



For Immediate Release

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2019 Bike Commuter of the Year Winners Announced

SAN FRANCISCO, April 25, 2019... This week Bay Area Bike to Work Day (BTWD) organizers named the winners of the 2018 Bike Commuter of the Year awards. Given to individuals for inspiring bicycling in their Bay Area communities, the Bike Commuter of the Year award recognizes a winner from each of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties for their commitment to bicycling as their primary mode of transport.

The 2019 winners include Sergeant Dave Thompson from Sonoma County, a 27-year veteran of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. Since 2014, he's been making the 16-mile round-trip commute from his home in Windsor to the Sheriff's Office in Santa Rosa just part of his regular day. "While coworkers may arrive in the office grumbling that they need coffee to get going, I just rode eight miles in the fresh air – that's MY coffee!" In San Mateo County, Avana Andrade's work on San Mateo County's Climate Action Plan has given her a keen awareness that transportation is one of the county's largest sources of emissions. She practices what she preaches and shares her love of bike commuting – even during this year's fierce winter storms – with people who say that the joy she exudes is infectious and inspiring.

Here is the complete list of 2019 Bike Commuter of the Year award winners:

- Alameda County: **Carol Lahti** has been bike commuting in the Bay Area for 23 years – first in Hercules and now in Albany, but she's been riding since childhood. You'll see her biking early in the morning to catch the ferry to work at Genentech in South San Francisco and late at night on her ride home. To Carol, her commute feels like vacation every day.
- Contra Costa County: **John Cunningham**, a longtime cyclist and principal planner for Contra Costa County's Transportation Planning Division, literally pedals the talk to help make infrastructure improvements for cyclists and pedestrians throughout the county. But it's not all about work for him. "By riding my bike to work I save money, stay healthy, and reduce my stress levels at the same time!" says John.
- Marin County: **Brian Lehman** has been bike commuting to work for 15 years. His 15-mile round trip commute from his home in Santa Venetia to his job as publications manager for the California Film Institute in downtown San Rafael is his way of making an impact on the environment. According to Brian, "I have not used a car to commute since late 2004 and have not owned a car since 2013!"
- Napa County: **Aileen Carroll** fell in love with bike commuting while at college in San Louis Obispo, and made a conscious choice to live within biking distance of her job at Van Winden's Garden Center. Her two-mile commute is often the best part of her morning, and always a good way to unwind after the workday. And **Dave Kearney Brown**, a Napa native and 3rd grade teacher at Napa Valley Language Academy fondly recalls his first bike – a blue Sting Ray with a banana seat and butterfly handlebars. He rode that bike everywhere, and still rides everywhere, proudly noting that he recently went three months using just a single tank of gas in his car.
- San Francisco County: **Ricky Ramos** moved to San Francisco in 2011 as an SFSU student and he's been biking all over the Bay Area ever since. For first time commuters, Ricky says, "You don't have to be an avid biker to start biking to

work – the joy of riding on two wheels starts with just one day!”

- San Mateo County: **Avana Andrade** (see above) empowers others to get out of their cars and onto their bikes by offering advice and teaching them things like how to fix a flat tire.
- Santa Clara County: **Marc Graci** committed to riding his bike eight miles round trip from Campbell to his job as a math teacher at Discovery Charter School in San Jose for the whole 2018-19 school year. Winter rains didn't stop him and his goal is now in sight. He's even incorporated biking into some of his lessons!
- Solano County: **Paul Meltzer** traded in his car for a multi-modal commute by bike and train – 44 miles round trip – from his home in Fairfield to his job at the Shell Oil Refinery in Martinez – a true commitment to lowering his carbon foot print and making a difference for the environment and getting a work out. “Biking to work is a great way to get exercise, and I've even persuaded some of my colleagues to give it a try.”
- Sonoma County: **Sergeant Dave Thompson's** (see above), commitment doesn't stop with his daily commute; he gives back to the cycling community as a volunteer with the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition's Safe Routes to School program.

Each winner will receive a set of panniers from Mike's Bikes, a laminated, boxed set of San Francisco Bay Trail map cards from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and a cycling jersey from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). You can read all about the winners at <https://bayareabiketowork.com/bike-commuters-of-the-year/>.

Many of the winners will be honored on Bike to Work Day — the Bay Area's premier bicycling celebration — on Wednesday, May 9, 2019. The awards are part of many events scheduled during the San Francisco Bay Area's National Bike Month celebration this May.

Take the pledge to ride on BTWD 2019 – May 9

Bay Area Bike to Work Day is May 9! We encourage everyone to take the pledge to ride on Bike to Work Day 2019 and help break our Bike to Work Day ridership record! [Go here to find your county and take the pledge today.](#) And when riders take the pledge, they can enter into a drawing for a fabulous vacation package for one to the [Alaskan Kenai Peninsula, donated by Exodus Travel and Alaska Airlines!](#) Complete information about BTWD 2019 can be found at bayareabiketowork.com.

There's still time to sign up to participate in the Bay Area Bike Challenge!

The Challenge gets underway May 1 – but there's still time to sign up as an individual or as part of a team of up to 10 friends, family members, coworkers or neighbors. Participants compete for top honors and bragging rights by collectively riding thousands of miles all month long. The Challenge runs through May 31. To register, visit <https://www.lovetoride.net/bayarea?locale=en-US>

Bay Area Bike to Work Day encourages local residents to try commuting on two wheels for the first time and celebrates those who regularly bike and is presented by [MTC](#) (the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area), [511](#) (the region's traveler information system) and [Alaska Airlines](#). Bike to Work Day 2019 also receives regional support from the [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) (BAAQMD), [Bay Area Rapid Transit](#) (BART), [Clif Bar](#) and [Exodus Travels](#), as well as from many sponsors at the local level. Bike to Work Day's media sponsor is [NBC Bay Area-KNTV/Telemundo 48](#). In addition to BAAQMD, prizes for the Bike Commuter of the Year winners were donated by the [Association of Bay Area Governments](#) (ABAG) and [Mike's Bikes](#).

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