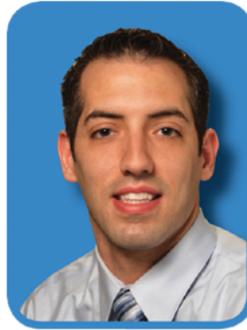




Spring 2016

**Coordinator's Corner**

Late last month I sent out an email that included a little teaser about some exciting news that we had learned about, but couldn't share quite yet. Now that it is official, I am pleased to announce that one of our local SRTS partners, the City of Galax, has won the James L. Oberstar Award in recognition of their SRTS accomplishments! We have some more information about Galax's well deserved recognition later in this newsletter.



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It is also time to get ready for the spring and summer. As we approach the warmer months, I'm excited to see schools gearing up for National Bike to School Day (BTSD). BTSD has become a much-anticipated way to celebrate students who are already biking to school and encourage others to join in. Each year, more Virginia schools have participated in BTSD - in fact, the participation growth rate from 2014 to 2015 was 43%. Let's continue this great trend this year!

How do you prepare for BTSD? Check out our "Bike to School Day Planning Advice" article, which features tips and ideas from Quick-Start MiniGrant recipients. One great way to prepare is to provide bicycle safety and skills curriculum.

Safe Routes to School programming can continue through the summer months, especially as many students don't get the recommended amount of physical activity during this time. As the school year winds down, schools should begin planning for summer SRTS activities. Your outreach coordinator can help you get started.

Several of our local coordinators and members of our team will be attending the [Safe Routes to School National Conference](#) April 5th through April 7th in Columbus Ohio. Stay tuned for some highlights of the event.

If you have questions or would like more information on any of the topics included here, please call the Virginia SRTS Hotline at 1-855-601-7787 or send an email to [info@virginiarts.org](mailto:info@virginiarts.org).

Regards,  
Rob Williams  
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

**CALENDAR**

**APRIL**

- 1: Non-infrastructure Grant applications due
- 6: National Walking Day
- 7: QuickStart Mini-grant due date
- 22: Earth Day

**MAY**

- All: National Bike Month
- 4: Bike to School Day
- 20: Bike to Work Day

## **Friends & Faces: Matt Hassman and Barbara Larvey**

*For this edition, we spoke with Matt Hassman, the Local SRTS Coordinator in Harrisonburg and Barbara Larvey, School Champion for Isle La Motte School in Vermont. Both Matt and Barbara have been developing robust biking programs for SRTS and share their thoughts on these programs in this article.*

### **Tell us a little about your programs and your school context.**

**Barbara:** I'm the Physical Education Teacher for Isle La Motte School, a very small school on Grand Isle in Northern Vermont. There are only 35 students, grades PK-6. The island has very basic infrastructure: there are no sidewalks, streetlights, or shoulders on the roads. Although there are these challenges, many students live within walking or biking distance of the school and we want to encourage those students and their parents to get out of their vehicles! As the school's SRTS Champion, I implement bicycle safety curriculum in the fall and organize programs and initiatives to encourage students to bike to school. I keep a shed at school with bikes and bike tools that students can use. We also have bikes for adults, especially for teachers who take their classes out on biking field trips.

**Matt:** I'm the Local SRTS Coordinator in the City of Harrisonburg. Although my position is housed within Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital, I work directly with five elementary schools and two middle



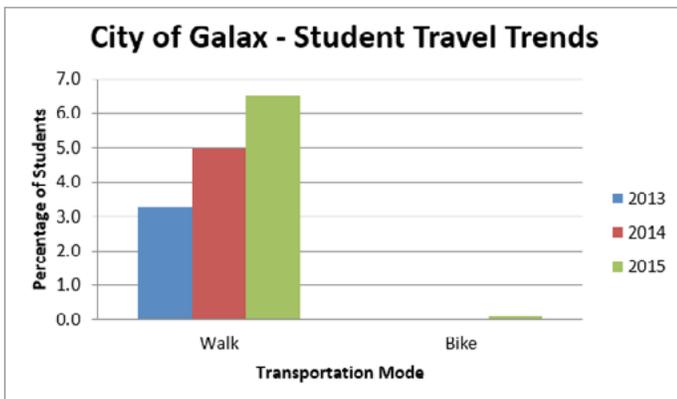
schools within the city school system. Recently, I've been working with the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition on the Connect the Schools Initiative. The coalition is working with the city to include \$1.5 million in matching funding in the school bond to build a multi-use path adjacent to the high school, a new elementary school, and one middle school, which would create connectivity for about half of the students in the city. Many middle school students already walk and bike to school, however, a busy road makes it much harder for them to walk to the high school.



