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CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)
Mweinstein@cedarville.edu
[@cedarvilleneews](https://twitter.com/cedarvilleneews)

From Cedarville University Comes the “Bike of the Future”

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Students from Cedarville University’s industrial and innovative design, mechanical engineering and business programs, are working to create a high-end, personal mobility device – a sustainable e-bike. They will roll out their creation during the North American Handmade Bicycle Show (NAHBS) March 10-12 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

E-bikes are a new trend among bicycle riders. An e-bike comes equipped with a battery and motor, which can assist the rider in movement. The bike can function as a normal bike, but it can also be fully or partly operated by the motor.

The three teams are creating a bike with a wooden frame, rather than a metal one, along with Jay Kinsinger, an associate professor of mechanical and biomedical engineering at Cedarville and a world class wooden bike craftsman. Alex Camacho, associate professor of marketing, and a team of business students, are collaborating with Kinsinger to develop the marketing plan.

The idea for the e-bike project originated with Kinsinger, who has been building award-winning wooden bikes for the past several years. After being elected to an entrepreneurial board last year, Kinsinger saw the opportunity for collaboration between engineering, business, and design students. The bike is the capstone project for six senior engineering students.

“This is the first capstone project with an emphasis in collaboration between majors,” said Kinsinger. “It’s a very open-ended project. There’s no answer in the back of the book for this one.”

“Each of our three programs – engineering, design and business – are interested in innovation and creating 'real-world' projects to enhance the student experience, but each of our disciplines bring something diverse and unique to the process,” said Jim Stevenson, president of the International Center for Creativity (ICC) and supporting instructor of industrial and innovative design for Cedarville students.

Trayton Ojala, industrial designer and project specialist at ICC and a 2014 Cedarville graduate, led the design aspect of the project. “The project teaches the students to lean on the expertise of others and to communicate outside of their own discipline – both of which are extremely important when trying to get a product to market with efficiency,” he said.

ICC students presented the final design concept on October 21, engineering students are preparing to build the bike and business students from are looking for ways to market and sell it. One of the first places this will be tested is NAHBS.

“We’re going to check the demand and interest,” Kinsinger said. “I’m looking for orders.”

Kinsinger explained that e-bikes are huge in Europe and Asia, and he sees a great potential market in the United States. “You still pedal, but the bike helps you,” he said. “The harder you push, the more it helps. In Europe, you see 70 and 80-year-olds cruising along on these.”

The bike going to Salt Lake City will be available for viewing in the Stevens Center on May 5, 2017.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,760 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.