

Veterans ranch plans fundraising event

Central Oregon Veterans Ranch is a 19-acre farm located between Bend and Redmond that provides peer support, agri-therapy, and will soon specialize in end-of-life care for veterans.

In January 2017, COVR obtained a state license to open and operate an adult foster home on the property to provide specialized care to terminally ill or aged veterans. This spring, the Ranch will also implement a \$55,000 greenhouse project and work with veterans and community members to develop a sustainable agri-business.

On June 3, the Ranch will host The Red, White & Blue Ball at the Winter Range Ranch. Patrons will enjoy dinner, live music by Lindy Gravelle, Doc Ryan, and the Whychus Creek Band, dancing, a silent auction and raffle.

For sponsorship information or to purchase tickets visit www.covrredwhiteblueball.com or email admin@centraloregonveteransranch.org.

Cycling event honors Bjarne Holm

The annual Crest the Cascades scenic bike ride over the Old McKenzie Highway is back for another year.

The riders are paying homage to Sisters cycling advocate and volunteer Bjarne Holm, who died last year. Through his work with the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA) and Sisters Park & Recreation District (SPRD), Holm dedicated his time and energy to ensure fellow cyclists were able to enjoy one of the most beautiful passes in the state without having to compete with motorists.

Sponsor organization Sisters Park & Recreation District is commemorating Holm's life and work by putting his name on one of his favorite events. With STA providing volunteers, the ride is scheduled for Saturday, June 17.

Crest the Cascades was originally established under the name The Ride for Two Rivers. This ride began as a benefit for the National Forest Foundation, protecting both Whychus Creek and the Metolius River — iconic rivers of the Sisters area. Both rivers were in need of restoration along the river corridors, and fish habitat needed

improvement. Proceeds from The Ride for Two Rivers benefitted these local waterways, helping to improve Central Oregon rivers.

Beginning two years ago, the ride transferred ownership to the Sisters Park & Recreation District. Proceeds from the Crest the Cascades Ride will benefit SPRD and support efforts to provide affordable recreation and enrichment opportunities to the Sisters community.

The Crest the Cascades Ride begins at the SPRD campus, which is adjacent to the Old McKenzie Highway. This highway used to be a wagon toll route that meandered its way through the lava flows. That same wagon route was turned into a paved, two-lane highway that is open only during the summer months. The route is closed seasonally between the east and west gates, which provides Crest the Cascades Riders 44 miles of riding with no cars on the road during its seasonal closure.

Riders begin the event at SPRD and cycle toward the east gate and first-aid station which is about nine miles into the ride. The climbing

begins in earnest at the east gate, where the pitch averages an 8-9 percent incline and finally peaks out at the top of the pass at 5,200 feet at Dee Wright Observatory, about 15 miles into the course. A dramatic change in landscape occurs from SPRD to Dee Wright Observatory with riders beginning in large pine tree forests, passing through Douglas fir forests, and finally ending in the alpine lava landscape that characterizes the Dee Wright Observatory.

The observatory offers a panoramic view of the Cascade Mountain Range. Mountains as far away as Mt. Adams, a large volcanic mountain in southern Washington nearly 200 miles away, can be seen on clear days. An aid station is available at the summit of the ride where riders can fuel up on water and light snacks before continuing their journey.

Blazin Saddles bike shop staff will be at the summit to assist with any maintenance issues.

Some riders choose to turn around at the observatory while others continue along

the route toward the west gate. For riders that continue toward the west gate on this out-and-back ride, the scenery is comprised of alpine meadows, mountain views, and roadside ponds as riders wind their way down the west slopes of the Cascades. The west gate is the final destination of the Crest the Cascades ride. Some riders continue beyond the final aid station which is approximately 31 miles outside of Sisters. Belknap Hot Spring is another eight miles down the road for the ambitious riders.

After returning from their ride at SPRD, registered participants are invited to enjoy post-ride festivities including music, soup and subs. A local DJ will greet riders beginning at 2 p.m., while fresh local soups will be provided by sponsors Melvin's Fir Street Market and sandwiches by Subway.

More information, including a course map and registration for the event, is available at www.CrestTheCascades.com. Registration is \$40. Participants can pre-order T-shirts for \$15 during their registration.

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