



Media Release, for Immediate Circulation

Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce to Name Cycling Champion Levi Leipheimer Their 2010 Businessman of the Year

Business group recognizes economic value of cycling after a highly successful 2009 mass participation bike ride, Levi Leipheimer's King Ridge GranFondo brings over \$1.2 million in economic stimulation to the area.

SANTA ROSA (January 18, 2010) – In one of its fastest and least contended nominations to date, the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce awarded its coveted Businessman of the Year title to Sonoma County's own Levi Leipheimer. Leipheimer was chosen from amongst several candidates chiefly for the business impacts generated by the 2009 Levi Leipheimer King Ridge GranFondo, a mass participation cycling event for 3,500 riders that begins and ends in Santa Rosa, taking in some of North America's most impressive terrain in between.

While not a businessman in the classic, suit-and-tie sense, Leipheimer has long been a proponent of the incredible opportunities afforded bike enthusiasts in Sonoma County. He has often remarked on how the area has shaped his development as a professional cyclist and has indicated that his GranFondo was a natural way to share that enthusiasm with as many people as possible. Leipheimer's reputation as one of the world's leading professional cyclists propelled the event to the top of many recreational rider's lists, bringing participants from all over California, the United States, and beyond, filling restaurants, bike shops, and hotels across Santa Rosa. Couple that business stimulation with one of the worst years in recent memory for the retail and hospitality sectors and it quickly becomes apparent that there was more to this event than a simple day on the bike. Analysts from the City of Santa Rosa have determined that the economic and revenue impacts of the 2009 GranFondo totalled \$1,247,490, a large sum for a slumping economy and struggling local government.

"I wanted to pay back Sonoma County for what it has done for me," said Leipheimer, of the impetus for the 2009 GranFondo. "It (hills, roads, people, cycling community, friends) has made me a better cyclist and so the only motivation I had was to give something back to the area." To further this point, Leipheimer, in partnership with local non-profit, VeloStreet, donated all the proceeds from the event to the City of Santa Rosa's campaign to ensure the return of the Tour of California and to the Sonoma County Humane Society's Forget Me Not Farm, a program for area at-risk children.

"You didn't even have to ride a bike to appreciate what Levi did," said Janet Rogers, special events director of the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce. "Anyone who can make people feel good right now,

anyone who can put a smile on someone's face, you have to notice that."

Given the success of the 2009 event, planning and registration have begun in earnest for the 2010 GranFondo. Working once again with Bike Monkey, a local cycling promoter and magazine publisher, the registration cap has been expanded to accommodate 6,000 riders this year, in the hopes of continuing the community benefit from the inaugural event. In just over a month, well over 4,500 people have signed up via the event website at www.levisgranfondo.com, some traveling from as far away as Australia and Germany to attend. With the expanded registration and surging interest in this ride, it can be expected that Santa Rosa and Sonoma County will continue to see cycling as a robust component to the regional economy.

About Levi Leipheimer's King Ridge GranFondo

Levi Leipheimer's King Ridge GranFondo is a fully supported bicycle ride with 35, 65, and 103-mile route options through some of the finest cycling country in the USA. The range of riders is recreational to pro, and the pace varies from leisurely to very fast. The ride is owned by VeloStreet and produced by Bike Monkey with Levi Leipheimer as the patron. The ride is organized with the collaboration and support of the City of Santa Rosa as well as communities and fire departments around Sonoma County.

About Bike Monkey

Bike Monkey is a bicycle culture portal that promotes the adventure and passion of cycling through a variety of outlets. Active since 2005, Bike Monkey organizes several races across multiple formats, publishes a high-end quarterly cycling publication to a nation-wide subscriber base, and hosts several personalities via a series of blogs and web articles. To learn more about Bike Monkey, visit www.bikemonkey.net.

About VeloStreet

VeloStreet is a 501(c)3 non-profit based in Santa Rosa, CA. VeloStreet's mission is to promote community-based cycling initiatives that encourage advocacy, athletics, and recreation.

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Event website: www.levisgranfondo.com