

Cortez cyclist rides the Rockies

Physical therapist Pike realizes long-time dream to enter famous Colorado bike trek

BY BEN WEBSTER
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Even before Cortez's only local rider participating in the Ride The Rockies moved to Colorado, he wanted an opportunity to ride in the annual bicycle tour through the mountains.

Physical therapist Herb Pike, riding the tour for the first time, hung up a small flyer in his cubicle more than 10 years ago to remind him to enter the lottery for the tour when he lived in Texas. After moving to Cortez, he continued to put it off.

Even this year, he never got around to actually registering to be in The Denver Post lottery that decides who will be in the field.

"I've thought about doing it a lot," Pike said. "I just never got around to it. I thought about it and it's been something I've wanted to do for a long time, but things come up."

Without a late entry Specialized Bicycle had reserved, Pike would have been waiting at least another year to be one of the 2,000 cyclists riding in the tour that came through Cortez on Sunday.

"It's nice to have one local rider. We didn't have any in the first field they released, but at least we have one person doing

it," Cortez tour coordinator Lynn Dyer said.

The problem is, as a late entry, Pike didn't have the amount of time he would have liked to train for the tour. Pike's training included rides to and from Dolores, Mancos and Mesa Verde National Park.

"I would be more comfortable if it was in August so I could train more, but I feel good. I'm just going to see how it goes," Pike said.

Pike had the added benefit of staying in his own bed the night the tour came through Cortez after starting in Durango.

"I took it easy today," Pike said after the first ride from Durango to Cortez. "This was an easier ride. It's been fun to be able to take part and soak it all in."

Pike left Durango around 9 a.m. Sunday morning and arrived in Cortez almost three hours later. He was able to avoid the cold middle school showers and go home to rest. But the ride gets tougher, and he won't have all the luxuries of home the rest of the way.

"Initially, I'm looking at the last few days as the toughest. It goes over some tougher areas, and who knows how it will go," Pike said.

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HERB PIKE, the only Cortez participant in the 2008 Denver Post Ride The Rockies bicycle tour, poses for a photo Sunday afternoon at Panther Stadium.

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