

## Ride shines light on bike safety in city

### Ride

By **CHELSEA OLMS**

**News Staff Reporter** MOUNT VERNON — Creating a more bicycle-accessible community was part of the goal of the Get Healthy Knox County Coalition when it brought Yay Bikes! to Mount Vernon on Monday and partnered the group with local officials.

An organized bike ride through Mount Vernon, funded by the Ohio Department of Transportation, conducted by Yay Bikes!, a bike advocacy group based in Columbus, was a means to educate riders on how to safely cycle in and around the city, determine challenges and point out ways the city can keep cyclists and motorists safe.

The riders were made up of local officials from the Mount Vernon City Council, the YMCA, the Knox County Parks District, Board of Developmental Disabilities, Knox County Health Department and the board of commissioners.

Tami Ruhl, the creating Healthy Communities Coordinator at the Knox County Health Department, as well as Catherine Girves, executive director of Yay Bikes!, led a discussion on how to make Knox County more bikefriendly and what that might entail. Many comments were made about educating the public on bike safety so that both cyclists and motorists know what to do when riding or encountering bikes on the road. There was also talk of organizing more public transportation systems around the county and how bike riding would fit into that.

Susan Kahrl, a Mount Vernon City Council member, attended the morning ride. She told the *News* Monday that she went on

the ride because she really wants to promote bike transportation. She said she would like to see more people using bikes as a major form of transportation.

Girves said Yay Bikes! works with communities all over Ohio — speaking with people within the communities who have the ability to advocate for biking as transportation. After Ruhl reached out to them to do the ride, Girves explained that she came to Mount Vernon and **See RIDE on Page 3A**



**Joshua Morrison/ News** From left, Kathleen Watkins of Yay Bikes!, Knox County Engineer Cameron Keaton and Nick Clark, Mount Vernon YMCA. Government and organizational officials took a ride through the city of Mount Vernon to identify challenges of bicycling in the city.

---

## Ride shines light on bike safety in city

### Ride

The next step, Girves said, is up to the individuals of Knox County, putting together a plan for the future and looking at existing assets and opportunities for

spent a day here exploring the city on her bike so she could create a route for Monday's riders that best showcased what the city already has in terms of bike riding accessibility, and what some of the challenges are.

Girves told the *News* she was struck by the diverse group of Knox County decision-makers who participated on the rides. She also commented that "there are a variety of things Knox County and Mount Vernon are doing well already" that could promote more cycling.

the future.

Ruhl said that her goal in organizing the rides Monday was to increase awareness of the ability to use different types of transportation. She said that Centerburg and Danville both now have bicycle loan programs available to the public, and that helmets and bike locks were also available for use, as well as a "Burley Bee" that you can attach to the bike for children to ride in.