

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Jo Wright, QBP Director of Marketing

Tel: 1-952-941-9391

Fax: 1-952-941-9799

jwright@qbp.com

QBP Forms Commuter Bike League

Competitive Teams Spur Dramatic Increase in Bike Commuting for Employees of Bike Parts Distributor

BLOOMINGTON, MN – May 7, 2007 – In a city famed for Siberian-style winters, February seems an unlikely month to pull the bike out of mothballs and battle sub-zero wind chills en route to work. But that's exactly what 100 cyclists did when they layered up and launched the new QBP Commuter Bike League (CBL). By mid April, the intrepid commuters passed a new milestone, logging a combined 30,000 miles. And they're just getting started. As spring greens the Twin Cities metro, the CBL is wheeling more miles than ever.

Conceived last fall as a way to increase bike commuting among QBP employees, the CBL fosters friendly competition between teams while building a strong sense of community. Ten teams comprised of ten riders each compete to score the most commuter credits, a point system based on individual trips instead of miles. As an added incentive, riders can redeem their credits to purchase bike products from QBP, a leading distributor of bicycles, parts and accessories.

"We want to encourage people to bicycle to work in order to use, know and enjoy the product and bliss of cycling," said Steve Flagg, president of QBP. He sees the CBL and its non-competitive counterpart, the QBP Commuter Program, as part of the company's mission to minimize its impact on the environment. "Bike commuting promotes employee health, and benefits the environment by decreasing traffic congestion, pollution and the amount of land needed for parking lots," he said.

Only three months old, the League is already racking some impressive statistics. By leaving their vehicles in the garage a few days a week, team members saved more than 1,200 gallons of gas and prevented 24,000 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. Since the CBL got underway, bike commuting has increased 68 percent over last year. By contrast, bike commutes among non-league riders actually decreased slightly.

"Team riders started earlier and rode more," said Doug Shidell, CBL organizer and special projects director. "That's because the team approach creates instant loyalty. It's one thing when you're riding for yourself. People tend to be more casual about it. But something happens when they become part of a team. People encourage each other to ride. They want to beat the other teams."

This was certainly true for Geoff Schley, QBP marketing coordinator and CBL member. He says being on a team has been a great motivator. “Sometimes I don’t feel like getting on my bike,” Schley admits. “But when I think of the team and our goals it spurs me to get going.” Schley, who joined QBP nearly a year ago, says the experience has helped him make more friends at the company. “The League has been a great way to get to know people I don’t normally work with,” he said. “We’re team mates now. There’s a real bond there.” He also enjoys the healthy rivalry between teams. “We razz each other but nobody takes it very seriously. It’s all in good fun.”

Although the program is new, teams have already developed distinct identities with colorful names like Tar Nation, Rebels Without a Cog, Wheel in the Sky and American Thunder Thighs. And while competition spices their daily commutes, most riders aren’t in it for the glory of winning.

“This isn’t a pro racing team,” says Ryan Horkey, QBP events coordinator and team captain for Tar Nation. “This is about enjoying yourself and adopting a healthier lifestyle. We don’t expect people to ride every day. We just want them to do what they can and feel good about it.” And though he encourages team members to set goals and “step up the pace,” he strives to keep the tone relaxed and fun.

For all the joy CBL members find in gliding past gridlocked lanes of rush-hour traffic, most acknowledge the group’s efforts have little impact on global climate change. Still, for Shidell, who has been a dedicated bike commuter for more than 30 years, programs like the CBL contain promising seeds of change. He believes the concept could make bike commuting a viable option for many more people.

“There’s growing awareness about individual health and the health of our environment,” Shidell says. “People are looking for ways to make positive changes. By working with willing partners outside the bike industry we could export this concept to other companies.” Eventually, Shidell plans to offer a package of tools and information for organizations that want to start their own commuter bike leagues. Meanwhile, he gives would-be bike commuters some common-sense advice.

“Don’t battle the weather. Pick a bright, sunny day for your first ride to work. Do it once a month, once a week—whatever suits you. Have fun. If you like it, ride some more. After you’ve ridden a while, you’ll be surprised how you expand your definition of ‘good weather.’ When you really like to bike, you’ll ride in almost anything.”

About QBP

Based in Bloomington, MN, QBP is a leading distributor to the cycling industry. QBP offers domestic and international retailers a wide array of products and services including a 1,500-page catalog, a robust online ordering system, a renowned custom wheel service, a specialty bike-building program and more. QBP continues to be a vigorous advocate for the cycling industry. For more information, please contact Jo Wright, director of marketing at 952 -941-9391, or visit: www.QBP.com.