May is National Bike Month

Bicycling is a great way to see the sights, stay in shape, lessen pollution and make some wonderful family memories.

The National Safety Council has some great suggestions for your days/early evenings of cycling around Clermont County to make your time on the road a safe and happy one.

First, protect your head. Find a good helmet that fits your head securely. If you are in a bicycle collision the first thing to fly forward is your head and the skull cannot protect your brain. Make certain that you buy a helmet that meets federal safety standards.

Know the law. Bicyclists are to follow the same rules of the road as motorists so be sure to review traffic laws if planning on riding on streets. This includes learning hand signals for slow/stop, left and right turns. Ride in single file with traffic, not against. Obey all traffic signals such as traffic lights and signs and give the pedestrians the right-of-way. Be aware that in some states it is illegal to ride a bicycle under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Know your bicycle. Be certain that your bicycle is in proper, well-maintained, working order. Check the brakes, chain, tire pressures. Make sure your seat, handlebars and wheels fit tightly. Be certain that the bike fits you. When you are on your bicycle, stand straddling the top bar of your bike so that both of your feet are flat on the ground. There should be 1 to 3 inches of space between you and the top bar.

Always wear bright clothing. Bright clothing makes you more visible to motorists and ride during the day. If you must ride at night, wear reflective clothing; equip your bike with reflectors on the rear, front, pedals and spokes. A bright headlight and rearview mirror is recommended as well as a bell or bike horn. Remember that just because you see a driver does not always mean the driver sees you.

Be in control of your bicycle. Always ride with your hands on the handlebars. Use a bicycle carrier or backpack to carry items never in your arms. On a clean, dry and level surface practice balancing, circling, braking and control skills. Practice also turning your head without swerving to look for approaching vehicles from behind.

Watch for road hazards. Potholes, broken glass, puddles, gravel and animals could cause crashes. If you are the lead rider in a line with family or friends point out the hazards to alert the others. Be aware of your surroundings by not wearing earbuds or listening to music. Sometimes you can hear hazards before you see them.

Clermont County has several very nice bike paths in the county. For more information on locations of trails and walking paths go to https://ccphohio.org/places-and-spaces/.