



Photos by ALAN HENDRY/Valley Press

Above left: Ken Yanecko, a deputy with the L.A. Sheriff's Department, shows a bike safety video to 8-year-old Dajour Lewis (front) and 6-year-old Marcus Davis (middle) of Littlerock on May 15 at the Bicycle Ride Day at George Lane Park. Right top: Alan Rennie, 8, of Rosamond rides the bike he won at the event. Right bottom: Safety equipment was available for kids.

# Cycling near and far

Bicycle Ride Day features fun rides, youth safety

Written by ALAN HENDRY ■ Valley Press Staff Writer

QUARTZ HILL — Adult cyclists were eager for an opportunity to face challenging rides with a variety of scenery, while some young bicyclists were content to remain at George Lane Park and pedal around a short course with a few Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies.

The 15th annual Bicycle Ride Day on May 15 had bicycle-related activities for young and old, beginner and expert.

For the adults, there were fun rides of 20-, 30- and 60-miles that headed west from George Lane Park to Three Points and back past the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve.

Those rides of been a staple of the Bicycle Ride Day, but the day was expanded this year in many ways.

A portion of the ride followed the California Aqueduct, as the Antelope Valley Conservancy, which organized the event, received special permission from the Department of Water Resources for cyclists to use the trail.

"For 14 years, our bicycle ride has gone through many reincarnations," said Bicycle Ride Day organizer Wendy Reed, the director of AV Conservancy. "Fifteen years ago, this ride was at the Aqueduct, but not since (Sept. 11, 2001)."

The day was also expanded to attract younger cyclists and brought in the Los Angeles County



Sheriff's Department youth cycling program, Bicycle Education and Registration (BEAR).

"We felt by broadening the event and including the kids would inspire them," Reed said. "We wanted to expand what we do to engage younger people."

Kids were taught bicycle safety, given a helmet fit check, had their bike registered, went on a ride with a deputy and rode an obstacle course at the park.

Ken Yanecko, a deputy with the L.A. Sheriff's Department, said BEAR is a five-week program, consisting of two hours, one day a week, in which kids are taught bicycle safety and repair. Yanecko said if a child successfully completes the program, the child will be given a bike that has been seized or confiscated.

"It's cool," said 8-year Dajour Lewis, who is in the BEAR program at Jackie Robinson Park in Littlerock. "They give you a free bike and you fix it."

Johnie Oates, a sheriff's deputy involved with the Littlerock BEAR program, look Lewis and 6-year old

Marcus Davis to the Bicycle Ride Day and one of the highlights for the boys was the obstacle course.

The highlight for three other boys was a raffle giving away three bikes from the BEAR program.

Alan Rennie, an 8-year old from Rosamond and in Cub Scout Pack 741, won a bike, as did 6-year old Chevy Eye of Llano, from Boy Scout Troop 692.

"It's making his day," said Chevy's grandfather, Richard Eye.

"It also has a cup holder!" Chevy exclaimed to his grandfather.

Kristine Wolf, a law enforcement technician with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, had some simple advice for parents training their young, or even older, children learning to ride a bicycle.

"Take the training wheels off," Wolf said. "It's takes the center of balance off. (Training wheels) throw you off. They get the feel of it and they're off. It really, really works."

Just as soon as Wolf passed along the advice to one group of parents, a mother led her young daughter into the room on a bike with training wheels. Soon the lesson was passed along again.

The highlights for the adult cyclists were the ideal conditions for the ride and the detour the route took along the Aqueduct.

"It was great today," said Lancaster resident Rick San Miguel, who did the 30-mile ride. "The wind wasn't blowing. It wasn't hot. It was a great day for riding."

San Miguel said he hoped the Aqueduct could remain open for cyclists.

"It can take you where you want," San Miguel said. "It's safe for cyclists."

The fun ride routes had three support stations, with water, food and aid available to riders. The ride also featured a sag vehicle, as Wendal Reed drove the course, checking on cyclists.

"I didn't have any complaints," Reed said. "Everybody was back by noon. Nobody got lost. There were no breakdowns. It was a good ride."

"Driving around, there were gold fields. There are still poppies out. I wish I would have gone riding, but I had to work it. It was a lot of work, but it was good."

Members of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition also were at George Lane Park. The LACBC is an advocacy group for cycling, including pushing for more cycling trails.

Valley cyclists hope to get more cycling trails, much like as the network of trails in the Santa Clarita Valley.

The 30- and 60-mile rides began at 7 a.m., while the 20-mile ride started at 7:30 a.m.

"It was pretty demanding," said Santa Clarita resident Mike Angulo, who did the 60-mile ride. There were some hill climbs. I think it was well supported. The stops were correctly spaced.

"I really try to give back to the community. This is one when I get to participate."

Victorville resident Dan Eggleston rides the course on May 15 during the Bicycle Ride Day.

Photo courtesy of Neil Arao

