



NEWS ADVISORY

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For immediate release

Mayor's Bike Light Initiative Rolls Out for Winter on Friday

Mayor John Engen will launch a fourth season of the Mayor's Bike Light Initiative on Friday at 5:30 p.m. at the Icicles and Bicycles Celebration at Adventure Cycling at 150 E. Pine St.

The initiative puts high-quality bicycle light sets into Missoula Police Department patrol cars for use in enforcement. When officers pull over cyclists who are riding without lights, they have the option of giving cyclists light sets. They may or may not waive the tickets. If time allows, they'll even help the cyclists install the lights. During the past three winters of the promotion, officers have enjoyed the opportunity for positive interactions with bicyclists – and many chances to prevent injuries and save lives.

"We think bike lights save lives," Mayor Engen said. "And we know the police see this every day. We're happy to give them the tools to keep people safe."

Mayor Engen was inspired to create the program in the fall of 2006 after the death of a teenage bicyclist in a collision at night galvanized city and county staff members. At the Bike/Walk Summit convened shortly after the accident by citizens and businesses, Mayor Engen learned about a similar light promotion in Portland and committed to creating a program in Missoula.

Generous partners make the program possible. The Missoula County DUI Task Force and the University of Montana President's Office donated the money to purchase the light sets. Jim Sayer of Adventure Cycling helped connect the Mayor's Office with Planet Bike, a Madison, Wisconsin, bicycle products company that supplies the lights at a deep discount. This year, police will have 200 light sets – a five-LED white headlight and a five-LED red tail light – to use through the dark months.

The light sets are distributed only through police officers as part of their educational and enforcement efforts. They will not be available at City Hall.

Icicles and Bicycles is a winter bicycle extravaganza and safe riding celebration sponsored by Adventure Cycling, Missoula in Motion and Bike/Walk Alliance for Missoula, with an emphasis on fun and safety.

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