'Jazz' season finale to welcome cyclists

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Scores of cyclists are pedaling their way into town, staying at local hotels, eating out and joining in the fun at the season finale of Jazz on the Alley tonight.

The cyclists are converging at Ram Cat Alley from points throughout the country and even distant shores to partake in the Road Titans 300-plus mile challenge in the Upstate.

The Road Titans challenge participants — about 100 of them — will officially register for the race at To the Letter, a store at 114 Ram Cat Alley that features personalized gifts, embroidery, screen printing and sporting goods.

To the Letter proprietor Shonda Wilson said Wednesday she and her husband, Rick, were looking forward to having the cyclists visit their store today to register.

"I know they are going to start registering at 2 in the afternoon until 7," Wilson said.

The shopkeeper is hoping the influx of visitors to her store will help business.

"We have created a few T-shirts for cyclists with logos on them so they can get an idea of what kind of things we can do that we can offer when they come in," she said.

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CYCLISTS: Coming to Jazz on the Alley

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Seneca events coordinator Riley Johnson said Jazz on the Alley was extended an additional week to welcome the riders at the popular weekly outdoor party at Ram Cat Alley that features music, food from local restaurants and extended shopping hours for stores. The Wobblers are scheduled to perform.

Riley said the cycling challenge is generating excitement.

"They start and finish on Main Street in downtown Seneca," Johnson said. "The hotels are filling up."

Charlotte Walters, who works with Ken Sloan at the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the organization is partnering with Seneca, the Clemson Chamber of Commerce, Clemson Area Transit and Greenville County Parks, Recreation and Tourism to host the Road Titans event.

"People from all over the country are coming," Walters said. "Most participants are from Florida, and we have some from South America and one from Europe."

The grueling challenge features three days on courses covering many uphill climbs with mountain views. The ride will begin in Seneca on Friday morning and cover more than 101 miles to Greenville, continuing Saturday with more than 105 miles from Greenville to Clemson and concluding Sunday with a 103-mile course from Clemson to Seneca.

"Most of the (challenge) is going to be spent going straight up," Walters said. "Especially Paris Mountain (in Greenville) is for cyclists world-renowned, so they are going to have a major challenge."

Organizers hope the cyclists will enjoy the experience and that the event will grow.

carlos@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6686
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