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Paul Hope, a Warehouse Supervisor for Micropower Electronics, has been an avid mountain biker for the last 15 years. When gas prices shot up in 2008, he decided to translate his love of biking into a free commute. The benefits have gone beyond gas savings.

For the last year, Paul has been biking to Redmond two to three times a week year round. He covers 38 miles round trip from his Shoreline home to his Redmond employer. Starting work at 6 a.m, Paul has to leave home at 4:30 a.m. in order to get to Redmond and have a shower before starting work. Now that's dedication!

His ride is 90% on the Burke Gilman and Sammamish River trails. In that fairly developed setting, he's seen a surprising variety of wildlife: owls, deer, bald eagles, coyotes, herons, "10 million rabbits," and one naked hiker. Paul talks about the early morning ride on which he saw a man wearing nothing but running shoes and a yellow backpack. Paul thinks the naked hiker reported in the Redmond police blotter a week later was the same man he saw on his early bike commute.

To bikers considering a year-round commute, Paul recommends fenders and a waterproof backpack. He also has this advice, "Don't be too concerned about biking in a certain number of days—even once a week is so refreshing. On a beautiful day, a ride home is just awesome, and that's what you get addicted to." Paul says the first couple of rides he did were exhausting, but after a week his body was used to it.

The encouragement and support that Paul provides to his colleagues (Paul is willing to travel different routes to accommodate others trying the bike commute for the first time) and his own personal example are what make Paul a clear 2009 Commute Champion!