



# BICYCLE RODEOS

AUGUST 2003

## THE BIKE RODEO

### What is a Bicycle Rodeo?

A bike rodeo is a community event where children, usually 5-15 years old, learn safe bicycling skills at a hands-on training event.

Most rodeos help children learn to ride in an urban setting. However, a bike rodeo can be tailored to fit the specific needs of the community. In addition, the rodeo can be held during other community events. For example, we organized a bicycle rodeo during a bike-a-thon in Kake. The children attended the rodeo in the morning and rode for the bike-a-thon in the afternoon. Safe bicycling skills were reinforced because the children were able to use the new skills in a realistic setting immediately after the rodeo.

### Do You Need a Bicycle Rodeo Guide?

The short answer is yes. Finding a bike rodeo guide that is easy to use and works well for the rodeos you organize is a must. At the very least, a good guide will provide a logical approach to organizing a rodeo. The best rodeo handbook we've seen and used is *The Guide To Bicycle Rodeos* by John Williams and Dan Burden.

Another rodeo guide set available is the *Bicycle Skills Course Rodeo Planning Guide* and the *Bicycle Skills Course Rodeo Instructor's Guide*. They were written and published by the Cascade Bicycle Club in Seattle.

Even the most inexperienced bicycle safety person can successfully organize a bicycle rodeo with *The Guide To Bicycle Rodeos*. We included a copy of the guide in this manual. With the manual and a little bicycling experience anyone can begin to organize a bicycle rodeo.

### Basic Bicycle Rodeo Needs

You can use personal experience and/or a rodeo guide to determine what you need to organize and run a bicycle rodeo. The following is a list of materials and volunteers that we used to for a bicycle rodeo for about 50 children. We used past rodeo experience and the above mentioned rodeo guide to develop the needs list. It worked well.

### Pre-Rodeo Activities

- **Create a rodeo notebook.** This is an extremely important step in organizing a bicycle rodeo. The *Guide to Bicycle Rodeos* suggests this and our experience fully supports this activity. Keep copies or originals of all correspondence, notes of meetings, a phone log, notes on group and individual activities, and any other information or work that is related to the rodeo. As the guide states, it will help you stay organized and make future rodeos much easier.



## BICYCLE RODEOS CAN BE A GREAT MEDIUM FOR TEACHING SAFE RIDING SKILLS.

There are many reasons why a bicycle rodeo is a great event for a community.

- ⇒ They teach safe riding skills.
- ⇒ They are free to the participants.
- ⇒ It provides children and parents with an entertaining, safe, family-oriented activity.
- ⇒ Riders of almost any experience can participate.

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BICYCLE RODEOS ARE COMMUNITY EVENTS. PEOPLE CAN BE INVOLVED AS VOLUNTEERS, PARTICIPANTS, OR BYSTANDERS.

BE SURE TO INVITE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY!

# BICYCLE RODEO

- **Find a leader.** Some communities will sponsor the event and leave all the organization up to you. Others will want a hand in the organization process or complete control. We usually volunteer to take the lead unless the community wants to accept the role. If your organization is a major contributor or sponsor, insist on being a member of the core group at least. Find a leader as soon as possible.
- **Create the event core group.** These are the people that will carry on rodeo activities from start to finish. We use a core group of 3-5 people for a 50 participant rodeo. Use this meeting to come up with a general plan (next step).
- **Make a general plan.** This includes the event date (and a rain date) size, location, rough layout, estimate of participants, estimate of volunteers, and some general reference to helmets, refreshments, prizes, and sponsors. Create a timeline and fill in all duties and responsibilities. This is also a good time to assign or have the core group members choose the activity(s) they want to work on. The general plan is a working document. Make changes in it and the timeline as you progress.
- **Helmets.** If you plan to sell helmets at the rodeo, order helmets at least one month before the rodeo. Work with local vendors or contact some of the discount helmet suppliers in the helmet purchasing section of this manual.
- **Mechanics.** Find one or two bicycle mechanics interested in attending the rodeo. Select several dates when they will be available and get commitments for those dates. Call them as soon as you finalize the event date and the rain date.
- **Call for volunteers.** The general plan should give you a good estimate of the number of volunteers you need.

