

Greeley Tribune

Weld County's Bike to Work organizers look to local employers to encourage participants

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Organizers of Bike to Work Day in Weld County have focused this year on reaching out to employers in the hopes that they, too, can inspire residents to dig in their garages and dust off their bicycles this summer.

From 6-8:30 a.m. Wednesday, local agencies will be at eight stops in Greeley, two in Evans and one in Windsor with prizes and free breakfast to lure employees into riding their bikes to work. Wendy Polulech, coordinator for the event and a wellness specialist at North Colorado Medical Center, said company-based bike to work competitions and other incentives for healthy living are picking up steam.

In offices with the city of Greeley, departments have been competing against each other to log the most miles on their bikes, said Sarah Boyd, a park planner with the city who sits on Greeley's bicycle advisory committee. The winning department will qualify for drawings for tickets to events at the Union Colony Civic Center, a paid day off and various kinds of bike gear, she said.

The Make Today Count Campaign, organized through the North Colorado Health Alliance, aims to get all Weld County residents participating in a daily log of exercise and eating. Those who participate could win \$100 and \$50 gift cards to Amazon.com in weekly and monthly competitions or in drawings, said Carlee Rosen, the campaign's coordinator.

Rosen said the campaign is reaching out to larger employers in the area, such as JBS USA and State Farm Insurance, to get the word out to their employees about the campaign.

Polulech said NCMC's parent company, Banner Health, has also done some quarterly drawings for bike riding and car pooling that should hopefully come to the hospital soon. Especially with prizes like a paid day off, she said businesses hold a great deal of potential to motivate healthy lifestyles.

"We would like to help be the catalyst to get more companies to do this," Polulech said.

Since she began helping with Bike to Work day about six years ago, Polulech said she has seen a steady average of 400 people show up to the event. Greeley's recent recognition for being a bike friendly community and the launch of greeleybikes.com, which includes maps of bike routes, should help this year, Polulech said. Coupled with efforts from businesses in the area, she said she's hoping this year will show an increase in attendance.

"We are just gaining more and more momentum."