USA Cycling Reports Growth In Membership, Race Participation

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO—Competitive cycling in the United States remains healthy despite the downturn in the economy, according to the latest figures released by USA Cycling.

For the sixth consecutive year, the number of licensed competitive cyclists is up compared to the previous year, while the number of registered clubs and event sanctions also increased. Collectively, these categories demonstrate the popularity of bike racing in America from a participation standpoint.

At the close of the 2008 license sales season on Nov. 30, USA Cycling listed 63,280 licensees (members), a 2.9 percent increase over 2007. The number of sanctioned clubs also rose 1.8 percent.

USA Cycling listed 2,155 teams among its constituents. The race organization also sanctioned 2,551 events, a 3.1 percent jump from a year ago.

"Once again we’re excited to witness continued growth in the sport of cycling," said Steve Johnson, chief executive officer of USA Cycling. "The market for amateur sports in the United States is a competitive one with so many choices and opportunities available to athletes. That said, to experience another year of increased participation is very rewarding. We hope and expect this growth trend to continue throughout 2009."

The growth in membership continues a six-year trend that has seen the number of licensed racers in America increase 48 percent since 2002. Over that same period, the number of events USA Cycling sanctions has gone up 50 percent, while affiliated clubs have grown 30 percent.

Sport insiders point to the success and popularity of American athletes in cycling’s most notable events, such as the Tour de France and the Olympic Games, as a primary factor in the sport’s recent boom. —Jason Norman

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What Housing Crisis?

BY RAY KEENER

Despite economic turmoil and foreclosures at their highest levels since the Great Depression, your best customers are not sideways on their mortgages. Most bike shop customers have money and the security of solid home equity.

According to Catalyst Communication's 2008 study, “Who Shops at American Bike Shops?” 96 percent of your customers own their homes. And as this graph shows, 76 percent have been in their homes for five years or more.

Catalyst chief executive officer Leslie Bohm suggests these data give bike marketers reason to be hopeful.

“Our industry’s core customers are in a more secure position than average Americans,” Bohm said. “They’re generally in more stable jobs, with 42 percent earning over $100K a year, and most are far from the crisis in plummeting home equity. In fact, most have owned their homes long enough to have secure, appreciated value, and many have little or no mortgage debt.”

Bohm’s advice: “In hard times, focus on your core customers—that 20 percent who bring 80 percent of your profit. Your customers are still spending, but you’ll need to reach out to them and present reasons to shop with you. This is not the time to eliminate advertising, just to demand more results from it.”

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Most Bike Shop Customers Are Settled in Their Homes

Length of Residence

- 16+ years: 26%
- 0-4 years: 24%
- 5-15 years: 50%


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