

Courtesy graphic

## Book blends bikes and graphics

By Betsy Clayton  
Emerald Reporter

It's a gorgeous fall day — the perfect cycling weather. You grab your bike and a map of a route and head off to the trail. Unfortunately, you discover the hard way that the picturesque, curving country road on your map is actually a series of switchbacks climbing the side of a hill and your tour will be a lot harder and longer than you expected.

Peter Powers knows how important the terrain of a route is and that's why he put together his map book called "Touring Eugene." Powers' maps are computerized graphics that give a three-dimensional look at the topography of the chosen area and therefore give the cyclist a complete idea of what to expect.

"This book is the first application of this type of computer mapping to recreation," Powers said. "There's been good local interest in the books because they are so different and unique."

The computer generated view of the earth's surface accurately describe the nature of the landscape and the road system on it in different areas. This is what sets the maps in Powers' book apart from other cycling books, he explains in the book's introduction.

Powers began working with

the idea of computerized cartography about three years ago. He has been a cartographer with the forest service for the last 10 years, and he developed his interest in computer graphing as a hobby. When he found himself ready to apply the graphing to maps, he decided to combine it with his interest in cycling and touring.

A year ago, Powers came out with four maps of different trails in Eugene, and he started selling them individually in cycle shops.

"My original idea was just to sell them separately. I printed them in groups of four and each time I did, I improved them," he said. With the feedback Powers received from local store owners, he saw that runners also were using his maps. So he then decided to look at other possible trails and put them all together in a book designed for cyclists, runners and walkers.

"Touring Eugene" came out in August and currently is being sold in 26 stores in the area. It has 15 mapped routes that range from flat and five miles to hilly and 50 miles. The size of the book is small so it can be taken on tour, and the maps easily can be cut out. Other information such as local sporting events, weather, fitness tips and cycling laws are included. There also is a special section listing

47 Forest Service trails recommended for mountain bikes.

"I'd like to see this help people get out and take different trips. It opens up an awful lot of options," Powers said. People tend to have their favorite routes, and often they hesitate to explore because they don't know what their getting themselves into, he explained.

To begin making a computerized map, Powers takes a U.S. Geological Survey map and places it on a digitizer that traces the entire map. He can then use his computer program to project the image on his screen and drape lakes, roads and parks on it. After that he makes a plot with colored pens, still using his computer, and then does more cartographical improvements. At the end he profiles the route on top. "Each map is very complete," he said.

Powers said that he's not surprised that no one thought of using this type of mapping for recreation before. "It's a special niche. You have to have the interest to create it, the interest in cycling, the willingness to put money into it and the background in cartology." He has seen computer cartology used for oil work and in conjunction with analysis of land, but never cycling.

For the future direction of

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