



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **CALFIRE TRIUMPHS IN BIKE COMMUTE CHALLENGE & OWENS HEALTHCARE NAMED BICYCLE FRIENDLY EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR**

SHASTA COUNTY – The 2014 Bike Commute Challenge was bigger than ever with 562 participants riding a combined 27,766 miles between May 3 and 18. Those miles prevented approximately 25,683 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions and 361 pounds of other pollutants from being released into the air. Participants saved nearly \$5,262 by not using 1,322 gallons of fuel. Not only were fewer cars on the road for the 2,474 trips participants took by bike rather than driving, but bicycle commuters also got energized, burned calories, and enjoyed being on a bicycle instead of behind the wheel.

The top team in the 2014 Bike Challenge was **Cal Fire Smoke Chasers** (top score overall and top score among large worksites), followed by **Owens Healthcare** (top score among medium worksites). **Living the Dream** (Sports LTD) placed first among small worksites and **RSA Foxes** (Redding School of the Arts) placed first among school teams. Teams competed in the Bike Challenge for points based on miles ridden, days ridden, proportion of worksite or school participating and other criteria. The goal is to encourage more people to ride more often – from motivating experienced riders to push a little harder to introducing new people to bicycling.

“My husband saw how excited I was about riding again. He had to go buy a bike for himself during the first week of the challenge. I think we have now found an exercise that we both like to do and can do together,” says Lisa Martin-Kepner, who was a member of the Healthy Hubs team in the Bike Challenge. She joined the team through her worksite. “It has been almost 35 years since I rode a bike. I moved to a place in Redding that is close to all the trails and can easily access several parts of Redding. The 2014 Bike Challenge encouraged me to begin riding again.... and I couldn’t be happier!”

**Owens Healthcare** was named Bicycle Friendly Employer of the Year. Over half of Owens employees logged at least one bicycle trip during the Challenge. Owens offered every employee an athletic shirt for commuting to work and all new bicycle commuters a gift certificate to a juice bar. Bike shop gift certificates were offered to the employee with the most miles and another to the employee logging the most trips in the Bike Challenge. Owens Healthcare also offers indoor secure bicycle parking, showers, groups rides, and allow a change in dress code for employees bicycle commuting to work.

“Owens is all about making people healthier...the Bike Challenge was a perfect opportunity to see that lived out in the lives of our employees and hopefully inspire them and others to make those healthy choices,” says Jarred Witt, team captain of the Owens Healthcare Bike Challenge team. “We tried to remove every obstacle to bicycling for our employees. Overall the greatest motivator was the time we got to spend with friends riding to and from work, this is what brought so many first time commuters to our team.”

Winners of the Bike Challenge will be announced at the Market Street Faire in downtown Redding on June 12, in conjunction with Shasta Living Street’s Rideabout Downtown. The Bike Challenge took place during Bike Month, surrounded by a host of bicycle related activities such as a Bike-In Movie, Bike to School Day, and other celebrations to encourage more people to bicycle more often.

Full results are available at [www.healthyshasta.org/bikechallenge](http://www.healthyshasta.org/bikechallenge).

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***Bike Month 2014 & the Bike Challenge is organized and supported by:***

***Healthy Shasta, Shasta Living Streets, Shasta Wheelmen, Shasta Safe Routes to School, Shasta Regional Transportation Agency, Caltrans District 2, Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA), Ride on Race Series & Blazing Saddles, and individual volunteers. With support from: Chain Gang, Enjoy Magazine, First 5 Shasta, Shasta Early Literacy Partnership, Sports LTD, The Bike Shop, Abby Jeanne Jewelry, Bikes Etc, Brew Craft Coffee, Country Organics & Roots Juice Bar, Cyclopedia, Kaleidoscope Coffee Company, Redding Rancheria, Sanchez Jewelry, Trails & Bikeways Council of Greater Redding, Turtle Bay Exploration Park, Village Cycle, Rose Center, Shasta Arts Council, Starbucks, and Sports Authority.***