## **Local VA SRTS Program Wins National Oberstar Award**

The SRTS Program in Galax has been awarded the James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The award recognizes outstanding achievement by a local Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program that has greatly improved the safety or increased the number of elementary and/or middle school students who walk and bicycle to school.

In Galax, the percentage of students walking to school has nearly doubled in the past three years. This increase is the result of a comprehensive SRTS program with strong education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation and infrastructure components.



Linda Mock, the Local SRTS Coordinator in Galax offered this when learning about the award: “Galax Safe Routes to School owes much gratitude to the VDOT Safe Routes to School program for any successes in our program. The staff, the resources, the training and the network of statewide coordinators has been appreciated. Any accomplishment to one goes to all.”

Representatives from the National Center for Safe Routes to School presented the award at a ceremony at Galax Elementary School on March 23, 2016.

*The James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award is named for the pioneer of the Federal Safe Routes to School Program. Mr. Oberstar served as former chairman of the United States House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and sponsored the Safe Routes to School legislation in 2005 that strived to create safe settings to enable more children and parents to walk and bicycle to school.*

## Bikecentennial Celebrates 40 Years of Travel by Bike

The [Bikecentennial](#), a 4,250-mile cross country bicycle ride that took place in the summer of 1976 with over 4,100 participants is celebrating 40 years of traveling by bike, sponsored by what became Adventure Cycling. As part of the 40th Anniversary celebration, two new annual events will inspire a bike travel movement throughout North America.



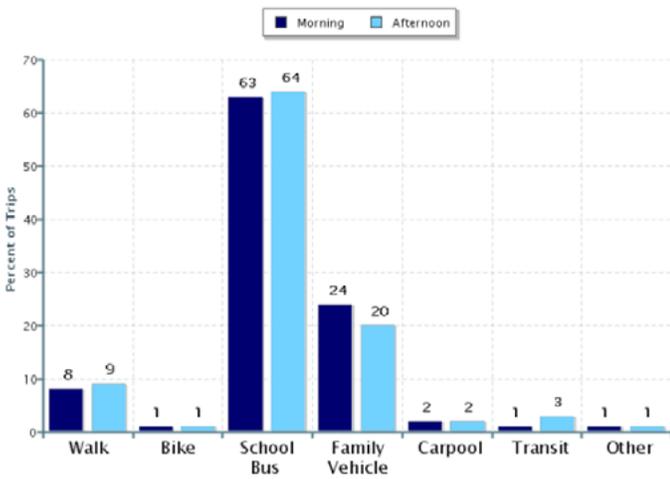
National Bike Travel Weekend, June 3 - 5, 2016, is meant to motivate bike travelers from all over North America to go on bike overnights. Visit the website to get inspired and register your trip and be part of the online community.

Not ready for an overnight? Celebrate on Bike to Your National Park Day on September 24, 2016 instead. The day marks the National Park Service's centennial, National Public Lands Day and Adventure Cycling's 40th anniversary by promoting bike travel to and within national parks, state parks, and other recreational areas. Find your closest park [here](#).

### Student Travel Tally Week Results

Two hundred sixty four schools collected student travel tallies over a one week period in either September or October of 2015. The data from these schools maintained gains in walking and biking from 2013.

