

# EARTH RIDERS

Mountain Bike Club



Newsletter for Kansas City and Midwest Mountain Bicyclists \* Volume 8, Issue 6 \*

## November Meeting: Bikes & Trikes for Tykes

As we do every year, we're holding our November EarthRiders meeting at a worknight event for Bikes & Trikes for Tykes. According to their website:

We are a 100% volunteer organization that repairs and donates bicycles to kids in the Kansas City Metro Area for Christmas. We donate over 2,300 bikes EVERY CHRISTMAS.

The worknight will be held Thursday, November 17th at the Bikes & Trikes for Tykes Warehouse at 1415 Iron Street in North Kansas City from 5 pm to 9 pm.

If you're afraid you may not be much use because you're not a professional bike mechanic, don't be — come anyway. They are in desperate need of volunteers. The work is easy, there are plenty of people to help you, and you'll probably learn something about bike repair while you're helping to make a local child happy.

Here's the way it works:

- 1) Choose a bike from the 'donated' area.
- 2) Run down the provided checklist of parts/systems to inspect and repair if needed, such as:
  - a) wheels (straight, tires good, aired up, rotate freely)
  - b) drivetrain intact, operating, lubricated
  - c) brakes work
  - d) seat, handlebar, grips, pedals, etc. in place, functioning, and clean
- 3) Send bike to cleaning area.

If repair really isn't your thing, you can run for parts or work the cleaning area or just spectate. The important thing is that we show up to support this wonderful charity in their effort to make kids happy and get them on bicycles. Later, when they grow up and join the EarthRiders, they'll thank *you* for your efforts.

Learn more about them at [www.bikesandtrikesfortykes.org](http://www.bikesandtrikesfortykes.org).

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### ER Meetings

**NOVEMBER**  
**Bikes & Trikes for Tykes**  
 THURSDAY, Nov. 17th  
 B&T4T Warehouse  
 1415 Iron  
 North Kansas City  
 5 pm—9 pm

Volunteering to help fix bikes for Kansas City youth.

### DECEMBER TBA

Check the forums at [www.earthriders.com](http://www.earthriders.com) for meeting notice.

# Bonktoberfest Report

As was widely reported, the EarthRiders made our annual Bonktoberfest trip the second weekend in October, but this year we changed the venue to the Syllamo Trails near Mountain View, Arkansas. It was a beautiful weekend for riding. We got to see some majestic Ozark mountains and peer over the bluffs at the White River while riding the Green, Red, Yellow, and Orange trails. At night, the sky was pitch Black, and during the day the brightest Blue.

Our own Joe Folse got a little



*A quick Saturday morning breather on the trail.*

black and blue when he crashed on the rocky staircase (see photos in the July 2005 newsletter, when Mike Rago did the same). He broke his wrist and “used” his helmet once again, but will be back on his bike soon. Ryan Turner scared the living daylight out of some of us by taking



*Joe Folse’s newly “used” helmet.*



*Taking over the trailhead.*

a walk on the bluff ledge. We surprised the heck out of the locals, including the man responsible for the construction of the Syllamo Trails, when we drove up to the trailhead; 25-plus riders from Kansas City all making the pilgrimage to ride these wonderful trails. And all of us had a great weekend riding with our friends.

Go ahead and mark your calendars now for next year’s installment, the second weekend in October.



*Tim Greene demonstrates “perma-grin.”*



*Above: a moment of reflection while staring at the White River, over a hundred feet below. Below: Ryan Turner takes a stroll on the bluff.*



# Good Trails Don't Build Themselves

The trails need you! Please come out for one of our regularly-scheduled trail work days to help build and maintain the over 100 miles of singletrack trail in the Kansas City region, all of which is done by volunteers like you!

**When & where:** Dates listed below. Trailwork is done on Saturdays generally starting at 8 a.m. and finishing around noon. Some trails will have a follow-up workday from noon - 4 p.m. on Sunday.

