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## Soaring gas prices boosting bike sales

Fullerton and Buena Park shop owner has seen a 25-percent increase over the previous year.

By **BARBARA GIASONE**

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FULLERTON Bicycle shop owner Mike Franze has been dealing with wheels for 32 years – from building BMX ramps as a kid to marketing mountain bikes.

Yet, he's never seen two-wheeler sales surge as quickly as in the past two months – along with the soaring gas prices.

At his two shops, there was a 25-percent increase in bike sales in April and May compared to the same months last year.

"We're selling a minimum 25 bikes a day on weekends," Franze said. "At this rate, we're on track to sell more than 2,000 bikes this year."

Bikes Belong, a national coalition of bicycle suppliers and retailers based in Boulder, Colo., predicts 20 million bicycles will be sold this year –

5 percent more than in 2007.

"Nationwide, retailers are telling us a lot more people are dusting off old bikes and bringing them to shops to get fixed, or buying new bikes," said Avery Stonich, Bikes Belong marketing director.

Katie McDorman, 22, and her mother, Jean McDorman, 55, of Fullerton circled the aisles at Franze's Fullerton Bicycles (Franze also owns Buena Park Bicycles). They aimed to cut down on gas bills.

"It's been 10 years since I rode to elementary school," Katie McDorman said. "But now I drive eight miles round-trip to work in La Habra, and I'm ready to bike it."

Jean McDorman said she will share the bike with her daughter, taking it aboard Metrolink trains and riding five miles to work in Costa Mesa.

Nigel Hamid, a salesman at Richard's Cyclery in Garden Grove, said there has been a 10-percent increase in bike sales over a year ago and an equal boost to the number of people bringing in bikes to be repaired for commuter use.

"Most of these folks say they are commuting 15 to 20 miles to work, and don't want to pay for gas," Hamid said.

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