

Awesome Bike Racks!

Tell us about your awesome project!

Together with Carbondale Community Arts and Southern Illinois University Carbondale –School of Art and Design’s Metalsmithing program, Carbondale Main Street plans to create a series of artistic and structural bike racks in the downtown area. The purpose of these racks is to increase the bike friendliness of the region, as the City of Carbondale is creating bike lanes and routes, it is important that bicyclists have a place to safely and securely lock their bikes when not in use.

The design ideas for the bike racks are nontraditional and imaginative to provide visual interest to passersby and bring the arts downtown.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) is the only school in the United States where students can earn an accredited graduate degree in Blacksmithing and Metalsmithing and is regarded as the best in the world. The school boasts a rich history in the craft, largely credited to Brent L. Kington, who taught at SIUC for more than 30 years and is known for reintroducing metalwork as an art form to the United States. The graduate program is highly competitive and has links in Europe, the Pacific Rim and Mexico with opportunities for student involvement. Carbondale Main Street, and much of community, would like to see their work integrated into the streetscape of our city.

The bike rack project will give students an opportunity to showcase their talents locally and will hopefully increase tourism from artists and metalsmithing enthusiasts throughout Illinois and the rest of the country. Both functional and beautiful, these pieces will become unifying public art.

How will you use the money?

It is estimated that each bike rack will cost approximately \$1000 in materials and a stipend for the artist. If awarded a grant through The Awesome Foundation, we would be able to complete one bike rack and begin the project. From there, we would use the momentum and excitement to fundraise for other racks.

Tell us a little about yourself

As the Assistant Director of Carbondale Main Street, I am constantly looking for ways to partner with different organizations to provide the most impact for our community. Carbondale Main Street is part of the National Main Street program which focuses on downtown revitalization and historic preservation. Using the Main Street 4 point approach of Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring, we are able to build a sustainable and complete revitalization effort.

How much (if any) of the grant will be used to cover salaries/stipends?

Approximately \$700 of the grant will be used towards materials, while \$300 will be used towards stipends for the SIUC students who are taking the time to create the bike racks. None of the grant will be used towards existing salaries.

How will your project make Chicago more awesome?

While we aren't located in Chicago, The Awesome Foundation website advises to apply to the chapter closest to us.

Many students from Chicago attend SIUC and return to Chicago after graduation. Students often take the ideas and inspiration learned at college with them in their future endeavors. Being a part of a creative community while in Carbondale will undoubtedly inspire students and create an increased appreciation for the arts throughout their lives.

Since both Chicago and Carbondale are both in Illinois, we share much of the same tourism traffic. People from Chicago and throughout Illinois often take trips to the wine country here in southern Illinois and residents from southern Illinois are known to take weekend trips to the city. Offering this grant opportunity to Carbondale, Illinois fosters a cohesive relationship within two areas of the state.