



Bike MS: Gateway Getway event at LCCC attracts thousands with goal of curing disease

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GODFREY - More than 3,000 cyclists participated in the massive **Bike MS: Gateway Getaway** Saturday and Sunday, with the start and finish at **Lewis and Clark Community College**.

Bike MS, hosted by the **National Multiple Sclerosis Society** and previously held in Columbia, Mo., is the premier fundraising cycling series for anyone seeking a personal challenge and a world free of multiple sclerosis. The two-day ride showcased the beautiful LCCC campus with places on campus for meals and camping accommodations for those who wanted it.



Jamie Mealey, co-chair of the Bike MS Planning Committee for the race, said the group was thrilled to partner with Lewis and Clark Community College.

“The route took cyclists along the river bluffs, over the Mississippi River into Missouri, and back into Illinois,” Mealey said prior to the two-day event.

Chris Houston of Express Scripts is the board chair for the Gateway chapter of MS. She said MS is a disease that typically hits people in their 20s and 30s, in the prime of their lives. Multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body.

“Our goal is to end MS,” she said. “The MS events are the largest series of cycle events in the world. Lewis and Clark Community College were wonderful hosts and we have enjoyed their support.”

Cyclists Mary Morris, Cherylene Ramos and Mary Bena completely enjoyed their two-day trek and felt their efforts were going to a most worthy cause.

Morris said she wanted to do something in addition to typical MS fund-raising and this cycling event fit the bill.

Ramos said the good cause and to ride with friends were key reasons why she participated. She said she loved the experience at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey and hoped the event would be there next year.

Bena said this was the fourth time she had participated in the event and added, “Unfortunately, I know too many people who have MS,” she said. “I am doing it for them.”

All participants Saturday and Sunday had access to bike mechanics, support vehicles, rest stops every 10 miles, a finish line celebration and much more.

River Bend Growth Association President Monica Bristow was one of the people who helped land the two-day cycling series to Godfrey. She beamed with pride about having it next to her RBGA offices.

Bristow said it was a “huge event” for LCCC and the region with a significant economic impact with the influx of thousands in the area for the weekend. She praised LCCC President Dale Chapman, Lori Artis and staff for their efforts working with her to bring the event to Godfrey.

Artis and Bristow pointed out that the event drew more than 3,000 participants and 700 volunteered their time for two days.

Illinois American Water was a sponsor participant and Karen Cooper, Stacy Ortiz and some other volunteers helped distribute some small towels.



“I think it is just awesome to be a sponsor and participate,” Cooper said. “There is a huge turnout. We think it is import to support the community we live in and this is another way.”

Ortiz helped raise funds to be able to donate the rally towels and she said it always feels good to represent Illinois American Water in community efforts like this one.

Artis and Kent Scheffel of LCCC were both in attendance Saturday at LCCC. She said she was so excited of the opportunity to showcase the college and for the college to help such a good cause.

“There were people here from all over region, the St. Louis area and beyond,” she said.

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