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## NEWS

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For More Information Contact:  
Kathryn Kingsbury, Director of Communication  
Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin  
(608) 251-4456  
kathryn.kingsbury@bfw.org

### **Governor announces \$6M in grants to make walking and biking to school safer** **Bike Fed affirms commitment to removing barriers to walking and biking to school**

**MADISON** – Gov. Jim Doyle announced today 44 Wisconsin communities will receive grants totaling more than \$6 million to make it easier and safer for kids to walk and bike to school.

“The Bike Fed congratulates the 44 communities that will receive funding for Safe Routes to School,” said Kevin Hardman, executive director of the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (Bike Fed). “We share their commitment to improving the safety of students who walk and bike to school – not just because it’s good for kids, but because kids tell us that it’s a fun way to start their day, and teachers tell us that kids who walk or bike to school tend to be more focused in class.”

Safe Routes to School is a federally funded, state-administered program to increase the number and safety of kids walking and biking to school. Since 2000, the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin has played a key role in fostering the Safe Routes to School movement throughout Wisconsin.

The Bike Fed coordinates the Wisconsin Safe Routes to School Network, founded in January 2010 to remove barriers to walking and bicycling to school. The state network links community leaders and Safe Routes to School programs in various parts of the state so they can work together to help Wisconsin’s kids. Focuses of the network include reducing crime and traffic problems in school neighborhoods, developing a bicycling curriculum for physical education classes, and ensuring that kids have access to sidewalks between home and school.

Over the past decade, the Bike Fed has partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools, Sheboygan County School District and Madison Metropolitan School District to develop Safe Routes to School programs. In Milwaukee, for example, Bike Fed staffers teach the age-appropriate traffic safety courses *Bike Drivers Ed* and *Walking Wisdom* during the school year and as summer camps.

“In 2007, two-thirds of the kids participating in our Milwaukee Safe Routes to School programs said that walking and biking were their favorite forms of transportation,” Hardman said. “And why wouldn’t they be? As almost any kid will tell you, it’s a lot more fun to move around than sit around. But parents often have concerns about the safety of walking or biking to school. The Bike Fed is committed to helping communities address safety issues that prevent kids from walking or biking to school.”

The Bike Fed also offers technical services and advice to a number of districts throughout the state. This year, it was chosen by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to train local communities in applying for the state's Safe Routes to School grants program.

The grants announced today are the third round of projects approved under the state's Safe Routes to School program. According to the Governor's office, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has distributed approximately \$14 million in federal funds since 2007 for projects that make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative. The program operates on a reimbursement basis, meaning that projects must be completed before funds are distributed.

For a complete list of Safe Routes to School projects announced today, visit:

[www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=20436](http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=20436)

**About the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin:** The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (Bike Fed) is a statewide bicycle advocacy organization representing thousands of members across Wisconsin. Its mission is to inspire, motivate, and unite a strong community of civic, business and political leaders, motorists and bicyclists to move bicycling forward in Wisconsin. For more information on the Bike Fed visit [www.bfw.org](http://www.bfw.org).

**About Safe Routes to School:** Thirty years ago, more than 66 percent of all children walked or biked to school. Today, less than 13 percent of all students enjoy the benefits associated with walking or biking to school. Safe Routes to School is a federally funded program that is being adopted in communities across the nation to address skyrocketing childhood obesity rates, poor air quality and the crashes and injuries due to increased traffic near schools. Through education, engineering, encouragement and traffic enforcement, Safe Routes to School increases the number and safety of children walking and biking to school. More information is available at [www.saferoutes.bfw.org](http://www.saferoutes.bfw.org).