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NEWS RELEASE

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Bike-Friendly Fitchburg Scores Silver Status from the League of American Bicyclists

Fitchburg, Wis. -- The League of American Bicyclists (Bike League) today awarded a silver designation to the City of Fitchburg in the latest round of Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC) awards, part of its national Bicycle Friendly America program, which recognizes states, communities, universities, and businesses for their efforts to provide safe conditions and encouragement for bicycle transportation and recreation. Fitchburg earned a bronze award in 2012.

The award will be presented to Fitchburg Mayor Steve Arnold today at 2 p.m. at the Dawley Bike Hub, 3041 Seminole Highway, by Jay Ferm, Director of Advocacy, Planet Bike, and member of the Bike League Board of Directors.

According to Ferm, Bicycle Friendly America is more than a certification program. It guides work at all levels year-in and year-out to develop safe, fun, and healthy transportation and recreation opportunities across five action areas: engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation.

“We are thrilled to receive this recognition after three more years of relentless work to make Fitchburg a great biking destination while contributing to a safer and more comfortable regional network,” says Mayor Arnold, who is an active and enthusiastic cyclist. “We have been working in all these areas to make Fitchburg a healthier, safer, more sustainable, and more vibrant place to live, work and visit by bike. This award shows that those efforts are paying off.”

Mayor Arnold thanks members of the county-wide Healthy Kids Collaborative Active Living Work Group for their collaboration. Representatives of Dane County communities and the University of Wisconsin-Madison worked together over eighteen months to explore the “Five E’s”, share best practices, point out each other’s blind spots, and stitch their networks together. They were supported by the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (the area’s metropolitan



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planning organization, or MPO). Five communities and the University submitted applications in August. In addition to Fitchburg's silver award, Madison received long-sought platinum status, Middleton and Monona received bronze awards, and Sun Prairie received an honorable mention. The University of Wisconsin-Madison was awarded gold status as a Bicycle Friendly University. "Our city is six miles square, yet residents routinely bike beyond its boundaries. Working with Madison, adjoining communities, and our flagship university make these efforts so much more valuable," says Arnold.

Highlights of Fitchburg's accomplishments since 2012 that contributed to their BFC silver status include:

- New facilities, including the first-ever bike roundabout in Wisconsin, Dawley Bike Hub, Military Ridge Path with overpass and tunnel crossings, Cannonball Path with Belmar boardwalk connection, and Dane County's Seminole Mountain Bike Trails
- An official Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee within city government
- An independent, local advocacy organization: Fitchburg Bicycling Advocates
- New adult bicycle safety classes through Fitchburg's Recreation Department
- New events and programs to encourage bicycle commuting and transportation
- A county-wide wayfinding signage system and installation of signage at the bicycle roundabout
- Annual volunteer counts of bicyclists

Photographs and additional details may be found in the supplemental material for Fitchburg's 2015 BFC application, available at http://fitchburg.wi.us/2015_BFC_supplemental_material.pdf.

Among the many benefits of biking, Arnold cites cost savings, health benefits, and pollution reduction, creating more livable cities. "As a mayor, there are many 'best-of' lists and programs that one can pursue, but there are few better investments for a city's health and economic prosperity than vigorously pursuing the Bicycle Friendly Communities awards."

Arnold attributes Fitchburg's accomplishments to dedicated staff, regional collaboration, contributions of funding partners and volunteers, and the vision of elected officials. "We could never have achieved these successes alone without the energy of Fitchburg Bicycling Advocates, the Fitchburg Chamber, and our peer communities." Arnold says. "Biking has become an enduring part of our identity in Fitchburg."

Angela Kinderman, Executive Director of the Fitchburg Chamber Visitor+Business Bureau, says "We support biking in our community not only because it makes for happy and healthy citizens but also because biking is good business! Bicycle recreation contributes more than \$900 million in economic activity in the State of Wisconsin. Add to that the impact of over \$600 million from the bicycling industry, which includes innovative manufacturers like Fitchburg's Saris Cycling Group, and retailers like Fitchburg Cycles, and we have a \$1.5 billion industry that helps to fuel our State's economy. That is a lot of pedal power! Biking is a part of our Fitchburg identity and our Fitchburg economy".

Matthew Jones and Jennifer Ullman, co-founders of the Fitchburg Bicycle Advocates, expressed congratulations and excitement for Fitchburg achieving BFC Silver status. Matt says, "Working with the City and Chamber, we were able to move Fitchburg up in the ranks of Bicycle Friendly Communities. FBA is committed to supporting safer roadways, more connected trails and greater legitimacy for bicyclists." FBA members are continuing their work by organizing events and by mapping the city's bicycle parking.

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Earning the silver award gives Mayor Arnold great satisfaction, but he pledges to continue to improve every aspect of living and working in Fitchburg. Gold-level recognition is his next goal for bicycling. “The bottom line is that we encourage people to get out and enjoy bicycling in and around Fitchburg and throughout Dane County.”

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About the **League of American Bicyclists**: The League is leading the movement to create a bicycle-friendly America for everyone. As leaders, our commitment is to listen and learn, define standards and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change. Bicycle Friendly America is the League’s evaluation and recognition program for states, communities, universities, and businesses. <http://www.bikeleague.org>

About the **City of Fitchburg, Wisconsin**: Fitchburg is a six-mile-square city of about 26,000 residents in south central Wisconsin. The southern neighbor of the capital city of Madison, Fitchburg was a town before incorporating in 1983, and so is one-third urban and suburban, and two-thirds rolling glacial farmland and natural areas. The city is blessed with three state trails and two mountain bike parks, and has developed a dense bicycle transportation network of scenic rural roads, off-road paths, bicycle lanes, and quiet neighborhood streets. Fitchburg's municipal staff support many aspects of bicycling for all ages and abilities, including BFC applications. <http://www.fitchburgwi.gov>

About the **Fitchburg Chamber Visitor+Business Bureau**: The Chamber is a not-for-profit business membership organization with more than 375 members. The Chamber provides tools, resources and opportunities to support the success of our members. Chamber members have embraced Fitchburg's identity as a bicycling destination. Chamber staff prepared Fitchburg's 2012 application for Bicycle Friendly Community, resulting in recognition at the bronze level. <http://fitchburgchamber.com>

About **Fitchburg Bicycle Advocates**: FBA is an independent, non-profit, city-wide advocacy group for all forms of bicycle transportation and recreation. Founded in 2014, FBA catalyzed Fitchburg's first volunteer bicycle counts and first adult bicycle safety classes. FBA volunteers helped represent Fitchburg on the Health Kids Collaborative Active Living Work Group and draft Fitchburg's 2015 application to be a Bicycle Friendly Community. <http://facebook.com/Fitchburgbikeadvocates/>

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