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Monday, July 11th, 2011 | Posted by **Enterprise staff**

Livestrong Challenge raises over \$880K in Davis ride



Lance Armstrong signs a framed photograph for a fan prior to the start of the Livestrong Challenge ride in Davis Sunday morning. To view galleries and purchase prints of Livestrong Challenge photos, visit <http://davisenterprise.zenfolio.com>. Fred Gladdis/Enterprise photo

They came from 36 states and nine countries to ride their bikes through Davis and raise money for cancer research, prevention and survivor assistance.

And when the last of more than 1,400 riders crossed the finish line Sunday, the Livestrong Challenge had collected over \$880,000 in pledges, donations and sponsorships for the cause.

"Together we have raised close to \$1 million to support people and families affected by cancer and we appreciate every one of the 11,000 donors who made that possible," said Lance Armstrong, seven-time Tour de France champion and Livestrong chairman and founder, in a news release.

This was the fundraising ride's first time in Davis. The three-city series heads to Philadelphia, Aug. 20-21, and will conclude in Austin, Texas, Oct. 15-16.

In addition to raising money to help find a cure for cancer, the ride boosted the local economy. The ride took place on the same weekend as the Davis Legacy Soccer Showcase, which brought more than 100 Northern California girls teams to area fields for a three-day tournament. (Next up, the boys showcase is planned this weekend.)

Bike riders, soccer players, parents and coaches filled Davis hotels, ate at local restaurants and did some shopping — all contributing to the city's cash registers.

"On the weekend after the Fourth of July, which is typically slow, it was hoppin'," said city spokesman Bob Bowen.

"We're very pleased with the impact on the town. The hotels were all full. ... So far, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive."

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Bowen said city leaders already are talking with ride organizers about bringing the event back next year. However, they're hoping to plan the ride on a separate weekend from other large events like the soccer tournament to spread out the economic boost for local businesses.

Bowen said he heard from riders that "they loved the town and the support and the farmers market where they picked up their (registration) packet, and the cheering along the routes."

Participants had the choice of riding 20-, 45-, 70- or 105-mile courses. The start and finish lines were on C Street next to Central Park where a Livestrong Challenge Village was set up with vendor tents and food booths to celebrate before and after the ride.

Joining locals from the Davis-area were 45 students from the University of Texas at Austin who stopped in Davis to participate in the ride as they continue on toward Anchorage, Alaska, as part of the Livestrong Texas 4000 for Cancer.

Elden Nelson, the captain of "Team Fatty: Fighting Like Susan," led the fundraising efforts for this year's event, winning awards for Individual Champion, Individual Messenger, Team Champion and Team Time Trial — all designated by Livestrong in the effort to encourage fundraising. "Team Fatty" was the event's top fundraiser, contributing \$118,000.

Nelson said he began fundraising for Livestrong about three years ago, when his late wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. He started a blog, FatCyclist.com, documenting their experience with cancer until his wife died in 2009 from the disease. He rode in the Philadelphia Challenge once and the Austin Challenge twice before participating in the Davis ride.

Through his blog, Nelson inspires people online to join him in the fight against cancer.

"I ride for those who can't, and in memory of those who have lost their battle with cancer," Nelson said in the news release. "I am honored to lead a team of passionate, committed individuals who come together to do their small part in the fight against cancer, a disease which has touched us all and am grateful to Livestrong for leading the charge for survivors around the globe."

Livestrong was founded by Armstrong, himself a cancer survivor, to serve people affected by cancer and empower them to take action. Since its inception, the organization has raised more than \$400 million for the fight against cancer. The Livestrong Challenge events alone have raised more than \$70 million since 1997.

For more information, visit livestrong.org.


To view galleries and purchase prints of Livestrong Challenge photos, visit http://davis_enterprise.zenfolio.com.





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