

Minnesota Post Improves Trails with Repair Stations

Minnesotans now can repair their bicycles on the go thanks to VFW Post 1676 in Detroit Lakes, Minn.

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Post members partnered with the city of Detroit Lakes and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) last year to install two bicycle repair stations along local trails. Kohl Skalin, a member of Post 1676, said Detroit Lakes is a “bike-friendly city” that has many trails for residents to use.

“We thought [the repair stations] would be a good addition for the city,” said Skalin, a Bosnia and Iraq War veteran who served in the Minnesota Army National Guard from 2000 to 2009. “We thought this would be a great way to impact the community considering how much bike activity we have in the city and area.”

Post 1676 purchased the materials for two repair stations, and the city and MnDOT installed the stations on multiuse trails, which are used for bicycles, scooters and pedestrians. City leadership agreed to install a repair station if VFW provided the repair stations. MnDOT, where Skalin is a project manager, installed the second station. The repair stations have an air pump, wrenches, tire remover and stands to repair bicycles and other transportation equipment.

“You could fix a wheelchair or a motor scooter,” Skalin said. “[The stations] are on a multiuse trail – so this can impact more than just people with bikes.”

Skalin said his Post has volunteered for and provided financial support to other community groups, such as local hockey and baseball teams, but decided to work with the city and MnDOT for a new project.

“All levels of government can help VFW [Posts] deliver projects that impact the public in different ways than supporting an individual organization,” Skalin said. “We always try to do community outreach [projects], and this is an avenue that is something different that we

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haven't tried."

Skalin added: "When VFW works with other entities, it allows for opportunities to serve the public in ways not conventionally thought of."

This article is featured in the January/February 2018 issue of [Checkpoint](#), and was written by [Dave Spiwa](#), senior writer, VFW magazine. Photo courtesy of Minnesota Department of Transportation.