Assign one of the organizing staff the duty of finding volunteers. You may have to contact 2-3 times the actual number of people needed to get the desired number of volunteers. Be ready for last minute cancellations and no

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**rodeo site.** The site should be paved (or at least surface) and clear of obstacles. Use a covered area if possible. The minimum area you need will be determined by your course layout. The layouts we use (attached) require minimum dimensions of 60 x 100 feet. The ideal dimensions are about 100 x 200 feet. Stations for registration, maintenance, refreshments, and helmet fitting. The ideal dimensions for these activities is about 45 x 70 feet.

- **Draw the rodeo layout.** Use your rodeo guide to draw a rodeo layout. We use most of the stations mentioned in the Bicycle Rodeo Guide. However, the dimensions of your site will determine how many of the stations you can use.
- **Finalize the course layout.** The final course layout should be to scale and include all stations at the rodeo. We drew a layout of the entire rodeo and separate scale drawings of each station on graph paper. This made the course setup much easier. Provide draft copies of the course layout to the community staff members if you live outside the community. Review their comments and make necessary changes to the layout.
- **Make a list of rodeo materials.** Once the layout is complete you can begin making a list of all the materials needed for the rodeo. Each station should be labeled with the name, the ideal number of volunteers, the minimum number of volunteers, and equipment needed. A sample materials list begins on page 4.
- **Make station cards.** We made small, laminated instruction cards for each station. A bullet format that includes the objective, procedures, and a summary of what the children should learn works well. Use a large enough font for easy reading.
- **Start the volunteer list.** Make a list of the volunteers, their phone numbers and addresses, and the station they or you would like them to oversee. Whoever is finding volunteers will have a feel for the most sincere and dependable people. These people should be station leaders; let them choose or assign them a station. Give them a copy of the station instructions (save the laminated card for the day of the rodeo). Remember, some volunteers may be core group members. Keep in weekly contact with the volunteers to avoid surprises.



# BICYCLE RODEOS

- **Advertising.** Radio and televisions public service announcements (PSA) are good advertisers. Radio is a good medium for advertising in rural communities. Make posters for the health center, head start, post office, schools, and any other well-visited places. You should start advertising about 4 weeks before the event and continue to the day of the event.
- **Search for prizes.** We like to give all children who attend the rodeo a prize. You can give out prizes before the rodeo or after. We hold a drawing (using forms) after the event and while the children are getting refreshments. Businesses will often donate several prizes and you may need to purchase some. Everyone goes away with a prize.
- **Determine your refreshment needs.** Local businesses are sometimes good sources for refreshment donations. If you purchase additional supplies from them they may be more apt to donate a few items. Remember that parents and visitors will also attend the rodeo and will likely visit the refreshment station (so will the volunteers). The expected number of participants may change several times before the event. Pay attention to this and adjust the refreshment needs accordingly.
- **Make transportation arrangements.** You and/or the volunteers may need to travel to the community. Reservations should be made as soon as the event date is set. Make arrangements for a backup travel plan (ferry, extra automobiles, plane).
- **Hold several meetings.** Weekly meetings are ideal and should be in person. The teleconference method is acceptable. Have each core group member report on their activities. Adjust their activities or the time line as necessary and provide any assistance, advice, or reassignments during the meeting. Send each member a short summary of the meeting results and follow-up assignments.
- **Host a final rodeo meeting.** It is best to have all the core group members and volunteers present. Make sure your check list is complete and address any last minute details. Make a detailed plan (including times) for the rodeo and give all members a copy.

## Rodeo Day Activities

- **Course layout.** Layout the course the night before if possible. However, if the site can't be locked or there is a chance of rain and wind you will need to get up early

on the day of the rodeo to set up the course. We use masking tape to layout the stations. This works very well, but there is usually a lot of sweeping involved. Try to do most of the sweeping the night before (some people get up at 4:30 am very easily).

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**Set up the tables and chairs.** Place the supplies needed at the station or on the station table. The volunteers organize their station.

**Volunteer meeting.** Gather all the volunteers about 1/2 to 1 hour before the rodeo. Explain minute changes and the anticipated time line for the rodeo. Walk the group through the course to give them the "flow" and the importance of each station.

Give the laminated station sign to the leader of each station and explain the station to the group. Start a station priority list for volunteers that show up late or not at all. Fill in the list (and stations) as volunteers become available.

