

# Bicycle Retailer

Published by the NBDA AND INDUSTRY NEWS

## Fading youth

2012 data shows a sharp drop in the number of kids on bikes.

By Toby Hill

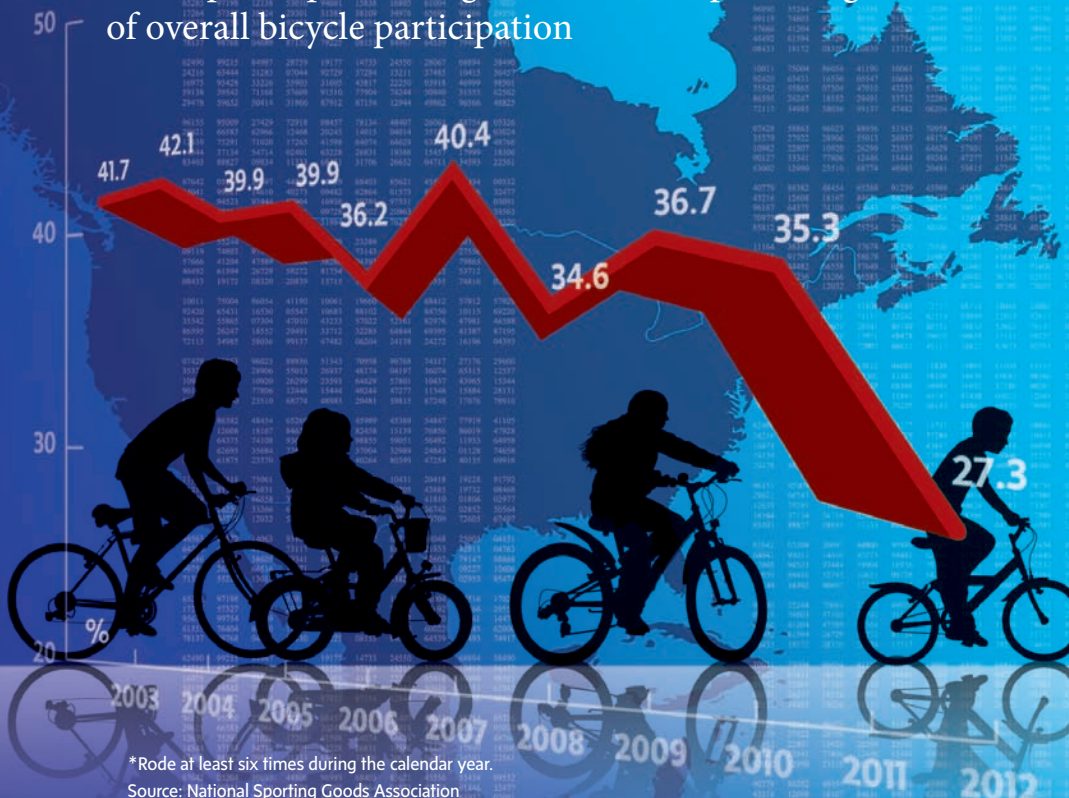
Overall participation in cycling—those who ride at least six times during the calendar year—rose a modest 0.4 percent from 2011 to 39.3 million riders last year, according to survey data from the National Sporting Goods Association, mirroring the minor hills and valleys in ridership over the past decade.

But NSGA numbers on

Continues on page 30

### ANNUAL STATS ISSUE

Youth participation\* (ages 7 to 17) as a percentage of overall bicycle participation



## Growing the 'Green' scene

Bike Belong's Green Lane Project sets its sights on expanding protected bike lanes in six new cities.

By Doug McClellan

BOULDER, CO—As the first phase of the Green Lane Project comes to completion, director Martha Roskowski is already looking ahead to what she calls "Green Lane Project 2.0."

The next phase, scheduled for 2014 to 2015, will include six new cities "that are at that magical place in their evolution where they have political support and staff support and projects in the pipeline," she said.

The Green Lane Project, a campaign by the Bikes Belong Foundation, has been working since last year with six U.S. cities to build segments of protected cycling lanes, or green lanes—typically notable for their neon green hue.

The six—Austin, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Memphis, Tennessee; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, California; and Washington, D.C.—aren't the only cities building protected cycling lanes, but the Green Lane Project has allowed them to network together and share ideas, Roskowski said.

Started in 2012, the Green Lane Project has helped spark a boom in protected cycling lanes. Between 1874 and 2011 only 62 were built nationwide, according to the project. The number almost doubled by the end of 2012 to 102 and this year should almost double again as 100 more green lanes are completed, including those in other cities.

"We chose the right issue at the

Continues on page 36



The back of Specialized's new on-site wind tunnel in Morgan Hill, California

## FAN CLUB

Manufacturers bring wind tunnel testing in-house.

By Toby Hill

MORGAN HILL, CA—"Aero is everything," Specialized trumpeted at the May media launch of its new on-site low-speed wind tunnel testing facility.

The same day, a collective of five Belgian bike brands including Ridley and Lazer announced they had obtained 500,000 euros (\$662,000) in government funding to go toward building a research and development facility in Belgium's Flanders region that would house the first low-speed wind tunnel—better suited for bicycle product test-

Continues on page 20

the smarter phone holder  
For latest Android® Phones and all iPhones®



MSRP \$29.99  
www.deltacycle.com



Now includes all weather protective bag

mega margin!



# Slow start to year follows flat 2012 for bike market

Suppliers report strong sales in May, but it's unclear whether ground lost through April can be made up.

By Matt Wiebe

The 2013 bike market is shaping up to be a shadow of 2012. Suppliers say May was a stellar month, but it is not clear whether business lost over the first four months can be recovered.

"With April still being down over last year it puts more pressure on May and June sales to improve the numbers for the year," said Michael Forte, BPSA statistical committee chairman and Felt Bicycles' director of operations.

Through April supplier sales to IBDs were down 14 percent, or 97,263 units. Even compared with 2011, which got off to a slow start due to a long and extended winter, units were still down 7 percent, or 41,856.

