

Aggie Blue Bikes

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What is Aggie Blue Bikes?

Aggie Blue Bikes is a non-profit, community-oriented bike shop located right here on the USU Logan main campus. We aim to create a safe, inclusive, non-elitist space and learning environment for all skill levels of bicycle rider and mechanic to feel comfortable.

We have a fleet of about 250 bicycles available for rent to students, faculty, staff, and community members alike. We also have several tool boards available for use and our knowledgeable mechanics can teach you how to fix most common problems that occur on your bike. In addition to these amenities, we also host a series of events geared towards getting more people on bikes more often, as well as sustainability-oriented events like workshops teaching you how to make windchimes out of bicycle parts.

In addition to rentals and toolboards, we also repair and donate hundreds of bicycles to the community, both providing transportation for people and keeping bicycles out of the landfill.

How much does it cost to rent a bike?

For active students (students who are enrolled in classes), all of the ABB services are free, excluding the tandem rentals. For non-active students, our Blue Bike rentals are \$15 for a three-month rental, \$5/day for 24-hour rentals, and \$10/day for the tandem. For staff, faculty, and spouse pass holders, three-month rentals are \$30, 24-hour rentals are \$10/ day, and tandem costs \$20/ day. Community members (those who do not have an A number with the university) are not eligible to rent our three-month rentals, but 24-hour rentals and tandems are available for \$15/day and \$20/day, respectively.

How did Aggie Blue Bikes start? What was the inspiration behind it?

Here is a segment from our website: "In 2005, a group of bike commuters, students, staff, and community members gathered to discuss ways to attack the air quality problem in Cache Valley and launch a community bike program. This group changed a previously restrictive walkway policy on the USU campus that paved the way for the Aggie Blue Bikes (ABB) program.

September ABB opened its doors with one employee (founder Adam Christensen) and a fleet of nine bicycles that were available for free checkout to the USU community. By the end of the year the fleet had grown to eighteen bikes."

How have you seen the community come together since being a part of this?

It has been so much fun to see the community come together for events and to become more involved ourselves. We work with a bunch of organizations, both on and off campus, to hold events and donate bicycles. On campus, we work closely with the Center for Community Engagement programs like COSAS, as well as other campus programs such as Dining Services, USU Facilities, Outdoor Programs, SNAC, and more. Off campus, we work with local programs Cache Refugee Immigrant Connection (CRIC), Citizens Against Physical and Sexual Abuse), Common Ground, and Athletics United to donate bicycles and hold instructional sessions to teach people basic bicycle mechanics and skills. We almost always have over 200 people at our Bike to Breakfast events in the fall and spring, where we bring people together with free breakfast if they use sustainable transportation to get to the event; this is one of my favorite events since it's breakfast and also always gets a variety of people who might not have met if it weren't for bicycles, sustainable transportation, and breakfast.

In what ways do you see this making a difference?

There are multiple ways in which I have seen Aggie Blue Bikes make a difference in people's lives and also in the community. It is always quite cool to see how much a bicycle can change someone's life, creating a sense of freedom for the user. The smile that often spreads across someone's face when they start figuring out how

to balance on and actually ride a bike, or the look of satisfaction that comes from learning how to successfully complete a repair on a bike that may have cost 10x as much to pay someone to fix, makes working at ABB incredibly fun. Blue Bikes has also made a huge difference in the community by donating hundreds of refurbished bicycles to programs across the valley to help people who may not be able to drive for financial, safety, or visa-related reasons still be able to travel around the valley. We have been able to teach so many people how to fix their bikes, as well as donate and repair bikes across the community to get people mobile.

What is your favorite part about being involved with this project?

My favorite part about working at Aggie Blue Bikes is the fact that I continue to learn more every day. I get to spend time with so many interesting and fun people and teach them how to do something that I love: fix bicycles. It is so much fun to see someone learn how to fix something, and then be proud of themselves for figuring it out. I also truly believe that the bicycle is one of the most powerful tools pertaining to transportation, sustainability, and health, and so sharing that in any capacity with the community is almost always an excellent experience.

What is the benefit of using a bicycle as transportation?

Environment, quality of life, community. There are countless benefits to using a bicycle as transportation. First and foremost, there are environmental reasons: the UCLA transportation page cites this metric: "With a typical passenger vehicle emitting almost five metric tons of carbon dioxide a year from burning fuel, biking cuts back on fuel consumption" Additionally, bicycles take up considerably less space than cars, with about 12 bicycles fitting into one average sized parking space.

Another benefit is the quality-of-life improvements that come from riding a bicycle; research suggests that being outside and riding a bicycle regularly makes you happier. You also can avoid sitting in traffic, both improving the quality of your commute and reducing the amount of greenhouse gasses and pollutants released by vehicles.

How have students been able to help out with this project?

There are tons of volunteer and employment opportunities at ABB! We are always looking for volunteers to help us tune up the ever-growing fleet of bicycles we donate to CRIC and CAPSA and other organizations here in town. Volunteers can also help out with our events by tabling or running a station during one of our scavenger hunts.

We also primarily hire USU students as mechanics at ABB. There is no experience necessary, only a willingness to learn and the ability to work well with our team. If interested in working at ABB, apply online at usu.edu/abb/apply

In your own words, what do you hope to see happen with this project in the future?

I would love to see Aggie Blue Bikes expand to rent more bicycles to the community and get more people on bikes, more often. I am working with other organizations on campus and statewide to get some E-Bikes for the university, to expand our rental program into new areas. We also have plans to start a youth summer bike camp in the future. We have big plans here at ABB, but I would love to see them all happen!

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