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

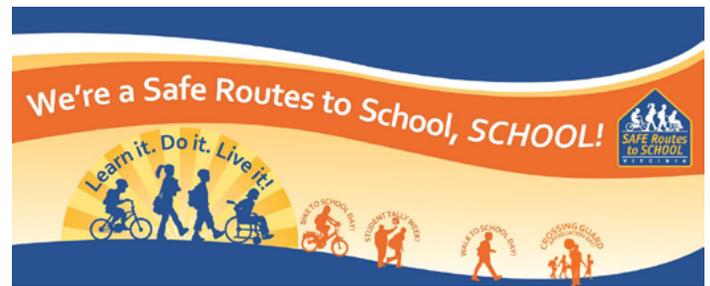


The full statewide travel tally report and travel tally reports for several participating school divisions are available on the Student Travel Tally page of the program website. Remember that tracking program progress by measuring the number of students walking and biking to and from school is important. The data is one way to evaluate the impact of SRTS programs and is often requested in grant applications.

To encourage broad participation across the state, schools that participate for the first time in Student Travel Tally Week in fall 2016 will receive a Safe Routes to School Banner and a decal to decorate the banner. Repeat participants will receive a STTW participation decal to add to their SRTS Banner.

Schools can earn additional decals by participating in other statewide and national SRTS events like Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day and Crossing Guard Appreciation Day. See the Did You Know column in this newsletter for more information.

### Did you know? SRTS Banners and Event Decals



Show your school pride with SRTS banners and event decals!

**NEW for 2016!** Your school will earn SRTS decals just by participating in any of the following events: International Walk to School Day in October, Crossing Guard Appreciation Day in February or National Bike to School Day in May. Visit our [program website](#) for free resources and to learn more about how to participate in these events.

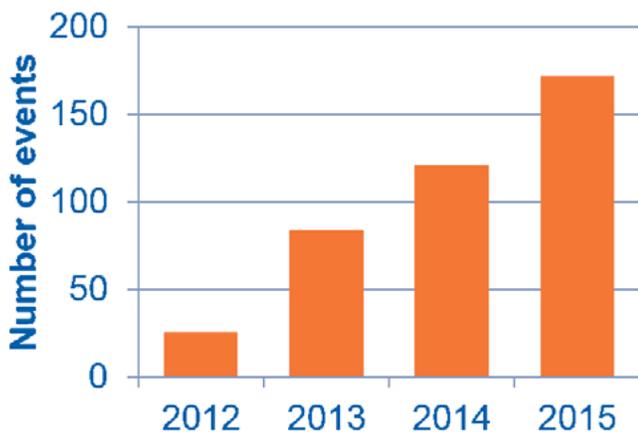
Need a place to showcase your decals? Participate in Student Travel Tally Week (STTW) and receive a free SRTS Banner, on which you can add decals every time your school participates in an event. You can customize your banner with student signatures, dates, or other additions to make the banner your own. Once you've started filling up your banner, send us a photo for a chance to be showcased on the VDOT SRTS website.

## Bike to School Day 2016

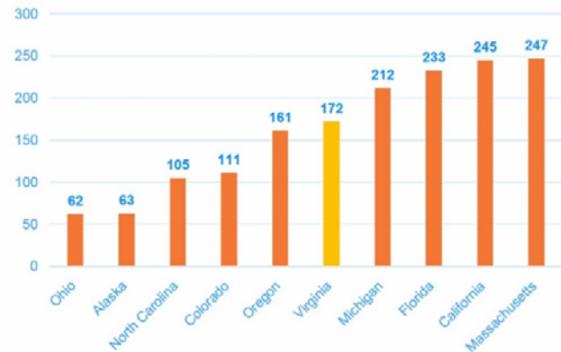


Join tens of thousands of children, parents, school officials and community leaders nationwide on May 4 for the two-wheeling celebration of the year, National Bike to School Day (BTSD). Last year, 172 Virginia schools participated -- a 43 percent growth from 2014! Nationally, Virginia ranked 5th among states with the most BTSD events.

### Virginia BTSD Participation



### How do we compare to other states?



Every year communities across the country celebrate the big day by organizing helmet fittings, bicycle skills clinics and bike trains. These events help bring attention to safety needs, promote physical activity, help build a sense of neighborhood and inspire school spirit. "We invite communities to use National Bike to School Day to best fit their circumstances, whether there are already students and families bicycling to school or whether it's not currently safe to bike and the event is held on campus to bring light to necessary changes," said Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

Schools, parents and community organizations can now register 2016 Bike to School Day events [online](#). Those registering will receive access to additional resources and earn a Bike to School Day decal for their school's Virginia SRTS banner. This year, all schools that participate will receive decals. Don't have a banner yet? Earn one by participating in Student Travel Tally Week in fall 2016. Learn more in the Did You Know column above.

