Greenville turns into 'Bikeville' during May

Bike Valet service debuts downtown

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If you start seeing the term "Bikeville" around Greenville, don't worry, the city fathers haven't dumped Nathanael Greene. They're just trying to make his namesake better.

Bikeville is the local effort launched in 2006 to have Greenville named a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. If Greenville wins the designation – the effort can take years and requires extensive engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation – it will join Spartanburg and Columbia as the only South Carolina cities with the achievement.

In May, Greenville's efforts are in high gear, as the city celebrates Bike Month with several events, skills sessions and even a valet service for cyclists.

Andrew Meeker, an urban designer with the City of Greenville, said the valet service began last weekend at the Saturday Market. Ten cyclists used the unique service, he said, which takes more worry away from riders.

"It's a new idea for Greenville," he said. "It's a chance to educate cyclists. We'll hand out brochures, and we'll enter them in a drawing."

Meeker and his Bikeville cohorts sat around and brainstormed ways to get people to bike more and drive less.

"You know people," he said. "They will circle around downtown 10 times looking for a spot. This may have saved 10 cars from driving downtown."

This weekend, Artisphere: Greenville's Arts Weekend will be the second chance to give Bike Valet a try. The downtown arts festival has embraced the concept, describing Bike Valet in its literature and placing the location, on Camperdown Way next to Michelin on Main, on its maps.

Bikeville has a video of how it works on its Web site. But Meeker said it's all rather simple. You hand over your bike, and you receive a tag.

"We'd like to be at the farmers market every weekend, but staffing with volunteers is a problem," he said. "We'll be all over the U.S. Pro Cycling Championships with that many people in town."

LEARN MORE

- To learn more about Bicycle Friendly Communities, visit: www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/communities/
- To find out more about Greenville's Bikeville efforts, visit: www.Bikeville.org/bikemonth

BIKE MONTH EVENTS

Here are some of the upcoming events in Greenville that are part of Bike Month:

- May 9-10 – Free Bike Valet available next to Michelin on Main, at South Main Street and Camperdown Way, as part of Artisphere
- May 14 – Free Commuter Safety Course, from 6:30-8 p.m. Register by e-mailing: bikeville@greenville.sc.gov
- May 15 – Greenways Bike Tour, noon-12:30 p.m., Linky Stone Park.
- May 16 – Mountain Bike Skills Clinic and Cleveland Park Trails Tour, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- May 20 – Ride of Silence, to honor those killed or injured while cycling on public roadways.
- May 23 – Downtown Greenville Art Tour on a Conference Bike, noon-4 p.m., register by e-mailing: bikeville@greenville.sc.gov
- May 27 – See the movie, "Breaking Away," at Moonlight Movies, 8 p.m., Peace Center Amphitheater. Free Bike Valet and a raffle drawing for bike gear.
- May 28 – Jeanne Menard Bicycle Lane Dedication to honor Greenville cyclists and bike advocate Jeanne Menard who was killed in 2005 while bike commuting.
- May 29 – Bike to Work Day and "Ride with the Mayor." Route features bicycle friendly greenways and streets. Free coffee and refreshments courtesy of Spill the Beans.