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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Allston-Brighton groups to pass out free bike helmets via state, national program

Posted by Matt Rocheleau May 31, 2011 12:07 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Two neighborhood organizations have been awarded 48 bicycle helmets to distribute for free to cyclists in Allston and Brighton.

The protective head gear was awarded as part of an annual nationally-funded, statewide bike safety program to [The Parents & Community Build Group, Inc.](#) in partnership with [A-Bbikes](#), also known as Allston-Brighton Bikes.

The broader bike safety initiative will provide more than 2,900 helmets to 68 communities and organizations that will distribute them locally for free this spring and summer. (A full list of this year's winning communities and organizations is below.)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration funds the program and the state's Highway Safety Division distributes the helmets to the local entities.

Last year, around 14,500 helmets were awarded to 157 communities and organizations statewide. In 2009, more than 8,000 helmets were given to 86 communities and organizations. And, in 2008, around 26,500 helmets were given to 271 communities and organizations in the state.

But, significant drops in funding reduced this year's available helmet output in Massachusetts, which has participated in the program for the past decade, said state public safety and security department spokesman Terrel Harris.

He said the state does not view the situation with a "glass half-empty" outlook, but rather, "we're thankful for the funding to provide the helmets that we can provide."

According to the state Highway Safety Division, "A bicycle helmet can reduce the risk of serious head and brain injury by as much as 90 percent. [And] according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 91 percent of bicyclists killed in 2008 were not wearing helmets."

Allston and Brighton residents or business owners that are MassHealth eligible and need a helmet for themselves or their MassHealth eligible dependent can contact A-Bbikes at ABbikes@gmail.com or Commonwheels at admin@Commonwheels.org to make an appointment for a fitting.

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"We are pleased to receive these helmets to enhance our bicycle safety efforts in Allston-Brighton," Galen Mook of A-Bbikes, who is also the founder of the Commonwheels Bicycle Co-op in Allston, said in the announcement. "The helmets will be distributed at no cost in our community."

"We hope to see more young riders rolling through Allston-Brighton wearing helmets," Mook continued. "Some of the helmets we distribute will be decorated by local Allston artists, adding a bit of color and style to our streets."

State law requires anyone 16 years old or younger operating a bicycle or other "manually-propelled wheeled vehicle," such as in-line skates, a skate board or scooter, on a public way or bicycle path to wear a "properly fitted and fastened helmet." The helmet rule also applies if someone from that age subset is riding as a passenger on any "manually-propelled wheeled vehicle," according to the state Highway Safety Division.

For more information on the helmet law and bike safety tips, visit www.mass.gov/highwaysafety.

Massachusetts' 2011 bicycle helmet grant recipients:

- Andover Police Department, 48 helmets received
- [Arlington Police Department](#), 48 helmets received
- Attleboro Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Ayer Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Blackstone Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Boston Society of Vulcans, 58 helmets received
- Boxborough Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Brewster Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Cambridge Police Department, 58 helmets received
- Chelmsford Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, 48 helmets received
- Chelmsford Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Chelsea Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Chicopee Fire Department, 48 helmets received
- Danvers Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Dedham Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Dennis Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Duxbury Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Eastham Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Fairhaven Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Granby Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Groton Fire Department, 38 helmets received
- Groton Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Hamilton Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Holliston Fire Department, 38 helmets received
- Holliston Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Holyoke Fire Department, 48 helmets received
- Leominster Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Lunenburg Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Lynn Police Department, 58 helmets received
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- Mansfield Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Marlborough Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Melrose Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Milford Police Department, 48 helmets received
- Millville Police Department, 38 helmets received
- Milton Police Department, 48 helmets received

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