

By Matt Ottinger

# CYCLE OF SUCCESS

**Community:**  
Bloomington

**University:**  
Marian

**Company:**  
Zipp Speed  
Weaponry

**Advocate:**  
Bill Browne



# Bloomington Seeks Even Lottier Status

Bloomington's recognition as a silver-accredited "Bicycle Friendly Community" from the League of American Bicyclists in 2010 hasn't slowed the city's efforts to achieve even more.

The community has a long history of working to reduce impacts on the natural environment. It created the Alternative Transportation Fund in the late 1990s (and first earned a bronze designation in 2003).

"The fund used overages in a neighborhood parking program to help reduce the community's dependence on the automobile and fossil fuels for transportation," iterates Vince Caristo, the city's bicycle and pedestrian coordinator during an interview in May, which has been designated as Bloomington Bikes Month. "That's always been a part of our heritage in Bloomington and why we have one of the strongest transit systems in the state."

The city has been reaching even higher since its common council created the Bloomington Platinum Biking Task Force in 2010 to help achieve platinum status (the highest ranking – two levels above silver). Since that time, its total inventory of bikeways and paths (now at 69 miles) has increased 100% (this includes a 50% gain in multi-use paths and 40% growth in bike lane mileage, as well as the addition of 20 miles of shared lanes).

"What we've worked on the most is improving our infrastructure to support a wider variety of everyday cyclists," Caristo says. "The goal is to clarify how bicyclists are supposed to use our streets, and we want people using it to feel safer. We want people on the road to co-exist in the most efficient way."

## Money trail

He targets public health as a motivator, articulating that the city wants to help citizens incorporate activity in their daily lives. Economic incentives, however, are also a critical driver. The B-Line Trail – a 3.1-mile multi-use trail that cuts through downtown – was completed in 2010 for community use and has benefited the area in many ways.

"We have planning regulations that encourage surrounding land uses to orient surrounding buildings to the trail," Caristo offers. "We've found that the trail is attracting new investment – real estate investment adjacent to it. It encourages people to come

outside and exercise for lunch, ride their bike."

An Indiana University Kelley School of Business study released in 2012 tallied investment surrounding the trail at \$75.18 million and determined appreciation of properties near the trail outpaced those downtown.

Businesses are also participating in the city's pro-bike efforts, according to Caristo.

"Overall, the local business community is filled with strong supporters of bicycling," he asserts. "We have 14 sponsors this year for Bike to Work Day and some are hosting tables to greet bicyclists. We have three bicycle-friendly businesses in the community (another designation from the League of American Bicyclists)."

Bloomingfoods Market and Deli incentivizes its employees to ride to work – and strives to help the community get active as well.

"Our stores are all bike accessible with bike racks; three have covered bike parking," points out Emily Winters, Bloomingfoods special projects coordinator. "We also have community partnerships with two local bike shops that allow us to host repair demos for our customers. We also got a grant from the city to install a bike repair stand along the B-Line Trail. That's adjacent to one of our stores, and anyone can use it."

Furthermore, Bloomingfoods co-hosts a National Bike to Work Day bash, in which it blocks off the street adjacent to its downtown location.

"It's important for us because we advocate healthy lifestyles," Winters says. "It

also shows our alignment with the city's (goal to reach platinum recognition). We're extremely supportive of that, and all the bike lanes and the Civil Streets Initiative."

## Sharing the road

Civil Streets is a comprehensive program designed to reduce unsafe behaviors by all road users. Caristo notes local celebrities and positive messaging have been used to discourage rolling through stop signs and riding bikes on sidewalks, as well as encourage yielding to pedestrians.

Indiana University-Bloomington (IUB) also plays a role in the community's work.

"(IUB has) an active group of staff members that represent their sustainability department and transit agency; all those groups are active in promoting biking on campus," Caristo relays. "They've focused on a bike library for students and staff to allow them access to a working bike at little or no cost to ride around town."

He adds that most in the community favor the efforts, and Bloomington strives to educate those who have reservations.

"Very few people driving a car today got much instruction on how to navigate around a bicycle on a roadway, so (some pushback) is to be expected," Caristo contends. "We've put a lot of effort into education and outreach to address any tensions arising about road usage. But across the country, people are starting to leave their cars and use bikes for transportation. It's happening, but there are growing pains."

