Meet ED Michael Immel

Issues involving public health and the urban environment have long occupied Michael Immel. As a WalkBoston member, he's seen how walking can bridge the two. And as WalkBoston's new executive director, he can act on all three using his professional experience.

Named in April, Immel brings a unique perspective to the position. He spent 8 years developing and directing education programs for the AIDS Action Committee in Boston and is now leading a task force that is rewriting design and directing urban projects as a landscape architect. A believer in open communication and creative management, he has often worked as liaison between funding organizations, staff, volunteers and target audiences.

Immel can already visualize three paths to progress:

1. Seek additional partners for programs like Safe Routes to Schools and pursue long-range fundraising opportunities structured like STEPS, WalkBoston's current five-year program with the Boston Public Health Commission. [see Walking Groups, back page]
2. Expand WalkBoston's consulting practice by offering services such as community audits of walking environments or helping planners incorporate walking into the design process.
3. Employ social marketing strategies successful in the public health field. Social marketing informs, educates and encourages people to change an attitude or behavior—for example, to get out and walk more often. Immel points to WalkBoston's guided walks as instances of social marketing, where people have the opportunity to try something new. If they have a good experience, they'll do it again.

By strengthening existing programs and exploring new opportunities, Immel believes WalkBoston can further its local leadership in creating safe walking environments and expanding the walking constituency. All the recent news about Overweight America may signal the time is right for Immel's active approach.

New WalkBoston President

Elizabeth Levin, affectionately known as Liz, is the new president of WalkBoston. She began her presidency at our 14th annual meeting in March.

Liz has been a WalkBoston Board member since 2002. Well-known in her South End neighborhood, Liz is active in environmental, transportation and engineering projects throughout Greater Boston.

A Wellesley College graduate, Liz holds a Masters of Urban Affairs degree from Boston University and an MBA from Simmons School of Management.

President of Liz Levin & Company, a management consulting company serving the transportation, design and environmental industry, Liz was formerly a Senior Vice President and Principal at Rizzo Associates. At Rizzo, she led the Transportation and Environmental Permitting Group.

Liz's work has led to regional and national prominence, with honors and awards from the Environmental Business Council, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus, Women's Educational & Industrial Union and Women's Transportation Seminar.

Looking to the year ahead, Liz challenged WalkBoston members "to walk and engage with her and the Board as we move this year to build our organization's resources and to advance safer and better walking environments."

2004 Golden Shoe awards

Awarded at the 14th Annual WalkBoston meeting in March

Beth Larkin is leading a task force that is rewriting the Massachusetts Highway Design Manual, so that pedestrian needs will be included in the design of transportation facilities. Beth's employer, was cited for graciously providing the opportunity to try something new. If they have a good experience, they'll do it again.

The Cambridge Public Health Department sponsors an annual Cambridge Walks Program to encourage residents of all ages to walk and search for gold-painted shoes conspicuously "hidden" in parks and playgrounds. Pedestrians who discover a golden shoe can swap it for a free pair of New Balance walking shoes.

William "Buzz" Constable is an attorney active in conservation and trail development through the Land Conservation Trust in his hometown, Lincoln. Because of Buzz's efforts, Lincoln now boasts walking trails along all of its roads for recreation and for walking to school.

Ann Hershfang was WalkBoston's president from 1997 to 2004. She proudly notes the growth of the organization from its original 40 members to over 500 today. She has been invaluable as an advocate for pedestrians, and will continue her work as an advocate for improving pedestrian facilities and programs.
wanted

New copy machine  Small desktop copier with self-feeding feature. Used for 3000 copies/month. Call or email the office for details

Membership volunteers  Help membership grow to new levels! Team with our new staff to find new members and renew old memberships. Camaraderie and fun in return for only a few hours each week!

Volunteer coordinator  We need a few hours of help each week in finding and managing volunteer work. We have a lot of exciting things to do, and too few people to do it all. Join us in encouraging member participation! Call 617.367.9255.

DNC help  If you want to participate in our efforts, contact Erik Scheier at escheier@comcast.net or call 617.899.9116

walking groups

NeighborWalk walking groups  The Boston Public Health Commission’s STEPS Program has over 58 walking groups set up in seven neighborhoods as part of its anti-obesity and health campaign. WalkBoston is part of the STEPS program, helping create groups in Chinatown/South End, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, South Boston, Mattapan, and Roxbury. WalkBoston will aid these groups in evaluating local walking routes and recommending ways to improve pedestrian facilities – through neckdowns, wider sidewalks and more walk time at signals.

For information on joining a walking group, see www.bphc.org/bphc/neighborwalk_sched.asp.

riverpaths

On April 24, we joined with the cities of Somerville and Everett and the Mystic River Watershed Association to highlight the need for a path over the dam. We believe the simplest solution would be replacing the existing catwalk with a pedestrian crossing over the dam.

The DCR has designated $250,000 of the $1 million fine levied on Exelon Northeast for clean-air violations in Everett to design a path over the dam. We believe the simplest solution would be replacing the existing catwalk with a pedestrian walkway.

walking cities

The American Podiatric Medical Association, concerned with the health of the feet of our citizens, has surveyed 125 US cities to determine those best suited for fitness and walking in 2004. Boston ranked number 7, outranked only by New York, San Diego, Jersey City, Honolulu, Madison, and Philadelphia. To establish rankings, the Association weighed 20 criteria chosen to reflect both walking and walking conditions. Criteria concerning walking conditions included crime, urban sprawl, air quality, and annual precipitation of both rain and snow. Pedestrian participation rates were reflected in choice of commuting mode (walk/or bike and the use of mass transit), and the use of historic sites, museums, parks and health or fitness clubs in each city.

The Routes  WalkBoston volunteers will be stationed at hotels and along the best walking routes to the convention. Volunteers will guide the delegates along these routes, making their walk convenient, informative, and enjoyable.

To accomplish this WalkBoston will:

• Distribute maps and route info at hotels during the convention.
• Provide “WalkStations” with colorful banners and T-shirt clad volunteers to cheer and celebrate the walking delegates.
• Describe travel time, health and environmental impacts for transit, shuttle bus, taxi, and walking choices.
• Create a memorable walking surface illustrated with artwork drawn on the pavement by a Boston artistic legend.

mission

WalkBoston promotes walking for transportation, health and advocacy. Our mission is to create and preserve safe walking communities.

memberships

Completed this form & mail along with your check made payable to:
"WalkBoston, Old City Hall, 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108.
T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | info@walkboston.org | www.walkboston.org

name(s)

address

phone/daytime  evening

e-mail  fax

check one:

STUDENT / SENIOR ($5+)  $15
MEMBER  $30
FRIEND  $100
DUAL / FAMILY  $40
SUPPORTER  $50
ORGANIZATION  $250  $500  $1000

circle committees you are interested in. (to contact them directly - see front)

membership  advocacy  communications
legislative  development  programs

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.