"With a good May and June we can close the gap. But considering that roughly 30 percent of the business in bicycles occurs in the first four months of the year, it's difficult to create the scenario where 2013 can match 2012," said Roger Gierhart, president of the BPSA and Trek's vice president of forecasting, distribution and logistics.

Last year suppliers sold 50,929 more bikes than they did in 2011, a 2 percent increase, and importers brought in almost 3 million more bikes. The 3 million-bike jump in imports was primarily kids' bikes destined for mass-market retailers. The extra bikes suppliers shipped to specialty bike shops were 29ers and hybrids.

Through April, imports were down 2 percent, with most of the drop coming from kids' bikes, which are 10 percent behind 2012.

Adult bike imports, on the other hand, were up 10 percent, but this is not reflected in supplier shipments to shops. These extra bikes are either going to mass-market retailers or into specialty channel warehouses.

Suppliers report robust sales in May, but it is still too early to say whether those strong sales will extend through August.

Gierhart remains optimistic, however, that the tide can turn. "I think we will still have a good year, but my definition of good is somewhere between 2011 and

2012," he said.

In the specialty channel, 29ers saved 2012. Suppliers shipped 71,253 more 29ers last year than in 2011, accounting for \$53.5 million in additional sales. And surprisingly, all kids' categories except BMX saw growth, as did hybrid bikes.

The story is the same over the first quarter of 2013, with 29er full-suspension bikes up 40 percent in sales but jumping a whopping 88 percent in shipments.

"We cannot keep our carbon full-suspension Jet 9 and Air 9 RDOs in stock. We are already way behind filling orders," said Brett Rosenbauer, Niner Bikes' global sales manager. Niner sells 29ers only.

"Those are not cheap bikes. We are seeing slow growth in the middle of our line, but the high end is hot," he added.

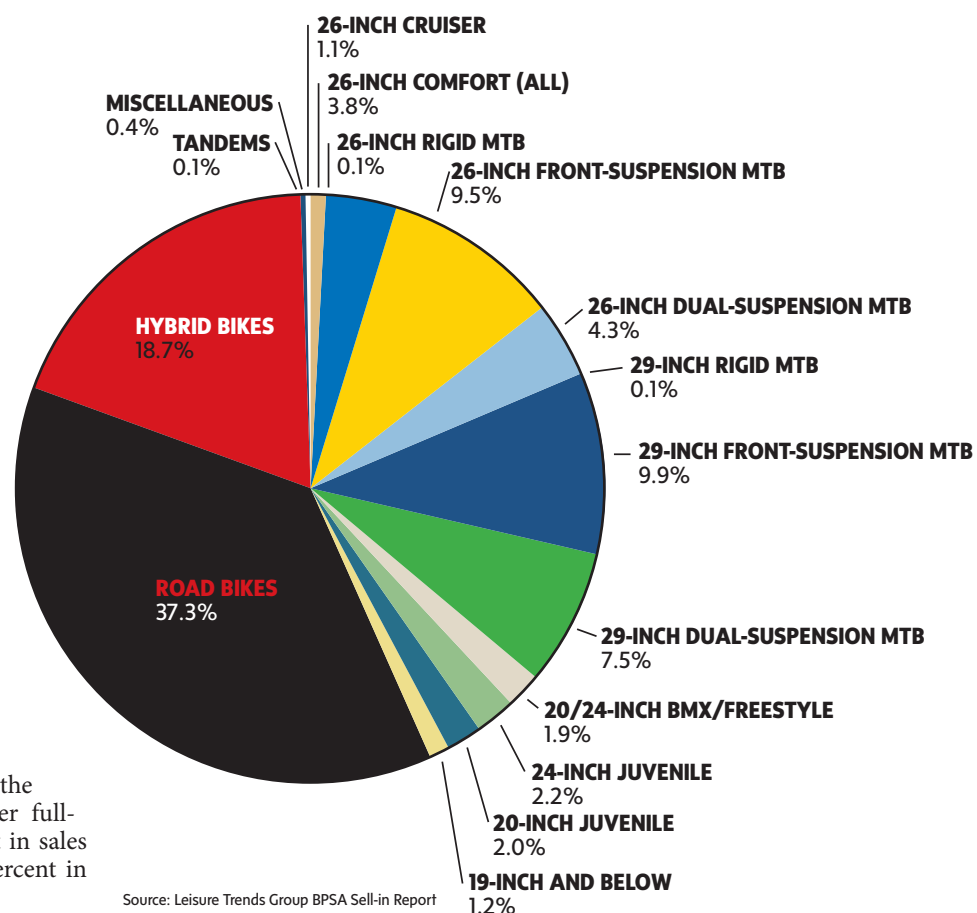
Rosenbauer guesses those high-end 29er full-suspension buyers are not as affected by the economy as other consumers. And he is hearing from dealers that endurance and enduro racing are causing riders to trade in carbon and alloy hardtails for full-suspension bikes.

The impressive growth in the 29er full-suspension category is not due to its small size. Given the high selling price, the category is now 11 percent of all BPSA supplier sales over the quarter. Add in the 13 percent front-suspension 29ers contribute to sales and 29ers compose 24 percent of all sales. Road bikes contribute 37 percent of all sales.

Despite the hoopla surrounding the second coming of 650b mountain bikes, it is too early in the season to evaluate their impact on the mountain bike market. The BPSA is collecting 650b sales data this year, including the tally in the 26-inch categories. It may break it out next year.

