



Thursday, Feb. 17, 2011

MID to participate in MERCOCO McClane Cycling Classic Race

Sun-Star Staff

The MID will hold the first MID Lake McClure Road Race in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of Merced, the agency said in a news release.

The foothills race is an extension of the individual time trials, Downtown Grand Prix and Almond Blossom Road Race that make up the MERCOCO McClane Cycling Classic. The new race will add a day to the four-day event.

"All of us at MID are extremely excited about supporting the race and offering a venue for this new course," said MID General Manager John Sweigard in the news release.

For nearly two decades, the MERCOCO McClane Classic has been a fixture in Merced County, drawing thousands of spectators and cyclists to the family-friendly event. In addition to driving significant economic activity, the proceeds benefit the nonprofit United Way of Merced County, which works to improve education, health and income in the community.

During the MID Lake McClure Road Race, cyclists will race a 12.5-mile loop through the MID's Recreation Area near Lakes McSwain and McClure. They will be confronted with more than 4,500 feet of accumulated elevation gain.

The race will begin near the recreation area entrance, just off Lake McClure Road. Cyclists will race north up Lake McClure Road and turn west on Haul Road. They will turn back south on Merced Falls Road and turn northeast at Lake McClure Road.

The loop will be completed seven times. After the seventh lap, cyclists will finish by racing to an area just above the New Exchequer Dam on Lake McClure.

"This is really going to test the athletes' endurance. The addition of this race is going to take the MERCOCO McClane race to an entirely new level," Doug Fluetsch of Merced, who has organized the event since its inception, said in the news release.

"MID is ready and willing to provide any service and assistance we can to the organizers of this race," said MID Parks Director James "J" Mills.

During the course of the four- to five-hour event, the California Highway Patrol will be controlling traffic. There will be a brief road closure along Lake McClure Road, and traffic delays and diversions along Merced Falls Road. Traffic control probably will begin about 9:30 a.m. March 3 and end about 2:30 p.m.