

Bicycle Shops in State College, Pennsylvania

Bicycling, bicycle shops, and college towns go together. Full-service bike shops existed as early as 1896 in Bellefonte and State College. Since then, many small businesses served the market in Centre Region for bikes, accessories, repairs, and expert advice. Several shops were operated by students, who continued their studies along with the business. However, in 2023 there were only three full-service shops remaining as many businesses exited the market. Internet sales and big box retailers picked up the slack.

Local bike shops are an integral part of bicycle riding as a recreational and competitive activity. In 2023, there were six bike clubs for adults in the Centre Region for road and off-road riding: State College Cycling Club; Happy Valley Women's Cycling; Nittany Mountain Biking Association (NMBA); Rothrock Regulators; Penns Valley Pedals and Pints; and Penn State Cycling Club. These organizations provide instruction, group rides, races, and other services such as trail maintenance. CentreBike is a general organization for bicycling advocacy and safety. Additional local resources are a network of off-road trails in Boalsburg, "Harvest Fields Community Trails," built and maintained by NMBA and an annual 100-mile-ride "Central Cycling Classic Challenge" run by Centre Volunteers in Medicine. Two past Penn State cyclists are in the U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame. The Women's Cycling club sponsors several races, including the Rothrock GRIT Gravel.



The first shop of note in State College was Krumrine's Bicycle Shop, which opened in 1946 on Clay Alley behind 433 West College Ave. Operated by Walter F. "Tuffy" Krumrine, the shop initially offered only repairs but in 1951 began selling new bikes by Schwinn and Raleigh, two leading brands at the time. Krumrine's nickname was due to a childhood farm accident that he survived.

Shop in Clay Alley in 1947. (Photo courtesy of Richard James)

In April 1961, he moved to 441 West College, site of a former grocery store/butcher shop with its ornate tin ceiling and meat hooks. Another local store that offered full-service during the 1960s was Western Auto at 200 West College. Other stores such as Grants, O.W. Houts, Penn Traffic, and Sears sold new bikes but provided few other services. Over the years several stores rented bikes, including Metzgers and Appalachian Outdoors.

In 1965, Krumrine sold his business to Harvey Shoemaker, a Penn State student who worked at the shop in exchange for room and board. Shoemaker renamed the business, The Bicycle Shop, a name that survives to this day. The Shop sold again in 1979 to another student employee, Randy Moore, who was only nineteen years old at the time. One of the Shop's employees in the late 1980s was Mike Hermann, who went to found Purple Lizard Maps in 1997.



Bicycle Shop riders on homemade mountain bikes, c. 1979. (Photo courtesy of Randy Moore)

During the 1970s and 1980s, bicycle sales increased nationally and changed with the development of mountain bikes. Several new shops opened in State College, starting in 1973 with Strada Bicycle Shop in a small space on Highland Alley at Burrowes St. Owned by Stanley Voicheck and Gary Weeks, the shop sold new and reconditioned used bikes until its demise in 1988.

Pedals Bicycle Shop, owned initially by Mark Lyons and later by Randy Moore, offered full-service from 1973 to 1989 when its space on East Beaver Ave. was turned over to Appalachian Outdoors. Pedals was the first local shop to sell Specialized bikes, a top selling brand since 1981.

In the sport of bike motocross (BMX), Clayton John opened a BMX racetrack near Stormstown in 1977 and it was the site of a national championship in 1981. John was Penn State's hockey coach (1975-1981) and for many years the president of the American Bicycling Association. His shop was John's Derailleurs (1973-1985) on East College. An employee in the early 1980s was Bill Grove, who founded Grove Innovations. John's shop passed to Ken Hoy and then Edward Magulick in

1985. Renamed Eddie's Bicycle Shop & Hockey Equipment, it closed in June 2021 when the shop's building was torn down for a new high-rise, thus ending a long history at the same location.



Another market entrant in 1987 on South Allen and various College Ave. locations was New Age Bicycle Sport (aka 3B Sports), owned by Anthony DeAngelo and John Keller. For a time, New Age carried top mountain bike brands such as Kona, Giant, and GT. In the late-1980s, State College boasted five full-service shops, but by the end of the decade turnover had reduced the numbers.

New Age shop sign, 2003. (Photo courtesy of Howard Petrie)

Another business that opened after 2000 was Mt. Nittany Wheelworks (2003-2009) on Village Dr., owned by Frank Maguire. The Ski Station on College Ave. sold bikes and service in the 1990s under general manager Chad Rockey. Recumbent bikes were sold by Rob Gentry at RBR on South Atherton St. from 2002 to 2020. The Bicycle Shop changed hands three more times – in 2001 to Kevin and Sara Moore and again in 2005 to Erik Scott. A triathlete, Scott also operated B&E Cycle on Martin St. (2003-2005). In April of 2022, the Shop became a company-owned franchise of Specialized Bicycle Components, Inc. with Grant Corman as the manager.

Blacklist Bikes, owned by Wyatt Stoup and Jim Welsh, was a new entrant in 2021 with mobile repair service, custom frames, and parts for all types of bikes. Blacklist opened a full-service shop in Boalsburg in April of 2023. Lastly, Freeze Thaw Cycles was started in 2005 by three students – Jordyn Drayton (age 22), Corey Lev (24), and Justin Wagner (22) – in a small space on South Fraser St. for custom recycled bicycles. Along with ownership changes, it expanded twice, first to Calder Way in 2006 and then in 2009 to the current location on South Allen St. The store features a hand-picked selection of new bikes as well as a display of antique bikes, custom bikes, and accessories. Centre County bicycle riders are fortunate to have been served by many fine shops over the years. Like overlapping wheels, bicycle shops connect bike riders from different generations and bike types through a shared common resource.

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