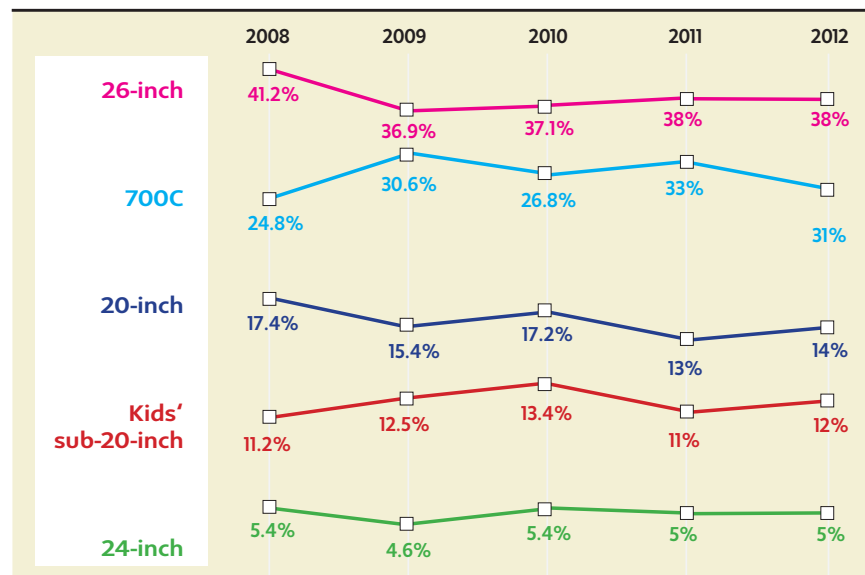
All 26-inch categories dropped 33 percent over the first quarter of the year, so 650b sales of BPSA members have not been sufficient to offset the continuous contraction of 26-inch categories since the introduction of 29ers.

U.S. market dollar sales share 2012



Source: Leisure Trends Group BPSA Sell-in Report

U.S. import dollar market share by category



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

And as long as Cannondale, Giant, Specialized, Trek and other BPSA members do not offer 650b bikes, it is doubtful sales will be significant among association members.

Road bikes are still the cash cow, composing 37 percent of all supplier sales. However, shipments of road bikes fell by 7,250 units over the first quarter. Road shipments are down more than all

other categories, so there could be other factors in their slowing sales.

"Basically road is following the rest of the business," the BPSA's Gierhart said. "Unit share of road bike sales year to date for the past three years has held relatively steady at 18.5 percent. It's hard to make any assessment of the category until retail sales pick up."

Gierhart said there's no evidence that

## ANNUAL STATS ISSUE

shows the road category is shrinking. Even though entry-level price points remain above other categories, most brands are offering affordable options, he added.

The BPSA is also collecting data on electric bikes for the first time. Currently e-bike shipments are being recorded under the “miscellaneous” category, which dropped 61 percent over the quarter. Since many e-bike suppliers are not BPSA members, it is doubtful this category is capturing much of the overall market.

**Fat, balance and commuter markets grow.** The next big market trends have nothing to do with mountain or e-bikes. In fact, the bike categories showing growth are not traditional at all.

Balance bike sales and the passion on display at events held in conjunction with BMX and mountain bike races have the industry’s attention.

Balance bikes, those pedal-less push bikes, have been around for years, but the segment really took off two years ago. Strider, the dominant brand, has been growing 40 to 50 percent month-on-month sales for the past five years and hopes to sell more than 125,000 bikes this year for riders 18 months and older.

This wave of balance riders moving up into pedal bikes is the best news the industry has had in years. Product-wise, however, they are stymied. What type of bike is going to appeal to balance riders and keep them cycling?

Consider balance bikes weigh less than 15 pounds, and by design, riders can easily reach the ground. Yet most kids’ bikes weigh at least 10 more pounds, are geared too high and can be difficult for kids to reach the ground from saddles.

“Kids are having a lot of fun on those balance bikes. They are light and easy to move around. There are no brakes or controls, just your feet. Kids’ bikes are way heavier and lots more complicated,” said John “JQ” Quattrocchi, Redline’s department manager of logistics and R&D.

Quattrocchi sees huge potential in getting these new riders onto bikes and into a lifetime of cycling, but he does not think current product offerings target balance bike kids ready to move to pedals.

Kent Jacobs, U.S. sales manager at Strider, encourages parents to keep their children riding balance bikes as long as they can, in part because he fears pushing kids onto heavy difficult-to-ride kids’ bikes may ruin their fun of cycling.

“Keep the adventure up as long as they can—wheelies, stoppies and stunts are possible on balance bikes,” he said.

If balance bikes provide simple fun to kids, fat bikes are balance bikes for adults. Fat bike riders are smiling and doing stupid stuff they would never do on their serious bikes, which is precisely their appeal.

The market is hitting critical mass and growing so fast suppliers cannot ship dealers all the fat bikes they want because key components like tires and rims are unavailable.

“Last season saw astounding growth for 9Zero7 as well as the fat bike market in general. We and our dealers were really held back by the supply of fat-specific parts,” said Scott Sunderman, founder of Anchorage, Alaska-based 9Zero7.

QBP controls the bulk of the fat bike market with its bike brands Surly and Salsa and parts brand 45NRTH. Sun Bicycles is a dominant player in coastal fat bike cruiser markets. Race Face and SRAM offer fat-specific parts and Specialized’s Ned Overend has been racing a fat bike prototype, signaling Morgan Hill’s interest in the category.

And don’t think market growth is limited to Alaska and the snowbound upper Midwest. Suppliers are picking up new dealers across the country, especially in the Rockies.

“The coastal areas are turning out to be a surprise market. We get constant feedback on how nice it is to go for a one- to three-hour ride and never get off the beach,” Sunderman said.

Fat bikes are bikes that enthusiast riders want even if they have too many bikes in their garage.

“Our fat bike customers don’t buy one as another mountain bike to ride. A fat bike is its own thing. It may get ridden on the same trails, but it’s a bike in addition to a mountain bike,” said Davis Carver, owner of Bath Cycle & Ski in Woolwich, Maine, and founder of Carver Bikes, which now offers a full-suspension titanium fat bike.

