

Take My Wheel Award Spotlights Staff Generosity

January 2013

The famous *Tour de France* bicycle race and a generous gesture from **John Herzog** inspired **Mike Hutchinson** to invent the Take My Wheel Award for GeoEngineers staff in the Puget Sound region.

If you have ever watched a stage of the *Tour de France*, you have probably seen the leading rider assist another by letting his teammate ride right behind him. This racing strategy, called *drafting*, allows the following rider to ride with less headwind for a few miles and get his energy back. To bike racers, drafting is also known as “taking my wheel.”

Mike explained, “I was feeling a bit run down, getting over a cold, working on numerous projects, campaigns and pursuits and dealing with other personal issues when John came to me and said, “Take my wheel for a while... How can I help?” He did not do it for any reason—just a partner helping a partner. It totally energized me (instantly!) and gave me the ability to help someone else. I was very inspired and something came from that inspiration.”

Mike worked with **Stefani Harrey** to create a trophy that would represent the kind of help John gave Mike just when he needed it. They decided on a golden bike wheel mounted on a trophy base. When the Take My Wheel trophy was ready, Mike presented it to John. John then selected the next award recipient, **Tina Remley**.

Since last July, Take My Wheel Award recipients have also included **Sean Cool, Nancy Hill, Paul McAfee, Jodie Sheldon** and **Brett Larabee**. At each passing of the wheel, they praised the next award winner for their dedication, willingness to help, can-do attitude or commitment to excellence.

Mike said, “The wheel represents the helping hand we lend to someone to get them back in the pack. It is not about a billable hour, an exchange of favors or anything else beyond the spirit of altruism and recognizing that someone needs a breather.”



Sean Cool poses with the Take My Wheel trophy in Bellingham.

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