

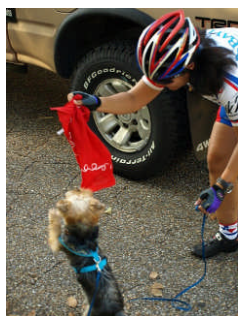


MY RIDE DIARY by Southbound Hondo Schopmeyer

A SWEET LIL' OLE RIDE: *The Mississippi MS 150 sponsored by Denbury Resources, Inc.*

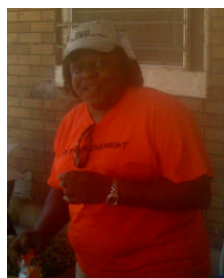
"SWEET"

I adored this ride! I can truthfully say that EVERY volunteer I met was super to me! And they all thought I was the cutest thing since



sliced bread so what was not to love?! From Connie Machado, who appointed herself as my personal SAG driver, to the volunteers from the Knights of Columbus who snuck me tasty burgers when Mommy wasn't looking at the second-day lunch, everyone was sweet, kind, and thoughtful.

Title Sponsor Denbury Resources, Inc., ("DRI"), an oil and gas company with offices throughout the southwest, did a superb job both outfitting their own MS 150 cycling team and providing huge volunteer support throughout both ride days. Dozens of DRI employees from three different states converged on Mississippi to



Glenda

volunteer in various capacities from serving lunch to driving SAG wagons.

The volunteer efforts if the DRI employees was coordinated and

overseen by Glenda Wolfe, the company's Events Coordinator, who traveled all the way from the DRI headquarters in Plano, Texas, to donate a weekend of her time to the MS cause. We met company employees from Mississippi, Texas, and Louisiana and I took a particular fancy to Kenny Biglane who works in the DRI Mississippi office. Kenny sagged us from lunch on the first day all the way to the overnight stop in Vicksburg. It was so much fun to ride in his big truck and exchange stories with him!

"LIL"

This was the littlest MS 150 I've ever been on with just under 300 riders so it was perfect for a small pup like me! There was no traffic congestion with thousands of riders hogging up the roads nor did I see any harassed, surly volunteers pulling their hair out.

The Mississippi Division is a smaller chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society ("NMSS"). The Mississippi office has just three staff members, but they do the work of a dozen more.

I don't know anyone who works harder at recruiting sponsors, riders, and volunteers than Jimmie Saucier, the Development Coordinator of the Mississippi NMSS. She is a very sweet, soft-spoken Southern lady who, like most of her Southern brethren, is a whirl-wind at organizing

events and galvanizing people. She is the only Mississippi staff member dedicated full-time to the Bike Tours and Walks, so she works year round to recruit sponsors, volunteers, and riders. Jimmie's hard work is evidenced by her contact information on dozens of email lists and websites of companies, groups and organizations that might be interested in the MS 150.

Anyone interested in riding the Mississippi MS 150 next year should contact Jimmie because she will actually reply to you within 24 hours! What a wonderful lady!



Jimmie, Hondo, Elizabeth

"OLE"

The Mississippi MS 150 has been riding for 17 years but has moved around the state. It currently starts and ends in the state capitol of Jackson with an overnight in historic Vicksburg. The ride route varies each

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: E. Schopmeyer
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Everything else you can think of pretty much relates back to us!

year due to the continuous road construction projects that take place between Jackson and Vicksburg. Jimmie and her ride team make a monumental effort to select safe and smooth roadways for the ride.

The ride was also well-supported by an army of attentive and hard-working volunteers, many of whom return year after year. There seemed to be one volunteer for every three riders and an overwhelming number were family and personal friends of Jimmie herself. She had dozens of volunteers out on the ride route and working at rest stops. Many had no personal connection to MS but were there to support Jimmie and a great cause. As Jimmie very simply told me, "We're all family."

"RIDE": First Day



On the first day I was only tossed around in my burley until the first rest stop where we caught a ride with the Red Cross Disaster Relief van. We must have looked really awful for a Disaster Relief van to pick us up!

While in our SAG van, we overheard that someone had lost one of their biking shoes while riding on the route. I don't know how you lose just one biking shoe while pedaling and don't realize your shoe is gone until you get to the next rest stop. Burleys are SO much better!

