

The MESA Bike Tour Has Many Purposes

by Ed Stewart, MESA Bike Tour Coordinator



I have always looked at the Bike Tour for MESA as a troupe of rolling ambassadors who weave through District 6600 a thread of friendship and fellowship, pulling together clubs and members in a fabric we call MESA. While the main goal is to raise money for the project, the coincident accomplishments are notable: clubs work together for another common purpose, members from different areas become close friends – possibly for life, we all experience Rotary through a unique event that inspires and energizes as no other event does.

The Bike Tour for 2008 has been an exceptional one. A number of changes were made this year and those changes were good ones. We added a day to the tour making it a weeklong event; this allowed us to see even more clubs on our trek. We created Day Coordinators who took charge of specific days and the ensuing activities; this had more people interacting for the common good and helped increase an already high spirit for the event. We changed the start-end location to Fremont; this made the tour a more district-wide event rather than one belonging to Elyria where it all began. We opened our rider limit and added a second support vehicle; this gave us more riders for each day and increased overall participation. The things we wanted to improve, did.



Along our trek throughout the district we stopped at 19 clubs for nourishment, fellowship and an overnight stay. We also received a lot of money for MESA. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 this year and we raised over \$30,000 on the road, with much more assured from clubs and individuals yet to pledge or donate. We should be very close to our goal if we do not reach it.

Most of you have read of our daily progress on the district website, as **Kurt Anderson** chronicled each day's activities. Believe me, for each word he wrote we could have added pages of content filled with sweat, pain, humor and fondness for our district.

As we look back at another successful event we must acknowledge those who made it possible. Kurt mentioned in his chronicles many of the people at each stop along the way who made sure their parts were in place. The tour has some other significant folks to thank for putting it together through the tedium of planning. A planning team was put in place last August to begin the process of improving, organizing, and making sense of this year's tour. That team consisted of the following people, without whom this tour would not have occurred:



Day One Coordinators – **Helen Zielinski** and **Angelica Rinehart** of Fremont
Day Two Coordinators – **Chuck Stocking** of Toledo and **Ken Robinson** of Perrysburg
Day Three Coordinator – **Bill Pepple** of Bryan
Day Four Coordinators – **Ron Stoner** of Bowling Green and **Jim Heinrich** of St. Marys

Day Five Coordinator – **Cherie Carroll** of Marion

Day Six Coordinator – **Jim De Santos** of Mansfield

Day Seven Coordinators – **Jim De Santos** of Mansfield and **Angelica Rinehart** of Fremont



Jim Shrader of Findlay offered his usual wisdom and wit
Jim Hunt of Elyria for making sure our chronicles and images are web worthy

Herb de la Porte of Elyria Sunrise for the donation of his bus a vital support vehicle

District Governor David Daugherty – last but certainly not least – attended frequently to offer his guidance and necessary support for this district-wide project.

Planning for next year has already begun and a new planning team will soon be in place to begin the process again. We already have clubs asking to be included on next year's tour – now we have to figure out how to choose among them.

Thanks to all for your support and the opportunity to serve.

Edward Stewart

Bike Tour Coordinator

Elyria Noon Rotary