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### Spin challenge kicks off bike week



Const. Jonathan Fischer, of the RCMP Bike Patrol, left, maintains his bearing and a steady pace as Coun. Diana Johnstone appears to delight in the discomfort of fellow Nanaimo city councillors George Anderson and Fred Pattje as they near the end of a five-minute, thigh-burning contest to see who could produce the highest wattage on electricity-generating spin cycles during the Bike to Work Week kickoff Wednesday. — Image Credit: CHRIS BUSH/The News Bulletin



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by [Chris Bush - Nanaimo News Bulletin](#)  
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Bike to Work Week might be more than a month off, but that just means there's more than enough time to pull that old bike out of the garage, pump up the tires and at least start thinking about cycling to work for a few days.

The lunchtime kick-off event for Bike to Work Week was held at Nanaimo Fitness Centre Wednesday when representatives from city council, Nanaimo RCMP Bike Patrol, parks and recreation, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital physiotherapists, Nanaimo Cycling Coalition, and other cycling affiliated organizations – not to mention a few cyclists – turned out for information on how to get signed up to take part.

Highlight of the event was a five-minute challenge among 14 contestants to see who could generate the most electricity on the fitness centre's Green Revolution spin bikes, which are connected to generators that feed electricity back into the power grid during spin classes.

Bike to Work Week, set for May 26 to June 1, promotes the benefits of cycling to work.

"It's physically and mentally healthier, environmentally friendlier, really a lot of fun and, oh, did we mention, it's a great deal cheaper too," said John Ruttan, Nanaimo mayor.

Bike to Work Week includes a competition to see who in each community can rack up the most kilometres biking to and from work. Riders can sign up as individuals or as workplace teams.

Leo Boon, chairman of the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition, estimates about 300 people in Nanaimo cycle regularly to work, but that figure could be easily doubled with minor infrastructure improvements that could be realized with various groups, including the city, tourism organization, cycling groups and other parties working together on common goals.

He has nothing against people who want to continue driving to work, but there should be more opportunities available and better accommodations for people who want to walk or cycle.

"When you look at the Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan what they're saying is, OK, we have this percentage of people cycling now. We want to increase that. What's the limiting factor?" Boon said. "They know that between 20 and 40 per cent of people are ready to come and cycle, but they just don't feel it's comfortable enough. What do we need to do that? Well, we need to build the right infrastructure."

Throughout May there are a number of events promoting cycling including a heritage ride, community rides, bike repair courses, a commuter challenge and more leading up to Bike to Work Week.

For more information and to register as a team or a solo rider, please visit [www.biketowork.ca/nanaimo](http://www.biketowork.ca/nanaimo).

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