At the first-day lunch stop we met the Mississippi state troopers who rode the entire route with us for two whole days to ensure rider safety. Incredible! "Doc" and Leo were so helpful and lots of fun to hang with at the overnight rest stop where we traded war stories.



Thanks a whole bunch, guys!

The first day ride ended right at the circular port-cochere of the Battlefield Inn which served as the official overnight stop. The hotel was very conveniently located, unless you make plans to ride at the last minute like we did so the hotel is sold out and you right have to stay at a neighboring hotel. The awards banquet and dinner were also held at the same hotel along with a pool party following the ride that featured a beer keg and baked potatoes! Yum!

"RIDE": Second Day

We stayed at a hotel just a bit down the road from the second-day start. We were trudging up a steep hill to the start-line when a big pick-up truck unexpectedly pulled right up next to us. It was Connie! She had remembered that we were not staying at the start-line hotel and figured that we might need a lift. All without us asking! Now, that is truly caring about the riders!



Connie and Jana

Bike mechanic Andrew from Indian Cycle Fitness & Outdoor in Jackson, MS, became my very best buddy. On the first day he sagged my burley in the bike repair van from rest stop to rest stop then parked and stored it at the overnight stop for me! He repeated his kindness all the next day PLUS he entertained us at the second day lunch stop by telling jokes and performing his juggling act. I LOVE Andrew!



Andrew

After lunch we hitched a ride in the back of Connie's pickup truck all the way along the Natchez Trace to the

Finish Line. We turned into every rest stop to meet new people and so Connie could ensure that all the volunteers were well-supplied.

The last rest stop on the second day was my favorite



of the entire ride because it was a PINK-themed rest stop. My favorite color! The volunteers were dressed in pink and wore pink wigs, the decorations were pink, and EVERYTHING was pink. Pink, after all, is my signature color. They even gave me a cool pair of pink sunglasses to shade my eyes because it was so hot that day.

The finish line was the only part of the entire ride that I did not enjoy. The finish line was at a medical center that boasted SHOWER ROOMS near its fitness center. Riders were allowed to use the shower rooms to clean up after the ride. Ick! I hate baths! Everyone else thought it was great to have a warm shower and good scrubbing to wash off the dirt from the road before the long ride back home that night. But bathing was definitely not for me. I like being dirty and smelly. Cleanliness . . . ACK!

CONCLUSION

The Mississippi MS 150 really was a sweet lil' ole ride for a sweet lil' pup like me. The volunteer support was phenomenal and the bike route was challenging but scenic through the Mississippi back roads. Title Sponsor DRI was very involved both in terms of riders, volunteers and financial support, and the local NMSS chapter was nothing but efficient and warm-hearted.

Jimmie is already signing up riders for next year so register for this ride. So if you want a peaceful, well-supported ride through the peaceful Mississippi countryside, then contact Jimmie through the NMSS.

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Gossip

CONGRATULATIONS

Kathy Boyett, Justin Kvasnicka, Elizabeth Schopmeyer and Jennifer Wall for making the Top 100 Fundraiser Club for the Dallas MS 150. They each raised more than \$3,000 for the National MS Society!

Elizabeth Schopmeyer, Southbound Hondo Schopmeyer, and Jana Diminnie for riding in the Denbury Resources, Inc. MS 150 in Mississippi.

THANK YOU

Kathy Beck, Vice President of Operations at **Atlas Legal Research, LP** (one of our valued sponsors) for updating our team website. She put a lot of time and effort into the project out of the kindness of her heart.

Andrew Vidales for becoming our new Education Coordinator who will be providing us with valuable information on cycling nutrition, health and fitness.

THINKING OF YOU

Debbie Hines recovering from a broken ankle (she was so surprised and horrified to be named the new Membership Director that she fell out of her truck).

Andrew Vidales' mother recovering from knee surgery and **Shaun Vidales'** mother recovering from back surgery. It has clearly been an eventful year for the Vidales family so we're sending our thoughts and best wishes their way.

WELCOME ABOARD

Robert McDowell, a police officer from Jackson, Mississippi, is our newest rider. He intends to travel all the way from Jackson to ride the MS 150 with us next year!