

Harp, others raise awareness for bicycle safety in memory of Carol Admire

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Biking activist Tom Harp said there appeared to be a part of his friend Carol Admire's positive spirit with cyclists Sunday as they biked up and back on the Great River Road.

Harp, owner of Wild Trak Bikes in Alton, organized a pair of memorial bike rides at the point where Admire died recently.

Harp put a ghost bike last week in the exact place where Admire, 65, lost her life on May 23 between Piasa Harbor and Stanka Lane. Admire was hit by a driver of a pickup.

“It was a fairly emotional ride,” he said. “It went really well between the two rides. We did one at 7 and another at 9 in the morning. We had 115 total people out on bikes and several others stop by my shop and sign a petition and ask how they could lend their support with however we choose to move forward with this incident.”

Harp said everything about the event was on a positive note, something Carol Admire would have wanted.

“If this had happened to someone else, Carol would have been there,” he said. “We want to look at the tragic incident and turn it into a positive note.”

Some negative comments have surfaced in the media about the memorial and discussion of a guardrail along the Great River Road to protect bicyclists. Harp said he was glad to see fellow biking advocates speaking out to those in opposition of those who ride.

“We have a legal right to ride where we want to,” he said. “Automobile drivers are supposed to pay attention and show us caution.”

Harp said there has been an outpouring of support for his ghost bike and for remembering Carol with some changes along Alton routes.

Some of the comments I read sounds like the ghost bike is out in the middle of the road and was a hazard to drivers,” he said. “If they stopped and looked at it, it is four-feet clear from the roadway.”

There was an original petition that surfaced about installing guardrails on the riverside of the Great River Road. Harp has created a petition at the bike shop to start urging local officials to enact changes in routes with repainting and resigns through Alton.

The Madison County Sheriff’s Department provided an escort for the bicyclists on Sunday. Duke Bakery provided a gift of three-dozen free donuts for hungry cyclists after their trek. Harp said Duke Bakery’s donation was most appreciated and shows how committed Duke is to the Alton community.

“As far as I am concerned the last Sunday in May will be an annual ride for Carol Admire,” Harp said. “Heaven forbid if there are any other incidents, but if it happens we will keep adding them to the list. We are not going to stop our work in her memory.”

Harp said what he wants to do is be an advocate to increase safety measure in Carol Admire's memory.

“It is just about being a human being,” he said of his advocacy work.