

2-wheel crusade



Dennis Dorman, pictured recently with his bike, determined his route using a map and plans from the Adventure Cycling Association. PHOTO COURTESY DENNIS DORMAN

Rotarian to ride across country to raise funds for fight against polio

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Maybe 3,200 miles seems like a long way to ride a bike, but for Laurie-Sunrise Beach Rotarian Dennis Dorman, it's a short way to go to help eradicate polio worldwide.

Through its Polio Plus pro-

gram, Rotary International has a mission to raise \$200 million by June 2012 to match the \$355 million grant received from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

It is Dorman's goal to raise \$100,000 of that goal. He plans

"It's a route that has been ridden many times by bikers of all kinds. It shows where the bike shops are, where to avoid ..."

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– Dennis Dorman

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on accomplishing his goal by reaching out not only to the community here but also to the people and Rotary Clubs along his route. He has been greatly supported in these efforts, Dorman says, by Laurie-Sunrise Beach Rotary's Polio chair Sherry Nielsen and president Jerry Franklin.

Why he's riding

"I need my head examined," quips Dorman when asked why he's making this journey.

But seriously, he says, after taking a trip to El Salvador a couple of years ago with a group from the Shrine of St. Patrick Church, he was deeply affected by the people and poverty he saw there.

"We lived with the indigenous people in a small mountain village. When you see poverty at that level, it tugs at your heart strings," Dorman says. "From that experience I gained a deep appreciation of how devastating disease can be to a country and its people."

As a Rotarian, Dorman was aware of the club's efforts to stamp out the polio virus worldwide through their PolioPlus program.

Combining these experiences is how Dorman decided he needed to do something to help.

Trip preparation

A biker and runner on and off through the years, Dorman has been training for this event since mid-summer.

"It's important to be on the bike almost every day, so that you're comfortable when you're out there," he says.

Even during the snowfall earlier in the month, Dorman was on his bike — albeit at the West Side Athletic Club.

He spent a couple of hours every day at the gym with his bike stationary.

When he trains outside, Dorman says he judges based on mileage and is now up to 45-50 miles a day.

He will soon be pushing that number higher.

"I need to get some 50-60 mile days in before the trip," Dorman says.

Once he's out on the open road, Dorman's longest day will be 90 miles. The shortest will be around 40 miles.

"I tried to keep it relatively reasonable, factoring in the possibility of bad weather, high winds," he says.

The first two days out of San Diego, riding away from the Pacific Ocean will be pretty much all up hill, according to Dorman, so that could be one of the toughest stretches.

He's preparing for the possibility of cold weather as he goes over the Continental Divide, and then for heat when he hits Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

About the journey

The bike trail across the southern United States between San Diego, Calif. and St. Augustine, Fla. will take Dorman more than two months to traverse. He plans on starting his journey March 1 and completing it May 5.

The route runs through California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas — which accounts for one-third of the mileage — Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and finally Florida. While Dorman has been to California, Texas and Florida the other five states will be a new experience.

The path will be a well-worn one as Dorman determined his route using a plan from the Adventure Cycling Association.

While the journey will last 66 nights, Dorman will be staying overnight in 55 towns over the course of the trip, resting every seventh day. To help defer costs, he has been in contact with the Rotary Clubs around where he wants to stop each night.

"They've offered their motor homes, a bunk house, cabins; I'll be staying in a bed and breakfast one night. One club even got a hotel room for me. They've been great," Dorman says.

Dorman will not be alone during his ride. With all the literature he will be carrying about PolioPlus, the Rotary Club and even some material from the Lake of the Ozarks Convention and

Visitors Bureau, Dorman will be followed by a motor home driven by Howard Thieland — an old friend from Dorman's hometown of Granger, Iowa — for the first half of the trip, then by local Rotarians Don and Dorothy Tyler.

What is polio?

Poliomyelitis (polio) is a disease which strikes children mainly under the age of five. Capable of causing paralysis within hours, polio paralysis is nearly always irreversible. By attacking the motor neurons of the brain stem, it causes difficulty breathing which can also result in death. With no cure, the only defense against the disease is prevention through immunization.

About PolioPlus

Established in 1985, Rotary International's PolioPlus program has contributed millions to the eradication effort. PolioPlus helps Rotary fund immunization operational costs. Since the program's inception, 2 billion children have received the oral polio vaccine, and 350,000 cases of polio per year has been reduced to less than 2,000 per year. Rotary International is still working on immunizations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nigeria.

How to donate

People can make a donation of a flat amount or pledge so much per mile. Pledging just one cent per mile is a donation of \$32.

Make a check or money order to:
"I Ride, They Walk"

Laurie-Sunrise Beach Rotary Club
P.O. Box 1099
Laurie, MO 65079

Rotary Club on the Web: www.rotary.org

SOURCE: Rotary International



San Diego, CA. to St. Augustine, FL.

3,200 MILES

The route Dennis Dorman plans to ride his bike will take him from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic. MAP COURTESY DENNIS DORMAN