**What to expect:** Four hours of light manual labor, friendly people to work with who will gladly show you the ropes, and to be thanked and then left alone afterward.

Learn more at [www.earnyourdirt.com](http://www.earnyourdirt.com)

## 2005-2006 Kansas City Metro Area Trailbuilding & Maintenance Schedule

Sat./Sun., November 12-13th, 2005	<i>Lake of the Ozarks</i>
Sat./Sun., November 19-20th, 2005	<i>Kill Creek Park</i>
Sat./Sun., December 3-4th, 2005	<i>Shawnee Mission Park</i>
Sat./Sun., December 10-11th, 2005	<i>Smithville Lake</i>
Sat./Sun., December 17-18th, 2005	<i>Hillsdale Lake</i>
Sat./Sun., January 7-8th, 2006	<i>Landahl Park Reserve</i>
Sat./Sun., January 14-15th, 2006	<i>Lake of the Ozarks</i>
Sat./Sun., January 28-29th, 2006	<i>Blue River Park/Minor Park</i>
Sat./Sun., February 4-5th, 2006	<i>Fancy Creek, Manhattan, KS</i>
Sat./Sun., February 11-12th, 2006	<i>Landahl Park Reserve</i>
Sat./Sun., February 25-26th, 2006	<i>Smithville Lake</i>
Sat./Sun., February 25-26th, 2006	<i>Knob Noster State Park</i>
Sat./Sun., March 4-5th, 2006	<i>Hillsdale Lake</i>
Sat./Sun., March 11-12th, 2006	<i>Lake of the Ozarks</i>
Sat./Sun., March 25-26th, 2006	<i>Blue River Park/Minor Park</i>
Sat./Sun., April 1-2nd, 2006	<i>Fancy Creek, Manhattan, KS</i>

IF A TRAILWORK DAY IS CANCELLED due to inclement weather, notice will be recorded on the *Trail Maintenance Hotline* at 816-377-3037.

## Melancholy is incompatible with bicycling.

James E. Starrs

<http://www.quotegarden.com/bicycling.html>

### ERTA Fundraiser — Price Chopper/Hy-Vee Coupon Books

Greetings all, from ERTA's new treasurer. We've got a limited # of Price Chopper and Hy-Vee fundraising coupon books remaining, with dozens of coupons inside - \$1, \$3, \$5 off any number of things - total of more than \$60 savings on peanut butter, Cheerios, ice cream, soup, etc. The book is just \$5 - and the first coupon is good for \$5 off your next trip to the grocery store, no strings attached. If you shop at Hy-Vee or Price Chopper anyway, this is basically a \*free\* way you can support ERTA's efforts to purchase tools and equipment for trailwork and to work with land managers to continue to support the outstanding network of trails we've got in the area. A limited number of books remain, and most of the coupons for the Price Chopper books expire 12/31/05. I want to get these into the hands of people who can use them while they're still good. The Hy-Vee coupons are good through '06. Contact me as shown below for one. Thanks, and happy trails —*Nate King*

### Ride Schedule

**Tuesdays:** Taco Tuesday at the Blue River Parkway Trails. Meet at Good Time Charlie's parking lot (formerly Pat Murphy's), 130th and Holmes. Rides start at irregular times after work, generally several groups of varying abilities. Bring a light.

**Wednesdays:** Hump Day at Kill Creek. Leaves from the Shelter 1 parking lot 6-6:30 pm. Bring a light.

Rides are subject to weather and leader availability, and are "show and go." Check the appropriate forum thread for the latest updates (see it at [www.earthriders.com](http://www.earthriders.com)).



### Officers

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# Crossing Over

Michael Gier

I had read about the CrossLogic Cyclocross race scheduled for early November in Riverside. When day broke it was really nice outside.

Amazingly, there was nothing overly pressing on my calendar to keep me from checking it out.