## Diff'rent spokes

Caristo reports that Bloomington's combined number of biking and walking

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### Bronze Bicycle Friendly Communities

(League of American Bicyclists)

Carmel	Columbus	Goshen
Indianapolis	Fort Wayne	South Bend



Part of Bloomington's bicycle-friendly success is the buy-in from local organizations. Scholars Inn and other businesses host races and make parking convenient for cyclists.

# Marian Cycling Sets Course for Champions

Picture a sports fan bellying up to a bar, only to be challenged by this stumper: “What Indiana university sports team boasts 26 national championships since 1992?”

It’s most unlikely the patron would come up with the correct answer: the Marian University cycling team. Yet through years of perseverance and growth, the Knights are among the nation’s leading cycling programs and compete in many disciplines, including track, road, mountain biking, cyclo-cross and BMX.

“Some of it’s based on geography, but there are so many interesting ways to create teams,” reveals head coach Dean Peterson, who’s been at the helm for eight years. “It’s still an emerging sport.”

Peterson notes that there are 4,700 licensed collegiate riders and over 300 teams and clubs. Marian races at the Division I level and competes with top cycling schools, including other small institutions that carry big weight in the cycling world: Lees-McRae College (North Carolina); Fort Lewis College (Colorado); Midwestern State (Texas); Lindenwood University (Missouri) and Lindsey Wilson College (Kentucky), among others.

## Free wheelin’

Peterson explains there’s a “grassroots” ability to build a team, as the sport is governed by USA Cycling – not the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), as some might assume.

“We don’t have a very thick book like the NCAA,” he explains, adding that graduate students can ride. “You just have to be a full-time student, and in good social and academic standing with the school, and compete in conference racing to be eligible for the national championships.”

Marian possesses a unique asset in the Major Taylor Velodrome and Indy Cycloplex, which the school operates (and Peterson leads as executive director) via a recent agreement with the city. He cites the facility as a blessing for the program and the community – and a recruiting tool for the team. Peterson adds that the cycling team’s success helps Marian attract more students, many of whom hail from far beyond county or state borders.

“We have riders from Ecuador, England, Germany, and about 15 different states are represented,” he quantifies. Peterson anticipates the team will feature over 60 riders next year, growing from just eight participants in 2006.

“Women’s and men’s scores go together for nationals and conference racing. They race separately, but there’s not a men’s and women’s national title. So you have to be built on both sides – and that’s a great way to encourage and build female cycling, which is volume-wise a much smaller group. A lot of what collegiate cycling was started as – and still is – is around development of cyclists in the country. It’s one of the best pathways they have in getting new riders in and making it a fun, team-oriented experience.”

## Business of building a winner

Marian cycling also partners with Indiana businesses that support the team (and the Indy Cycloplex), including world-class bike component company Zipp Speed Weaponry/SRAM, Ratio Architects, LincLogix, TruTrainer, Nuvo, Klipsch, St. Vincent Sports Performance and many more. In fact, the school’s PowerBooster program also helps fund the team by offering students and the public a premier indoor cycling



Marian University has reached the pinnacle of collegiate cycling by developing champions in all disciplines of the sport.

studio featuring Computrainer units that provide a rigorous training system for cyclists.

Peterson offers his gratitude for local businesses and “community connectors” who have aided his team’s development and the state of cycling in Central Indiana.

That growth – along with the entrepreneurial impact of PowerBooster and the fact that the team utilizes an advisory board – illustrates Marian’s creative approach to building a winning program.

Yet cycling at Marian is far more than just an athletic undertaking, and the school’s approach would hardly be confused with that of some major college sports that often serve as feeder systems for professional ranks.

“Scholarships here are packaged, so it’s not just cycling. It’s an athletic and academic kind of thing,” Peterson clarifies. “We look for high-achieving students and people who have a desire to race bikes or have a proven history. But the classroom performance is the most important.”

He adds that team members have gone on to work in different aspects of the cycling profession and interned at local businesses that support the team (like Zipp). Many team members study sports performance, biology and science-based curriculum while at school.

According to Peterson, success is no accident and building a championship quality program requires a great deal of work and fortitude by Marian’s coaches and riders. Formerly a teacher who owned his own coaching business, Peterson himself has sacrificed to focus full time on the program as it competes 25 to 30 weekends per year – and on managing the Indy Cycloplex.

