



SPOKE TALK

Beyond Bike Match

A few weeks ago, our Spoke Talk gave an overview of the Roult County Riders' Bike Match program. For this Spoke Talk, let's address moving toward a bicycle hub that gives everyone in Roult County access to a bicycle, a place to work on it and the skills and knowledge to do so.

This season, Bike Match has grown from an organization with one part-time paid employee, fixing and matching donated bikes from his garage, to a program that routinely employs 15 volunteer mechanics, several bike shops and several local non-profit partner organizations. Even with amazing donors providing serviceable bikes for the program, we find ourselves falling far short of what a bike hub could be doing for our community.

To-date, we've matched 56 bicycles, but we haven't been able to address the growing need for cycling-related education. This includes a lot of things. We've provided helmets, but outside of a brief exchange, we haven't provided accompanying education on the importance of wearing them. Similarly, we see through our interactions a growing need to teach kids riding bikes — or ebikes — about cycling etiquette, safety and maintenance.

Our volunteer mechanics, along with Boys & Girls Club youth, washed and repaired the entire Boys & Girls Club fleet, over 20 bicycles, before moving them to storage for next season. We also fixed bikes over the course of the summer because many kids don't know how to care for their bikes.

There are things every bike operator should know, like how to remedy a clicking gear or adjust the brakes by using barrel adjusters, change a flat tire or just put the chain back on when it falls off. By the way, if you're in the group of people who take your bike to our overworked bike shops for these kinds of things, wouldn't it be nice to have a place that helps you spend five minutes to skip the bike shop while they do more technical work that requires special tools and expertise?

What if there were a place in our community where there were a few bike stands, some tools and a knowledgeable mechanic who was there to help us out? What if we could also take our kids there to get a serviceable used bike when they're learning to ride or when they outgrow the ones they have, and they could also be

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SAILORS BATTLE HUSKIES



SHELBY REARDON/STEAMBOAT PILOT & TODAY

Tori Billbrey, a senior on the Steamboat Springs High School volleyball team, tips the ball over the net during a game against Battle Mountain on Thursday night. The first set took half an hour, with the Sailors topping the Huskies, 25-23. Steamboat won the second set as well, 25-18. However, the Sailors fell in the third set, 25-19. The final score did not come in before press time.

Raise funds, Ride the Cog

Experience Hayden's history, scenery with annual bike event

Shelby Reardon
Steamboat Pilot & Today

HAYDEN — The annual Ride the Cog fundraiser is way more than a scenic bike ride. It showcases historic Routt County while raising money for the Hayden Heritage Center. The seventh edition of the event is Saturday with registration beginning at 8:45 a.m. at the museum.

"I don't know if a lot of people know the little town of Hayden's got a museum," said event organizer Wes Dearborn. "It's a neat little spot that's a train station. It's exactly like Steamboat's train station. They have a lot of artifacts or historical goodies they want to display. ... We're trying to bring some awareness to the museum by having an event in Hayden. That's really the cause. The bicycle ride is a good ride to display Hayden and the surrounding areas and that it does have some great gravel riding around, but that's sidelined to the cause."

Dearborn started the event seven years ago as a ride to benefit ALS. The Hayden Heritage Center took over the event and is now the main beneficiary of the ride.

The Heritage Center uses the money raised by the ride to continue putting on the event, as well as fund museum



RIDE THE COG/COURTESY PHOTO

Ride the Cog will take place in Hayden on Saturday. The bike ride benefits the Hayden Heritage Center.

projects. Over the past few years, they've constructed sheds on the property to house artifacts and donations they don't have on display. Eventually, the museum plans to expand the existing building so every item can be on exhibit all the time.

The Hayden Heritage Center didn't just take over the fundraiser to raise money but also to highlight the history of the area, which aligns with its mission.

"The routes that we send people on

have been used historically for ranching, hunting practices, and you can even see ... the valley where the settlement of Elk-head used to be," said Emily Waldron, vice president of the Hayden Heritage Center board. "Even though most of those houses and homesteads you can't see where they were anymore, that valley, at one time, had quite a lot of homesteaders in it.

