

'Green Bike' tour to yield video on sustainable colleges

By Dave DeWitte
The Gazette

At Luther College in Decorah, they're replacing the college vehicles with gas-electric hybrids.

At Grinnell College in Grinnell, they're composting 300 pounds of daily cafeteria waste into fertilizer.

Participants in this year's 1,270-mile Green Bike Tour, which ended Thursday in Iowa City, found so many sustainable living and renewable energy practices at eight colleges that they could make a movie about them.

Thomas Cook, a professor in the University of Iowa Department of Occupational and Environmental Health, recorded four and a half hours of video interviews on renewable energy initiatives on the weeklong tour. He plans to edit them into a DVD about sustainable energy practices that will be shared with the colleges and municipalities visited on the tour.

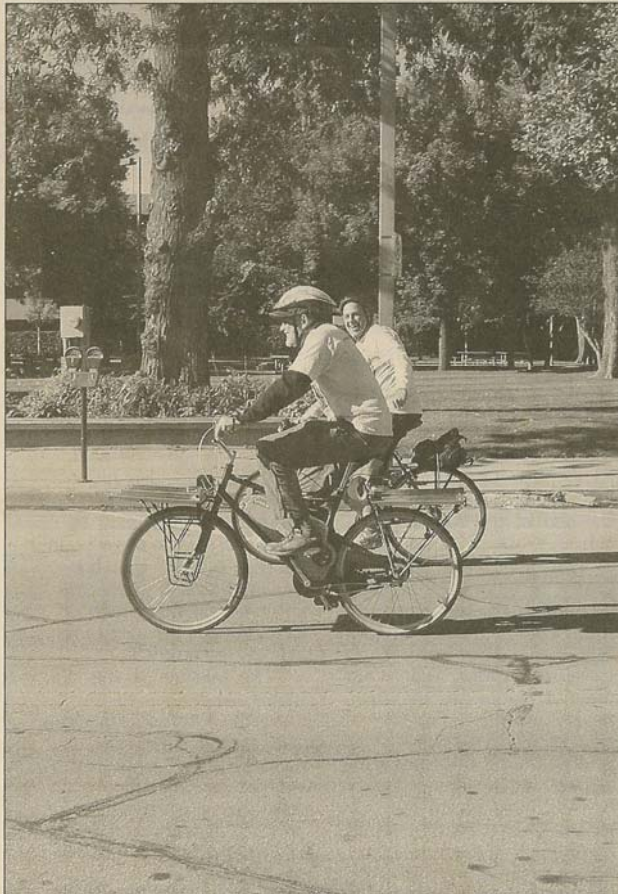
The tour was a great learning experience for Cook and other participants, who visited Coe College in Cedar Rapids Thursday before ending the tour at a rally at the Conference of Engineers for a Sustainable World at the University of Iowa.

Organized by David Osterberg of the Iowa Policy Project, the fifth annual Green Bike tour traveled part of the time on bicycles equipped with electric assist devices powered by rechargeable batteries. Osterberg rode a bike equipped by Cook with two solar panels to keep the batteries charged.

On the final leg from Cedar Rapids to Iowa City, they were joined by Cedar Rapids City Council member-at-large Tom Podzimek, state Rep. Rob Hogg, D-Cedar Rapids, and Dave Loeb sack, Democratic candidate for Congress from Iowa's second district.

On the Net

■ A Web log recounts the full experience of the group's tour at www.greenbike.tour.blogspot.com



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Green Bike tour organizer David Osterberg (left) of Mount Vernon pedals a specially designed bicycle with a solar-charged electric assist device on the weeklong renewable energy tour's final leg from Coe College in Cedar Rapids to the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Bob Campagna of Mount Vernon pedaled a conventional bicycle as they headed south. The tour, with a rotating cast of riders, motored and pedaled to eight college campuses in five states to promote renewable energy and learn how the colleges are using it.

Teresa Galluzzo of Iowa City and Bob Campagna of Mount Vernon also rode.

The group's three-part message was repeated at each stop.

"Global warming is real. The solution is renewable energy, and if it's done right, local people can make money," Osterberg said.

Osterberg said he was pleasantly surprised when the group discovered several

renewable energy initiatives that were not part of the tour schedule.

One was a "Green Bike" program in La Crosse, Wis., which has rehabilitated hundreds of donated bicycles, painted them a distinctive green color, and left them available for free use.

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