

Solar bike tour in Decorah today

Renewable energy supporters will be in Decorah today as part of an eight-day tour to show off renewable energy technology and potential in the Midwest.

The five-state tour opens in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area at 9:30 a.m. with a bike ride from Pfeiffer Park along the Cedar Valley Lakes Trail through George Wyth State Park, to Washington Park in downtown Waterloo at Washington Street and Park Avenue, next to the Grout Museum.

Following a 10:30 a.m. rally at Washington Park, bicyclists will ride back to Cedar Falls for a tour of the Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE) at the University of Northern Iowa, with CEEE director Dr. William Stigliani.

During the afternoon, the bicyclists will load up their bikes to travel to Decorah, where they will stop to see the wind turbine at the home of Larry Grimstad, then ride to a rally at Luther College at 3:30 p.m.

"This is our fifth Green Bike Tour, and each one is a new glimpse into the future of energy policy and economic opportunities," said David Osterberg, organizer of the tour and executive director of the nonpartisan Iowa Policy Project (IPP), which has issued reports on the economic potential of renewable energy.

"Our goal is not only to show the potential of renewable energy, but to remind Iowans and others in the Midwest of the importance of public policy in encouraging its development," Osterberg said.

In addition to highlighting wind and ethanol projects during the eight-day tour, bikers will demonstrate practical uses of solar power. Bikes will be equipped with solar panels that produce electricity to help with uphill rides or play music.

Readers, listeners and viewers can check www.greenbiketour.blogspot.com for schedule updates as well as comments from riders along the way.

The Green Bike Tour 2006 is sponsored by: the Iowa Policy Project, the University of Iowa's Environmental Health Sciences Research Center, Fresh Energy, the League of Rural Voters and the Fred & Charlotte Hubbell Foundation.