



# The Environmental Advocate

N O V E M B E R - D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 2

## Free-wheeling! Bike First Co-op

EA recently received a grant application from the Bike First Co-op, a volunteer group working to bring community bikes to Iowa City. Bikes would be parked in public places where anyone who needed to could take one, ride it wherever they need to go, and then leave it for someone else to use. Bike First would provide and maintain the bikes. Besides being an interesting and fun community service, the project is aimed at creating "community awareness and acceptance of bicycles as a viable form of transportation." To find out more, we talked to Jeremy Lynch, who is organizing the effort.

### Where did this idea come from?

A number of other communities have done it. I was in Columbia, Missouri, six or seven years ago, and a friend of mine was working for a bike co-op. I ended up staying and working on it for six months. We released about 150 bikes, and since then they've put out another 100 or so. It's still going.

### How far along are you?

We've got some bikes ready to go, and about fifty waiting to be tuned up. Some of us would like to get bikes out yet this fall, but we'll probably wait until spring.

### What kind of bikes will you have?

We'd like to have a bunch of British 3-speed hubs, because they're easy to maintain. But for now we'll take what we can get. All of the bikes are donated.

### Do you have a garage where you can work?

Right now, we're doing it in my yard. It would be nice to have an inexpensive space indoors.

### I know the bikes are donated, but there will be ongoing costs, for tires, brake pads, work space, etc. What do you see as your revenue stream?

In Columbia we had a semi-sponsorship from a bike shop. There's a bike shop in town that I would like to approach. A couple of my friends work there, and they've been helpful with advice. One is donating a wheel-truing stand.

### How will people know the bikes are free?

We'll paint them warning yellow, so they'll be pretty obvious. That and word of mouth were pretty effective in Columbia. Each bike will have a label with information on how the system works and what's expected of the users. Like: don't lock them up, report any mechanical problems, ride safely.

### Is there a bigger agenda, besides launching free bikes?

We'd like to teach people how to fix bikes, and make it easier to use other forms of public transit. For instance, if you work downtown past bus hours, you could take a yellow bike home. More than that, we'd like to advocate bicycles in a positive way, so teaching people to ride courteously and safely is important.

For more information or to help, call Jeremy at 337-2769 or visit [www.bikefirst.com](http://www.bikefirst.com)

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EA is a member of  
Iowa Shares and the  
Iowa Environmental  
Council

## Upcoming Events

Saturday, November 2

Tour the Southeast Wastewater  
Treatment Facility

1:30–2:30 pm, 4266 Napoleon Road.  
Carpool from College Green Park at  
1:00 pm.



Tuesday, November 5

**REMEMBER TO VOTE!**

Saturday, November 9, 2002

November EA Board Meeting

For location information call 351-6410.

Tuesday, November 19, 2002

Public hearing on proposed amend-  
ments to the Iowa City Sensitive Areas  
Ordinance. City Council meeting starts  
at 7:00 PM.

## about this newsletter . . .

The *Environmental Advocate* is the newsletter of Environmental Advocates, P.O. Box 1831, Iowa City, IA 52244. An elected board of directors sets policy and oversees the organization's activities.

EA welcomes letters and submissions to the newsletter. However, we reserve the right to reject or edit any submission; articles represent the views of the authors and not necessarily those of EA. If you would like to contribute, contact Sarah Walz, newsletter editor, at 466-0908 or by e-mail at [sarah-walz@uiowa.edu](mailto:sarah-walz@uiowa.edu).

E-mail submissions should have all text included within the body of the message; no attachments, please.



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## Support Iowa Shares

Iowa Shares is a coalition of 18 social and environmental nonprofit organizations working to build better communities through research, education, advocacy and direct service. Environmental Advocates, Women's Resource & Action Center and United Nations Association are three local organizations addressing community problems at their roots.



Payroll deduction is available through the University of Iowa and Iowa City Community Schools. Donors can give cash or checks. Contact: Del Holland, 338-5220 or Jean Martin 351-6391 for further information.

## EA's November Event . . .

### **Tour the Iowa City Wastewater Facility** **Saturday, November 2, at 1:30 PM**

Though it's not one of the more appealing aspects of environmental protection, wastewater treatment is one of the most immediate and important ways that local governments protect environmental health. While all of us contribute to wastewater on a daily basis—wastewater treatment is something we don't often think about.

To raise awareness of this important process, Environmental Advocates will host a tour of Iowa City's new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility on Saturday, November 2, 2002. The tour begins at 1:30 PM at the Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant at 4366 Napoleon Road. You can meet us there, or join our carpool to the plant at College Green Park at 1:00 PM.

Visitors to the plant will see the process of cleaning Iowa City's wastewater as it happens and may talk to a chemist, mechanic, or plant operator about how things work. We will get to see all the equipment and learn about the history and future of water pollution in Iowa. There will also be information and handouts about what individuals can do to help keep the water that goes into the river clean.

For more information on the tour, contact Environmental Advocates board member Del Holland at 338-5220 or e-mail [DelHolland@aol.com](mailto:DelHolland@aol.com).