Bicycle Races are Coming to Town: Growing Tourism through Cycling

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All photos from Damion Alexander
Agenda

• What’s a bike race?
• Average racer demographics
• Event statistics
• Evolution of an event
  • Local: Javeline Chase, Duncan AZ and Hillside Road Race, Hillside AZ
  • Regional: Oracle Road Race, Oracle AZ and Bike the Bluff, Show Low AZ
  • National/International: Tour of the Gila, Silver City NM
• We want a race! Now what?
What’s a bike race?

• Many types of bikes
  • Road, mountain, track, cyclocross, BMX
  • We’re focused on road bikes

• Several types of events
  • Gran Fondo: Timed mass start ride. Not a race
  • Time trial: you versus the clock over a set distance. Fastest time wins
  • Criterium: NASCAR on bikes
  • Road race: Think Tour de France stage
  • Stage race: combination of the above 3 in some form. Lowest overall time wins
Racer Demographics - Who are we talking about?

USA Cycling membership demographics:

- Age: 39
- Gender: 85% of racers are male
- Income: $75-99,000
- Education: 66% of all racers have at least a bachelors degree
- Employment: 73% are either employed full time or own a business
- Arizona licenses: 1,936 in 2013

Source: 2013 USAC membership report
Event Statistics

Avg event expenditures for a race: **$115**
- (lodging, food, gas—excludes entry fees)

Distance to events (for AZ):
- Max: 282 miles, avg 86 miles (one way)

Non-championship race in AZ:
- Approximately 250 participants
- Estimated expenditures at an event (by participants): $28,750
Evolution of an Event

- Local
- Regional
- National/Int’l
Local Event: Javelina Chase - Duncan, AZ

- Year 1 (2014): 24 participants
- Year 2 (2015): 166 participants
- Javelina is quickly growing to become a regional event.
- *Impact*: $19,090 (some of this would be seen in Safford since Duncan has limited lodging).
Local Events: Hillside Road Race - Hillside, AZ

Hillside Road Race - Hillside, AZ
• 2015: 110 participants (back after 1 year hiatus) Prior years saw around 250-300 racers.
• Longstanding event outside of Prescott. Residents in town volunteer and make picnic lunch for the awards ceremony.
• Impact: $12,650 (most of this is seen in Prescott/Prescott Valley since Hillside has no hotels, gas, or food)
Regional Events: Oracle Road Race-Oracle, AZ

- 2014: 350 participants
- 2015: 348 participants
- Consistent turnout. Well supported by community.
- Impact: Estimating without lodging ($50 avg) would be a $17,000 impact.
Regional Events: **Bike the Bluff- Show**
Low, AZ

- 2015: 414 participants
- 8th year, growing steadily
- 1 day event
- Promoter provides pancake breakfast
- **Impact:** $47,610
National and International

Tour of the Gila - Silver City, NM

• 2015: 269 non-professional; 207 professional (476 total)

• 29th year, 5 day event

• Impact: Long term lodging: some riders arrive 3-4 weeks prior to the event to adjust to elevation. Nearly impossible to find lodging during the event. It is the largest tourism event for the city and county.
  • Over 5 days: $273,700

• Intense media coverage from local/regional press as well as specific cycling press. Event attracts riders from across the US and the world (Mexico, Australia, and Canada)
We want a race! Now what?

A good event needs several factors:

• A good route (nice pavement, low traffic, some challenging terrain)
• Easy to access (good parking, easy to find)
• Good organization (fast, accurate results; vendors/food for after the event; good rider support)
We want a race! Now what?

- Bicycle events can be expensive!
  - Insurance, traffic control, prizes, etc. ran up to $15,000 or more
  - Impact outweighs the cost
  - Leverage impact to get support from the county and other jurisdictions.

- Reach out to ABRA and ask questions! We’re here to help!
  - Azcycling.com
The best way to showcase the rugged beauty of our state is through our small towns and communities. A small investment in sporting events can lead to a long term impact through increased tourism.