

UNITED BICYCLE INSTITUTE

Pedal Power Taught with Solar Power

By Christopher Dymond, *Oregon Department of Energy*



Two students at UBI "Building bikes with solar power."
Photo Credit: Dennis Dunleavy.

United Bicycle Institute (UBI) is located in sunny, bicycle friendly Ashland. Few are surprised to learn that UBI's support for sustainable energy goes beyond pedal power. In April 2005, UBI had an 8.4 kW photovoltaic system installed on the roof of its facility. In 2008 the company plans on building a new facility that will be LEED certified and incorporate enough solar to provide 100 percent of their annual energy needs.

"Installing solar was a no-brainer for us" and said Ron Sutphin, company president. "Being able to 'bike-the-talk' along with the financial support from the City of Ashland, the Oregon Business Energy Tax Credit and Federal Government translated to a good business investment for UBI."

United Bicycle Institute is a nationally recognized bicycle technical institute offering courses in repair, frame building, and mechanic certification for beginner to advanced technicians. The UBI teaching philosophy is founded on the idea that learning about bicycles is fun and that bicycle transportation is part of a path to sustainability.

Bicycling is not only clean and healthy; it is the most energy efficient form of transportation.



Ron Sutphin with bike made by UBI. Photo Credit: Dennis Dunleavy.

Walking requires three times as much energy per mile and driving requires more than 50 times as much energy per mile than riding a bike. Creating bicycle friendly commuting options is a valuable part of any green building development.

"In my line of work solar is a perfect match, but any business that intends to operate for the long term, should seriously consider investing in solar today." – Ron Sutphin ■