“It takes more than money. It takes time, commitment, a will and leaning into discomfort and the challenges that can occur with young people who are sorting out life. But it has deep intrinsic value to me and the people we have working here.”

**RESOURCE:** Dean Peterson, Marian University, at [www.muknights.com/sport/0/21.php](http://www.muknights.com/sport/0/21.php)

# Zipp Rolls On at World-Class Speed

It may not be blessed with mountainous vistas or rolling vineyards like the grueling stages of the Tour de France, but Indianapolis' west side is home to one of the world's most notable cycling companies. Zipp Speed Weaponry – and its parent company, Chicago-based SRAM – are go-to resources for professional and high level cyclists.

“Virtually every major race (at least once) has been won on Zipp wheels and SRAM components,” offers Zipp/SRAM public relations specialist Dan Lee.

In fact, a stroll through the company's facility reveals the famed – and framed – yellow jersey of 2008 Tour de France winner Carlos Sastre (of Spain). Sastre rode to victory for Zipp-equipped Team CSC/Saxo Bank. Additionally, Australian Mirinda Carfrae took the women's 2013 Kona Iron Man World Championships with Zipp/SRAM equipment.

## Starting line

With a staff of around 300 in its 70,000-square-foot building, Zipp takes a different tack on building wheels and bike components than many other companies.

“One thing that's unique is that it's a full manufacturing site,” Lee explains. “A lot of the bicycle industry is overseas or outsourced. But Zipp full carbon wheels are made here in Indianapolis and our hubs are made in Indiana.”

“We purchase prepreg unidirectional carbon, which means it already has resin applied to the carbon fabric, and slice it into component parts on an automated cutting table,” adds James Lipe, manufacturing engineering manager for SRAM's Zipp facility. “The prepreg component parts are

assembled into rim-shaped preforms and placed into a heated press to cure them into composite bike rims.”

While the company acquires spokes from Belgium and bearings from Switzerland, the rest is built from the ground up in Indiana. That not only helps keep jobs here, but allows for a streamlined process so the brains behind the technology can collaborate effectively.

“We have a full test lab and our engineering is done here,” Lee shares. “So it's a full process where the manufacturing engineers and design engineers can talk to each other and can all be out on the factory floor checking things. It makes for a very efficient process.”

Taking on component manufacturers like Shimano and Campagnolo is a task that keeps Zipp and SRAM in high gear, striving to develop the latest technology. Fortunately, many of the best minds are educated right here in the state.

“We definitely pull (engineers) from Purdue (University) and Rose-Hulman (Institute of Technology),” Lee states. “We were just featured as a ‘manufacturer of the week’ by Purdue. Those schools are important to us. And we developed a software tool for our aero bars last year, and we worked with (Rose-Hulman) to develop (the Vuka Fit phone app) to help people select the correct fit.”

## Next gear

Zipp is quite visible in the cycling world and makes an effort to associate with the top riders across the globe.

“We sponsor professionals for a number of reasons: It's good exposure and shows our products can be used at the highest level,” Lee relays. “Nobody uses wheels in a more demanding way than pro riders because of the miles they ride and the conditions they ride in.”

He adds that sponsorship also allows the company to receive feedback from those using their products in the most rigorous ways.

“With SRAM, we have a whole department that spends a lot of time with our professional athletes and is constantly talking with riders and the mechanics. They give us critiques on what we're doing well and what we need to improve. Our engineers talk to them as well.”

SRAM is also visible through its charitable endeavors, like its efforts with World Bicycle Relief (WBR) – created in 2005 by SRAM co-founder and executive vice president F.K. Day.

“Around the time of the (Indian Ocean) tsunami in 2004, we decided to look for a way bicycles could help people. Now we work with WBR and there are about 182,000 bikes in the field, mostly in rural Africa,” Lee quantifies. “These bikes help people get jobs and they ride their bikes to school, or health care workers see more people, or entrepreneurs carry more stuff.”

He adds that the Buffalo Bike used for the project is very durable and contains parts that can be replaced in the field.

## Road to the top

Zipp sells through distributors and its products can be found at independent bicycle dealers and shops.

“There are some online retailers that sell our wheels, but most are independent dealers,” Lee clarifies.

Despite competition, Zipp's wheels – and their distinguishing dimples (that aid wind resistance, much like those on a golf ball) – continue to lead the pack, according to Lee.

