



Noble Street Festival and Two-Day Alabama Cycling Classic Return to Anniston First Weekend of April

17th Annual Sunny King Criterium Places National Spotlight on Downtown Anniston as Start of USA Cycling Pro Road Tour



PRT
PRO ROAD TOUR



Anniston, Ala. (Feb. 7, 2018) - - The annual spring street party that combines food, family fun and bicycle races will return to Anniston, Ala. April 7-8. The popular Noble Street Festival joins forces with two days of bicycle races, Alabama Cycling Classic, for a 17th consecutive year. Saturday features a full day of downtown festivities along the Noble Street corridor, with the heart-pounding action of the Sunny King Criterium keeping spectators engaged until well after dark. On Sunday, a second day of amateur and professional bicycle racing will continue with the Piedmont Road Race.

“Southern hospitality is at its finest for the Noble Street Festival and the Alabama Cycling Classic. Thousands of people enjoy a full day of Saturday events, from art to live music to incredible food. We will be expanding the footprint of activities for children and families with two additional blocks of exhibits and activities this year,” said Suzen Robertson, organizer of the Noble Street Festival for the City of Anniston.

The Noble Street Festival provides food and festivities to complement the bicycle races on Saturday. Spectators will find many free activities for the entire family from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. CT in the heart of downtown Anniston. Returning for 2018 will be the "Taste on Noble," offering the rich flavors of culinary offerings from across the city. A lineup for participating restaurants and vendors will be announced in March. Applications for vendors, including arts/crafts vendors, will be accepted online until March 15, 2018, — <http://anniston2017.businesscatalyst.com/vendors.html>.

This year, the Sunny King Criterium is the lead-off road cycling competition for USA Cycling’s Pro Road Tour (PRT). It is also the only professional cycling event in Alabama on the PRT. The 2018 PRT is the premier, domestic calendar of events for road racing, which will include 21 events across 16 states. As a PRT event, the Sunny King Criterium will feature the nation's top athletes. Saturday offers a full schedule of 21 criterium events for amateurs and professionals. The one-kilometer, four-turn course will begin and end at E. 11th Street near Noble Street.

For a fifth year, a road race will be contested on the day following the criterium. Located 25 miles north of Anniston in Piedmont, Ala., the Piedmont Road Race will provide nine categorized events for men and women. The start/finish will be located at the Piedmont Civic Center. The course traverses 40 miles of rolling terrain in Calhoun County, from downtown Piedmont to the Talladega National Forest. Elite Men and Category 3 Men will begin at 9 a.m. CT on Sunday for the longest races of the

day, two full laps for 80 total miles. Elite Women and other divisions will race 40 miles, with competitions expected to end approximately 3 p.m. The total prize purse for the Alabama Cycling Classic will be \$54,000, with equal payouts for women and men.

Admission for spectators is free for all bicycle races, making it one of the most unique professional sporting events in the country. Online registration is currently open until April 5 for racers (www.usacycling.org/register/2017-35). Prices range from \$10 for juniors to \$50 for pros.

“We are very proud that Sunny King Automotive Group continues as the title partner for the Sunny King Criterium. As a national Pro Road Tour event, the criterium attracts the best professional cyclists from across the country. It’s an incredible experience for spectators. And the live webcast of the races showcases Anniston as a tourism destination throughout the year,” said Marilyn Cullinane, owner of Start Smart Cycling, which manages the Alabama Cycling Classic for a fifth year.

A portion of proceeds from all bicycle race registration fees will be donated again to the American Cancer Society Relay for Life chapter of Calhoun County, expected to be \$10,000 this year. In the 10-plus years this beneficiary has been involved with the cycling weekend, more than \$100,000 has been raised for cancer research and patient support. Sponsors for the Noble Street Festival include Sunny King Automotive, Alabama Power, Visit Calhoun County, Webb Concrete & Building Materials, B.R. Williams Trucking, Regions Bank, Consolidated Publishing Company, State of Alabama Tourism Department – Sweet Home Alabama, and Calhoun County Commission.

For information about race registration, calendar of events and downtown activities, visit the Alabama Cycling Classic website (www.annistoncycling.com). Follow the Alabama Cycling Classic on Facebook (AlabamaCyclingClassic) and Twitter (@SunnyKingCrit #AnnistonCycling). Follow the Noble Street Festival on Facebook (NobleStreetFestival). Follow the USA Cycling Pro Road Tour on Twitter (@USACycling).

About Alabama Cycling Classic

The Sunny King Criterium began in 2002 as Anniston’s signature cycling event for professional and amateur male and female cyclists from around the globe. The start/finish line for the race is located at 11th and Noble streets in downtown Anniston, with 21 categorized races for adults and juniors. The criterium is the first of 21 events on USA Cycling’s Pro Road Tour. Nine categorized road races for men and women will be held on Sunday for the Piedmont Road Race. Admission is free for spectators. All races are managed by Start Smart Cycling.

About Noble Street Festival

The annual Noble Street Festival comes alive with family-friendly activities to support the Sunny King Criterium. Activities will include the "Taste on Noble," Sunny King Toyota Kid Zone, YMCA Kidz Bicycle Races (children pre-K to grade 6), Mellow Mushroom Mad Dash, and more.

About Sunny King Automotive Group

Located in Anniston, Alabama, the Sunny King Automotive Group has been in business since 1922, when it began as the King Motor Co., Inc. The Sunny King Automotive Group offers new & used car sales, finance, body shop and service repairs. Among the dealerships which support Sunny King Criterium and Noble Street Festival are Sunny King Ford, Sunny King Honda and Sunny King Toyota. Sunny King Honda and Sunny King Toyota have been recognized as President’s Award recipients for multiple years. Learn more: www.sunnyking.com.

About Start Smart Cycling

Start Smart Cycling, LLC (SSC) provides professional management and consultation for all areas of cycling and community-based events. SSC specializes in the production and management of sports

events. Follow on the web (startsmartcycling.com), on Facebook (StartSmartCycling), and on Twitter (Start_SmartBike).

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