

KRON 4

Silicon Valley Bicycle Group Certifies Four Workplaces as 'Bike Friendly'

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SANTA CLARA COUNTY (BCN) -- As the region prepares for Bike to Work Day on Thursday, a local bicycle advocacy group has granted its first-ever "bicycle-friendly workplace" certification to four Silicon Valley businesses. The certification program is a new initiative from the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. Executive Director Corinne Winter said simple actions by a company can make the difference for employees deciding whether to commute by two wheels or four. The tiered certification is designed to highlight companies that promote bike commuting, she said, and encourage other organizations to adopt simple, inexpensive measures to do the same. "It's not just a rubber stamp thing," Winter said. SVBC representatives survey the worksites, assigning points for features like bike storage, clothes-changing facilities or supportive messages from the CEO. Supporting bicycle commuting demonstrates a company is environmentally and socially responsible, Winter said. The health benefits for employees can also translate to increased productivity. "When people bike to work they are definitely more alert," Winter said. "They're ready to go, they don't need another cup of coffee." This week the SVBC awarded its first certifications to four organizations. The city of San Jose received a platinum certification for offerings that include showers, lockers, secure bike parking, repair equipment, bicycle commuting incentives, an employee bicycle fleet and free helmets and lights. San Mateo-based Webcor Builders received a gold-level certification, and semiconductor manufacturer Mattson Technology and solar giant SunPower Corp. garnered silver certifications. The scores are awarded on a 100-point system. Silver certification requires 60

points, gold requires 80 and platinum companies earn 90 points or more. After a company is certified, the coalition works with them to suggest simple enhancements - like having a bike pump or spare tires on-site - that add points without much cost, Winter said.

Large companies like Lockheed Martin and Google offer corporate bicycle fleets so employees can run errands or make small day trips by bike, she said, but smaller companies could benefit from even a handful of bicycles available to workers. Winter said no one feature is mandatory to be certified. "But it would be pretty darn hard for them to be certified if they had no bike storage, no bike racks or didn't allow people to store bikes in the building," she said. The certification is good for one year. Organizations pay \$1,000 and up, depending on the size of a company and whether they are a non-profit or government organization. Winter expects 150,000 people across the Bay Area to participate in Bike to Work Day on Thursday. Her organization is talking to additional companies about certification and hopes to work with even more Silicon Valley-area organizations, she said. (Copyright 2009, Bay City News, All rights reserved)