



THE MAKING OF A

Bicycle Friendly Mississippi

Bicycling brings people together.

When more people ride bikes:

Life is better for everyone;

*Communities are safer, stronger
and better connected;*

*Our nation is healthier,
economically stronger,
environmentally cleaner
and more energy
independent.*

*~ The League of
American Bicyclists*

The League of American Bicyclists (originally the League of American Wheelmen) was founded more than 135 years ago to create a safe and bicycle friendly environment for everyone. In the beginning, the League was advocating for "wheelmen" who were challenged by rutted roads of gravel and dirt and who faced antagonism from horsemen, wagon drivers, and pedestrians. (The more things change, the more they stay the same.) Fast forward to the 21st century and the organization's Bicycle Friendly StateSM program works to promote awareness, best practices, and encourage action by state Departments of Transportation and state legislatures to help make cycling safer and more accessible to more people. The League's Bicycle Friendly America program provides a roadmap, hands-on assistance and recognition for states, communities, universities and businesses that are working to be more bike friendly.





BICYCLE FRIENDLY STATES

The Bicycle Friendly State program uses data from all 50 states to rank and create a report card for each state. Each year, the League releases that detailed ranking that cyclists can use to track where it's safe, and not so safe, to hop on wheels. The group also monitors each state's progress toward increased bicycle safety. The rankings are derived from a variety of factors, including five key bicycle-friendly actions, federal data on bicycling conditions, and summaries with feedback on how each state can improve the safety and mobility of bicyclists.

➔ *A bicycle friendly culture – the intersection of health, fitness, the economy, the environment and a better quality of life*



BICYCLE FRIENDLY MISSISSIPPI

Bike Walk Mississippi serves as a statewide bicycle and pedestrian nonprofit advocacy group in Mississippi. The organization works on behalf of pedestrians and bicyclists to advocate for increased programs, policies and infrastructure that support a 'bike-able,' 'walk-able' and more livable Mississippi. Since 2012, it has partnered with the League of American Bicyclists, the Mississippi Department of Transportation and others to increase awareness and steadily work to improve Mississippi's rankings among other states and to increase the overall number of bicycle friendly communities, businesses, and universities in the state.

Over the years, the state of Mississippi has moved up and down in the statewide rankings largely due to our progress compared to other states. What this means is that some years, our state's efforts clearly outshine those of other state's, however changing factors such as another state's launch of a new awareness campaign, can mean their progress surpasses ours for that year. When that happens, it doesn't mean we aren't gaining ground. It just means that bicycling is becoming more of a priority for all states and we have to work that much harder to be sure that increasing numbers of Mississippians come to believe in the bicycle as a tool for a healthier, safer and more connected state. In fact, in recent years the state was steadily climbing in the ranking from #47 to #35...all the way to #31 and now, unfortunately it has dropped back to #40. But we still are making steady progress in increased infrastructure, local political buy-in and programs.



BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

The Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) program provides guidance for helping communities improve conditions for bicyclists and supporting the community's goals for making a better, bike-able community a reality.

BFCs work to provide safer accommodations for bicycling and encourage more of their citizens to bike for transportation and recreation. By promoting bicycling, communities can affect positive change with respect to public health and fitness, reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and have a positive effect on the quality of life of those who call their community home.

➔ *Bicycle Friendly Communities are vibrant destinations for residents and visitors alike – places where people don't just live and work, but thrive.*

Mississippi currently has three Bicycle Friendly Communities, according to the League of American Bicyclists. Hattiesburg, Oxford and Ridgeland have all met the criteria to be awarded the distinction of BFC, and received bronze level awards. Mississippi also has two Bicycle Friendly Businesses, Peddler Bike Shop in Southaven, with a bronze level award and Bicycle Revolution in Madison, with a gold level award. Finally, the University of Mississippi has received a bronze level award as a Bicycle Friendly University. To learn more about how you can work to make your community a Bicycle Friendly Community, visit www.bikeleague.org/community or contact www.bikewalkmississippi.org.