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Smart Commute Week advocates alternative forms of transportation

NASHUA – As summer weather approaches, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission will host Smart Commute Week from May 15-21 to encourage commuters to try taking an alternative mode of transportation to work.

“We want to motivate people to adjust their routine,” said Jill Longval, public outreach coordinator at the NRPC. “If they try it once, they may realize it’s not that difficult.”

The NRPC works with local businesses to educate employers about the benefits of green transportation such as carpools, public transport, walking, biking and telecommuting.

To kick off the week, NRPC will host a free event at Kaley Park, 442 Nashua St., from 3-6 p.m. Saturday. It will feature family activities, demonstrations, food, raffle prizes and more.

The Bike-Walk Alliance of NH has partnered with the NRPC to organize three bike rides starting at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the Hampshire Dome for 5-, 10- and 30-mile trips.

“It’s a great way to explore the region, enjoy the weather and promote bike riding while highlighting all that the state has to offer,” said Dave Topham, director of the Bike-Walk Alliance of NH.

Registering for the rides is free, and bikers are encouraged to participate in a survey evaluating what can be done to make green commuting more appealing for employers and employees.

Feedback on road safety, bike racks, trails and showers at work are topics that could be addressed to local businesses through the survey.

Companies in support of the program include Southeastern Container, Hampshire Hills Sports & Fitness Club and Amherst Bicycle, among others.

On the final day of Smart Commute Week, another free event will be held from 7-9 a.m. May 21 in front of Nashua City Hall during the morning commute.

Gov. John Lynch and his wife, Dr. Susan Lynch, plan to bike from their home in Hopkinton to the Statehouse in Concord as part of the final day of activities.

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