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## Commuting to work by bike good exercise, good for environment

Marisa Petrich/Northwest Guardian

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Staff Sgt. Matthew Carter, 23rd Chemical Battalion, 555th Engineer Brigade, always loved riding his bike. He rode it as a kid. He rode it while he was stationed in Germany.

Now he rides his bike to and from work at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, weather permitting. Everyday he goes from the Beachwood Housing on Lewis North to Lewis Main, not to mention additional trips for fun on the weekends.

“I think it’s great,” he said.

Carter does it for the exercise, the environmental benefits and to ease traffic congestion all over the installation — and he’s not the only one seeing the benefits. Last week the group of 26 participants who logged bike trips during Bike to Work Month in May came together to eat lunch, get prizes and discuss ways to improve biking on the installation.

It was JBLM’s most successful Bike to Work Month to date. The group took a combined total of 255 trips and traveled 4,863 miles. Last year participants logged just over 50 trips in the same month.

“It’s a pretty nice start,” Pierce Transit marketing and communication specialist Zach Shaner said.

Shaner credits the success to promotion of the program, a timely spike in gas prices and, of course, the generous prizes that were offered this year. The participants who took the top three most trips received \$250 gift certificates to Bike Tech, plus 10 \$100 certificates given to participants at random.

It was the cost of driving that encouraged Tim Weldin to reduce his number of car trips four years ago. Weldin, who works in JBLM’s environmental division, logged 23 and 644 miles in May, more than any other participant.

“I gotta do something cause I’m tired of paying these gas prices,” he said of his thoughts at the time.

Now he bikes to work from Spanaway from April through September. With so many Soldiers back from deployments, Weldin sees even more reason to keep his car off the road whenever he can.

Sustainability outreach coordinator Miriam Villacian has noticed something else.

“Myself, just visually, I see more bikers around here than I ever have before,” she said.

The community aspect is important. While hearing the results of their efforts and waiting to see if they’ve earned a prize, the group chatted about ways biking on base could be improved. More bike paths and room away from cars, for instance, would help a lot of them on their commutes.

In the end every little bit helps.

“It’s cliché, but it saves you money, it’s easier (and) you don’t have to worry about traffic so it saves you stress,” Villacian said.



Ingrid Barrentine  
Staff Sgt. Matthew Carter, 555th Engr. Bde., rides his bike to work on Lewis Main nearly every day from his Beachwood neighborhood home. Carter logs his trips with Pierce Transit and participates in JBLM’s bike to work incentives.

Additional \$100 prizes are being offered to those who use alternative commutes at JBLM through July and August. Contact Miriam Villacian at 966-1734 for additional details.

**Top trips**

- Tim Weldin: 23 trips, 644 miles • Marlin Causey: 18 trips, 43 miles • Tom Lynott: 17 trips, 357 miles

Marisa Petrich: [marisa.petrich@nwguardian.com](mailto:marisa.petrich@nwguardian.com)

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