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Hundreds of Bicyclists Participate in Circle Boulder Annual event shows off city's bike trails

By Amy Bounds

Julie and Tim Johns first hopped on their bikes for the inaugural Circle Boulder ride a dozen years ago.

Since then, they've added two children to their family and this year rode on what may have been the longest bike at Sunday's 12th annual event - a half-wheeler and a bike trailer attached to their tandem bike so 2-year-old Marina and 4-year-old Liliana could join them.

"It's a really nice ride," Julie Johns said. "It gets us out as a family."



Photo by Cliff Grassmick

Shane Comiskey is seen through the spokes of his dad's bike before they begin the Circle Boulder ride on Sunday.

The Johns family was among hundreds of bike enthusiasts who gathered Sunday at Scott Carpenter Park for the annual bike ride. The free ride typically attracts about 500 people.

The ride is sponsored by Boulder's Greenways Department and kicks off the city's Walk and Bike Month, which culmi-

nates with Bike to Work Day on June 24.

Annie Noble, Boulder's greenways coordinator, said she tries to change up the ride each year to introduce riders to a selection of the city's 74 underpasses. Next year, she's hoping to highlight the city's 75th underpass, which is being built under Valmont Road.

"It's definitely a priority for the city to get people out to walk and bike and get out of their cars," she said.

Before Sunday's ride, children tested their skills at a "bike rodeo" hosted by Community Cycles, a nonprofit bicycle advocacy organization. The ride ended with a party that included free food provided by ride sponsors and music from a teen band.

A core group of volunteers also comes out each year to check in riders, pass out water bottles and give safety lessons.

The ride is a self-guided tour of the ins and outs of the city's extensive, interconnected bike trail system. Participants chose either a 12-mile "180" tour or a 23-mile "360" tour.

"We want to help people understand how to use the trails and how to get around," said ride coordinator Melinda Gillespie.

John Comiskey brought his 6-year-old son, Shane, to try the shorter route because, he said, "it looks really fun and is totally family friendly."

Shane wasn't worried about finishing the 12-mile ride because he regularly rides for "16, 15, 17, 14" miles.

"We sweat like crazy," he said.

Nine-year-old friends and avid cyclists Hanna Ellis and Maddie Foster decided to try the full 23-mile tour this year - their



Photo by Cliff Grassmick

From left, Tim Johns, of Boulder, leads his family, Julie, Liliana, 4, and Marina, 2, on the Circle Boulder ride on Sunday.

fourth time participating - because the shorter route wasn't enough of a challenge.

"Last time, we did it too fast," Maddie said.

Her dad, Kurt Foster, called the ride "a blast."

"This is one of our first rides this year," he said. "We love it."

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