

Highland schools ready for Redlands Bicycle Classic

By Hector Hernandez, Jr., Highland Community News

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In anticipation for the 2017 Redlands Bicycle Classic, scheduled to race through Highland May 3 and May 5, 36 local schools were visited by participating race teams in the days leading up to the race. Highland's Arroyo Verde Elementary sits on Friday's Highland Circuit and was among the first schools visited.

During a special assembly on Monday, May 1, the school met five members of the Gateway Harley-Davidson Trek Under-25 team from St. Louis as part of a San Manuel Band of Mission Indians sponsored campaign to visit about 10,000 students and teach them about the sport and the importance of healthy living and nutrition.

"This is all about making a connection with students and encouraging them to come out and see the race," said Redlands Classic President Marc Shaw. "They now have a team they've connected to and can cheer for."

Riders Matt Zimmer, Sean Gardner, Bryan Gomez, Dennis Ramirez and Micah Engle shared with students about the sport, the Redlands Classic, their equipment and team techniques, and the necessary health and nutrition.

They also demonstrated some of their bicycle skills including the passing of food and water while riding and wheelies (to the kids delight).

The riders shared that on the Classic's longest days they'll race for about five hours traveling about 95 miles and at times reaching speeds of 50 mph.

To sustain them through the race, riders eat and drink on their bikes with the assistance of teammates, burning through an average of 5,000 calories on the longer courses.

Friday's Highland Circuit charges up Base Line from Boulder to Church Street where the course loops south and back to Base Line at Webster. The 2.8-mile circuit is lapped 20 times for a total of 58.1 miles in the men's race and 14 laps and 41.3 miles in the women's race.

The circuit starts with women at 8:45 a.m. followed by the men's race at 11 a.m.

The riders race right by Arroyo Verde where classes plan to watch and cheer with colorful posters made just for the occasion.

Students were also invited to participate in the School Duel public race scheduled for Saturday, May 6. For more information, visit redlandsclassic.com.