



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BikeWalkLee applauds Sanibel's designation as a "Bicycle Friendly Community"

FORT MYERS, FL –BikeWalkLee applauds today's announcement by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) that Sanibel is one of 18 new Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC). According to the league, "A Bicycle Friendly Community welcomes cyclists by providing safe accommodation for cycling and encouraging people to bike for transportation and recreation." More than 400 communities have applied for BFC designation and, to date, 158 communities (six in Florida, including Sanibel), have received the recognition.

"We applaud the Sanibel city manager and the Sanibel City Council for submitting the application, which was essentially an audit of its engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation (the 5 Es) efforts to promote bicycling," BikeWalkLee's Darla Letourneau said.

"Today's 23-mile shared use path system began as a result of citizen efforts in 1974 -75 that envisioned Sanibel as a bicycle/pedestrian-friendly community. By 1996, the 23-mile path system which exists today was completed. With encouragement and support from the Sanibel Bicycle Club, the city spent three years developing a comprehensive shared use path master plan, which envisions further improvements in the system," said Letourneau. "The Sanibel Bicycle Club, one of BikeWalkLee's partners, is to be commended for its long-standing work with the city of Sanibel to make the island a bicycle-friendly community."

BikeWalkLee's vision is for a bicycle, pedestrian, and transit-friendly Lee County, the goal of Complete Streets —streets designed, built, operated and maintained for safe and convenient travel for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

"Sanibel is the first community in Southwest Florida to be awarded a BFC designation and we hope Sanibel's efforts to put a comprehensive program in place can serve as a model for other communities within Lee County," said Letourneau. "Often, a community applies and doesn't succeed the first time, but receives assistance and feedback from LAB that helps it improve programs to be more competitive the next time. For example, Lee County applied for the BFC designation in 2009 but was not successful.

However, the feedback should encourage program improvements that could help the county be successful in the future."

For more information about the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Communities program, visit http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/communities/bfc_about.php

BikeWalkLee is a community coalition raising public awareness and advocating for complete streets in Lee County—streets that are designed, built, operated and maintained for safe and convenient travel for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. For more information, visit www.BikeWalkLee.org.

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