Whether you are a seasoned Bike to School Day champion or will be planning event for the first time, be sure to check out the resources on the program website , including How to Plan a Walk or Bike to School Day Event in 7 Days and our Learn it, Do it, Live Event Ideas tip sheet.

### ***Bike to School Day Planning Advice***

Are you planning a Bike to School Day event? Here's some advice from our QuickStart Mini-grant recipients.

- Start planning early and do not give up! ... Make sure that you plan for the unexpected to help ensure a successful event! - *Regla Perez Pino, Walt Whitman Middle School, Fairfax County*
- Start small. ... Choose one aspect to focus on and do the best you can with that, then expand to include other aspects next time. - *Mikian Royer, Shreveewood Elementary School, Fairfax County*
- Organize a team to help with the project and delegate jobs. - *Paige Holbert, Richmond*
- The support of administration is key! - *Jennifer Johns, Aldrin Elementary School, Fairfax County*
- Promote the event with the PTA. - *Judy Fraser, Daniels Run Elementary School, Fairfax County*
- Make sure to invite decision makers and school administration so that they get to see the benefits to their school and community. - *Becky Johnston, Thomas Harrison Middle School, Harrisonburg*
- Try to be flexible as possible in your plans. It's okay to postpone due to weather. - *Keow Essig, Olde Creek Elementary School, Fairfax County*

- Make sure you have enough bike racks to [park] all the bikes. - *Brenden Menuey, Lake Anne Elementary School, Fairfax County*
- Recruit at least two adult riders for every 8 children. Divide them into groups by ability. - *Philip Troutman, Graham Road Elementary School, Fairfax County*
- Small incentives go a long way and setting a goal as a team is a fabulous motivator. - *Meredith Grasso, Nottingham Elementary School, Arlington County*

### ***Fire Up Your Feet Spring Challenge***

Want to earn money for your school by walking and biking? With generous support from Kaiser Permanente Fire Up Your Feet will award up to \$6,950 to Virginia schools during the May 1- 31 Fire Up Your Feet Activity Challenge.

This spring, Fire Up Your Feet is offering even more awards to schools participating in the Fire Up Your Feet Activity Challenge, including a brand new award for schools that track enough miles to bike across their state or region! With multiple awards in several categories, your school has even more chances to win awards to support physical activity and wellness programs.

Another new award is the Marathon Kids Run/Jog Award. This award will go to the school with the highest total minutes spent running or jogging. Schools with a minimum of 20 participants tracking running/jogging are eligible. The winning school will receive 10 Marathon Kids Running Club Memberships.

Visit the [Fire Up Your Feet website](#) to learn more about these Challenge Awards and more in California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Metro Atlanta, Oregon, Nevada, SW Washington, Virginia, Washington DC, and Wisconsin. Also, be sure to check out the list of winning schools from the Fall Challenge. If they can do it, so can you!

### ***FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Resources***

Want to know more about biking and walking programs at the federal level? Check out this summary of Federal Highway Administration Pedestrian and Bicycle Research and Program Activities.

The following highlights are particularly relevant and useful for those engaged in SRTS programs:

- See how Virginia's allocation of funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects compares to other states, and transportation funding in general on the website for [Federal-Aid Funds for Pedestrian and Bicycle Programs and Projects](#).

- The Mayors' Challenge for Safer People and Safer Streets has a lot of parallels with SRTS. Learn more [here](#).
- Need general resources on walking and biking? Bookmark the [Pedestrian Bicycle Information Center](#).
- Learn more about [engineering treatments and facility design for bicyclists and pedestrians](#).
- Prepare for meetings by reviewing the benefits of walking and biking and other useful information in these [Fact Sheets](#).
- Help connect the dots between transportation and health with the comprehensive [Transportation and Health Tool](#) developed by the Department of Transportation.