Now, I'm a cross-country MTB guy. Downhilling is too much adrenaline for me, road riding involves too many cars, and I don't have the balance for freeriding or trials. Many of our fellow riders decry the cliques that bicycle riding and racing seem to be devolving into, but it's a fact of life: riding is becoming specialized — compartmentalized, even — and so I wasn't surprised when people expressed shock that I was at a (gasp) Cyclocross event. I don't know the secret handshake. I'm not supposed to be here.

And truth be told, I don't really know why I'm here. I'm not a racer. 'Cross is a winter sport, and I'm the perfect opposite of a winter guy. It's nice out, so I should be across town riding at Landahl. I dunno — I guess it's just the fact that everyone's talking about it, and I don't want to be the only one who doesn't know what's going on. I have to go see what it's all about; what's so compelling about this style of racing? Plus it gives me an excuse to fill some newsletter space.

## Insert Copy Here

When I arrived I made the rounds and greeted everyone I knew, and helped out a (very) little bit with the course marking. Obviously the promoters had been out very early this morning setting up; what seemed like thousands of cones and hundreds of feet of marking tape had transformed these few acres of E.H. Young Riverside Park (behind the Argosy Casino) into a 1.8-mile serpentine race course. I imagined that from the air it must

look like some orange-and-green alien's small intestine. I imagine a lot of un-

usual things early in the morning. I decided to pre-ride the course, or at least to claim I was pre-riding. I'm not sure what to call it when you don't actually intend to enter the race. Probably "poaching".

The course was dry, which was nice. As has previously been established, it was a beautiful day. I'm told that often the elements are not so friendly to the course and racers, and my mind kept wandering to what it would be like if it were 29 degrees and sleeting. I guess my glass is half-empty lately.

## Into the Bowels of the Open Field

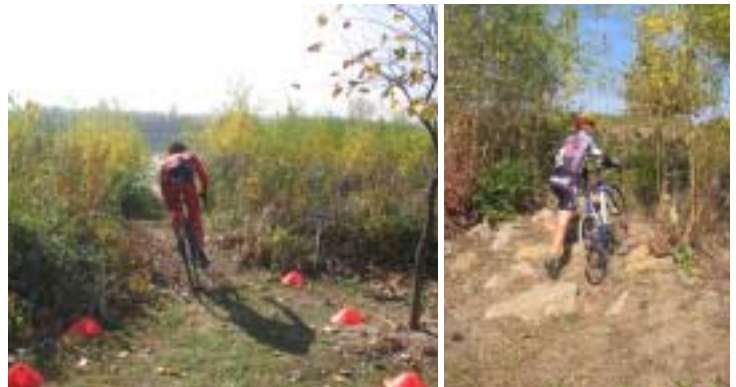
The course started near the well-built bathroom facilities (thanks, casinos!) and immediately took a sharp 180-degree turn. Later that morning the same turn would knock down the entire field of Women's "A" racers in a spectacular crash seconds after their start. All of them were able to get up and moving again, and soon they would provide some of the day's highest drama. More on that later.

After essing for a while on the flat grass, the riders would pass The Wheel Cyclery pit stop, then rail another hairpin into a climb, which was blocked in three places by a 2-by-12 board across the path. Most racers would dismount and carry their bikes over the barriers and up the hill. The strongest and most skilled, however, could bunny-hop right over at least the first — demoralizing their competitors, I'm sure. At the top of the hill, the course entered the woods at the edge of the park, going over a soft dirt jump and then through an off-camber downhill back into the open field.



The field provided just under a mile of orange-cone-delineated course over both paved and grassy sections, up and through a couple of bermed turns and the belly of that alien beast. Up next was the sandpit, as the riders were herded across a sand-volleyball playfield. Only those with remarkable balance, as well as an oversized helping of momentum, could ride through it from one side to the other. Most would dismount before even reaching the sand and run across. In terms of time and energy consumption, it seemed the wise move.

