

Carroll County Times

Hills, heat provide challenges for cyclists

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By Karen Kemp, Times Staff Writer

About 670 cyclists battled the rolling hills of Carroll County during the hottest day of the year so far.

Temperatures had climbed into the 70s and 80s by the time most of the riders had finished the fifth annual Tour de Carroll, which was held Saturday starting in Dutterer's Park in Westminster.

All proceeds from the event, including registration fees and raffle ticket sales, support West End Place Adult Day Services in Westminster, according to event director Noelle Floreen. She said the Tour de Carroll raised close to \$26,000 this year — about a 40 percent increase from 2008.

This year, riders could choose from five different routes, including a 36-mile loop and a 63-mile "century ride" throughout the northern part of the county. Less challenging rides of eight, 20 and 25 miles were held between Westminster and Manchester.

"This is a killer course," said Charlene Macko, of Ellicott City, who had stopped at one of several rest areas along the way for water and a snack.

It was her second Tour de Carroll, and she and her husband planned to complete the century ride in about 4½ hours.

The steep hills and changing scenery make the tour the best course in the region, said Macko, who has been riding for more than 30 years.

Howard Noll, a volunteer who helped develop the courses, said the longer rides contained a significant number of moderate and steep hills with inclines of up to 18 percent.

John Mazur and Cindy Piotrowski, of Arlington, Va., read about the Tour de Carroll in a cycling magazine and decided to do 63 miles on their tandem bicycle. They plan to come back next year.

"It's been a great ride," Mazur said. "There are enough hills to challenge you but enough flat [areas] to enjoy the scenery."

Baltimore County resident Brian Berryhill, who road a recumbent bicycle on Saturday, said the event was well organized.

He had stopped to grab a bite to eat at the last rest stop on Uniontown Road, just six miles from the end of the course.

Cecilia Alcorn, one of the volunteers, thanked the cyclists for supporting West End Place Adult Day Services as she handed them water, fruit, energy bars and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

Her mother receives services from the nonprofit, and Alcorn said the ride is a phenomenal effort to help seniors in the community.

"Normally they're overlooked," she said.