



## Press Release

Event: Bicyclinois – Bicycle Group Tour – Cycling from Cairo to Chicago!

**Date:**

July 7, 2004 – Spending Overnight at the YMCA

July 8, 2004 - Leave Kankakee County for Chicago at 7:00am

**Location:**

Kankakee YMCA  
1075 North Kennedy Drive  
Kankakee, IL 60901

**Time:**

July 7, 2004

5:00pm – Approximate Arrival in Kankakee from Champaign: July 7, 2004

6:30pm - Trolley to arrive at YMCA for pick-up

7:00pm – Trolley to pick-up Cyclist take to Coyote Canyon

7:30pm – Trolley Departs from Coyote Canyon to visit some of favorite Nightlife Spots.

10:00pm – Trolley Arrive back at YMCA.

July 8, 2004

5:30am – Departure from YMCA to Uncle Johnnie's Restaurant: July 8, 2004

7:00am – Departure from Kankakee County to Chicago: July 8, 2004

**Contact:**

Robert S. Layton, Ride Director

**Organization:**

BICYCLINOIS Inc.  
3645 N. Sheffield Ave. #1  
Chicago, IL 60613

Phone: (773) 868-1495

Website: <http://www.bicyclinois.com/>

Attendance: 24 Cyclists

The Cyclist are coming! The Cyclist are coming! The only Cross State bicycle group tour will be heading across the state of Illinois, starting in Cairo and ending in Chicago. And Kankakee, Il has been chosen as an overnight stop on July 7, 2004. The group will be riding north from Champaign, and will stop in Kankakee overnight at the YMCA.

The group will be taking the back roads throughout Illinois. I have attached the routes the group will be taking through Kankakee County. If anyone would like to set up a lemonade stand, or cheer on the group of cyclists by giving them a shout of encouragement, I am sure they would greatly appreciate it! The trip will be 100 miles from Champaign to Kankakee in the July sun so these athletes would probably welcome the hospitality Kankakee County residents are so willing to give. Keep an eye out on July 7 for the riders.

Rob Layton, 28, is the executive director of Bicycllinois, Illinois' new cross-state bicycle tour. He has cycled across the United States from San Francisco to Washington DC as well accumulating well over 6,000 miles on the road. He also works as a personal trainer in Chicago, and specializes in endurance sports such as cycling and triathlons. And he has coordinated this group tour, quite an ambitious event.

These are a few questions I asked Rob Layton, Bicycllinois Ride Director:

Q. How did you get started?

A. After I graduated from University of Illinois, I had a terrific opportunity to cycle across the country on a charity ride called Push America to benefit people with disabilities. I felt it would be the perfect antidote to 5 years of engineering school.

Q. Why did cycling appeal to you?

A. I've never been particularly big or fast, but one thing I can do is keep going. My legs are very strong, so cycling was a perfect fit for me. I also love being able to look back on a long ride, especially a century (100 miles) and say to myself 'man that was a long ride' especially if you think how long it takes to go that far in a car. I've also met some of the most wonderful people on the road.

Q. What are some good places in Illinois that you'd recommend?

A. Totally depends on your mood. In Chicago here nothing beats the lakefront path, especially as you're coming up the south side and get an completely unobstructed view of the skyline. Out in Kane County there's some great rolling hills and forests, and down near Southern Illinois it's very scenic and rural. Of course down near Champaign and Kankakee it's also cool to be able to see 5 miles down the road to where you're going, and be able to go in a straight line for miles and miles and miles.

Q. How would someone find a good route in Illinois?

A. I strongly recommend the bicycling maps put out by the Illinois Department of Transportation. I used them to design the route for Bicycllinois, and was very impressed by the accuracy and quality of their recommendations. Another good idea is to check with local bike shops and clubs.

Q. Is there anything that's different about cycle touring in Illinois?

A. That's difficult to say because Bicycllinois is Illinois' only cross-state bicycle trip. However we're extremely excited about it, especially when you consider over 20,000 people participated in Bike the Drive in Chicago this year.

Q. What are some things to think about in planning and packing for a cycle tour?

A. There are so many so I'll start with the basics. The most important consideration is safety. I've personally cycled our entire route, and most of it is on well-paved, infrequently traveled country back roads. Second is nutrition and hydration. On an average day of cycling you can burn up to 4000 calories! Dehydration and proper nutrition are key. On our trip all the meals and on-road snacks are all you can eat. Another important consideration is lodging. We have the ability to be indoors every night in case of inclement weather. And of course, rule number one, is you need to have fun!

Q. How important is it to train for a trip?

A. It is absolutely critical. Our longest day will be 100 miles, from Champaign to Kankakee, and that's a tremendous challenge on your body. And that's on top of four previous 60-85 mile days previously. You must be able to do that otherwise you're not going to be able to make it. However, from my experience, when your will is strong enough you can do anything. That's where the challenge and rewards come in.

Q. What kind of mileage should you budget for?

A. Our average day is about 80 miles, and our longest is about 95. Our shorter days have more rolling hills though, so they're challenging as well. Plus it's a good idea to figure that you'll miss a couple turns and have to back track several miles occasionally.

Q. So one common mistake is to have overly ambitious mileage plans. What are some others?

A. Some other common problems on the road are dehydration, not training enough, not getting enough sleep.

Q. Is a group tour a good way to get started?

A. Going with a tour group is absolutely the best way. On a fully supported ride

you'll have the opportunity to learn from others, other people will help you out when you need it, and in case you have any problems, a vehicle will be available to take you in if necessary. Plus you'll know that safety, meals, lodging, baggage transportation, mechanical support, and attraction in town and on the road have already been taken care of.

Q. Are there any challenges to riding in a group?

A. The most challenging part of riding with a group is when a group is riding too wide into the road and interfering with traffic. Really though I've found I feel safer riding in a group because we're more of a presence on the road to traffic than if I'm alone.

Q. For beginners, is it better to start out not carrying your own gear?

A. Without question.

Q. What should you look for when booking a bike tour?

A. Safety, experience of the staff, and what you get for your money. My team has been cycling and working cycling events for many, many years, and the registration fee for Bicyclinois includes everything you need. Be wary of tours that make you pay extra for food – you will get ripped off.

Q. What advice would you give to someone who has been on guided tours and wants to transition to a self-contained tour?

A. Plan, plan, and plan. Consider the unexpected, and do a couple of shorter, practice trips to get in some experience and test yourself and your gear. Also give yourself plenty of off days in order to compensate for such things as illness, rest, something really neat, mechanical problems, or the unexpected that may come up.

Q. Are there any biking skills you need to learn?

A. Being a personal trainer I could go on at length. There are some pedal stroke techniques that are very helpful such as pulling up on the backstroke as well as just pushing down. Also breathing in fully into your lungs helps with power output. But the single most important thing to do is get miles under your rear end on the road.

Q. Any last pearls of wisdom or words of advice?

A. The single most important thing, rule number one, is to have fun. Your body was designed to be active so if you're not enjoying what you're doing, something needs to change.