

THE NEWS



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Simone Ponne/THE NEWS

Great ride

Jonathan Reynolds promotes Great Rides, which include a route across the Golden Ears Bridge for the Caribbean Festival this weekend. See story p12.

Hundreds of cyclists to cross GE Bridge

Great Rides cycling event marks opening of Metro bike route network

by Robert Mangelsdorf
staff reporter

More than 1,000 cyclists are expected to take part in the inaugural Great Rides cycling event this Sunday, marking the official opening of a network of recreational cycling routes across Metro Vancouver with a ride over the Golden Ears Bridge.

Jonathan Reynolds of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition helped organize the event and said it will help introduce cyclists

from across the Lower Mainland to the great riding Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows have to offer.

"Pitt Meadows is one of the prettiest bike rides in the Lower Mainland, but its almost unknown outside of Pitt Meadows," said Reynolds. "Were trying to change that."

Sunday's bike ride, the first of many being organized by VACC across the Lower Mainland, gives cyclists a choice of two start locations, the Memorial Peace Park in downtown Maple Ridge and the National Historic Site in Fort Langley. Along the way riders will be guided by route markers and are encouraged to stop at celebration stations

for refreshments and information.

Bike mechanics will be available at each station and mobile bike mechanics will be riding the route throughout the event. Shorter routes are also marked for family rides, where bikers can stay on either side of the bridge and still enjoy an afternoon of cycling fun.

The ride will be bookended with music and entertainment in Fort Langley, and the annual Caribbean Festival in Maple Ridge.

"We've set up these routes to be the best bike routes for families and recreational riders," said Reynolds. "We want to get people out on their bikes, have fun and explore

their own backyards."

The network of bike routes VACC has designated have been marked with signs and maps are in the process of being printed, said Reynolds. While no upgrades have been made to the roads, lanes and trails themselves, he hopes having them designated as recreational cycling routes will encourage municipalities to upgrade them.

"We're trying to emphasize what's already existing," said Reynolds. "It would be nice to see some of those sections upgraded."

Cheryl Johnson, executive director of Tourism Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows said the cycling routes are a great opportunity to showcase our communities.

"This lets people know there are excellent cycling opportunities on both sides of the Fraser," she said. "We want to encourage people to come to our communities on bikes."

• For more information or to register for the Great Rides event visit www.vacc.bc.ca/greatrides or www.greatrides.ca