

Clinton cyclists invite more bikers for fun rides



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Cyclists gather in an MC parking lot on a steamy summer afternoon, ready to take off for a multi-mile bicycle ride. A number of Clinton residents are ready to ride several miles on a warm Monday afternoon. Pictured (l to r) are Lawson Presley, Layne Presley, Jake Presley, Adolphis Cleveland and Denise Martinolich.

By Carole Kelley

A warm summer evening is no deterrent for the bicycle riding enthusiasts who meet on Monday evenings at a Mississippi College parking lot and pedal through Clinton, heading for the Natchez Trace Parkway and a fun bike ride.

"We want to attract more cyclists from throughout the area," said Jake Presley. "They can participate in a fun social ride and see what Clinton has to offer."

The bicycle club was begun over seven years ago through the efforts of Robert (Rob) Logan, who is credited as the organizer. After he stepped down and became less active in the bicycle club, Presley assumed the leadership role. Both of them agree that a main purpose is to bring in new riders, encouraging them to "get out on the road and enjoy the fun of cycling."

"Seven years ago, we had - and we still have - many area bikers," Logan said. "Another club purpose is to increase awareness of the cyclists in

Clinton. At first, we met on Tuesday evenings, the night of the mayor and board of aldermen meeting. With our cyclists riding by City Hall, through town and back again, we demonstrated the interest in biking and encouraged the City to understand and support the hobby. And it happened. We are a bike-friendly town. It's also encouraging when the cyclists see a Clinton Police patrol car somewhere along the route," he added.

"Bike-friendly" is a good description, with the upcoming 2019 Crossroads Cycling Classic set for August in Jackson and Clinton, as some one hundred or more cyclists converge on the area. The Classic includes the Louisiana-Mississippi Bicycle Racing Association (LAMBRA)'s Jackson Criterium Saturday, August 10, and the Clinton Road Race Championship Sunday, August 11. The Velovit team is organizer for the race. The Clinton event will begin at Northside Park across from Lovett Elementary School.

Logan pointed out that riding in a

group helps promote safety. A group ride offers multiple movement, colors and a specific route, which contributes to safety.

For those who have thought about joining a cycling group, the place to go to find rides is through social media. Sites such as "Clinton Cycling" on Facebook show biking opportunities giving place, time, and pace for the beginner or the active cyclist. The site shares details for the Clinton Monday afternoon ride, such as time and meeting place. Details list some twenty cycling trails that were drawn in the years from 2011 to 2013. Distances vary, with some as short as one or two miles and others varying from three to 26 miles. One challenging route is 62.7 miles, winding from points in Clinton, on to Brownsville, Bolton, Raymond and back.

Training plans and nutrition information, especially important for longer rides, are discussed on the site.

Presley noted that riders can be divided into groups depending on their speed comfort zone. As a ride pro-

gresses, cyclists can separate and regroup at a designated intersection. If technical difficulties arise, such as a flat tire or a chain challenge, someone is there to help.

The participants change as time goes by, as new riders join and others leave the club because of health reasons or time constraints.

Denise Martinolich and her husband Stephen of Clinton have been riding with the group for four years and enjoy socializing with other participants in the popular sport. Adolphis Cleveland drives over from Madison to participate. They agree it's good exercise and fun to ride with the group.

All types of bicycles are represented on the rides as well as all ages of participants. Biking is a family activity for the Presley family, with Jake and his wife Brittany and their sons, Landon, Layne, Lawson and Grayson, all riding. A recent addition for Presley's bicycle is a bike seat for daughter Felicity, ten months, who is ready to "ride."