Last year hybrids, the category that includes commuter as well as fitness bikes, constituted one of every four bikes suppliers shipped to retailers. For comparison, one out of every six bikes

## U.S. domestic exports by category

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>TIRES &lt;25 INCHES</b>	28,993	31,838	35,935	32,765	28,636
<b>TIRES &gt;25 INCHES</b>	45,882	43,885	46,193	42,663	50,830

## U.S. import landed average unit value

CATEGORIES	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>KIDS’ SUB-20-INCH</b>	\$30.11	\$29.25	\$30.44	\$32.43	\$33.28
<b>20-INCH</b>	\$42.69	\$39.30	\$45.84	\$49.13	\$49.43
<b>24-INCH</b>	\$62.63	\$61.11	\$60.30	\$63.47	\$64.89
<b>26-INCH</b>	\$106.65	\$105.36	\$101.01	\$119.48	\$120.67
<b>700C</b>	\$274.09	\$284.36	\$284.78	\$310.39	\$274.04

## U.S. import units by category

CATEGORIES	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>KIDS’ SUB-20-INCH</b>	5,095,446	4,682,134	6,321,675	4,716,749	5,642,908
<b>20-INCH</b>	5,590,241	4,282,929	5,374,343	3,710,461	4,521,107
<b>24-INCH</b>	1,175,257	821,497	1,289,550	1,110,592	1,362,042
<b>26-INCH</b>	5,294,668	3,829,805	5,316,420	4,418,353	5,070,145
<b>700C</b>	1,220,789	1,167,157	1,323,582	1,475,888	1,832,873
<b>TOTALS</b>	18,376,401	14,783,522	19,625,570	15,432,043	18,429,075

## U.S. import value by category

CATEGORIES	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>KIDS’ SUB-20-INCH</b>	\$153,423,676	\$136,930,864	\$192,460,397	\$152,984,436	\$187,791,781
<b>20-INCH</b>	\$238,660,479	\$168,332,934	\$246,349,616	\$182,299,378	\$223,464,316
<b>24-INCH</b>	\$73,604,064	\$50,201,346	\$77,756,631	\$70,493,195	\$88,387,260
<b>26-INCH</b>	\$564,650,282	\$403,504,521	\$531,692,550	\$527,906,821	\$611,832,016
<b>700C</b>	\$334,602,603	\$331,888,367	\$376,935,998	\$458,097,883	\$502,275,820
<b>TOTALS</b>	\$1,364,941,104	\$1,090,858,032	\$1,425,195,192	\$1,391,781,713	\$1,613,751,193

## U.S. import unit market share by category

CATEGORIES	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>KIDS’ SUB-20-INCH</b>	27.6%	31.6%	32%	31%	30%
<b>20-INCH</b>	30.3%	28.9%	27.2%	24%	24%
<b>24-INCH</b>	6.4%	5.5%	6.5%	7%	7%
<b>26-INCH</b>	28.7%	25.8%	26.9%	29%	27%
<b>700C</b>	7%	8.2%	7.4%	10%	10%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

shipped was a road bike, so substantially more hybrids are being sold. Some 683,293 hybrids shipped in 2012, compared with 426,259 road bikes.

“Both fitness and commuter segments are growing,” Gierhart said, referring to where the growth in hybrid is coming from. “These bikes are replacing sales of 26-inch hardtail mountain bikes as an entry point to cycling.”

Gierhart said cross/hybrid bikes gained 10 percent in units and 16 percent in dollars last year. Compared with 2011 year-to-date data, the cross/hybrid category gained 11 percent in dollars and 2 percent in units, the strongest of the major adult categories.

While down through April of this year, the

category is clearly strong, Gierhart said.

According to dealers visited by *Bicycle Retailer & Industry News* staff around the country, commuter-related maintenance and repair dominates their service sales, just as sales of racks, fenders, lights and panniers dominate parts and accessory sales. The commuter market is big business.

Nowhere is the success of commuter sales seen more than in high-end road and mountain bike shops. A few years ago, commuters looking for a replacement tire or a new rack would have been shunned by sales staff. Now that same sales staff is asking commuters if they want that heavily belted commuting tire with reflective sidewalls. **BRAIN**

# Categories shine in lackluster retail market

By Val Vanderpool

The bicycle retail market was flat in 2012. Unit sales saw zero growth over 2011 figures, with bike shops and specialty retailers selling just over 2.3 million bicycles.

Growth was minimal dollar-wise, with a 1.9 percent increase overall.

As of Jan. 1, 2013, there were 4,056 specialty retail locations in the U.S., down just 33 stores from a year earlier. This is the smallest movement in the downward trend since 2009, according to figures from the U.S. Bicycle Market 2012 analysis prepared by the Gluskin Townley Group for the National Bicycle Dealers Association.

"There may be fewer stores, but they are doing more volume," said NBDA president Fred Clements. "The store size is getting bigger, and IBDs are doing a sound and solid dollar volume."

## Notable trends of 2012

For the first time since 2009, mountain bikes reclaimed their place as the most-sold bicycle type in the specialty retail channel, accounting for one-quarter of all new bike purchases. Big wheels were bigger than ever in 2012, with 29ers posting gains each month to help the mountain bike category edge up 2 percent, according to the Gluskin Townley Group's data. With the potential for more 27.5-inch models to enter many brands' lineups in 2013, 29er sales could show slower gains, but the category is still predicted to grow.

The NBDA study found that hybrid/transit unit sales rose 4 percent from 2011 to take second place, edging out the road category, which fell 4 percent in units.

"This shift in the rankings may be a result of two possible scenarios," Gluskin Townley principal Jay Townley said. "The first could be consumer demand for more comfortable riding options. And the second possibility is that retailer

## Store locations in 2012 by business and revenue size

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS	1	2	3	4	5 OR MORE
<b>TOTAL</b>	84.3%	9.4%	3.5%	1.4%	1.3%
<b>&lt;\$300,000</b>	100%	--	--	--	--
<b>\$300,000-\$499,999</b>	88.2%	11.8%	--	--	--
<b>\$500,000-\$999,999</b>	88.8%	10.1%	1.1%	--	--
<b>\$1,000,000-\$1,999,999</b>	73.8%	18.5%	4.5%	3.1%	--
<b>\$2,000,000 OR MORE</b>	48.4%	12.9%	19.4%	6.5%	12.9%
<b>TOTAL U.S. SPECIALTY RETAIL LOCATIONS</b>					<b>4,056</b>

Source: NBDA Specialty Bicycle Retailer Study and The Bike Shop List

sales staff are focusing more on the hybrid and mountain categories."