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HALFWAY TO ST. PATRICK'S DAY
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SPORTS

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There's a natural historical connection."

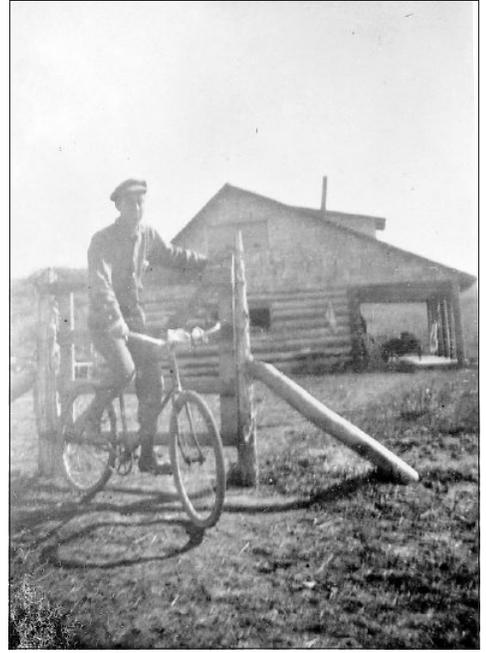
Ferry Carpenter, a rancher whose homestead on Routt County Road 80 is locally protected, used to bike to and from town in the early 1900s. The Hayden Heritage Center has photos of Carpenter and his bike, as well as other old bikes.

Ride the Cog offers four distance options ranging from the 19-mile Breeze Basin Breezer to the 43-mile Combined Ride. Online registration is open now at HaydenHeritageCenter.org, and in-person registration is available on the morning of the ride.

The rides begin between 10 and 11 a.m. and conclude at the historic Hayden Granary, where an after party will be taking place. Each participant will be given two drink tickets to the event, which will be catered by Sage and Spirit. There will also be live music by 3Wire. Nonriders are welcome as well with an entry fee of \$15.

Contact the Hayden Heritage Center at haydenmuseum@zirkel.us or call 970-276-4380 for more information.

Unlike its neighbor to the east, Hayden doesn't have a packed schedule of bike races and rides. Ride



COURTESY PHOTO

Ferry Carpenter, a well-known figure in Hayden, sits astride his bicycle at Oak Point. Carpenter would ride the Cog regularly from his homestead to town in the early 1900s. At Saturday's Third annual Ride the Cog fundraiser, participants can take part in three different bike rides while supporting the Hayden Heritage Center.

the Cog could begin a trend of getting more events in western Routt County. There are miles of gravel roads that see far less traffic than the roads around Steamboat.

"The thing about Hayden, even though it's only 25

miles west of Steamboat, it's totally different," Dearborn said. "It's an arid desert kind of climate, and it's completely different with the cogs and gulches and the landscape and the wildlife, generally, and sagebrush and rolling hills."

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taught how to safely use and care for their bikes?

Having a bicycle hub isn't a new or difficult concept, and many places already have these organizations serving their communities. In Tucson, Arizona, it's called Bicycle Inter Community Art & Salvage, or BICAS. Free Cycles in Missoula is another fantastic example or the Fort Collins

Bike Co-op.

So, if like us, you love bikes and think they are an important part of bringing our community together (check out this video on Dutch Cycling culture), or you just like having less people driving short distances on our roads, then please visit these websites to see what might be, consider joining Routt County Riders and please, reach out to us and let us know your thoughts on how we

can share the fun, freedom, transportation and recreation cycling provides.

Matthew Rochon is the Routt County Riders community outreach program manager. He loves living in a community that shares his passion for cycling. If you want to donate, learn more or volunteer, reach out to Matthew and RCR Bike Match at matthew@routtcountyriders.org.

IF YOU WERE HERE, YOU'D BE NOW BY THEN

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