

# Homewood public art project to promote shopping by bike

BY ERIC CRUMP

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With gas prices at all-time highs, cycling could become more than recreation in coming months.

The Homewood Business Association, in partnership with the village of Homewood and GoodSpeed Cycles, has started a project to encourage more visits to local stores on two wheels rather than four.

The annual Homewood public art project for this year will be decorated bike racks.

Twenty new racks will be added to locations at or near Homewood business locations, according to HBA President Julie Lawton.

"I think it's good for our community. It makes biking more accessible," she said.

Making it easier to shop by bike is not only a healthy way to save gas. It can also help businesses, ease traffic and parking congestion and it fits with the community's culture, according to Steve Buchtel of GoodSpeed.

"The painted racks this summer are going to vibrantly advertise that Homewood is open for business to

bike riders," he said. "If you doubt the impact that's going to have on the local economy, look at the bike parking racks at Churchill or James Hart (schools). They are packed full of bikes. People grow up biking in Homewood; the new racks are going to remind them of that, and how fun it is to get somewhere by bike."

Homewood has some bike racks in shopping areas, but Buchtel points out that proximity matters, and cyclists often resort to leaning bikes against walls or tethering them to trees.

## The public art tradition

In the past, the public art project has offered the community a way to help local charities and brighten the downtown area at the same time.

In recent years, the project featured decorated pet statuary, wooden chairs and benches and bird houses. Businesses, organizations and individuals bought the featured item each year, painted it and included it in an auction, usually held during one of the village's summer or fall festivals, with the proceeds going to the featured charity.

The bike racks, however, will be permanently installed in shopping

districts, so they will not be auctioned off. Instead, GoodSpeed has donated a bicycle valued at \$850 to be raffled off.

The bike is a three-speed Sun Streamway, which Buchtel said is well suited for shopping or dining in part because the step-over height and the seat are relatively low, making it easy to mount and ride in a variety of different clothing types.

## Fundraiser for HBA

The raffle will be held at the Artisan Street Fair early in June.

Bike racks are available for purchase now, and five had already been sold by Friday, March 11. The cost is \$180 each. Lawton said Ford of Homewood has offered to apply, at no charge, a protective coating on racks after they are painted in order to protect them from the elements.

The racks will be shaped like an inverted U and will be installed by village workers late in May.

A number of local charitable organizations have been the beneficiaries of the annual art project in recent years. This year the charitable beneficiary will be the HBA, Lawton said.

"The HBA has never had a fundrais-

er for itself," she said. "We are a non-profit. We try to do really good things for all the businesses."

The organization helps organize promotions and events that draw shoppers to local businesses and works with village staff to plan and promote events that encourage shopping locally.

Lawton said the organization hopes to sell 1,000 tickets. All the money would go to events that help local businesses.

Raffle tickets will be \$10 each and are available for cash payments at Art 4 Soul, 18135 Harwood Ave.; Art Corner, 18703 Dixie Highway; GoodSpeed Cycles, 2125 183rd St.; Loulou Belle, 2049 Ridge Road; Serendipity Yoga and Wellness, 18300 Dixie Highway; Thomas Photographic Services, 18705 Dixie Highway; UpsaDaisy, 18100 Martin Ave.; Van Sipma Jewelers, 2011 Ridge Road; and The Villager Gift Shop, 2007 Ridge Road.

Tickets will also be available online at [goodspeedcycles.com](http://goodspeedcycles.com), and will be available at the Artisan Street Fair until 5 p.m. on June 4. The drawing will be held at 6 p.m. at the fair.

Email [homewoodba@gmail.com](mailto:homewoodba@gmail.com) for more information.

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