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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May is National Bike Month – Why Do Your Ride?

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LICKING COUNTY, OHIO - May is National Bike Month and the best way to celebrate is to go out and ride your bike. Not only is bicycling great for the environment, it can be a much cheaper way to travel. According to the US Department of Transportation's Household Travel Survey, 50 percent of trips made by the average American are within 3 miles or less.

Bicycling is also a great form of physical activity. The Licking County Health Department wants to promote bicycling and the TJ Evans bike trail system here in Licking County with our Change Gears- Ride a Bike: 2011 Ride for Your Health. The event will take place on Saturday, June 4th at the Newark campus of Central Ohio Technical College and the Ohio State University at Newark - adjacent to the bike trail. There will be distance rides, a bike skills rodeo, educational displays and light lunch. Everyone is invited to participate, including families and long-distance bikers. There is no cost to participate so come join in the fun!

Although the event is free, it is requested that you register online at www.lcwalc.org to insure food will be available for all participants. All bike riders will need to wear a bike helmet during the ride and rodeo. Helmets will be provided at no cost to those in need (while supplies last). Please be aware, bike repair services will not be available, so come prepared. If you have questions about the ride, please call (740) 349-6535, press 0 and ask for the Wellness Program. The 2011 Change Gears event is sponsored by the Licking County Health Department (LCHD), We're Active Licking County (WALC), Licking County Area Transportation Study (LCATS), the City of Newark, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office on Women's Health, Bayer USA Foundation and Huntington National Bank. Lunch will be provided in part by Jimmy John's.

If you are unable to participate in the 2011 Change Gears event, you can also promote bicycling at your workplace. May 16-20th has been recognized as Bike to Work Week with Bike to Work Day being Friday, May 20th. A study in 2009 on *Active Commuting and Cardiovascular Disease Risk* by Gordon-Larson, P., et al., indicated, "those who biked to work were fitter, leaner, less likely to be obese, and had better triglyceride levels, blood pressure, and insulin levels than those who didn't active commute to work." Start small by organizing a group ride to work. If you live too far to ride the entire way, organize a meeting point a few miles away from work and bike in from there. Every effort counts; a few miles on your bike improves your health, your wallet and Mother Earth. For more information on how to increase bicycling efforts at your work place visit the Licking County Trails Alliance at: <http://lickingcountytrails.com/Bike2Work/index.html> or the League of American Bicyclists at www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth/

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