“Zipp wheels have been proven to be faster, more durable, and there is meticulous attention to detail and design that goes into them,” he concludes. “We've done high-level computer simulations to test out the performance – and with wind tunnel usage. Zipp has been a pioneer and leader in high-performance carbon wheels for many years.”



Master builder Nic James uses innovation and attention to detail to make Zipp wheels the preference of many professional cyclists.

**RESOURCE:** Dan Lee and James Lipe, Zipp/SRAM, at [www.zipp.com](http://www.zipp.com)

## Indiana State Students Innovate Cycling Fashion



Beginning fashion design students at Indiana State University turned scrap material into a convenient accessory for cyclists.

Students in Indiana State University's TAM-111 course (textile and apparel merchandising) hastily entered a 2013 design contest conducted by Fort Wayne-based Natril Gear – an outdoor company specializing in bicycle accessories.

Despite having less than three weeks to design and create their submissions, the ISU students' wallet and wristlet product was selected runner-up winner in the contest.

"We got a flyer from the company that there was a contest, and the design had to use scraps (from backpacks the company makes for cyclists)," explains course instructor Edie Wittenmyer. "We went online and looked at the backpacks and the students began to think

about what (cyclists) would want to carry with them."

Natril has placed the wallets/wristlets into production.

"We hadn't anticipated an entire university class would submit an entry in our contest, so that was a great surprise," reveals Natril Gear owner April Reinhard. "Part of our mission statement is to encourage people to try new things and help others live their dreams. We loved the creative and original features in their wallet prototype."

The design includes:

- A clear pocket that holds a phone, map or other small items
- A secure snap closure system
- A wristlet for those who don't want to carry a full wallet, which features two pockets and a window to display identification

The wallets debuted at the National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C. on March 3, and Natril sold out its inventory at the time.

"We've had a great response from our customers to them being a 100% scrap product, so even if it means they'll be out of stock occasionally, we are committed to making them entirely out of our scrap," Reinhard mentions.

Wittenmyer adds that much of the excitement stems from the fact that her course includes sewing beginners.

"Our students can now put it on their resumes that they are designers for Natril," she points out. "Every time Natril talks about the wallet, they always mention that it was from ISU students."

**RESOURCES:** April Reinhard, Natril Gear, at [www.natrilgear.com](http://www.natrilgear.com) | Edie Wittenmyer, Indiana State University, at [www.indstate.edu](http://www.indstate.edu)

DEFINING SPACES

CREATING PLACES

ENHANCING COMMUNITY

 RATIO [RATIOarchitects.com](http://RATIOarchitects.com)



# Passion Provides Personal, Community Boost

At first glance, architecture and cycling may not seem to go hand in hand. However, Bill Browne, founding principal/president of RATIO Architects, Inc. in Indianapolis, has rolled his enthusiasm for the sport into a personal benefit and one for the Central Indiana biking community.

Browne, who rides an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 miles per year, takes extended treks on weekends and powers through 6 a.m. spin classes during the week, which he credits for kick-starting his workdays and keeping him in shape through the winter.

“I ride mostly by myself or with friends in a group ride (on the weekends),” he relays. “I used to compete in duathlons when I was a little younger, but haven’t gotten into a super high level of competitiveness. I just do it for health and enjoyment primarily now. I think I’ve gotten the competitive edge out of my system.”

A resident of Indianapolis’ north side, Browne now embarks on journeys to local destinations like Fort Harrison State Park and cities like Pendleton, Lebanon and Greencastle. While Indiana boasts its own brand of beauty, it likely doesn’t compare to some of Browne’s previous excursions through scenic vistas like the Blue Ridge Parkway (Virginia and North Carolina), which he describes as “spectacular.”

“I’m working on riding in segments across the U.S. from west to east,” he adds. “I’m complete from western Colorado to the Atlantic Ocean. We’re (Browne teams with other cycling enthusiasts) riding from Missoula (Montana) to the Pacific Ocean this summer. That will leave me just a segment between Missoula and western Colorado to wrap up the transcontinental distance. We go to beautiful places, and have done all the major passes in the Rockies, and went up Mt. Evans, which is the highest paved road in the U.S. at over 14,000 feet.”



