

# Arizona Bicycling Summit To Unify Cycling Advocates

By Michael Murphy

**The 2016 Arizona Bicycling Summit** promises to be the premier bike advocacy event of the year, uniting the voices of bicyclists across Arizona.

The event, presented by the Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists, the City of Mesa and Perimeter Bicycling, includes addresses from local and state transportation officials and leaders from bicycle advocacy groups across Arizona. It will take place at the Mesa Convention Center April 1, a day before *Holualoa Companies 26th El Tour de Mesa*.

The program is geared to educate and empower attendees, identify common bicycling issues and solutions in local communities, demonstrate the power of a unified voice to the state legislature and set priorities for improving the future of bicycling in Arizona.

Organizers say the event is long overdue. The last statewide summit occurred in 2008.

"I really believe it's time for us to band together, to get closer together so we can work together on statewide issues," said Bob Beane, president of the Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists. "My perspective is that if we really network and organize ourselves and communicate, we can be a lot more effective."

He added, "We're not trying to take over local advocacy, we're trying to support it."

#### Topics include:

- Source of, and access to, federal funding.
- Keys to successful bicycling advocacy.
- Bicyclist safety education.
- ADOT: Bike-related policy, bicyclist resources and US

Bicycle Route System.

- Mountain Biking in Arizona: New Parks, Trail Access and more
- USA BMX: Current initiatives.

One of the most pressing – and most challenging – issues for bicycle and vehicle safety advocates is a proposed statewide ban on texting and driving. Sen. Steve Farley, D-Tucson, again is attempting to add Arizona to a list of 39 states and the District of Columbia that have texting bans for all drivers.

"I really think that every day we go without a law banning texting while driving is a day that we're endangering people on our roadways, and we need to do what it takes to try to stop that carnage," Farley said.

Farley's previous efforts to ban texting while driving have been

stalled by Senate President Andy Biggs.

"I'm not ready to write it off," Beane said. "You build public opinion and you surround the people that are not putting safety first and keep asking them the questions, 'What is it about making the roads safe you're opposed to? What is about saving lives you're opposed to?'"

Beane said municipalities like Mesa, Glendale, Yuma and Tucson have been receptive to recent initiatives to make their communities bicycle safe.

"The towns and cities are where the most positive and significant change is taking place," Beane said.

"For more information and registration visit [www.cazbike.org/summit](http://www.cazbike.org/summit)"