

Strive Not to Drive Film Festival urges community to park and ride

By Tierney Oberhammer
STAFF WRITER

Professionals offered several reasons not to drive, citing environmentalism, physical health and tourism at UNC Asheville's Strive Not to Drive Film Festival Friday.

The Strive Not to Drive Committee hosted the 5th annual Strive Not to Drive Film Festival Friday at 7 p.m. in the Highsmith University Union. The film festival failed to bring in many guests and suffered technical difficulties when showing the films.

Students sorted trash and offered free bicycle tune-ups on the Quad, and students who chose alternative methods to get to school received free breakfast, along with other events related to Earth Day.

The festival featured films created by college and high school students, according to Kathy Molin, transportation demand management coordinator for the City of Asheville.

"This year, for the first time, we worked with UNCA professors to have the students do the public service announcements for us," Molin said.

The PSAs will air on the Weather Channel this week through April 29 between 7 and 10 a.m.

"It's something good for the students for their portfolios when they graduate," Molin said.

Students who placed in the film festivals' contests won gift certificates to Best Buy, but few students were present to claim their awards.

Everyone benefits because the students contribute to the film festival by doing PSAs, and it provides them with a great opportunity, according to Molin.

"We had some short films and



JESSICA BYTTHI - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

As part of Strive Not to Drive, UNC Asheville encouraged the community to use alternative sources of transportation like walking and biking, while the Strive Not to Drive Film Festival showed student-made public service announcements promoting the decision not to drive.

some longer films that are basically communicating the Strive Not to Drive message in a creative format," said Terri March, physical activity coordinator at the Buncombe County Health Center.

Molin cited parking as a problem and not driving as a solution.

"Downtown Asheville faces a serious parking problem," Molin

said. "If we can work together and get employers downtown to encourage alternative transportation, maybe we can have more parking for visitors."

Kéith Bamberger of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources voiced the environmental rationale of car pollution.

"Striving not to drive is impor-

tant because the pollution that we have is directly related to cars," he said.

Nitrogen oxide precedes ozone, our primary pollution source, and 60 percent of the nitrogen oxide in the atmosphere comes from cars, according to Bamberger, who works as the information and communication specialist in the division of air quality for the

NCDENR.

"I can't emphasize how dramatic that is," he said.

For every gallon of gasoline a car burns, regardless of the type of car, it emits 20 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, according to Bamberger.

"The average car in the United States costs between 40 cents and \$1 per mile to drive for the

total cost to the individual, including the cost of car insurance, maintenance and gasoline."

As a result, some people think it costs less to drive a car rather than take public transportation if it's only a short distance, but that's rarely true, according to Bamberger.

"The biggest effects that we can have as individuals, a community and as a culture is how we get from place-to-place," he said.

Generally the quality of the air in Asheville remains safe, according to Bamberger.

"For the past several years, almost every day has been in the good or moderate range, and we've only had a few unhealthy days," Bamberger said.

To some people, the environment remains one benefit of striving not to drive, but one's physical health benefits as well, according to March.

"You can't pick up a newspaper without reading something about obesity," said March, who has worked for the city for seven years and for the Strive Not to Drive Committee for six years.

The dependence on cars for transportation has increased over the past decade as one of the biggest factors correlating with growing obesity, she said.

"One of the easiest ways to help people to become more physically active is to figure out ways that they can work activity into their daily lives."

Rather than go to the gym or an exercise class, people need to just do more in their day, according to March.

"The easiest way to achieve this is active transportation by walking and biking," she said. "You have to depend on your own two feet."

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