One more obstacle awaited the riders after a cooldown trip across the parking lot: Harter's Horseshoe. Heading straight for the Mighty Mo, riders steam down the riverbank and take a sharp right. For their efforts in avoiding disaster in the orange plastic fence, they are rewarded with a one-story rocky staircase climb. Survive that and you're home free, headed for the finish line. Except this is a 'cross race. You haven't been out long enough, cowboy. Do it again. And again. We'll tell you when you're done.



“I couldn’t imagine doing that for an hour,” one racer confided in me as he climbed out of Harter’s Horseshoe, close to finishing his 30-minute heat. The men’s “A” race would be starting soon, with an hour of punishment for those hardy souls. I offered the tired racer an encouraging word and silently thanked myself for choosing only to pre-ride. It was too nice a day to suffer.

### “They’re Not Ripe Yet”

There are a few peculiarities specific to ‘cross racing, like the ban against bar ends on handlebars to prevent hooking or goring a competitor, or the way everyone wore their rider number on their side rather than their front. The oddest oddity, however, was when I became aware that a surprising number of racers prepped by carrying around a set of wheels. I know baseball batters sometimes take practice swings with three bats – is this similar? I followed one of these “enhanced” bicyclists to his destination and discovered a freaky sight: more than a dozen wheelsets stood



leaning against themselves in the pit area. Is it a sacred wheel burial ground? Some sort of temple? No, explained Heather Jordan, owner of The Wheel Cyclery. These were racers’ spares, waiting for their masters to need a replacement for a



flat or a different tire tread. These folks demonstrate a remarkable never-say-die ethic. Twice I saw racers riding on a rim, grinding through the course as best as possible on a totally flat tire, trying like heck to reach the pits and a replacement wheel.

### Sticking the Dismount

Contrary to what you might think, it’s what you do off the bike that can make the most difference in your performance, several riders told me. With at least three virtually unrideable obstacles, this course had riders dismounting and re-mounting their bikes quite frequently. And when you can’t lose your competitors in the sprints or the turns, your only hope may be the few moments you can shave by getting off-and-on faster than the other guy. Some racers explained the various techniques to me, and I think they’d make a great class for our next mountain bike 101 session. It’s certainly a skill that some of us could put to use on some of our rockier sections of singletrack.

### “Speed Up, Please, You’re Blocking My View of My Front Wheel”

As I mentioned, the Women’s “A” race provided some of the best drama of the day, as two remarkable competitors pedaled out virtually their entire race no more than a bike length apart from one another. Jennifer Tilley and Kelly Benjamin almost looked tethered to each other every time I saw them go around. They appeared as a speeding blue-and-red blur each time they went by, and I really don’t know how Jennifer found

the legs to open up even a tiny gap at the finish. That kind of pressure would easily break a man like me.

What was just as cool to see was after the race. These fierce competitors hung out near the finish line with the other racers in their class, talking as friends for over a half-hour standing over their bikes. I can’t imagine what they had to talk about, since they had just ridden the race so closely that I thought they were riding a tandem. It was great to see an example of fierce battle on the course, and absolute class off it.



*Jennifer Tilley and Kelly Benjamin in their standard positions.*

### It’s All About the Bike

Throughout the day, I saw grit and determination, heartbreak and heart. I saw worthy competitors on all kinds of bikes. And I saw passion: for the kids, for the sport, for the love of the chase. I can’t think of a better way to spend a Sunday in November. Check out the Cyclocross schedule posted at [www.localcycling.com](http://www.localcycling.com), find a race close to you, and go check it out. I never did learn the secret handshake.

But I’m pretty sure I figured out what it’s all about.



***Dear EarthRiders Forum,***

I'm an ordinary rider like anyone else. Most of the time I ride what I'm close to and familiar with, but every once in a while I get an itch to venture out and try something new. Like many Forum readers, I've always read of other's incredible rides, vicariously enjoying their escapades, but never thought anything like that could happen to me. But last weekend I had an experience I'll never forget.

