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It's official: Key Biscayne is a Bike Friendly Community

By: **KELLY JOSEPHSEN**
kjosephsen@islandernews.com

People like to fondly remember the good old days of kids hopping on their bikes and riding off to school – but in Key Biscayne, those days aren't just a memory.

A leading bicycling advocacy group recently confirmed what parents and kids on the island already seem to know: Key Biscayne is a safe, accessible place to ride a bike. In recognition of that, the League of American Bi-

cyclists, the nation's leading advocacy group for cycling safety, has named the Village a Bicycle Friendly Community.

Hank Sanchez-Resnik from Bike Key Biscayne, the organization that helped Village officials successfully pursue the designation, said the recognition is exciting – but by no means marks the last step of promoting safe cycling in the community.

"Key Biscayne is already a good place for bicycling, and this designation from the League of American Bicyclists will inspire Village leaders to make it

even better," said Sanchez-Resnik, who cofounded Bike Key Biscayne with fellow Key Biscayne resident Cristina Ramirez. "Families want to live on the Key because it's great for kids, it's beautiful and it's a safe place to enjoy the region's natural beauty."

Andy Clarke, League of American Bicyclists President, praised the Key as one of a growing number of communities that have made a commitment to making biking – which he described as a "healthy and active transportation mode" – safe and

easy, and a quality of life improvement.

He said, "We're excited that Key Biscayne has made the smart and vital investments to become a designated Bicycle Friendly Community."

Bike Key Biscayne and the Village went through a lengthy application process to earn the honor.

The League of American Bicyclists uses rigorous criteria to evaluate communities that apply for the designation. The Village had to set up a bike advisory committee, task a Village staffer

with overseeing bike issues, work with local police on safety improvements, outline safe bike routes to school, create a bicycle map, involve local businesses, etc.

Bike Key Biscayne has also focused on public outreach, hosting numerous community bike rides and safety events. Most recently, on May 7 it promoted Bike to School Day, part of a national effort.

According to Sanchez-Resnik, the effort was a huge success and

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indicative of the Village's bike-friendly reputation: "Hundreds of kids biked to school," he reported. "A lot of people say, 'Wouldn't it be great to bike to school, just like in the old days.' Well, in Key Biscayne, kids can bike to school now."

That's exactly the kind of news the American League of Bicyclists promotes.

The Bicycle Friendly America program provides incentives, hands-on assistance and award recognition for communities, universities and businesses that actively support bicycling. It also ranks states annually based on their level of bike-friendly

liness.

Officials note the program "is revolutionizing the way communities evaluate their quality of life, sustainability and transportation networks, while allowing them to benchmark their progress toward improving their bicycle-friendliness" by providing a roadmap that educates the public and government leaders on how to build a Bicycle Friendly Community.

Since the program's inception, more than 769 distinct communities have applied, and with the latest round of honorees, there are now 303 Bike Friendly Communities in 48 states.

And even those that have earned the honor can continue striving to do better:

According to information from the League of American Bicyclists, the five levels of the award – diamond, platinum, gold, silver and bronze – provide a clear incentive for communities to continuously improve.

Indeed, with Key Biscayne coming in at the "Bronze" level – which League officials say recognizes the Village's commitment to improving conditions for bicycling through investment in bicycling promotion, education programs, infrastructure and pro-bicycling policies – Sanchez-Resnik indicated Bike Key Biscayne and the Village will continue trying to do even better.

For more information, visit www.bike-league.org.