Townley's study reported used bicycle sales for the first time. Secondhand bikes accounted for just over \$1 billion in retail sales—one-third the amount of new bicycle sales.

"As the industry evolves, used bikes are going to have more significance," said Clements. "This doesn't interest suppliers who need to sell new bikes, but the option to buy used gives customers access to a bike without being priced out."

"There is a shift happening in bicycle use from sport to activity," Townley said. "The used bicycle contribution to retail sales perhaps reflects this." Townley also noted that the used bike market can help increase ridership.

More retailers also are diversifying their services, offering customers everything from spin classes to beers on tap. There are at least 50 of these "New Wave" bike shops in the U.S., according to Townley. He expects that number to grow because it is a way for shops to attract people who wouldn't normally walk into a bike shop.

"If a retailer can make diversification work in their market, it should absolutely consider it," Clements said. "It will only bring more people in who will see

their bikes."

Diversifying helps bring in more revenue, which can be appealing for shops in seasonal markets looking for year-round customers.

"Shop owners are analyzing and responding to their market," Townley noted.

This may explain the rise in custom boutique shops that cater to one type of consumer or type of riding style. While the family bike shop still accounts for the majority of specialty retail business, some retailers are homing in on one niche and making it their specialty. More urban shops featuring locally made commuter bikes or European cargo and family bikes and stores specializing in electric bikes are cropping up.

According to Townley, other categories of specialty retailers emerging in the market include multi-store chains and IBDs that are opening new locations in multiple states. Nonprofit shops and brand concept stores are also opening in more cities, further diversifying the bike retail market.

Retailers surveyed for the NBDA study reported a number of challenges in 2012, including competition from mass merchants, increasing insurance costs and tense supplier relations. Seven of 10 shop owners cited competition from the Internet as a significant issue.

"It's a dogfight out there," Clements said. "Price competition is fierce. Online retailers are finding ways to buy lower—far less than the dealer can."

## Category growth across the board

Even with fewer storefronts doing business last year, revenue continued to increase. According to BPSA Topline data from Leisure Trends' Cycling RetailTRAK, dollar sales at IBDs were up \$76 million, or 5 percent, last year.

Leisure Trends reported dollar gains in nearly every bike category, thanks to increased average retail selling price. Carbon sport and performance road bikes, 29ers, transit/fitness and children's bikes saw the greatest dollar growth, helping bicycle sales reach \$1.7 billion.

In the road category, carbon accounted for 53 percent of sales. Selling at an average of \$2,513, the lightest-weight bikes were the heaviest hitters when it came to revenue.

At 40.6 percent, the hybrid category generated higher margins than road and mountain.

As far as margins, only children's bikes were higher, at 42.2 percent, according to Leisure Trends. Unit sales remained flat, however, accounting for 12 percent of all bikes sold.

## Bicycle unit sales by category, 2005-2012

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	CHANGE '12 VS. '11	CHANGE '12 VS. '05
<b>MOUNTAIN</b>	29%	24%	25%	26%	24%	22%	23%	25%	+2	(4)
<b>HYBRID</b>	14%	19%	17%	18%	21%	21%	20%	24%	+4	+10
<b>ROAD/700C</b>	16%	18%	21%	20%	20%	23%	24%	20%	(4)	+4
<b>COMFORT</b>	14%	17%	15%	16%	15%	13%	14%	13%	(1)	(1)
<b>YOUTH</b>	15%	12%	12%	12%	13%	12%	12%	12%	--	(3)
<b>CRUISER</b>	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	(1)	(1)
<b>RECUMBENT/TANDEM</b>	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	+1	--
<b>ELECTRIC</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.6%	0.3%	0.5%	+0.2	N/A
<b>FOLDING</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	--	N/A

Source: NBDA Specialty Bicycle Retailer Study



**ANNUAL STATS ISSUE**

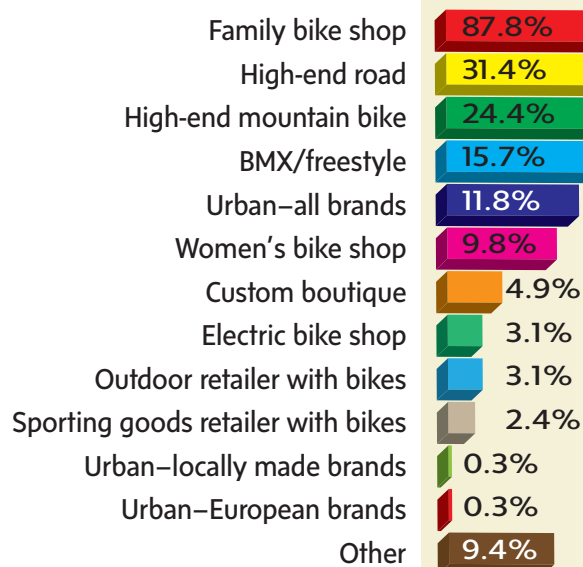
**U.S. bicycle market estimated consumption in retail dollars**

