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Spring is here!

Bike tips from iconic Dedham Bike

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Dedham Bike on Washington Street in Dedham Square is a 2000-square-foot store that reminds you of your grandfather's basement or workshop. With its wooden walls that resemble paneling, thousands of parts ranging from grease to handlebars and a repair center, the shop conjures up images grandpop tinkering on the weekend. The official name of Dedham Bike and Leather Company remains on the buildings signage despite the fact leather work stopped in the 1930s and two old-fashioned gas pumps sit on the sidewalk out front from when the establishment was also a gas station (Donovan's dad pumped the last gallon in the late

Spring bike preparation tips from Dedham Bike

- Be sure to lubricate the key areas of the bike like the chain but don't apply too much since doing so can actually make the chain act like a "magnet" and attract dust and dirt
- Perform proper tire inflation. Rubber is porous so it naturally loses air over time and higher pressure tires lose air more quickly.
- Do a general cleaning of the bike. Wipe it down and remove any cobwebs.
- Inspect the tires and sidewalls for dry cracking. The cold can cause rubber to dry out and sidewalls can become weakened which could lead to blowouts.
- Check out your gear. Lay everything out and ensure you examine your helmet. Check the inside of the helmet for a manufacturer date. If the helmet is over three-years-old it should be replaced.
- If you have lighting on your bicycle make sure the batteries are charged and the lights are working so when you go to use them they do what they are supposed to do.

'70s). And while the shop has done everything from leather work, automotive repair and selling bikes, it has always been more than just products and services.

“Over the years been a little bit of a social hangout for people,” Donovan said. “Going back to the early 1900s this has always been a place for people to come and hang out.”

As temperatures consistently rise into the 50s it is a signal to bike enthusiasts and casual riders alike that spring is coming and it is time to pump up the tires and hit the road. Dedham Bike third-generation owner Matt Donovan has some tips to help you enjoy your ride and keep you safe this year.

A former professional mountain biker Donovan has been in the bike business since his childhood. Viewing Dedham Bike as “not just a retail operation but a cornerstone of the community,” he brings his years of experience and a strong sense of family values to the store.

“We believe in putting customer service first and taking care of people,” he said. “We try to help people, assist them, listen. We don’t just sell bikes. We sell a healthy and fun lifestyle.”

While the old-time gas pumps may make you believe the store is a sweet and nostalgic mom-and-pop business from the 1950s, Donovan’s self-taught marketing and business acumen is more aligned with a Silicon Valley startup or companies like Google or Apple. Using street-smarts, strong values and a focus on the customer, he has worked hard to maintain his balance and ride out the ups and downs over the years.

“The buzzword in the retail world has become omni-channel,” he said. “We want people to be able to reach us anywhere - through the store, through our website, over the phone. Our online visibility has grown tremendously through our marketing efforts.”

Dedham Bike’s e-commerce sales are expanding rapidly with a bulk of online orders “coming from people west of the Mississippi.” In addition, the web visibility has resulted in

customers traveling to the area from Iceland, the United Kingdom and even Dubai purchasing bikes from the store, most while vacationing or traveling on business.

While Donovan has adapted to changing market conditions and has brought the business a long way from repairing horse harnesses, he is careful to maintain a hold on to the “charm” that he believes makes the establishment special.

“This is not a car dealership,” he said. “Our core customers are the local families, commuters, the everyman. Sometimes people come in just to talk and share stories, maybe share the joke they just heard. Just shoot the breeze about life in general. You could write a book about this place.”