It all happened early one Saturday morning. I was headed up North to take care of some personal business. I don't often get up North to ride, and thought as long as I was making the trip I'd take my bike and get some action. I knew what I was looking for. I'd known about this particular beauty for a few years, and that it carried a reputation for being particularly fast and curvaceous, with a few rough edges. I was feeling adventurous, so I thought I was ready for it.

After taking care of my personal business, I found what I'd been eagerly anticipating and started to get ready. It was a sight to behold, all glistening in the morning sun, beckoning me to come hither. It was early, and I knew there'd be many more patrons swinging by later to re-

lieve some stress. But I was the first customer of the day and for now I had it all to myself.

I started out slowly, taking my time to enjoy things and slowly and carefully negotiate my way through the unfamiliar territory. I definitely did not want to rush things.

No words were spoken – none were needed. Instinctually I knew exactly where to go and what moves to make. Some pressure here, a slight push there, lift off and float for a moment. I was definitely getting turned on by the sights and sounds and scents. Almost unconsciously the pace started to pick up, and I started pumping harder as my bike caressed the curves and undulations.

Things were going great. I was furiously pumping my crank and getting really turned on by all the flowy goodness, but I guess I must have made a move a little too quickly, because all of a sudden things got all rocky and I had to pull back and slow things down to avoid getting bucked off.

Soon things smoothed out and I managed to get back in control, cautiously working my way back up to speed - I didn't want that to happen again. Pretty soon I had a full head of steam, and a fantastic rhythm going, when

suddenly - from out of nowhere - there was a huge log right in front of me! Now, I've seen a log or two in my day, but this one was enormous! I nearly flipped out, but with a well-timed thrust and a slight jerk I managed to stay erect.

After an hour or so of riding, I was hot and sweaty and, frankly, a bit sore "down there" and close to exhaustion. My head was throbbing. But just as I was heading into the home stretch, I encountered the thickest, most overgrown bush I'd ever seen. It was pretty unappealing, and I wasn't really sure I wanted to work my way through it. I briefly considered turning around, but instead decided to finish what I'd started and ride it all the way to the end.

I plunged headlong into the tangled jungle. Just as I thought, it was hard to find my way. Finally I pierced through and emerged on the other side, dripping wet, covered in dew. I could sense the end was near. With a few last pushes, I gave it everything I had and reached the climax - the most incredible ride I've ever experienced.

I know it sounds unbelievable, but I swear it's all true. I definitely need to spend more time riding up North.

- Name and address withheld

Anyone even minimally aware of astronomy and seasonal changes is familiar with the fact that the shortest day of the year is December 21st, the first day of winter. This is the day that the Earth, in its tilted orbit around the sun, points its Northern hemisphere farthest away from the sun, producing the shortest amount of daylight hours in the year. Until that day, each day is shorter — and more depressing — than the last. But there is one bright factoid in an otherwise dimly

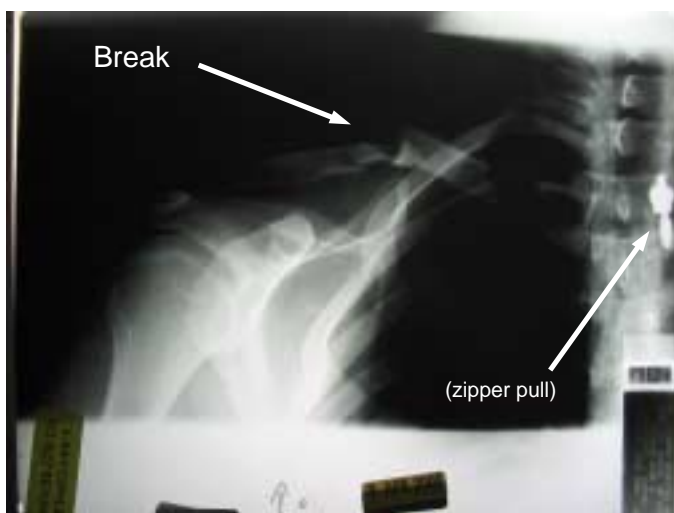
dark season, at least for those of us who tend to get our rides in during the evening. Due to rotational quirks in geometry (which, had you been paying attention in school, you would understand), the earliest sunset in Kansas City actually happens about *December 5th* (for you early risers, the latest sunrise does not occur until about December 30th). See for yourself at the "Data Services" link at <http://aa.usno.navy.mil>. Cheer up, riders; we're almost there!

