a safer way for students to get to school, but also a way for families to reconnect with each other by walking as a family.

"Welcome to the path; it's a wonderful opportunity for us and our kids. We are very happy to have it."

Ashland Mayor Bill Whalen read a proclamation saying that hundreds of children each year could be saved if communities took steps to make pedestrian safety a priority. He noted that driving children to school contributes to air pollution and congestion.

Whalen also noted that parents and community leaders all over the world were walking to schools on Wednesday to evaluate safety conditions, and he urged residents to consider the safety of children every day.

Among the observers of the event was Mike Gardner, from Northland College, who helped to bring the project to fruition.

"It started pretty simply," he said of the growing series of pedestrian and bike trails throughout Ashland.

"To see it become city-wide is an important piece for the college, for education in the city." ♪

*By Rick Olivo, staff writer
The Ashland Daily Press
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Students hold up a sign during the Safe Routes to School kick-off event in Ashland. Photo by Kelly Westlund

Lac Courte Oreilles Walk to School Day

LAC COURTE OREILLES OJIBWA K-12 School participated in a *Walk to School* event on Wednesday, May 19. At least 200 students participated, walking almost one-half mile from a bus drop. Teachers, Lac Courte Oreilles police officers, tribal council members, and college staff joined the students to walk along a path that connects the K-12 school to pow-wow grounds. Due to this event's success, school administrators and *Safe Routes to School* task force members now plan to hold weekly Walk to School events during the 2010-2011 school year. 🐾

James F. Cooper School promotes Walking and Biking

SINCE 2005, JAMES F. COOPER Elementary has been partnering with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin to increase the safety and numbers of kids walking and biking to school. As one of our 2010 *Safe Routes to School* Banner School participants, as well as a Milwaukee Public Schools



Students walk along a trail to attend classes at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa K-12 school. Photo by Amber Marlow

recipient of the Gold Level for The Governor's School Health Award every year since 2006, Cooper has been a shining example of the *Safe Routes to School* Program. By promoting good nutrition and physical fitness, Cooper addresses the importance of leading a healthy life. With the staff setting a positive example, students learn to choose fruits and vegetables over less healthy snacks. They also stay active and motivated to learn new ways to improve their health and fitness.

In the spring of 2010, Cooper instituted the Frequent Walker/Biker program offered by the Wisconsin DOT. Students receive card punches for every trip they take to or from school by bike or on foot. Every time a student fills up their card they receive a

colored plastic foot to collect on their keychain. Awards are given to students who have filled the most cards at the end of each semester. In an effort to provide active opportunities to the students who may live too far to walk or bike, these students are allowed to do laps around the playground during lunch time to earn punches.

The program has shown a marked increase in walking and biking. During the second week in October, Cooper students enjoyed the beautiful fall weather while 15 percent of them walked to school and 3 percent of students rode bikes; however, 53 percent arrive by family vehicle. Cooper has implemented a policy of family vehicles dropping kids off on the south side of the building; while school buses, consisting of 24% of their mode share, drop students off on the east side of the building. On the last *Walk and Bike to School Day* it was noted by several staff and parents that the parent drop off zone on the south side was less congested due to the number of children walking! 🐾

By Jake Newborn,
Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin



La Crosse County Walk to School Day and Walk to School Challenge



Students participate in a Walking School Bus at Franklin Elementary School. Photo by La Crosse County

LA CROSSE COUNTY STUDENTS FROM 18 schools participated in the 4th annual Coulee Region *Walk to School Challenge*, hosted by the Childhood Obesity Coalition. The main objective of the challenge was to encourage as many students as possible to walk, bike, scooter, skate, or blade to school during the week. Schools also had the opportunity to organize at-school walks before, during, and after school. The elementary and middle schools with the greatest participation received a Golden Shoe Award, a traveling trophy given to the winners of the *Walk to School Challenge*. Students were also encouraged to meet individual goals and were rewarded with iPods, jump ropes, and fitness DVDs. Many schools kicked off their Walking School Bus program or expanded an existing Walking School Bus program during this week.

International *Walk to School Day* took place during the middle of the *Walk to School Challenge*. The La Crosse County *Safe Routes to School* program annually partners with the Coulee Region Safe Kids Coalition to organize *Walk to School Day* activities at three schools in the city of La Crosse.

Hamilton/SOTA I students met at a local park and walked to school with Mayor Matt Harter and La Crosse Fire Department staff. All students received goody bags with pedestrian safety information for parents, a reflective zipper-pull and reflective sticker, and a pedestrian safety coloring book. A healthy breakfast was also provided to participating students.

Logan Middle School students walked or biked to school and entered their names in a drawing for gift cards. Once they arrived at school, students visited various stations and answered questions about health safety. After students answered all four questions they could exchange their entry card for a breakfast of mini-muffins, apples, and juice or milk. UW-La Crosse football players helped with the safety stations and encouraged students to be active.

Franklin Elementary School students met at nearby Logan Middle School and were escorted to school by School District of La Crosse administrators, UW-La Crosse football players, La Crosse Police Department representatives, and Logan Middle School 6th grade Global Village student volunteers. Students also participated in a Walking School Bus, the first of a weekly series. They received punch cards and earned prizes after five weeks of participation. 🐾

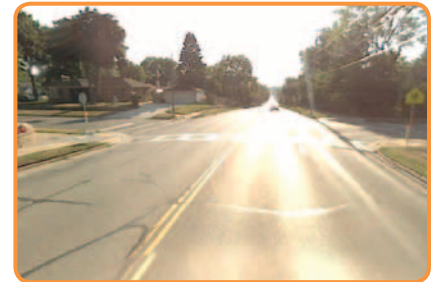


UW-La Crosse football players hand out prizes to students after they've walked to school. Photo by La Crosse County

Madison completes SRTS intersection improvements

INTERSECTIONS NEAR MIDVALE ELEMENTARY AND Our Lady Queen of Peace, in Madison, are safer for students thanks to improvements made possible by *Safe Routes to School* funding. Money was used to construct a pedestrian refuge island, install pedestrian-activated warning flashers, and improve signs at the intersection. 🐾

BEFORE



Mineral Point Road and South Owen Drive before intersection improvements. Credit: Google maps streetview

AFTER



Mineral Point Road and South Owen Drive after the addition of a median, pedestrian signal, and painted crosswalk. Photo by WisDOT SRTS