

Bikes let Democrat delegates stop spinning their wheels

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[DENVER](#) - The best way to get around this convention-clogged town these days is on a bike - and they're free.

Health care provider Humana has provided 1,000 free bikes for this week's event, and anyone with a driver's license and a credit card can pick one up at their seven Freewheelin' kiosks set up around the city and go about their day.

Tired of traffic and parking and exhausted from walking, I decided to try it out. I took the bike on my daily route from the Convention Hall, through downtown, on errands and to meetings. I have to say it was much more pleasant than I could have imagined.

Registration only takes about five minutes. You are given a bike helmet for safety, which is a little dorky and bad for the hair, but then who said the DNC was a fashion show? Then, off you are sent, with instructions to obey traffic laws and avoid pedestrians.

There is a certain camaraderie at the DNC when you're riding a free bike. Other bikers in their business suits and fancy dresses smile and wave in a way they wouldn't when they are pacing hurriedly through the crowds on the way to their next very important meeting, event, panel or speech.

The entire [Kentucky](#) delegation, led by [Lt. Gov. Daniel Mongiardo](#), gave me a thumbs up as they rolled past.

[Actor Matthew Modine](#) cycled alongside me for a bit on the river bike path. We chatted about bikes and Obama.

I encouraged DNC volunteer [Jonathan Nurse](#), 31, who was nervously rolling up his khakis and hopping on a cruiser.

"I'm not an avid bike rider," he said. "This is going to be interesting."

If I can do it, in a dress, with a huge purse and computer bag slung over my shoulder, anyone can do it.

At the end of the day I saved about \$30 in cabs and found myself with an hour more free time, since it wasn't taking so much time to walk from place to place.

You also notice more of your surroundings while riding on a bike, like the \$1 oysters on 17th St. and the \$10 manicure at the Fifth Avenue Nail Salon - both of which were options thanks to the time and money the free bike program saved me.

The one downside to biking, for a New Yorker, is the inability to multitask. At one point I attempted to [BlackBerry](#) and pedal. The pedestrians I ran into was less than pleased. They were unhurt, but definitely unhappy.

More than 3,500 bikes have been borrowed through the program since Monday, but Humana employee [Scott Ropp](#), who has been checking out the bikes each day, says only a couple of accidents have been reported and no one has been seriously injured.

The best part about biking is it is great exercise. Humana keeps track of all the calories burned and, since Monday, riders have burned nearly half a million.

My digital odometer says I burned around 1,000 calories during the day, which is a good thing, since the bison burgers here are delicious.

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