

TITLEONE TOUR OF EAGLE

Speed racers gear up for fifth anniversary bike race.

By Sydney Sallabanks

He was hooked the moment he saw his first bike race. The speed, the colors and the crowd made a permanent impression on nine-year old New Yorker Gary Casella. One year later, he won his first race. A couple of decades later he is still racing (and winning). Casella races for the TitleOne Elite team and runs the Tour of Eagle criterium bike race, the capstone event of Eagle Fun days, the annual cluster of community events including a parade, food and craft vendors, and cultural performances offered in Eagle each summer. A criterium race, or "crit" as cyclists call them, is the bicycling equivalent of the Indy 500, with a closed circuit course, usually through a downtown area convenient to spectators.

On June 8, 2007, the Tour of Eagle will celebrate its fifth anniversary. City officials expect record crowds to take in the excitement, which makes Casella a happy cyclist. "I love to share my passion. Cycling transcends being a sport. You can compete against fellow racers, or just ride for fun and recreation. Anyone can do it, no matter what their age or ability," he says.

Tour of Eagle racers speed through multiple laps on their road bikes in a one-half mile course, with the goal of completing the most laps in a set amount of time. The Eagle community shows up in force to cheer the racers on as they dash down Old State Street in downtown Eagle at an average speed of 30 miles per hour. "The excitement is in the corner," says Casella.

The group of racers is comprised of about 100 local professionals and amateurs, men and women in a variety of categories who Casella hopes possess the right mix of speed, savvy, and fearlessness that it takes to complete a criterium. According to Casella, there are three important components of cycling: tradition, etiquette, and strategy. "In a criterium, you need to know when to step on the gas and when to back off," he explains.

Eagle is known for having a fair share of cyclists, and any one worth his or her jersey will attest to the hard work and dedication it takes to excel in the sport. Casella says that although teamwork is an integral aspect of cycling, success depends a lot on an individual's own groundwork; including proper nutrition, and both mental and physical training.

Before moving to Idaho, Casella raced with a national development team as part of the US Cycling Federation and went to the Olympic training center in Colorado Springs. "As a kid from New York, I was living a dream, competing with cyclists from all over the country," he recalls. Now he enjoys the satisfaction of giving back to the community as the Tour of Eagle coordinator, and the collaboration his team has with the event sponsor, TitleOne Corporation. "They are so community-driven and totally involved in supporting the race," says Casella of the event's sponsor.

"Cycling transcends being a sport, you can compete against fellow racers, or just ride for fun and recreation."—Gary Casella, cyclist and Tour of Eagle coordinator.

Vicki White, Ada County Manager of TitleOne Corporation, says her company chose to support the Tour of Eagle because it was different from any other local event. "From TitleOne's inception in 2000, our philosophy has been to differentiate ourselves from within the industry. Our people, our service, our technology, our advertising methods, even our delivery vehicles [the VW bugs] have been different. The Tour of Eagle provides an opportunity to be involved in the community by sponsoring a cycling team as well as helping provide safety," explains White.

TitleOne has five offices in Ada and Canyon County and will open an Eagle branch in summer of 2007. "We are very excited about Eagle as a whole, and about being a part of the community," says White. What she likes most about her company's involvement in Eagle Fun Days and the Tour of Eagle is the thrill of seeing a community come together in a positive environment that appeals to all ages and lifestyles. "Our society today needs to continue to rally for fun events that families can be involved in," she says. The Tour of Eagle exemplifies that spirit. Catch the excitement on the race course this June 8, 2007. **em**

TitleOne is proud to sponsor this year's Tour of Eagle Cycling Race, Friday, June 8, 2007, in downtown Eagle, Idaho. TitleOne makes community service an on-going commitment. For more information about locally owned and operated TitleOne Title and Escrow Corporation, call (208) 323-4888, or visit www.titleonecorp.com

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