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Livestrong to Challenge Davis in June



Seven-time Tour De France winner Lance Armstrong leads a group of riders down C street in Davis during the 2011 Livestrong Challenge. A Tuesday announcement indicated that the Livestrong ride will be back in Davis in June in its continuing mission to raise money for cancer research and awareness. Fred Gladdis/Enterprise file photo

It had such a good time last summer, it will be back for more Davis-style hospitality on June 23-24 next year.

The Livestrong Challenge is a three-part celebration in which a dozen athletic events — mostly revolving around cycling and the sport's superstar, Lance Armstrong — are designed to raise funds and awareness for the fight against cancer.

“We'll have a lot of the same things we had last year, but the route is a little different this time around — more downtown, more flat,” Davis Public Relations Manager Bob Bowen told The Enterprise on Tuesday, just after the Livestrong organizers made the announcement.

Davis joins Philadelphia (Aug. 18-19) and Austin, Texas (Sept. 21) as the American sites for Armstrong's campaign against cancer.

Last year, more than 1,500 cyclists followed Armstrong's lead and took monitored rides from 20 to 100 miles through what one tour official called “some of Northern California's most beautiful countryside.”

Last year's two-day local event raised close to \$1 million, according to Challenge officials.

“We hope to have as many as 2,000 riders this year,” Bowen explained, adding that people who rode last year will “tell their friends” about it and the pack should increase.

Just like last year, there will be a Saturday Livestrong Village in Central Park (coinciding with the Davis Farmers Market). Featuring food, music, health-related displays, products and information booths, the Village also will be open to the public on Sunday — offering post-ride food and refreshments.

Organizers have an early-bird registration offer of \$35 for anyone signing up between now and Saturday, Dec. 31. Starting New Year’s Day, the ride cost goes up to \$45.

The U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame, also located in Davis, has partnered with Livestrong and the city of Davis to present this year’s event.

Last year, Armstrong not only rode on Sunday, he attended a Saturday-evening sponsors’ dinner at the Mondavi Center.

Bowen expects the seven-time Tour de France champion to do the same in June.

“And then, in four years, we hope to have him back here for his Hall of Fame induction,” Bowen continued.

Livestrong is the brand of the Lance Armstrong Foundation, created in 1997 by the cycling cancer survivor. Armstrong says his event is designed to serve people living with cancer “and empower communities to take action.”

Bowen says the Challenge “inspires and empowers individuals, teams, families, friends and co-workers to unite in the fight against cancer. One hundred percent of participant and donor gifts to the Livestrong Challenge Series go directly to support cancer programs and initiatives.” Since 1997, Challenge events have raised more than \$75 million.

The foundation, which points to 28 million people globally living with cancer, has raised more than \$400 million.

Known for its iconic yellow wristband, Livestrong, according to Bowen, “has become a symbol of hope and inspiration to people affected by cancer around the world.”

For more information about Livestrong — or to register for the Challenge — visit www.livestrong.org.

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