

Tour de Headwaters raises more than \$50,000

Written By KIRA WRONSKA DORWARD

You don't need to go to France to experience the comradery of cycling for a cause. Headwaters Hospital's Tour de Headwaters took place on the bright and sunny morning of Sept. 15 in Inglewood. Now in its fourth year, this year's Tour turned out to be the most successful yet, with 320 riders, almost 100 more than last year, signed up for the event to "pedal for a purpose."

This year, the event raised more than the \$50,000 goal in support of purchasing Headwaters' priority equipment needs, "a mass gamut of hospital equipment," says Nicole Hand, Manager of Annual Giving for the Hospital. This includes anything from ultrasound machines and supporting software upgrades to basics like wheelchairs and stretchers. "Events like this aren't just about our riders. Our sponsors really get us through this—we would really like to thank Brannon Steel, the presenting sponsor, and donors. We couldn't have done it without them." In the last three years, the Tour de Headwaters has raised \$150,000 through relatively small entry fees, donations, and the pledges of sponsors of cyclists, who have their choice of three intensity levels; The family-friendly 25-km trail, the challenging 50-km road ride, and the pinnacle 101.5 km challenge, a nod to radio sponsor 101.5 FM Orangeville, who was present to provide music at the event.

Another sponsor, and something out of the ordinary, were the ebikes provided by CUBE, a company from Germany whose bikes are the #2 selling products of its kind in Europe. The first event in North America to have ebikes, the new technology allows different riders with different skill levels to share the same experience. "An 18 year old to a 90 year old can ride," says CUBE representative Erik Jensen. Speeds range from 80-130 km/h and from kamikaze to easy entry cruisers. Essentially, it allows every rider to have the experience they want to have. Eight to 10 people rode ebikes in the Tour de Headwaters, as Erik reintroduced people who haven't ridden a bike in years.

With three starting time in order of longest to shortest distance, the idea is to finish roughly at the same time at Don Coats' Clubhouse Cycling store in Inglewood. A BBQ and beer, cooked and poured by Ward 1 candidate Jim Wallace and Palgrave Public Inn owner Terry Cutts, await the cyclists, as well as back and neck rubs, though Don, also co-chair of the event, feared for seating room.

"I hope the store can hold 300 people today, but I'm not sure."

Of the Tour de Headwaters event, he remarked, "the beauty of it is the engagement in the event. We all come from different lifestyles and different areas, but we all come together. I love all the smiling faces and social time afterwards. That's what Caledon's all about." He predicts even greater things for the coming fifth year of the event, and reminds residents that everyone is welcome. Presenting sponsor Kirk Brennon of Brennon Steel gave some rousing words of encouragement to the crowd, "you are making a difference in the quality of care to our patients and we couldn't be happier to have you here—for the most iconic ride in Ontario through the Forks of the Credit." Tim Peters, co-chair and founder of Tour de Headwaters, as well as incoming chair of the hospital board, emphasized how this event was about caring for the community and trying to give back. Five years ago, he wanted to do something local, and so he partnered with local businesses to create the event. All the supplies for the cyclists, the beef, the beer, the cider, and the hotels, are all from Caledon, he emphasized, in an effort to promote our region and area. "A hundred percent [of money raised] goes towards buying equipment, and we appreciate the support."

Mayor Allan Thompson had some final words on the event, as he came out bright and early to support all the cyclists. "It is awesome to see how this community has come together. It's a beautiful day, but I'm so happy to see everyone out here in support of the hospital. At the end of the day, it's great to see a community come out for a great cause led by a great champion."