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Caine Halter Y earns 'bike friendly' award

Y joins Mast General Store in local efforts

By Mike Foley • Staff writer • Published: April 03, 2011 2:00AM

The bike lanes in Greenville are a dead giveaway. So are bikes on racks atop cars all over town.

Oh yeah, don't forget cyclists themselves riding the streets, summiting Paris Mountain and cruising country roads and the Greenville Hospital system Swamp Rabbit Trail. This is truly Bikeville, which just happens to be the name of Greenville's bike-friendly initiative.

Now more designations have come Greenville's way after the Caine Halter Family Branch YMCA and Mast General Store have earned national recognition. The Y earned a bronze-level award for supporting a bike friendly environment from League of American Bicyclists. And Mast earned an honorable mention.

The awards are part of the League's Bicycle Friendly Business program which recognizes employers' efforts to encourage a bicycle friendly atmosphere for employees and customers.

The League offers bike-friendly designations and evaluations for states, cities and universities. South Carolina ranks 33rd among the 50 states for being bike friendly.

No state university has received a bike-friendly designation, but four cities have. Charleston won designation at the bronze level in 2010; Columbia received bronze in 2008; Greenville earned bronze in 2009; and Spartanburg led the pack with its bronze in 2007.

The YMCA of Greenville, Caine Halter Family Branch was announced as a Bicycle Friendly organization at the National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C., in mid-March. The League recognizes colleges, organizations and businesses that create exceptional environments where bicycling can thrive.

Six other Upstate companies have earned the Bicycle Friendly Business Designation in the past few years. In 2010, TTR Bikes received "platinum" recognition, the highest recognition possible and one of only

six companies in the nation at that level.

"It's a tremendous honor," said Nathaniel McCrary, one of the owners of TTR. "It's nice to have that validation of what we're trying to do."

In fact, McCrary said working toward the distinction was a way to help the City of Greenville work toward increasing its own status from bronze to silver.

"It's good for us that there are so many bike-friendly companies and organizations in Greenville," he said. "We've been a part of Bikeville so it was natural for us to get involved."

In fact, TTR is so involved that McCrary said sometimes he gets a little confused.

"We're like a bike advocacy organization," he said with a laugh, "that also sells bikes."

Other Upstate companies honored over the last few years are: Fluor, bronze in 2009; Mary Black Foundation, bronze in 2009; Upstate Forever, bronze in 2010; and The Great Escape, honorable mention in 2009.

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