

'11 Amgen bike tour to encompass much of Lake Tahoe

The 2011 Amgen Tour of California, the largest cycling event in America, will start at Lake Tahoe, officials announced today.



Lake Tahoe's first involvement in the race will feature more than a lap and a half around the lake beginning at the California-Nevada border in South Lake Tahoe with the Stage 1 finish at Northstar-at-Tahoe in Truckee. North Lake Tahoe also hosts the Stage 2 start at Squaw Valley.

The Amgen Tour of California covers more than 800 miles, traveling between 15 host cities over the course of eight days from May 15-22, 2011.

Last year's date change from February to May allowed the Tour de France-style road race to visit locations that would not have been possible previously, including a visit to Big Bear Lake.

The race will travel through some of the state's most scenic landmarks, with the overall finish in title-sponsor Amgen's hometown community of Thousand Oaks.

The 15 official stage start and finish communities that have been selected for the 2011 race include newcomers: South Lake Tahoe, Truckee, Squaw Valley, Auburn, Livermore, Claremont, and Mt. Baldy, along with return cities Sacramento, Modesto, San Jose, Seaside, Paso Robles, Solvang, Santa Clarita and Thousand Oaks.

"Whether it's skinny or fat tires, Tahoe is a passionate biking community," Carol Chaplin, executive director of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, said in a prepared statement.

“Hosting the Amgen Tour of California, the country’s most prestigious bike race, will put us on the map as ‘must ride’ for cyclists while having a significant impact on the local and regional economy.”

Lake Tahoe is recognized for several annual summer biking events. America’s Most Beautiful Bike Ride has participants circumnavigate the lake the first weekend in June. Another chance to circle Tahoe’s 72-mile shoreline is during the annual Tour de Tahoe Bike Big Blue Race in mid-September. Late September brings the Tahoe Century Ride, which starts and finishes at Squaw Valley and features scenic routes and challenging hill climbs. The annual Lake Tahoe Marathon Week offers a bike race around Tahoe’s shoreline the end of September. Furthermore, the annual Death Ride course covers five High Sierra mountain passes. Tour de Nez offers significant professional stage races in the country taking place in 2 states: Nevada and California; the cities of Reno and Truckee, along the shores of Lake Tahoe, and up the mountains surrounding the resort at Northstar-at-Tahoe every June.

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, are spearheading promotional and sponsorship efforts for the Lake Tahoe Stage 1 Start, Finish and Stage 2 Start, and will serve on the Amgen Tour of California Lake Tahoe Local Organizing Committee

In previous years, the race has drawn some of the world’s most renowned and respected riders, such as top Tour de France competitors, World Champions and Olympic medalists that include Lance Armstrong, Tom Boonen, Oscar Freire, Paolo Bettini, Fabian Cancellara, Carlos Sastre, Ivan Basso, George Hincapie, Mark Cavendish and Andy Schleck.

“The 2011 Amgen Tour of California route is going to result in an exciting and compelling race,” Lance Armstrong of Team Radioshack said in a release. “All of us at Team Radioshack

are looking forward to it.”

Returning as the title sponsor for the sixth consecutive year, Amgen will continue to leverage the race to raise awareness and support for people affected by cancer through its Breakaway from Cancer initiative.

Stages for the 2011 Amgen Tour of California include:

- * Stage 1: May 15 – South Lake Tahoe to Northstar-at-Tahoe in Truckee
- * Stage 2: May 16 – Squaw Valley to Sacramento
- * Stage 3: May 17 – Auburn to Modesto
- * Stage 4: May 18 – Livermore to San Jose
- * Stage 5: May 19 – Seaside to Paso Robles
- * Stage 6: May 20 – Solvang Individual Time Trial
- * Stage 7: May 21 – Claremont to Mt. Baldy
- * Stage 8: May 22 – Santa Clarita to Thousand Oaks

For further information on the 2011 Amgen Tour of California, visit www.amgentourofcalifornia.com.