

The Wheels on the Bikes go Round and Round!

“You don’t have to find a car parking space, no sitting in traffic jams, and I am more alert and awake than after any amount of coffee!”

20th July 2012: Over 760 people from 58 workplaces on the island of Ireland clocked up over 13,500 trips by bike in just three weeks in June, as part of the cross-border ‘10 Minute Cycle Challenge’. Workplaces including Accenture, Arthur Cox, Citi, IBM, Ikea, Microsoft, Queen’s University Belfast, Seagate Technology and Stormont Estate took part in the event, which encourages both new and regular cyclists to get pedalling as part of a fun, team event. The Challenge was run by the National Transport Authority in partnership with Travelwise Northern Ireland.

In spite of somewhat inclement weather over the course of the event, an average of 75 trips were clocked up per team – a figure made even more impressive by the fact that over 30% of participants were ‘new cyclists’.

One of the ‘new cyclists’, Carmel Puesch from Microsoft, commented, *“My husband bought me this lovely bike about 3 years ago that I admired from afar for more or less 3 years. I have 4 kids so I always had an excuse of not being able to cycle – but driving instead. Since this challenge however, I got it out of the shed, dusted it off, changed the wheels, bought a lock and key and a laptop bag to stick on the back of it and off I went! My kids could not actually believe I was doing it – and to be honest neither could I! I have got the bug now and only hop in the car if I really need to!”*

Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive of the National Transport Authority commented: *“The National Transport Authority recognises that cycling on the commute can have a significant positive impact on the health of employees, while also being a very sustainable mode of transport. Notably three quarters of the cyclists participating in the 10 Minute Cycle Challenge plan to cycle on the commute now that it has ended – that’s an increase of almost one third compared to before the event. Congratulations to all of the workplaces and participants who took part in this event, and continue to reap the benefits of regular cycling”.*

Prize-winners came from workplaces in both the Republic and Northern Ireland, with the overall Challenge winners being ‘The Red Devils’ from Galway City Council. The Red Devils clocked up an average of 120 journeys each over the course of the three week Challenge. ‘The Travelling Mugs’ from ESB picked up the Smarter Travel Workplaces overall prize, and the ‘Kerb Dodgers’ from Seagate won the Travelwise Northern Ireland overall prize.

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Michael Lindsay, Travelwise Northern Ireland commented: *"We were delighted to be invited to run this cross-border challenge in partnership with the National Transport Authority. The uptake of the challenge in Northern Ireland has been very encouraging. Travelwise Northern Ireland recognises the link between supporting employees to increase activity levels, using smarter modes of transport, and their health and wellbeing. This challenge has therefore resulted in positive effects on employee health and a shift to a more sustainable mode of transport. We would like to congratulate all participants from right across the island and to thank the staff in the National Transport Authority on behalf of our partner organisations for the opportunity to participate and the support they have provided. We look forward to further collaborations in the future."*

For more information, contact Arlene Finn, Project Facilitator, National Transport Authority. Tel. 879 8302.

Editor's Notes:

The National Transport Authority's **Smarter Travel Workplaces Programme** is a Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport-funded programme for large employers (over 250 employees) seeking to develop a Workplace Travel Plan. Workplace Travel Plans have been shown internationally to reduce single occupancy car use on the commute by between 10 and 24%. Workplace Travel Plans also impact on costs associated with parking, business travel, fleet, CO2 emissions, absenteeism, and access issues. Further information on the programme and Partners can be found at www.smartertravelworkplaces.ie

Travelwise Northern Ireland is an initiative within the Department for Regional Development tasked with the promotion of sustainable modes of travel. It works with three main target groups, namely schools, commuters and employers to encourage walking, cycling, use of public transport and car-sharing. It works closely with employers across Northern Ireland to help them develop Workplace Travel Plans that will encourage sustainable travel modes. For more information on the work of Travelwise Northern Ireland visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/travelwiseni

Further information on the **Cycle Challenge 2012** can be found here – www.cyclechallenge.ie

Smarter Travel Workplaces participating workplaces:

Accenture; AECOM; Airtricity; Arthur Cox; ARUP; Atkins; Bank of America Meryll Lynch; Bon Secours Hospital, Galway; Bord Gáis Networks; Boston Scientific; Children's University Hospital Temple Street; Citi; Connolly Hospital; Cork City Council; Cork University Hospital; Croke Park; Dell; Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources; Dublin Institute of Technology; Dublin City Council; Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council; ESB Galway City Council; Galway University Hospitals; Hewlett Packard; IBM; IKEA; Institute of Art Design & Technology Dun Laoghaire; Microsoft; Mount Carmel Hospital National Treasury Management Agency; National University of

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Ireland Galway; National Transport Authority; Oracle; Pfizer; Railway Procurement Agency; Roughan & O'Donovan; Savills; St. James' Hospital; Symantec Ireland Ltd; Takeda Ireland Ltd; Telefónica Ireland; Ulster Bank; University College Cork; University College Dublin; Veolia Transport Dublin Light Rail Ltd; Waterford County Council.

Travelwise Northern Ireland Participating Workplaces

Atkins Northern Ireland; Belfast Health & Social Care Trust; Clarence Court; Department for Social Development; Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure; DOE/N I Environment Agency; Newtownabbey Borough Council; Northern Ireland Assembly; Public Record Office; Queens University Belfast; Seagate Technology; Stormont Estate & Department of Justice

Photo Caption:

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20th July 2012: Over 760 people from 58 workplaces on the island of Ireland clocked up over 13,500 trips by bike in just three weeks in June, as part of the cross-border ‘10 Minute Cycle Challenge’. Pictured are The Red Devils team from Galway City Council who were the OVERALL WINNERS. The Challenge was run by the National Transport Authority in partnership with Travelwise Northern Ireland. Workplaces including Accenture, Arthur Cox, Citi, IBM, Ikea, Microsoft, Queen’s University Belfast, Seagate Technology and Stormont Estate took part in the event, which encourages both new and regular cyclists to get pedalling as part of a fun, team event.