

West Central Initiative and Ringdahl EMS Go for the Gold With Bicycle Friendly Business!



West Central Initiative leads by example by supporting bicycle friendly policies, but also provides bicycle amenities for their staff.



Ringdahl EMS found a creative and efficient use of space with their ceiling-mounted bicycle racks.

National Program, Local Recognition

How is America becoming more bicycle friendly? One business at a time. In December 2018, The American League of Bicyclists awarded 82 businesses in 30 states with its Bicycle Friendly Business (BFB) recognition. Two of those businesses, West Central Initiative (WCI) and Ringdahl EMS, both in Fergus Falls, achieved the prestigious gold level status this year.

The American League of Bicyclists has been offering BFB awards for 10 years, and has awarded a total of 1,314 businesses with one of their five award levels: Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, or Honorable Mention. Any size and type of business (including non-profits, government entities, and healthcare) is eligible to apply, and the League has awarded businesses with one to 19,000 employees. PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H) encourages many area businesses every year to apply or reapply for BFB, and is ready to assist with the application process.

Both WCI and Ringdahl made enhancements to their businesses to move up to a higher level award this year. WCI offers a shared staff bike, bicycle education for staff and partners, and technical assistance on bicycle issues to communities in the region. WCI also provides secure bicycling parking for both employees and guests. "As a result of these efforts, WCI showcases social responsibility, a commitment to sustainability and reducing the environmental footprint, and supports long-term health benefits, both physical and mental," said WCI President Anna Wasescha. "Leading by example is a great way to encourage others to become more bike friendly, which is why being recognized as a Gold Bicycle Friendly Business is such a great honor for WCI."

Ringdahl EMS also moved up from silver to gold this year due to their increased bicycle-friendly efforts include installing ceiling-mounted bicycle storage above ambulances, workspaces, and public areas, as well as maintaining a Bicycle Response Team and subsidizing league cycling instructor certification for employees. "We participate in the promotion of bicycle safety around the community, and encourage our staff to bike to work and bike for recreation," says Ringdahl's clinical manager Cameron Dean.

Why Bicycle Friendly?

To apply for BFB, businesses complete an application form on the League's website and are evaluated in four areas: Engineering, Encouragement, Education, and Evaluation and Planning.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 80 percent of American adults don't get recommended exercise. Having a bicycle friendly business makes it easier for adults to receive support and increase opportunities for movement in order to create more energized and productive employees, decrease your healthcare costs, and attract and retain motivated employees.

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