Bill Browne started cycling seriously in high school – and now he navigates scenic vistas like the mountains of Colorado.

## Healthy RATIO

“We try to encourage fitness and wellness in the firm,” Browne points out. “We participate with the Bike Indy map and help sponsor that effort.”

The Indiana Sports Corp’s Corporate Challenge now features cycling, and RATIO supports a team for that event in addition to competing in the overall challenge.

“This year will be our first to field a team for the Tour de Cure, which is a ride at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (to benefit the American Diabetes Association),” he adds.

Furthermore, RATIO purchased a bicycle and branded it with the firm’s name and logo as part of its bicycle share program for staff.

“That’s available for anyone at the firm to use. We have a number of people who ride in with some frequency,” Browne says.

He contends that as the make-up of RATIO and other businesses evolve, so will employees’ proclivity to want to bike to work.

“(As we get younger staff) who don’t want a car and want to ride a bicycle, all of these things continue to increase; that will fuel value of having more bike-friendly infrastructure in the city.”

## Knight in cycling armor

Browne’s efforts to build and participate in its advisory board have also helped pave the way for the Marian University cycling teams, which boast 26 national championships and are consistently among the nation’s top programs.

“From the beginning, (Browne) was the guy that helped me think through the advisory board and single-handedly helped us design PowerBooster (the school’s indoor cycling training business, which helps fund the team) at its first location,” praises Dean Peterson, head cycling coach at Marian University. “(Browne’s) a connector, and he creates community flow. That flow has created some tremendous outcomes and the long-term sustainable efforts we have going on here.”

Browne explains he based the concept on the Champions Club – an advisory board for USA Cycling composed of business leaders with a passion for the sport.

“(Peterson) was a teacher of my son’s for a number of years, and he got me tuned into what Marian was doing,” he recalls. “I felt it was important that our community recognized the value that Marian’s team has (in promoting our) amateur sports initiative. We wanted to help grow the program and hopefully become a model for other universities to follow. To the credit of lots of people involved, we’ve been able to grow the board and the team (which will have over 60 riders next year).”

## ‘Cultural’ shift

Browne stresses the importance of safety as a critical ingredient in the growth of recreational and commuter cycling.

“I think awareness is increasing, but it can’t increase enough,” he contends. “When you have fatalities, it’s evident there’s a body of people who don’t really like to share the road at all and don’t appreciate there’s an opportunity to slow down for literally three seconds and get past the cyclist in a safe manner.”

He commends Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard’s push to add bike lanes and believes Central Indiana is becoming more bike friendly.

“What (Central Indiana Community Foundation President/CEO) Brian Payne and the Glick family have done with the Cultural Trail has been a tremendous asset for our community, and all of the greenways are quite wonderful,” Browne states. “As those keep getting connected to each other, the network will develop across the state and we can have a system where you can ride virtually any direction.”

**RESOURCE:** Bill Browne, RATIO Architects, at [www.RATIOarchitects.com](http://www.RATIOarchitects.com)

## Bloomington

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commuters was second in the country for cities with over 65,000 people in 2011.

“Those numbers fluctuate, but we’re always in the top 10 to 15 in that ranking,” he quantifies, adding that biking in the city has increased three to four times since 1990.

Nancy Tibbett, executive director of Bicycle Indiana, points to the city as a leading example of forward thinking.

“Bloomington is planning for bicyclists;

that’s the main thing,” she notes. “When they look at road improvements or changes, infrastructure, zoning, they take into consideration the needs of people who want to ride their bikes, either for transportation or recreation or whatever it might be. Their forethought in that puts them above many other communities.”

Tibbett points to Carmel, Columbus and Noblesville as other cities making strides and

contends these types of projects will help Indiana retain top, young talent.

“Planning for bicyclists is allowing communities to attract that mind trust that leaves other states,” she concludes. “We don’t have mountains or the ocean, but by being bicycle friendly, we’re attracting talent and building tax bases in the communities. Businesses also want to be near those amenities.”

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**RESOURCES:** Vince Caristo, City of Bloomington, at [bloomington.in.gov/bike](http://bloomington.in.gov/bike) | Nancy Tibbett, Bicycle Indiana, at [www.bicycleindiana.org](http://www.bicycleindiana.org) | Emily Winters, Bloomingfoods, at [www.bloomingfoods.coop](http://www.bloomingfoods.coop)