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Saturday, July 9th, 2011 | Posted by **Crystal Lee**

## Davis kicks off Livestrong fundraiser



Utah resident Elden "Fatty" Nelson rides a stationary bike at the Nissan Innovation booth to see how much of a house he could power by pedaling a bicycle. Wayne Tilcock/Enterprise photo

More than 1,400 bicyclists will pedal through Davis on Sunday to raise awareness and funding for cancer survivorship and research in the city's first Livestrong Challenge ride.

Davis is the first stop in the three-city fundraising challenge that includes Philadelphia and Austin, Texas. It is the first time Davis is hosting the fundraiser, founded by seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong.

"We're thrilled and grateful to be able to bring the Livestrong Challenge to Davis for the first time this year," Armstrong said Saturday in an email to The Enterprise. "The Davis community has opened its arms to Livestrong and we want to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of Sunday's challenge."

Armstrong is expected to speak briefly Sunday morning before riding out with the first group of cyclists at 7:30 a.m. The start and finish lines are set up in the 300 block of C Street downtown, adjacent to Central Park.

The cyclists are from 36 states and nine countries. As of Saturday afternoon, they had raised \$855,000 for the Davis Challenge through rider pledges, donations and sponsorships, said Livestrong Challenge spokeswoman Jenifer Sarver.

The goal is to raise \$900,000 in Davis, she said. At last year's event in San Jose, 1,600 participants raised more than \$1.1 million.

Funds raised support cancer research, prevention, early detection and control, and assistance programs for survivors.

The riders will start their various routes of 20, 45, 70 or 105 miles by heading south on C Street. They will travel west on First Street, south on A Street, then wind westward on Hutchison Drive across the UC Davis campus. They will emerge on Russell Boulevard at Olive Tree Road and continue west past the

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city limits.

Cyclists on the 20-mile route are expected to arrive at the finish line between 8:40 and 9:45 a.m. Local residents are invited to line the route to cheer them on.

The next finishers are expected to complete the 45-mile route between 9:40 and 11:50 a.m., followed by the 70-mile riders between 11:05 a.m. and 2:40 p.m. The last cyclists to come home will have completed the 105-mile route between 12:45 and 6 p.m.

Among the participants is Davis Mayor Joe Krovoza, who plans to ride 45 miles on a road bike borrowed from a friend. Krovoza said he is excited to be part of "a great group of riders with a great cause in mind."

He also said he is happy for the opportunity to show off his city to new and bike-minded visitors.

"It's just another opportunity to shine, and I know that we will tomorrow," Krovoza said Saturday. He had spoken to several Livestrong Challenge participants who praised the U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame and the Davis Farmers Market, which operated harmoniously with the registration expo Saturday in Central Park.

"I really like it here," said Elden Nelson, captain of "Team Fatty," which will ride the 105-mile route. They expect to be on the road about six hours. Nelson, 45, who is from a small town in Utah, bought cherries and cheese danishes at the Farmers Market after a morning jog on a trail near the UCD campus.

After seeing the town, he said he would like his children to attend college in Davis.

Nelson said he began fundraising for Livestrong about three years ago, when his late wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. He started a blog, "Fat Cyclist," documenting their experience with cancer until his wife died in 2009 from the disease. He has ridden in the Philadelphia Challenge once and the Austin Challenge twice.

For the Davis Challenge, Nelson's team raised \$118,000, making "Team Fatty" the top fundraiser for the event.

"We have folks coming from all over the country to participate in this. It's really a national-scale event," said city spokesman Bob Bowen.

Local hotels were completely booked for the weekend due to guests who were in town for the cycling challenge, as well as a girls soccer tournament, Bowen said. He said drawing visitors to town is important because many people return once they have had a chance to experience Davis.

Bowen said a healthy tourism industry means more people at local restaurants, shops and hotels, which leads to a healthy local economy.

"We're swamped," B&L Bike Shop manager Christy Tamm said Saturday afternoon. Customers were mostly buying energy foods, which are made for athletes, from the downtown store, she said.

Tamm said she would love to see Davis host more events like the Livestrong Challenge.

For a map of the routes, see [http://www.livestrong.org/pdfs/2-2/LSC\\_DavisCA\\_Full\\_Course\\_Map](http://www.livestrong.org/pdfs/2-2/LSC_DavisCA_Full_Course_Map).

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