2012 total market share, new and used bicycles and parts by channel of trade

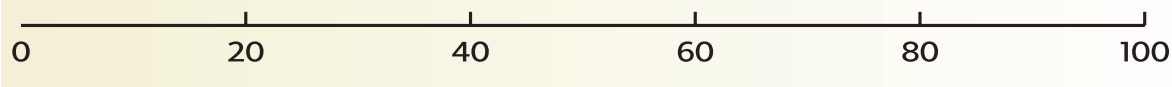
CHANNEL OF TRADE	BIKE SHOPS + OUTDOOR SPECIALTY RETAILERS	MASS MERCHANT	CHAIN SPORTING GOODS	OTHER (INCLUDING HARDWARE CHAINS AND INDEPENDENT RETAILERS, MAIL ORDER AND INTERNET)	TOTAL U.S. MARKET
<b>NEW BICYCLES</b>	\$2,158,429,000 59%	\$1,080,530,000 30%	\$292,035,000 8%	\$129,169,000 4%	\$3,660,174,000 100%
<b>PARTS, RUBBER, ACCESSORIES INCLUDING CLOTHING AND SHOES</b>	\$ 961,662,000 39%	\$567,134,000 23%	\$517,818,000 21%	\$419,186,000 17%	\$2,465,800,000 100%
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED RETAIL DOLLARS</b>	\$3,120,091,000	\$1,647,664,000	\$809,853,000	\$548,355,000	\$6,126,000,000
<b>PERCENTAGE SHARE OF TOTAL MARKET RETAIL DOLLARS</b>	50.9%	26.9%	13.2%	9%	100%
<b>USED BICYCLES</b>	\$569,949,696	\$77,041,476	\$91,978,091	\$422,238,290	\$1,161,207,553
<b>PERCENTAGE SHARE OF USED BICYCLES</b>	49%	6.6%	7.9%	36.4%	100%

Sources: National Sporting Goods Association; The American Bicyclist Study; The Gluskin Townley Group analysis and estimates

**Classification of bicycle retail business\***



\*Some shops fall into more than one category. Source: NBDA Specialty Bicycle Retailer Study



**Velo Cult owner Sky Boyer pours a beer at his shop in Portland, Oregon. He uses the full-size bar and café at the front of Velo Cult to host cycling-related events.**

Aftermarket parts and accessories posted overall growth of 8 percent in dollars, with tires/tubes, components, saddles/pads, hydration, eyewear and nutrition all making strong gains.

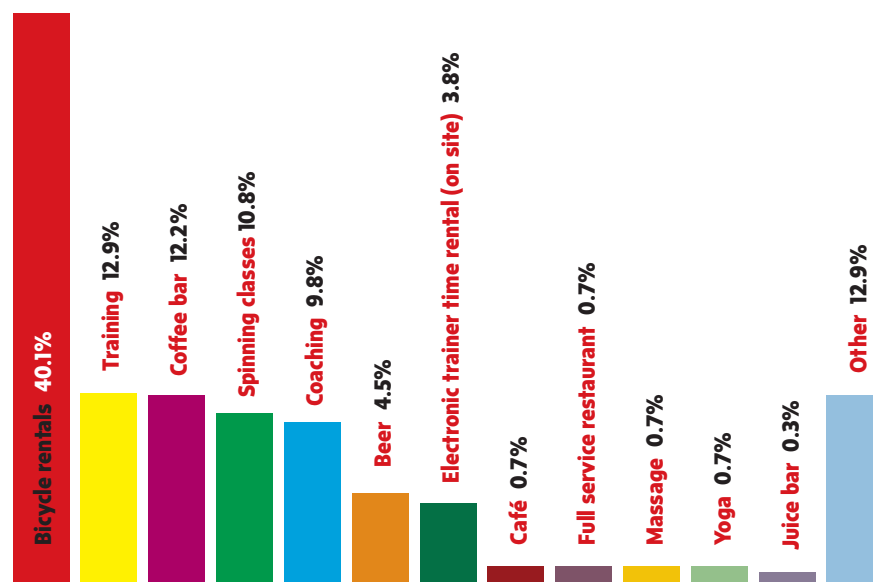
It remains to be seen whether the market will remain flat in 2013, which is off to a slow start.

A cold spring delayed the season in

many parts of the country, and overall first-quarter IBD sales were down 11 percent compared with 2012.

“Last year was the warmest ever on record,” said JJ Rudman, retail analyst for Leisure Trends. “This year is shaping up to be more normal, and we are likely to see bicycle sales stay flat and merchandise sales to be up.” **BRAIN**

**Other consumer services offered by specialty retailers\***



\*Some shops offer more than one service. Source: NBDA Specialty Bicycle Retailer Study

Continued from cover

## Fading youth

cycling participation among those ages 7 to 17 may give pause to an industry dependent on successive generations of consumers to grow sales.

The age group represented just 27.3 percent of participation among all riders last year, down from 35.3 percent in 2011. That's the most precipitous percentage-point drop of the past decade.

When weighted against the age group's share of the total U.S. population, however, the 7 to 17 cohort is still far more likely to ride bikes than the overall population, according to an index compiled by the NSGA.

"We saw a decline of participation among this age group, but when you compare it to other age groups it's still the most developed across the board," said Dustin Dobrin, director of research and information at the NSGA.

The very youngest children in the 29,000 households the association surveys, those ages 7 to 11, are twice as likely to ride bikes than the rest of the population, according to the NSGA index. That would be an encouraging figure for the industry if not for the fact that it is down from a three-times likelihood as recently as 2006.

Andy Clarke, president of the League of American Bicyclists, found the youth participation numbers surprising in light of the gains in cycling overall the advocacy group has seen throughout the U.S.

"Part of the recurring challenge we have is that we don't actually know because no one counts how many kids ride, or whether they ride to and from school or they ride for whatever reason. We just don't ask those questions," he said.

"So it's really hard to know whether those participation numbers are accurate or not. It does seem odd given that, in general, in communities across the country we're seeing cycling increase."

(For its part, the League pegs total U.S. ridership at 57 million bicyclists, a number reported by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.)

Still, Clark acknowledges obstacles remain to getting more kids on bikes—not the least of which is "stranger danger" fear among parents worried about their children's safety should they go off and ride on their own. "I think we massively overplay that and just are simply not letting our kids do what we took for granted and could do. And I think it's kind of irrational," he said.

Robert Ping, technical assistance director at the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, echoes that sentiment.

"Parents are afraid to let their kids out the door. We have a real hovering generation of parents, and we have a risk-averse society now when it comes to parenting. Parents want to protect their

kids as much as they possibly can, and they perceive bike riding as risky, so they won't let their kids ride bikes," he said.

