

TRANSPORTATION

Bike Week off, rolling

*County residents
urged to pedal*

By SUNITA VIJAYAN
The Salinas Californian

With skyrocketing gas prices and the dangers of global warming, it may make sense for more people to choose to pedal their way around town.

On Saturday, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County kicked off its 13th Annual Bike Week by inviting the public to ride their bicycles to Whole Foods Market in Monterey to buy groceries as part of the Community Support Ride event.

While such a feat would be

an all-day proposition for Salinas-area residents, TAMC has events planned throughout the county this week.

Kaki Chen, TAMC transportation planner, said the Bike Week's goal is to encourage the use of bicycles as an alternative to cars.

"It definitely reduces air pollution and traffic congestion," Chen said. "It's also a healthy mode of transportation, so people don't have to go to the gym to work out. You can just work out on a bike."

Last year, she said, more than 2,100 people participated in the various events held, a 35 percent increase from 2005.

This year, 11 schools throughout Monterey County will participate in "Bike to School" day

TO GET INVOLVED

For information on Bike Week, call 775-4413 or visit www.Bike2Work.com; e-mail bikeweek@tamcmonterey.org. Here are some Bike Week events:

■ **TODAY:** Learn proper bicycle safety and maintenance from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the bicycle clinic at Sports Center Bicycle, 1576 Del Monte Blvd., Seaside.

on Thursday.

"We want to target the kids, because they will be our next generation," Chen said. "We also want to encourage them to ride bikes, especially when they're young, since we have a serious obesity problem, too."

TAMC hopes to increase participation this year by offer-

■ **TUESDAY:** Bike vs. Car challenge at 7:45 a.m., in which a cyclist and a motorist race during the morning commute from Natividad Plaza Shopping Center on Natividad Road to Star Center at South Main Street and Blanco Road in Salinas. Information: 758-7195.

■ **WEDNESDAY:** Ride of Silence

ing bicycle safety courses in various places throughout the county and giving away grocery bags that list events, she said. Besides not having to worry about finding a parking spot or sitting in gridlocked traffic, Chen said, bicyclists can cut costs to their pocketbooks and well-being.

begins at 7 p.m. to honor cyclists who have been killed or hurt while cycling on the road. Event starts at 440 Harcourt Ave. Seaside.

■ **THURSDAY:** Bike to Work and School Day; sites located throughout Monterey County. To see locations, visit the Web site.

"They'll save money throughout the year if they do decide to go on the bicycle instead," she said. "You save on gas, and there are health benefits to it with the lesser stress level and daily exercise."

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