

Clearing the course for Hot Hundred bike ride

Druid City Bicycle Club cleans up road used for fundraising race

By Paige Bursleson Special to The Tuscaloosa News
Published: Sunday, July 24, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

An important part of the preparations for this weekend's Hot Hundred Bike Ride, which benefits the Tuscaloosa Mental Health Alliance, took place Sunday.

Members of the Druid City Bicycle Club gathered at Sanders Ferry Road to clean up litter along the ride's course, a stretch of road that is also heavily used by the Tuscaloosa biking community.

"We want the cyclists going out and seeing a litter-free route to get started with," said Stephen Secor, a University of Alabama professor in the department of biological sciences and a member of the bike club.

The group cleaned up for a few hours along Joe Mallisham Parkway, U.S. Highway 11 and U.S. Highway 43, using trash bags supplied the Tuscaloosa Department of Environmental Services.

Secor has been riding and volunteering for the Hot Hundred since the first ride 14 years ago.

He will be one of the support and gear, or SAG, drivers at this year's ride.

"A SAG driver, which is someone who is out on the road in a vehicle when the ride is going on," Secor said. "I'll have a trainer with me, and we'll drive around and help out people who either have a flat tire, some mechanical problems, but more so to assist riders who are overheated, need more fluids or need to take a break."

About 650 cyclists are expected to brave the Alabama heat on Saturday for the Hot Hundred bike ride.

"Proceeds benefit those in the West Alabama community that are facing the challenges and stigma of mental illness," said Kathryn Adams, administrative assistant for the Tuscaloosa Mental Health Alliance.

Adams said the event raised nearly \$20,000 last year. The alliances's goal is to put the money right back into the community.

"The Tuscaloosa Mental Health Alliance meets monthly to discuss resources available and to advocate for the highest quality care and services for those who need it," Adams said. "We also award grants to individuals and the agencies to help fund their programs or to meet direct needs for those in crisis. The money raised through the Hot Hundred specifically funds our grant program."



Staff Photo/Erin Nelson

Lucas Miller, vice president of the Druid City Bicycle Club (DCBC) works with others to pick up trash along Sanders Ferry Road in Tuscaloosa on Sunday. Members of DCBC gathered at Sanders Ferry Road to pick up trash along the 8-mile stretch of road in preparation for the Alabama Backroads Century Series 14th annual Hot Hundred bike ride on Saturday.

The ride begins at 7 a.m., but registration starts at 6 a.m.

“Our registration fee is \$70 on site, but our online registration is still open through Tuesday at 5 p.m., and it is \$60,” Adams said.

There are five different routes that people are able to register to ride: the 29-mile Crimson Tide Ride, the 36-mile Up Dry Creek Without A Paddle, the 53-mile Frog Ridge Croaker, the 71-mile Crazy Like a FoxFire Metric and the 103-mile Hellishly Hot Hundred.

According to Adams the rides all start at University of Alabama Outdoor Pool Complex and the cyclists will proceed down University Boulevard through downtown Tuscaloosa and then out on separate routes.

“This is strictly a ride,” Adams said. “We don't (track) time. You just ride and finish your route. For a lot of these cyclists, particularly the ones that want to do the century route, that's the accomplishment to cycle for over 100 miles especially in the July heat of Alabama.”

Adams said there are five rest stops available throughout routes. These stops are all manned by about 190 volunteers supplied with snacks, Gatorade and first aid, if needed. There will also be one rest stop with Chick-fil-A sandwiches and another stop with snow cones.

“We have a lot to offer the cyclists on routes,” Adams said. “Then we also have DCH (Regional Medical Center) sports trainers positioned at headquarters for cyclists when they return in case anyone is showing signs of heat exhaustion or other issues. They will be available with cold towels, ice baths and any kind of assistance that they might need.”

Adams said the most important thing to stay cool on this hot day for the volunteers and the cyclists is hydration.

“We have water products, Gatorade and soft drinks and things provided by Buffalo Rock (beverage company),” Adams said. “We are also going to have McAlister's (Deli) out at our headquarters with sweet and un-sweet tea.”

Adams said there will be lunch provided by Full Moon Barbecue for all of the registered cyclists. They will also have access to the University of Alabama outdoor pool when the cyclists finish their route.

“Although we don't personally have an after-party after the ride that is sponsored by Hot Hundred, we partner with Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission to let the cyclists know of anything going on that they can participate in because we have a number of out-of-town cyclists who come into Tuscaloosa just for this event.” Adams said.

Adams said the Embassy Suites in downtown Tuscaloosa will be the host hotel for the first time.

“We also have a partnership with Hampton Inn,” Adams said, “They are sponsoring rooms for our wounded warrior participants, which we are really grateful for. Sweet Home Food Bar has also donated a space in the back of their restaurant to host a dinner for our Wounded Warrior participants. “

There's still time to volunteer to help at the Hot Hundred or to register to participate in the ride.

“We welcome all cyclists and volunteers to come out and take part in this crazy ride,” Adams said. “Beyond that, if there is anyone who can't participate with us this year

or cycling is not their thing, they can visit tusalosamha.org to donate. It's very simple and it goes to help those with mental illness. “

Copyright © 2016 TuscaloosaNews.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.