"Once we get in there with the Safe Routes to School program, we can make a difference for a large number of parents by providing education, enforcing traffic laws, calming traffic and building facilities that make it safer for kids to bike. Then the parents will loosen up and let their children ride to school," Ping added.

Safe Routes to School has programs in place at almost 14,000 schools. A re-

## Ride frequency over past five years (percentage of total riders)

MALE	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>FREQUENT (110+ DAYS)</b>	13.7%	13.7%	14.3%	16.4%	16.0%
<b>OCCASIONAL (25-99 DAYS)</b>	48.3%	43.1%	46.6%	45.7%	46.6%
<b>INFREQUENT (6-24 DAYS)</b>	38.0%	43.2%	39.1%	37.9%	37.4%
FEMALE					
<b>FREQUENT (110+ DAYS)</b>	7.8%	8.3%	10.9%	10.0%	11.1%
<b>OCCASIONAL (25-99 DAYS)</b>	43.8%	41.5%	43.5%	44.3%	47.8%
<b>INFREQUENT (6-24 DAYS)</b>	48.5%	50.2%	45.6%	45.7%	41.1%

Source: National Sporting Goods Association

## Cycling and tri participation (ages 6+; in thousands)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	3-YEAR AVERAGE CHANGE
<b>BICYCLING (BMX)</b>	1,655	1,887	1,904	1,811	2,369	1,547	2,175	12.2%
<b>BICYCLING (MOUNTAIN/ NON-PAVED SURFACE)</b>	6,751	6,892	7,592	7,142	7,161	6,816	7,714	2.9%
<b>BICYCLING (ROAD/ PAVED SURFACE)</b>	38,457	38,940	38,114	40,140	39,320	40,349	39,232	-0.7%
<b>TRIATHLON (NONTRADITIONAL/ OFF ROAD)</b>	281	483	602	666	929	709	1,442	39.7%
<b>TRIATHLON (TRADITIONAL/ROAD)</b>	640	798	1,087	1,208	1,978	1,393	2,184	30.3%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2013 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

cent study in five states where the organization's projects had been completed found that walking to school increased by an average of 45 percent, and bicycling rose 24 percent.

Safe Routes also focuses significant resources on influencing "school sighting"—how close schools are built to residential areas—in order to encourage riding to and from school.

"The school sighting issue is a big one. As we continue to suburbanize our communities, the schools get farther and farther from where kids actually live. And so there is an increase of driving and school bus riding because of that issue," Ping said.

### Mountain biking

The NSGA tracks mountain bike participation separately. It pegged ridership at just under 5.5 million for 2012, down 7.6 percent from 2011 and more than 45 percent off a 10-year high of about 10.2 million in 2008.

This contrasts with the much rosier picture conveyed in the Outdoor Foundation's 2013 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report. Mountain participation rose 13 percent last year to 7.7 million riders, the Foundation reported, the highest level in the seven years tracked in the study.

The Topline Report doesn't break out participation by age group, but the NSGA's data shows that young riders' numbers have dwindled in recent years.

Children ages 7 to 11 were less likely to participate in 2012 than at any time in the past decade, coming in below the national average for all age groups. Kids ages 7 to 17 represented just 17.6 percent of mountain riders overall last year, down from 19.8 percent in 2011 and well off a 10-year high of 27.2 percent in 2005.

The key to getting more kids not just mountain biking, but riding any kind of bike, is to have more adult role models to help them get comfortable with riding, says Austin McInerney, executive director of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA), which develops high school mountain bike leagues across the United States. It also starts with creating safer routes so children can ride to and from school, McInerney believes.

"That gets the kid going, gets them confident. Because commuting is really about having confidence and knowing I can ride amongst traffic and not fear for my life. So you've got to start that young," he said.

NICA is an undisputed success story in fostering youth ridership. With nine leagues established—two, in Arizona and Tennessee, will have their first race seasons this fall—NICA expects to have a total of more than 3,000 student-athletes in the coming year.

In a member survey, 99 percent of student-athletes said they expect to ride bikes the rest of their lives. Further, 60

percent of parents said their child's participation in their local league got them back on the bike after a lapse, McInerney notes.

"When people say how are we going to grow the future of mountain biking and road bike racing, it's by creating a culture where younger kids learn to race before they get trapped into soccer or football or whatever other sport, and they don't think of cycling as an option," he said.

### Women and minorities

Female participation in cycling—representing 49 percent of riders overall, up from 45 percent in 2011—moved closer to equality with male participation in 2012, according to the NSGA. Women made up 51 percent of the U.S. population in 2012, however, so there is added ground to make up to achieve true parity.

To that end, the League of American Bicyclists launched its Women Bike initiative last year and held its first full-day Women's Cycling Forum this past March on the opening day of the National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C. The forum, expected to return in 2014, drew 375 attendees and 30 speakers.

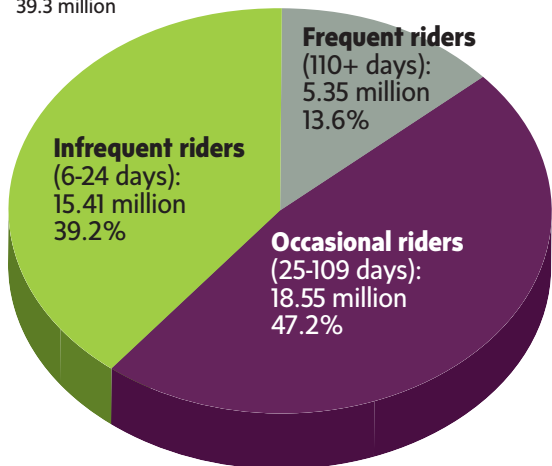
The League also released a report this spring on cycling among women and minorities titled "The New Majority: Pedaling Towards Equity." The findings, culled from a variety of research sources in addition to the League's own



