

## Bike program back in motion

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Author: Ann Wessel

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### Document Text

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The paint was fresh and the repairs were new when Vanessa Burggraff became one of the first St. Cloud State University students to take one of the eight bikes parked in front of Lawrence Hall for a spin.

She pedaled to a fitness class -- a move that shaved about 15 minutes from a schedule that includes two jobs and 15 credits.

The bikes are available to Lawrence Hall residents through Husky Re-Cycle. A reincarnation of the Yellow Bike Program, this rebranded, reined-in pilot project revives the campus bike-sharing effort that ran from 2004 through last school year.

Each semester, Outdoor Endeavors supplied 15-20 more yellow bikes that had been donated and then repaired by students and volunteers in its on-campus bike shop.

"They disappeared. They ended up in the river," said Ivan Bartha, coordinator for experiential programs at Outdoor Endeavors. "Blockbuster Video would call: 'One of your bikes is by the Dumpster in the alley.' "

It was bad public relations. And it didn't get the bikes to the students who needed them.

Husky Re-Cycle last week planted itself in front of the dorm where half of the 100 residents are international students -- students who likely don't have a U.S. driver's license and can't bring their bikes.

"They are the ones that have to be a little more creative about how they get around," said Zachary Staszewski, 22, a graduate hall director pursuing a master's degree in higher education administration.

Staszewski said two bikes set up to promote the program in Lawrence Hall -- where Burggraff works as a community adviser -- generated a lot of interest.

"I think a lot of people have the same feeling as me. It's really convenient. It's right there. You don't have to buy a bike," said Burggraff, 20, a sophomore from Redfield, S.D., majoring in global studies. "I looked at bikes the other day. It was \$130 for the cheapest nice one I saw."

She said she would continue to drive her 1988 Oldsmobile Delta to her second job at Crossroads Center. But she planned to use the bikes for errands and recreational rides .

Once the semester is over, Bartha said the bikes will move to Shoemaker Hall, which houses summer students. The long-range plan is to expand Husky Re-Cycle to more residence halls.

Evan Parkhouse, 24, a December graduate who spearheaded the student-led effort to revive bike sharing as part of a class project, said success will be measured partly in terms of maintenance. As a mechanic in the campus bike repair shop, he saw slashed tires and frames bent in half.

"It had a nice face to it, but there was a lot of work that did go into them, and it wasn't all that fun as a coordinator to see all the bikes either disappear or get destroyed for no reason," Parkhouse said of the Yellow Bike Program.

"If we can get two years or more out of these bikes with minimal maintenance, that would be a huge success," Parkhouse said.

Parkhouse, who is seeking a job in environmental studies, said the Re-Cycle bikes are mechanically simplified. Students can choose from different sizes and styles .

Bartha said it cost about \$45 to make each bike road-ready. The expense is offset by repair shop revenues.

Husky Re-Cycle requires riders to complete a safety course and to sign out the bikes, which are locked to a rack. The bikes must be returned within 24 hours. Riders notify residence hall staff if repairs are necessary.

Such close monitoring may help to alleviate Burggraff's one concern about using the bikes -- having one break down while she is in transit. Riders are responsible for the bikes while they're checked out.

Sharing that responsibility with the residence hall and tracking bikes' whereabouts and condition are part of what set the red bikes apart from the yellow.

"We're not bringing the same thing back," said Bartha, who will tally the miles ridden and then enlist the help of a science professor to determine the reduction in carbon emissions. "If we want to promote sustainable transportation, we have to be at the forefront of that."

How You

Can Help

St. Cloud State University's Outdoor Endeavors program accepts bicycle donations. Call 308-3772 for details.

How often do you ride a bike in the summer?

Vote at [www.sctimes.com](http://www.sctimes.com). Results will be on tomorrow's opinion page.

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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