

More than 1,000 Nebraska schoolchildren are expected to use their feet to get to school on International Walk to School Day Oct. 5.

Parents, educators and community leaders are encouraged to organize events at schools and in communities across the state so groups can meet to walk or bike together on that day. Safe Routes Nebraska offers resources for individuals and groups that want to sponsor an International Walk to School Day event.

“International Walk to School Day encourages kids to get in the healthy habit of walking and riding bikes to school,” said Angela Barry, project coordinator for Safe Routes Nebraska.

The Safe Routes Nebraska website—SafeRoutesNE.com—offers an online planning guide with step-by-step instructions, and promotional materials for students and parents.

Organizers can also register an event online and see which communities have already registered events. The site includes safety tips and ways that neighbors can work together to develop a plan for children to safely walk or bike to school.

“Anyone can get involved in the Safe Routes Nebraska program. The only requirement is a commitment to helping children become more healthy and active by walking or biking to school,” Barry said.

The 2011 event marks the 14th International Walk to School Day. What started with one school in Chicago has grown to more than 3,500 schools in more than 40 countries.

For information about planning walk-to-school events go to SafeRoutesNE.com, or contact Angela Barry, Safe Routes Nebraska program coordinator, at (402) 476-7331 or abarry@sinclairhille.com.

Safe Routes Nebraska is a state affiliate of the National Safe Routes to School Program.

Through the 2005 passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy of Users, Congress designated \$612 million toward developing the National Safe Routes to School Program. Money is distributed to the Nebraska Department of Roads to fund education, planning and implementation of Safe Routes to School plans and programs.