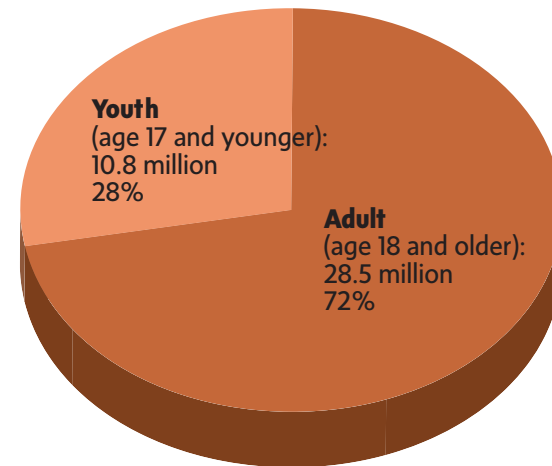
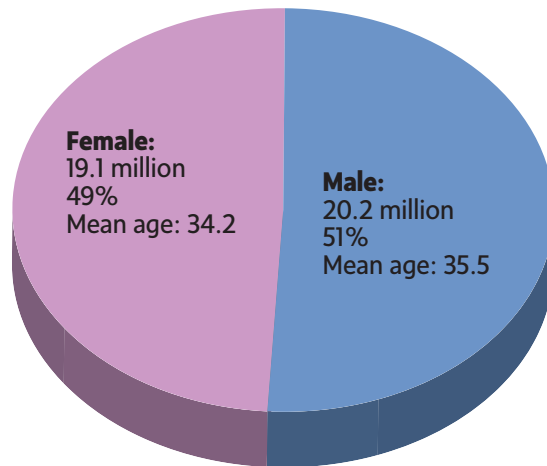
**ANNUAL STATS ISSUE**

**2012 ridership**

Total U.S. participation:  
39.3 million



**Gender and age, 2012 riders**



Source: National Sporting Goods Association

**Participation vs. population growth**

	2003	2010	2011	2012	10-YEAR CHANGE (2003-2012)
<b>TOTAL U.S. POPULATION</b>	290,810,000	309,326,000	311,588,000	313,914,000	+7.9%
<b>BICYCLE RIDERS</b>	36,257,000	39,789,000	39,147,000	39,317,000	+8.4%
<b>% OF U.S. POPULATION</b>	12.5%	12.9%	12.6%	12.5%	

Sources: National Sporting Goods Association, U.S. Census Bureau

research, surmised that from 2007 to 2011, bike commuting among women increased by 56 percent; the African-American, Asian and Hispanic communities saw the fastest growth in biking from 2001 to 2009; and 60 percent of non-white respondents said having more bike facilities would encourage them to ride.

“It’s really clear that all the things we know about cycling in general and what would get more people to ride—the infrastructure, the feeling of safe-

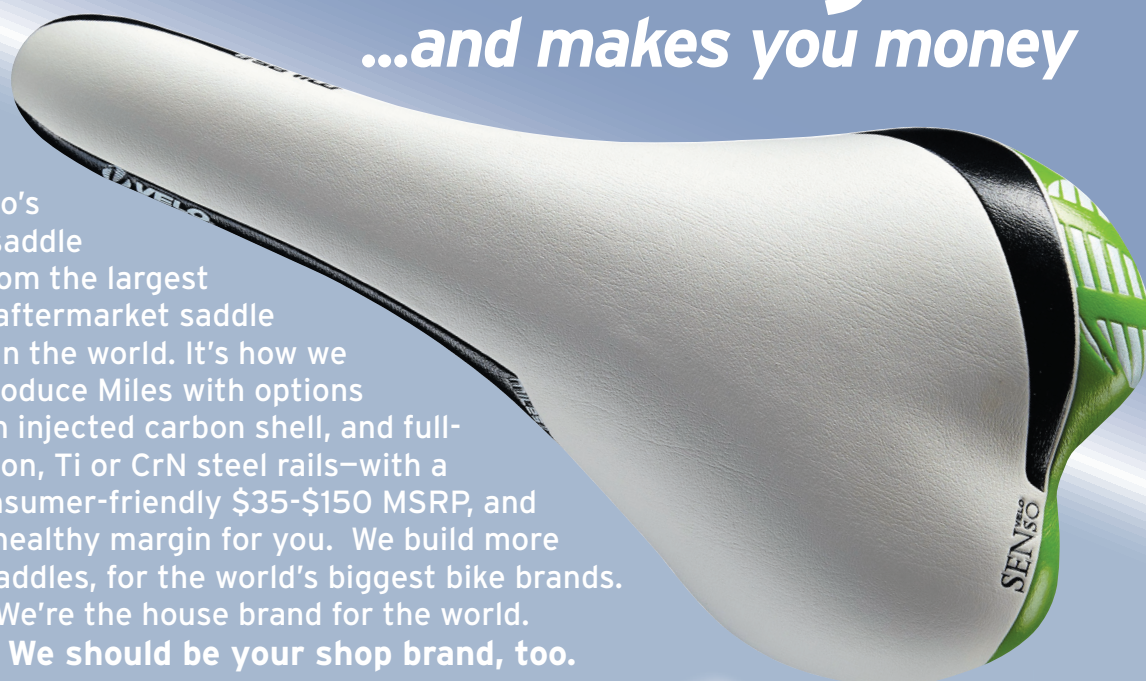
ty, the opportunity to ride—it’s even more pronounced in communities of color, underserved communities,” League president Clarke said. “People really want to ride. They want to have that option. They feel like they need some education and training more than the population at large.

“There’s a real opportunity, a real hunger to be able to ride and have the right conditions and infrastructure in communities that we just haven’t been active in over the years.” **BRAIN**

**Velo Feels Right...  
...and makes you money**



The new-for-2013 Miles is Velo’s top-level saddle family, from the largest OE and aftermarket saddle maker in the world. It’s how we can produce Miles with options for an injected carbon shell, and full-carbon, Ti or CrN steel rails—with a consumer-friendly \$35-\$150 MSRP, and a healthy margin for you. We build more saddles, for the world’s biggest bike brands. We’re the house brand for the world. We should be your shop brand, too.



Available From:



**KHS QBP**