- **Handle problems.** The leader should be available to resolve problems as they arise. Talk to the station leaders frequently to ensure they are not overwhelmed. The leader can be a fill in at the stations if people need breaks or if there are large groups of children that enter all at once.
- **Socialize.** Try to find time to speak with the participants and the parents. Ask them how they like the rodeo and if they have any suggestions for improvements. Write down their suggestions.

## Stopping the Rodeo

Discreetly let the volunteers know the rodeo is winding down and nearing the stop time. Make a general announcement to the participants about 15 minutes before the end. This will enable them to go through the course again. Get the prizes, drawing box, and additional refreshments ready and make the "Prize Time" announcement. Begin drawing registration forms from the box when all the children are ready.

Thank the children and their parents for coming. Invite comments, additional comments from parents or children and make notes of any feed back received.



**Materials List**

- Bike Rodeo Kit is available from Alaska Highway Safety Office—contact information on the cover page and in chapter 4 of this manual. The kit contains many of the listed items.
- cardboard cutouts; 4 cars, 2 trucks, 1 fence,
- traffic signs; at least one stop sign
- station signs; one for each station
- cones or standards; 30-40
- surveyors tape; 300 yards
- masking tape; 500 yards
- sidewalk chalk; one box
- registration forms; have plenty and access to a copier
- tables; 4
- chairs; 12-16
- cash box and change
- scissors
- pens, pencils
- refreshments
- mechanics and tools; as needed
- prizes; one per person
- sponges; 30-40
- drawing box; 1
- bike check forms; have plenty and access to a copier
- brooms

**Post-Rodeo Activities**

You can breath a sign of relief when a successful bicycle rodeo is over. However, there’s still a lot of work to do. The things you need to do include:

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- Collect all supplies.
- Clean up the rodeo site and dispose of all trash.
- Return all borrowed items.
- Donate leftover single service refreshments to local volunteer groups or the senior center. Don’t donate perishable foods such as cooked hot dogs or burgers.
- Send thank you notes to all businesses or groups who donated prizes, refreshments, or supplies.
- Send a thank you to the organization who allowed use of the site.
- Send thank you notes or inexpensive gifts to all volunteers. (T-shirts make good gifts).
- Reward the core group with a thank you letter.
- Give all volunteers and the core group a *Wishes and Pluses* form to fill out and return. Compile all responses and send a summary to those who responded.
- Reorganize the rodeo notebook.
- Make a last look through your rodeo notes and be sure you acknowledged everyone who helped at the rodeo.
- Take a well deserved rest!



**Sample Forms Summary**

The attached sample forms were used at one of the rodeos we organized. They're not very flashy, but they worked well for us. If you use forms such as these, tailor them to fit your needs. They really help us keep organized.

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**Bicycle Check List**

We asked our local bicycle mechanics what bike problems they most often while working at rodeos. They both agreed that tire inflation, brake pads, hub adjustment were the most typical bike problems. They also mentioned that during busy times it was difficult to check each bike that noted the problems so they didn't have to check everything. We made this form (see sample) and used it as a pre-bike inspection form at the bike mechanic station. One volunteer checked participants bike and marked any problems on the sheet. This helped the mechanics focus on the most common problems first and also sped up the station.

**Wishes and Pluses**

Wishes and pluses are an informal internal evaluation tool. We hand out a sheet to each volunteer and all core group members. Wishes are items that the person thinks would improve a future event. The pluses are things that worked well and should be repeated. Use the completed forms to compile a list of all wishes and pluses. Any reasonable suggestions or comments can be used to improve future rodeos.

**Rodeo Announcement**

There is an unlimited number of formats for rodeo announcements. This is an example of one we used in Kake. It was posted throughout the community.

**Registration Form**

This is another example from Kake. The registration form should be simple and a disclaimer is highly recommended.

**Bike Rodeo Checklist**

A list of all supplies and equipment needed for the rodeo is a must. Notice that there is a lot of room at the bottom of the sample. It usually gets filled up with all the last minute details.

**Volunteer List**

We use this form to track our volunteers. It's real basic and is easy to write down information in a hurry.

**Station Signs**

We use laminated versions of these signs at each station. They help direct the children (and the volunteers) to the right station.