Portland Bridge Pedal

Bridge Pedal is an annual bicycle event in Portland, Oregon, that offers cyclists the opportunity to bike across the city's bridges while they are closed to automobile traffic. In 2007 it was the third largest organized bicycle ride in the world behind New York's "Five Boro Bike Tour" and Montreal's "Tour de l'Île."

Rick Bauman hatched the idea for Bridge Pedal in 1980 as he drove across Portland's Marquam Bridge and watched plumes of smoke and ash spew from Mt. St. Helens. Bauman, who served in the Oregon State Legislature from 1978 to 1986 and on the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners from 1989 to 1992, felt all Portlanders should have the opportunity to experience the city views that were only available to motorists.

The first Bridge Pedal drew 7,500 participants in May 1996, but the long-term prospects for the event were in doubt as Bauman's company, Bridge Pedal Inc., and another event sponsor, Willamette Light Brigade, battled over revenue sharing. After several Portland civic leaders helped broker a deal between the two groups, Bridge Pedal was annually scheduled for the second Sunday of each August. In 1997, the name was changed to Providence Bridge Pedal for its major sponsor, Providence Health and Services.

Today, the event attracts approximately 20,000 attendees (both cyclists and pedestrians) each year. In 2008, Bridge Pedal participants were able to choose from several different ride options, including a shorter family option (approximately 14 miles) and a longer eleven-bridge option (approximately 37 miles). Although the route and bridge options change each year, the event often includes every Willamette River bridge in Portland except the Morrison Bridge.

Written by Scott Cohen

Further Reading:

Barnett Hoover, Erin, "Bridge Pedal organizers strive for a smooth ride." *Oregonian*, June 21, 2008.

Nkrumah, Wade. "Bikes and Bridges Events Hits a Roadblock." *Oregonian*, March 6, 1997.

Nkrumah, Wade. "One Day, One Way To Savor Views From Portland Bridges." *Oregonian*, April 3, 1996.

http://www.providence.org/bridgepedal/

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