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► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [CEO Hotline](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/
Library](#)

► [Metro Cafe](#) (pdf)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Retirement
Round-up](#)

Metro Info

► [Strategic Plan](#) (pdf)

► [Org Chart](#) (pdf)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

With bikers poised for a ride around Patsaouras Plaza, actor and "coach" Ed Begley Jr. told local media the bicycle "is the most energy-efficient vehicle science has ever invented."

Metro Tells LA Commuters: Don't Overlook the Bicycle

- Bike to Work Day is Thursday, May 20

By KIM SIM

(April 29, 2004) When it comes to choosing an alternative form of transportation, don't overlook the bicycle.

That was the message of "Tune Up & Challenge," an hour-long event held on Patsaouras Plaza, Wednesday, to promote next month's Bike to Work Day.

The morning kicked off with a press conference featuring Deputy CEO John Catoe and television actor Ed Begley, Jr., but the real stars of the day were the volunteer bicyclists who showed up to ride warmup laps around the Plaza.

MTA employees, along with members of bicycling clubs and others in the community, came out with helmets and bikes in tow to boost awareness about Bike to Work Day, May 20.

'A viable alternative'

The event also was used to promote bicycling as "a viable

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[An Eventful Day on Patsaouras Plaza](#)



Some 70 bicyclists and Segway riders push off for a two-lap circuit of Patsaouras Plaza. The event promoted "Bike to Work Day," May 20.

alternate means of transportation," said Bob Rainey, MTA transportation planning manager and bike warmup coordinator.

"This is fun, but it is a serious promotion," Catoe said, citing the county's traffic congestion and poor air quality.

"It is critically important that we get people to use various modes of transportation other than the single-occupant car to get to work, to go to visit the doctor, to get to school and go to recreational activities," he said. "And one of the modes of doing that is a fun one, and that is a bicycle."

Begley called bicycling "the best way to get around."

'Energy-efficient vehicle'

The ardent environmentalist and star on the ABC drama series "Stephen King's Kingdom House," said, "It is the most energy-efficient vehicle science has ever invented. It cuts down on traffic, it cuts down on pollution."

People were also encouraged to combine bicycling with Metro, especially if they are traveling long distances.

"You can put your bicycle on that front rack (of the bus) and you can ride the major part of the way and then get your exercise the last five or six miles," said Frank Roberts, mayor of Lancaster and MTA Board first vice chairman.

For Alfred Portillo, a Metro Bus operator at Central City Division 1, Bike to Work Day is every day. He rides his bike to and from work every day — and has for about 22 years.

"I think it's a great thing," Portillo said of the day's event. "It's beautiful to see people congregating, riding bikes. You've got your helmet on here and people know you're a bicyclist."



Among the participants in Wednesday's "Bike to Work Day" promotional event were, from left, George Campbell, LA Airport; Alfonso Valleza, Downtown Center Business Improvement District; Alfred Portillo of Metro; Stephen May, broker, Downtown Residential Real Estate; Deputy David Sivard, LA County Sheriff's Department; and Harvey Hetland, Los Angeles Wheelmen bicycle club.