

Get ready to love Lycra

CYCLE OREGON BRINGS 'HELL ON WHEELS' BACK TO THE ROAD

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Look out Wallowa County, 2,200 bike riders are headed our way for Cycle Oregon's second "Hell on Wheels" ride. The first ride was in 2003 and Cycle Oregon is pleased to re-prise it.

"This is a popular area for us. We know by our numbers that this is a good route because people are eager to sign up," said Tara Corbin, community liaison and event manager for Cycle Oregon.

The ride departs from Baker City on Sept. 12 and circles through Farewell Bend, to Cambridge, Idaho, to Halfway. Then the riders face their toughest challenge, up the hill from Halfway to Wallowa Lake — 77 miles and a gain of 3,400 feet in elevation. This is the "Highway to Hell" section, which features a stop at the Hells Canyon Overlook.

Hell is both challenging and stunning. According to the official guide for the ride, "the climb from Pine Valley to the High Wallows is the most memorable we've ever laid wheels on."

"That hill is a challenge with lovely scenery," said Corbin. "I think it both scares riders and excites them."

Jerry Peacock of Baker City recalls his first ride through Wallowa County as one of "majestic beauty."

"I think it's one of the prettiest and majestic places in the state," Peacock said. "It's probably one of the best kept secrets in the state. The people are very welcoming and when you get to experience it with 2,000 other people it's even more fun."

Once the riders arrive at Wallowa Lake State Park on Wednesday, Sept. 16, they get a rest day — the only rest day on the route.

"When they wake up on Thursday, they don't have to ride their bikes," Corbin said.

Cycle Oregon has an organized ride to Enterprise for those who want to go, and a special lunch will be served on the courthouse lawn (Enterprise FCCLA will assist in serving), "but we really encourage our folks to go to local sites," Corbin said. "I know the Lions Club is serving barbecued salmon in Joseph and there are plenty of things to see."

In addition to the Lions Club fundraiser, the Wallowa County Humane Society is setting up an information booth at Wallowa Lake, Sept. 16 and 17. They will offer local information, maps, brochures and Wallowa County Visitor Guides. Money donated to the Humane



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Cycle Oregon riders enjoy a ride down Hurricane Creek Road during the 2008 trip.

Society during this time will be earmarked for a future sanctuary.

Businesses that work with Cycle Oregon also benefit.

The official guide for riders encourages them to visit Enterprise for lunch and a few rider-favorites have built early relationships into events.

"Last time they came through we were packed all day long," said Jacey Bell, pub manager at Terminal Gravity in Enterprise. "We got in touch with Cycle Oregon to try and prepare for this year. This time we're planning on having extra staff on and an outside barbecue in addition to our regular menu. We've also made Terminal Gravity cycle jerseys for riders."

Visiting the local towns is one of the big draws to the Cycle Oregon, Peacock said.

"Having a layover day is exciting because I can't think of a better place to have a layover day," he said. "You have such a diverse downtown in Joseph. It's fun to tour in and out of shops and restaurants. The food provided by Cycle Oregon is delicious, but it's fun to go into the communities and sample what they've got."

On Sept. 18 the group heads for La Grande, and winds up back at Baker City.

"It's a cool route," Corbin said. "It's just nice. We're staying at a couple of state parks, the communities are great; it's a lot of nice things."

In addition to adding a bit of money to the local economy through dinners out and shopping, the 2,200 riders in the Cycle Oregon group take home their rave reviews of Wallowa County, boosting tourism among their friends and family.

And finally, Cycle Oregon gives direct aid to communities through grants.

"Most people are aware that we put on the best bike ride in the country," said Alison Graves, Cycle Oregon's executive director. "But our organization's purpose is actually twofold. We exist to showcase Oregon's lesser-known areas. And second, we work to create economic opportunities, such as our efforts to establish the Scenic Bikeways Program (SBP), which was recently recognized for generating \$12 million in 2014 and enabling 150 jobs."

"We want to expose people to the special places around the state and give people the tools and the reasons to come back again. And we want to do our part to support these communities, which are the heart and soul of Oregon."

Cycle Oregon has invested a total of \$1.6M throughout the state with more than \$350,000 in the communities along this year's route. Projects range from \$1,500 for bicycle racks in the downtown Baker City area to \$50,000 for improvements to the Halfway Fairgrounds.

Peacock has seen the benefits of Cycle Oregon money first-hand in Baker City but additionally remarked upon the sense of being part of something good that riders got from riding with Cycle Oregon.

"Cycle Oregon is very well organized and has a great reputation of supporting communities and helping them fundraise from outside sources instead of having to ask their own townspeople over and over," he said. "Riders from foreign countries

and probably every state in the union ride with Cycle Oregon — though probably the majority are from Oregon. I think one of the real advantages you have in Cycle Oregon is you get to see parts of the state you didn't even know existed."

Cycle Oregon has dedicated more than \$10,456 to Eastern Oregon University for research on the Rails-with-Trails project along the 63.5 mile route of Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA) track. Cycle Oregon also granted \$7,229 to NEOEDD for their research and support of the project in 2014.

"We are excited about the day when we can ride the Joseph Branch Trail," said Graves. "This is an important project that promises to create economic opportunities while also highlighting a hidden and



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Cycle Oregon riders enjoy some time in Joseph during the 2008 ride.

stunning landscape along the river."

NEOEDD in conjunction with Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA), and other

regional partners plans a two-day Bicycle Tourism Studio workshop to help local businesses learn to capitalize on bicycle tourism later this fall.

Juniper Jam

Many THANKS to the hard working volunteers, vendors, musicians, and the following SPONSORS who made the 7th Annual JUNIPER JAM a huge success:

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HELLS CANYON
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EVENT SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 11-12-13, 2015

Wallowa County Fairgrounds
Enterprise, Oregon

FEATURING TENNESSEE MULE ARTIST BONNIE SHIELDS

Free Raffle Ticket With HCMD Program Purchase

ALL DAY EVENTS

9:00 am Old World Oxen Living History Company
9:00 am Exhibitors/Artisans & Western Gear Show
10:00 am Vintiques Show, Cloverleaf Hall

Friday

9:00 am **Mule Show – Full day of competition**
Driving Events - Singles, Teams & Youth Classes
Trail & Timed Trail Classes
Log Pull, Mule Races & More!

6:00 pm Max Walker Memorial Cowboy Poetry Gathering
Traditional toe-tappin' cowboy tunes & western poetry

Saturday

8:00 am Halter and Showmanship Events
9:00 am Matt Fournier Mule Clinic - Warm Up Arena
11:00 am Non-Motorized Parade - Downtown Enterprise
12:31 pm Spectator Kids Events - Main Outdoor Arena
1:00 pm Grand Entry & Mule Show - Main Outdoor Arena
An afternoon of fun and entertaining events

2:00 pm Cowboy Poetry Gathering - Exhibitors Barn - Open Mic
5:00 pm Pit B-B-Q Dinner - \$10.00 • Scholarship Fundraiser
6:00 pm Mule and Horse Sale - Indoor Arena - Managed by J Arrow Livestock

Sunday

7:30 am Cowboy Church - Exhibitors Barn
8:00 am **Mule Show – Full day of competition**
Barrel Racing, Pole Bending, Death Valley Race,
Jump-off Challenge and lots more family fun!

9:00 am Dutch Oven Cook-Off - 2 member teams
10:00 am Levi King Mule Clinic - Warm Up Arena
4:00 pm Show Awards Presentation

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