# ER in the ER: Todd Posson

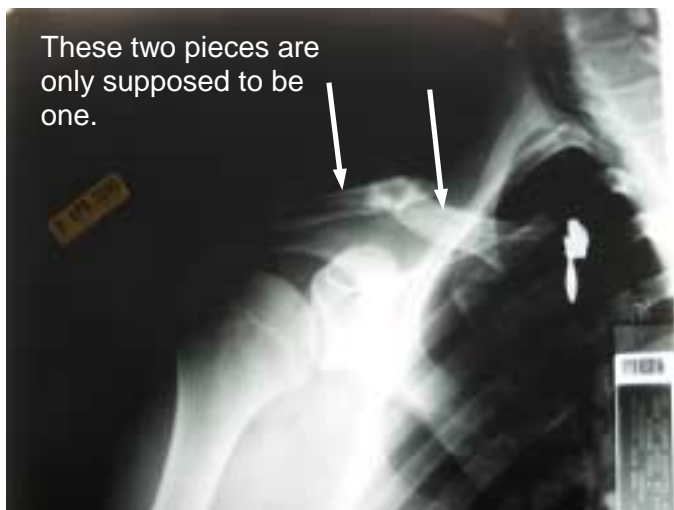
At the April, 2005 Midwest Single-track Summit in Southeast Missouri, Todd Posson took a spill and found himself in a world of hurt, nursing a broken collarbone a couple hundred miles from home. Finally, he has shared his story with us.

## ERNL: These X-Rays Look Painful. Where Were You, And How Did You Go Down?

TP: I was at the summit in St. Louis. I hadn't ridden much that weekend,



because I was too busy sitting on my butt. I decided that it was high time that I sampled the rest of the single-track the GORC boys had to offer in the park, so I convinced Zeke to go for a ride with me. We rode the 40% grade asphalt path to the top, rested,



and then began our sweet single-track descent down the hill. At the third switchback, we decided to let the group in front of us get some distance, because we were moving pretty good and starting to catch them. Not long after I got up to speed, I quickly noticed that my front wheel was loose in the fork. Before I could say, "what the f^@#," I hit a bump, bounced the front end and settled back down on the wheel. Wheel twists, fork bends, fork augers, body

touches tree, end of story. After I stopped rolling, I quickly noticed that I couldn't lift my right arm.

## ERNL: Describe The State-Of-The-Art Medical Facility That Treated You.

TP: St. Louis West Medical Center is phenomenal. The doctor was a mountain biker, and the nurse lived close to the trail. I got treated pretty quickly, and even got a shortcut back to the park.

## ERNL: Now Let's Get To What's Really Important: Did They Give You Some Good Drugs? And How Much Sympathy Did You Get At Home?

TP: I got a nice prescription of Vicodin. It definitely kills the pain, but I think it does it by putting you to sleep. I got absolutely no sympathy at home. My wife told me that I'm over 30, so I should stop doing childish things that get me hurt, since she had to do all the



things around the house that I couldn't.

## ERNL: Why Did You Choose Not To Have "Lawyer Tabs" On Your Fork? Will Your Next Custom Fork Have The Lawyer Tabs On It? Why Or Why Not?

