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Protect Your Noggin

For Bicyclists, A Helmet Should Be An Indispensable Part Of The Ride

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Bike safe. Bike smart. With National Bike Helmet Safety Week currently upon us, it's a message receiving extra attention. Organizations across the country are stepping up to promote bike safety and the use of safety equipment.

Yankton joined the national campaign earlier this week as the Yankton Medical Clinic and Yankton Rotary Club held their 17th annual Helmet Giveaway Program.

Every second grader in the city gathered at Yankton High School Wednesday afternoon for a bike safety presentation and were fit for complimentary helmets. The gear was purchased by the clinic and the rotary club through Ace Bike & Fitness in Yankton.

"We see bike-related accidents, and we've seen kids with concussions," said Dr. David Withrow, a Yankton Medical Clinic pediatrician who assisted with the event. "Luckily in my time here, we haven't seen the death of a child from not wearing a helmet, but just one would be too many."

While Wednesday's presentation was aimed at children, Withrow said that the advice of wearing a helmet is something everyone should take seriously.

"The reason the majority of people die from bike-related accidents is because of head trauma," he said. "It's estimated that over 50 percent of those injuries would be prevented by the simple use of a helmet. Most of us will never have an accident, but you might be that one person. So why not put a helmet on?"

When looking for a new bike helmet, getting a proper fit is the most important factor, according to Ken Kopetsky, general manager of Ace Bike & Fitness in Yankton.

"You wouldn't wear shoes that don't fit your feet well, or a hat that doesn't fit your head well," he said. "So why would you wear a helmet that doesn't fit?"

Kopetsky said it is best to have a helmet fit by a trained professional. This includes customizing the helmet shell, ear straps and chin straps.

He said it is also important for bike riders to purchase comfortable helmets with adequate ventilation for hot summer months.

"It's something that you're going to wear every time you bike, so make sure you get something you're going to enjoy," he said.

In addition to finding the right helmet, it is also vital to wear the equipment correctly, Kopetsky said.

"The helmet front needs to fit in the middle of your forehead," he said. "Never wear a helmet backward, and never wear a helmet where the chin piece is so loose that it won't hold a helmet on if it is to fall forward. You should be able to fit two fingers under the chin strap, but no more."

The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute offers these additional tips for bike helmet purchases and use:

- Check inside the helmet for a Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) sticker;
- Choose white or another bright color for visibility to be sure that motorists and other cyclists can see you;
- Specialty helmets can be found that include thick fitting pads for small heads, extra large shells for large heads, and ponytail ports for long hair;
- A helmet should rest level on your head, touching all around, comfortably snug but not tight;
- Children should remove hel-



The annual Yankton Rotary/Yankton Medical Clinic Bike Helmet Giveaway was held Wednesday at the Summit Activities Center, with second-graders from across Yankton showing up to get a lesson on bike safety and take away a new helmet. Rotary members such as Craig Kennedy (left) helped the young students with their new headgear. LEFT TOP: Kennedy helps Kayla Duenas of Stewart Elementary School adjust the straps around her neck in order to make sure the helmet has a solid fit but doesn't cut into her throat. LEFT BELOW: Diego McHenry of Stewart Elementary shows his new, adjusted helmet to Kennedy during Wednesday's giveaway. ABOVE: Dr. Dave Withrow of the Yankton Medical Clinic explains the importance of wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)



South Dakota Questers Set To Convene In Yankton

The 30th annual South Dakota State Convention of Questers will be held on May 31-June 1 in Yankton. Questers is an organization dedicated to preservation, restoration and the joy of finding antiques. It is an international organization with chapters throughout the United States and Canada.

All events will be held at the historic Excelsior Mill. The Friday night banquet will be open to the public.

A highlight of the convention will be the Friday night banquet speaker, Bev Schuetz, a popular and dynamic speaker who has

created "History Talks," a series of live presentations available to organizations with an interest in history. She is known for her unique topics, delightful presentations and thoroughly researched programs. Schuetz's lectures showcase her unique perspective and special insight on colorful historical subjects.

Schuetz is a consummate and experienced performer. Professionally she has appeared in summer stock, as well as community and regional theaters. She has given business presentations throughout the country. "History Talks" combines her

skills in public speaking, historical analysis and creative writing. The results are lectures that reward and enrich those attending her presentation. Her topic for the evening will be "Medical Quackery and Colorful Charlatans." Officials would encourage spouses or S/Os to attend the banquet. Separate banquet tickets will be available.

Questers will be honoring their past with the seminars on Saturday, June 1. "Historic Yankton Review" is a delightful and insightful program on the preservation efforts and roadblocks encountered by a valiant group of preservationists, Historic

Yankton, Inc. It should serve as a guide for many communities faced with destruction of historical landmarks.

The "Grave Walk" is a look our famous and colorful characters that helped to establish the Yankton community. Arikara chapter and Laura Ingalls Wilder chapter did an actual Grave Walk fundraiser a few years ago.

The convention will be hosted by the Yankton Arikara Questers No. 419, one of four local chapters.

For tickets, contact Liz Aanning at 665-3005 or Anne Swift at 668-9777.

mets before climbing on playground equipment or trees, as the helmet could get caught and cause choking;

- Replace any helmet if you crash.

Withrow added that while it is easy for everyone to wear a helmet when riding a bike, it is best to ingrain the habit during youth. Therefore, it is important for parents to not only ensure that their children wear helmets, but also serve as role models by wearing safety equipment themselves, he said.

"We can give children a helmet and talk to them about safety, but that's where you need parents to buy into it," he said. "It's up to Mom and Dad to send the right message."

You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at twitter.com/d_bartos

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