

Walk-n-Roll

SKAGIT COUNTY



2005 Walk-n-Roll Summary

Walk-n-Roll is an annual community-wide walk or bike to work campaign conducted by the Skagit County Physical Activity Coalition (SCPAC) that is held the third Friday in May. The purpose of the campaign is to promote active transportation and increase physical activity and health by encouraging people to walk, bike, or bus to work. Started in 2002, the campaign utilized three different formats before settling on the present format of a one-day event. A planning committee consisting of representatives from SCPAC, the Skagit County Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee, Burlington and Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation Departments, Skagit Valley Hospital and Regence BlueShield, have worked together to make the event a success. Local individuals were recruited to lead group rides and walks from various locations around the county. Individuals register their participation and are eligible for prizes, which have included five-\$100 cash prizes along with prizes solicited from community businesses and organizations.

The fourth annual Skagit County Walk-n-Roll event was held on Friday, May 20, 2005. Over 130 individuals participated with more than half participating for the first time. Women outnumbered men 2 to 1, with 68 to 32 percent respectively. Ten different group organized walks or rides were featured and led by community members such as Mount Vernon Mayor Bud Norris, Anacortes Mayor Dean Maxwell, Hospital executive Diane Morton, and Burlington Fire Chief Mark Anderson.

The total distance traveled for all modes was 800 miles. Walkers average 2.4 miles while bikers averaged 16.3 miles, which was an average increase of 3.8 miles per person over 2004. Women preferred walking; while men preferred biking. A small percentage of participants used a combination of both walking and biking, or biking and using the bus.

Publicity for the event included advertising in the Skagit Valley Herald. For the fourth year the Skagit Valley Herald donated over \$5,000 dollars in advertising as a sponsor of the event. Other methods of advertisement included employee newsletters, hospital publications, e-mail, flyers, and word of mouth from co-workers and employers.

Approximately 60 percent of the individuals that participated were from Mount Vernon but came from as far away as Blaine and Everett. There were 35 different worksites with

at least one participant involved and Skagit Valley Hospital had the most employees participating, with 32 individuals.

Methods of registration were more diverse than previous years. Online registration accounted for 75 percent while the remaining 25 percent of registration was conducted through fax, mail, and inter-office mail.

Numerous local companies and organizations contributed financial donations and supplied prizes for the event. Prizes ranged from five-\$100 cash prizes to gift certificates for local restaurants, to free memberships to local health clubs.



A web-based survey was conducted at time of registration and it indicated that 33 percent of participants took part in the Walk-n-Roll event because walking and biking to work was part of their regular routine, 30 percent stated that their involvement was due to their employer or company, 25 percent claimed to be motivated by the prizes, 16 percent did it for a co-worker, 13 percent wanted to start an exercise regime, and 24 percent had other reasons to take part. Other motivators for participating in the event cited were exercise benefits, environmental appreciation and concerns, a way to meet new people, and an event for families to participate in together. Notably, 27 percent of the respondents indicated that they would continue to walk or bike to work following the event, an increase of 8 percent from the previous year.

The survey also gathered information about what participants enjoyed about the event, what would motivate them to use active forms of transportation more often, and ways to improve the event for the future. Major themes from the survey included more advertising of event and more environmental engineering changes of roads and sidewalks to accommodate walkers and bicyclists. Many individuals appreciated the event being held in May because the weather was accommodating and refreshing, and also appreciated having a group to walk or bike with for the event.

The Skagit County Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee (NMTAC) and the SCPAC are requesting sponsorship and support of Walk-n-Roll by the Regional Transportation Planning Organization. The NMTAC members believe that this is a program that fits in well with our committee's core activities as well as the scope of the RTPO and their partners in planning and providing transportation for all.

