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Left to right . . . Cody Austin, Tim Engel, Tiffany Bauereisen, Kasey Martin and Craig Bastible.

Five of Burleson's finest have taken to the streets on bicycles.

Officers Cody Austin, Craig Bastible, Tiffany Bauereisen and Kasey Martin were certified through the Law Enforcement Bicycle Association (LEBA) at the Fort Worth Police Department. Officer Tim Engel and two other officers were trained through an International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) class at the Denton Police Department.

"Both classes entailed classroom work and practicals on the rules of the road, technical riding, obstacles, slow speed maneuvering, high speed maneuvering, emergency braking, contacts, pursuits, defensive tactics and how to take a fall," Officer Engel said.

The department already had two patrol bicycles that were donated in 2000 when the unit first got pedaling. Thanks to Chesapeake Energy, the department was able to purchase four additional bicycles this year.

"The bicycles are smaller than a car, quiet and can be used in tight spaces," Engel said. "They can be used in target areas that are having specific problems, such as car burglaries. They are also cost effective. Bicycles get unlimited miles per gallon."

The patrol bicycles, which are mounted on the back of the officer's patrol cars, are used in neighborhoods, shopping areas, apartment complexes and during special events including festivals and parades. The first time the unit worked together as a team was at the Burleson Old Town Boo Bash on Oct. 31. Most recently, the unit worked the Christmas parade.

Engel celebrates six years with the BPD in January. He rode BMX until he entered high school. He has done some recreational mountain biking. Now, with

a road bike, he wants to complete a Century Ride (100-mile ride). In addition to riding, he also works out at the gym, plays soccer, and practices judo.

"I wanted to be a sworn bicycle officer so I could combine law enforcement with the riding. Bicycles allow for more interaction with people. We're more approachable," Engel said.

Bastible was hired by Burleson in January 2006. When he was younger he rode BMX bikes, but when he became interested in the bicycle patrol, he switched to a mountain bike.

"I usually ride four or five times a week and use my personal bike as a mode of transportation. It's cheap on gas and keeps me in shape," Bastible said.

In addition to bicycling, Bastible plays football.

Bauereisen is a three-year veteran of the department. She loved to ride bicycles as a child, played softball and has always been athletic.

"The bicycles make it easier to sneak up on the criminals," Bauereisen said.

Martin joined the department in April 2006 after six years of active duty in the United States Air Force as a staff sergeant with the military police. He has been riding bicycles, mostly road bikes, for the past three years.

"It helps me stay in good physical condition and you have the element of surprise," Martin said. "It's harder to hear and see a bicycle officer."

Austin has been wearing the Burleson Police uniform since May 2006. He rode mountain and BMX-style bikes growing up.

"This is a good way to interact with the public in a positive manner," Austin said of the bicycle patrol unit. "It's also a great way to exercise on the job."

Austin hunts, fishes, runs and plays every sport he can.

For more information about this release, call the public information office at 817-447-5400, ext. 286.