TP: My fork did not have "lawyer tabs" because the dropouts on it do not come made that way (they are laser cut from plate steel). I had an identical fork built shortly after the crash, and no, it does not have lawyer tabs either. I simply do not like them. They make it an enormous pain in the ass to get your wheel on and off. All you really have to do to avoid doing what I did is to take a few more seconds every time you put your wheel on to triple-check your skewer, or get bolt-on skewers, like I have done.

## ERNL: Is There Anyone In Particular You Want To Blame Or Thank?

TP: I'd like to thank Doc Cummins for coming out to the scene to give me an early on-trail diagnosis. I'd like to thank Zeke for wasting his afternoon in the ER. I'd like to thank Brian Robinson for driving my dumb ass home, and not letting me do it myself.

## ERNL: Any Advice For Our Readers, Should They Ever Find Themselves Inverted, Flailing, And Milliseconds From Certain Injury?

TP: Close your eyes so you don't see it coming.

## ERNL: May I Touch Your Disfigured Collarbone?

TP: Uh, sure, but it'll cost you a dollar.



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### **EarthRiders Membership**

Support local mountain biking, trail maintenance, and land access efforts. Annual memberships/renewals are **\$25.00** individual or **\$30.00** family. Sign up online or find out more at [www.earthriders.com](http://www.earthriders.com). Membership information is not sold to third parties.

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Kansas City, MO 64108

### **Bike America**

[www.bikeamericakc.com](http://www.bikeamericakc.com)  
(913) 381-5431  
9514 Nall Ave  
Shawnee Mission, KS 66207-2950

(913) 780-4500  
2053 E Santa Fe St  
Olathe, KS 66062-1608

(816) 524-1819  
32 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> St  
Lees Summit, MO 64063-2323

### **Bike Source**

[www.bikesourceonline.com](http://www.bikesourceonline.com)  
(913) 451-1515  
Corner of 135th and Quivira St.  
Overland Park, KS 66213

### **Bike Stop**

[www.bikestoponline.com](http://www.bikestoponline.com)  
(816) 353-8448  
4013 Sterling Ave  
Kansas City, MO 64133-1309

(816) 224-8588

925 SW US Highway 40  
Blue Springs, MO 64015-4605

### **Cycle City**

(816) 587-8181  
7749 NW Prairie View Road  
Kansas City, MO 64151

### **Leawood Bicycles**

(816) 942-4442  
12311 State Line Rd  
Kansas City, MO 64145-1148

### **Midwest Cyclery**

(816) 931-4653  
3957 Broadway St  
Kansas City, MO 64111-2542

### **Peak Performance Therapeutic Massage Center—Art Ryan**

(816) 471-0505  
(816) 881-0164 (pager)  
308 E 18th Ave  
North Kansas City, MO  
64116-3609

### **Ride Bicycles**

[www.ponyexpress.net/~ridebic](http://www.ponyexpress.net/~ridebic)  
(816) 233-1718  
2320 North Belt Hwy  
St Joseph, MO 64506-2208

### **River Market Cyclery**

(816) 842-BIKE  
315 E 3rd St  
Kansas City, MO 64106-1001

### **Smithville Spokes**

(816) 532-8150  
spokes@LDS.net  
14462 North 169 Highway  
Smithville, MO 64089

### **Summit Bikes**

[www.summitbikes.com](http://www.summitbikes.com)  
(816) 554-8989  
1317 NE Douglas Road  
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

### **The Wheel Cyclery**

[www.thewheelcyclery.com](http://www.thewheelcyclery.com)  
(816) 455-BIKE  
5126 NE Antioch Rd  
Kansas City, MO 64119-2502

### **Trek Bicycle Store of KC**

[www.trekcc.com](http://www.trekcc.com)  
(913) 631-6800  
10412 Shawnee Mission Pkwy.  
Shawnee, KS 66203



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