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County, GV, Tucson get plaudits as bike-friendly

By Philip Franchine

TUCSON--Pima County, Green Valley and the City of Tucson earned praise for their efforts to promote bicycle-friendly policies at Tuesday's county board meeting.

Andy Clarke, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists in Washington, D.C., said his agency had received an application from the combined Eastern Pima County area for a platinum award and said the application was a very strong one.

Unique situation

"You have a unique constellation of city and county staff and volunteers. I am holding up the Tucson region as a perfect example. You have the Tour de Tucson, bike paths and lanes, safe schools programs" and other activities, Clarke said.

Clarke apologized for appearing before the board wearing dark glasses, saying he had lost his regular glasses during a tour of Green Valley on Monday.

Clarke praised county staffer Matt Zoll, who recently spoke at a bicycle planning meeting in Green Valley, and Bill Katzel, a white-haired bike activist from Green Valley, who looked a bit like Captain America in his red, white and blue stars and stripes windbreaker.

Clarke said of the Green Valley tour, "I saw so many people out riding. I could be out for two months in my community, in Fairfax County (Virginia) and not see that many people out riding. And I saw that the infrastructure was there for bicycle riding."

Clarke said the pace of growth is so rapid in the Green Valley area, with the population projected to reach 80,000 in 30 years, that it makes it even more important to build bike lanes and paths into the roads system now, or it will soon be too late.

More information on bicycle friendly communities can be found at the League's Website, <http://www.bikeleague.org>, and at www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org.

Katzel said the master plan developed by the Green Valley Community Coordinating Council (GVCCC) bike committee was scheduled be presented to Tucson City Council Member Fred Ronstadt, R.--Ward 6.

Clarke said anyone who finds his eyeglasses could contact Adamson, who can be reached through the GVCCC office.

Meanwhile, in another transportation-related matter, County Transportation Director Kurt Weinrich said he expects it will take between six and 24 months to obtain funding for a proposed Dial-A-Ride transit system.

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