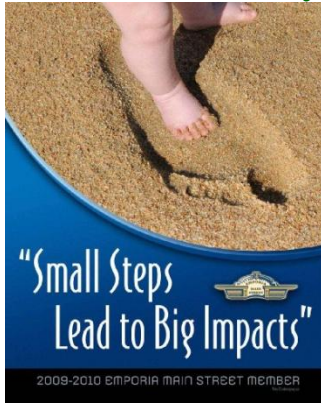


The Dirty Kanza

A story of community commitment and pride



When people ask me what I love about my job, the first thing out of my mouth generally is "I get to help people that are trying to make Emporia a better place." Businesses, organizations and community volunteers are our target audience, and I wanted to take this week's article to relay the "how" and "why" behind a volunteer effort to expand one of the nation's top 10 gravel road endurance races: The Dirty Kanza 200.

A few months ago, I got a call from Kristi Mohn. Kristi wanted to expand a bike race, now in it's fifth year, known as the "Dirty Kanza". She wanted to get the community involved, she wanted to improve the economic impact of the event on the community and she wanted to make the event more "fun" for everyone. Kristi is a board member of Emporia Main Street, but beyond that, she is a tremendously dedicated volunteer that has worked VERY hard to move this community forward on a variety of different fronts. A majority of the live music scene, including Live in the Lot, is a direct result of Flint Hills Music (a business owned by Kristi and Tim Mohn). Kristi is one of the figures instrumental in the local arts scene and the Arts Council. As a realtor for REMAX, not only has she helped people find homes and commercial properties, but she has helped people new to the community integrate into the Emporia "vibe" and has introduced potential business owners to sources of help. Emporia Main Street values hard work, loyalty and creativity; how could we turn down the opportunity to work with someone that has done so much to move our community forward?



Race organizers meet with the city.



In years past, the Dirty Kanza 200 started and finished at a local hotel. Local participants wanted more... Why couldn't we expose people from all over the nation to our unique retailers, service providers and entertainment? Why couldn't we reach out to the business community to create a festival? Why couldn't we take one of the top 10 races in the nation, that many people still didn't know about, and grow it for the benefit of the entire community? If a team were assembled to help race organizers out, the ceiling for the Dirty Kanza could be very high, so Kristi reached out to The Granada Theatre, The City of Emporia and Emporia Main Street to push the Dirty Kanza to the next level.

In Downtown Emporia
June 5th, 2010
Finish Line Celebration
3:30 The Granada Theatre will be showing
"The Sandlot" \$4.00 per ticket
5:00 Finish Line Celebration begins!
(open to the public)
-cheer on racers as they cross
the finish line
-visit the Granada Beer Garden
-listen to great music
-check out local food vendors
-inflatables for the kids
8:00-11:30 Live Music
"Clifton Street Bluegrass Band"
the co-dependents
9:30 pm Awards Ceremony

In years past, about 135 riders from several different states participated in the Dirty Kanza 200. With increased planning and promotion, the pre-registration ballooned to around 250. These 250 riders brought family and support crews resulting in over 330 hotel rooms booked for the

event. Jessica Buchholtz from the Granada Theatre, Kristi Mohn and Emporia Main Street representatives started meeting regularly with city officials to inform them of the expanded "DK 200" and communicate the groups intentions to expand the event. The Granada Theatre started planning a beer garden on Commercial Street, Emporia Main Street began promoting booth spaces to members and soliciting prize donations and coupons for event participants. And, at that point Russ Bonitatibus from Lyon County State Bank stepped in and offered to organize a "DK Lite" 20 mile fun ride. IM Design put together a t-shirt design, Kristi Mohn developed a course with a "map my ride" program, Russ put together a disclaimer entry form and Shawn Honea of IM Design (and the Emporia Main Street Business Enhancement Chair) developed an awesome poster promoting the DK Lite. Reebles Countrymart offered to provide food for the finish line of the DK Lite (which was very appreciated).

The Granada Theatre planned a showing of "The Sandlot" as

a matinee with tickets for families of the Dirty Kanza riders. The Emporia Recreation Commission donated the use of outfield fencing for the Granada's beer garden, which was picked up and delivered by Main Street volunteers, including individual member Fred Stephenson. High Gear volunteered to man the SAG stop at the 10 mile marker for the DK Lite, and the City of Emporia offered to make police officers and an ambulance available for the event while agreeing to shut down the 800 and 900 blocks of Commercial Street to accommodate the finish line and street festival. Countless businesses contributed coupons, prizes were donated by Capital Federal Savings, The Teacher's Hall of Fame, and other members of Emporia Main Street. Businesses like Tropical Snow, Dan's Hands, Blue Fox, Pyramid Pizza, High Gear, Ru Yi, Adventure Monkey, the Little Red Caboose, Jubilee Native and more signed up for booth spaces.



The DK Lite was so fun, even the Main Street Director could do it. Thank you to Harlan Smith for the photo.

The day of the event, volunteers and organizers met at around 4:30 a.m. to begin set-up and registration. Around 195 DK 200 riders showed up at the starting line (the weather scared a few off), and the race began at 6:00 a.m. **[For a complete map and an idea of what one of the riders went through, check out this compellation of a rider's Garmin Log by clicking HERE.](#)** It's unbelievable: distance, pace, elevation, heart rate, temperature... It's all there. **[For a photo album of some of the event, click HERE.](#)**



The Granada Theatre did a great job with the beer garden!

The Granada Theatre began showing "The Sandlot" at 3:30, and then in under an hour volunteers converted the 800 Block of Commercial Street to race central. Flint Hills Music set up the stage and sound system for the bands. The Granada Theatre Staff set up a fantastic beer garden. Main Street booths popped up along the exterior of the event, and the Finish Line was erected on the north end of the 800 Block of Commercial Street. The speed of this conversion was made even more impressive when considering that many of the volunteers had been up since 4:00 a.m., and some were even participants in the DK Lite bike ride...

At 7:38 p.m. our first rider returned. Corey Godfrey from Lincoln, Nebraska finished the race in just over 13.5 hours. Here is a list of the first 15 finishers:

Corey Godfrey- 7:38 p.m.- Lincoln Nebraska

- Lance Andre- 8:37 p.m.- Seffner, Florida
- Joe Fox- 8:45 p.m. Kansas City, MO
- Mark Walker- 9:13 p.m.- Salida, Colorado
- Tim Ek- 9:25 p.m.- Dillouth, MN
- Joe Meiser- 9:25 p.m.- Minneapolis, MN
- Erik Finks- 9:27 p.m.- Clinton, MO
- Troy Krause- 9:27 p.m. Lincoln, Nebraska
- Erik Nelson- 9:28 p.m. Lawrence, KS
- Jim Rank- 9:54 p.m.- Belton, MO
- John Mathias- 9:55 p.m.- Olathe, KS
- Ben Doom- 10:00 p.m. St. Cloud, MN
- Steve Goetzleman- 10:11 p.m.- Iowa City, Iowa
- Gerald Hart- 10:21 p.m.- Bucyrus, KS
- Robert Kranz- 10:21 p.m.- Ashville, North Carolina



First place finisher Corey Godfrey talks to Jeff ODell.

[IM Design produced some raw footage of this year's event you can view HERE.](#)



Kristi Mohn talks to KVOE.

down, the finish line was moved over into parking stalls in front of St. Andrew's Church. Volunteers picked up trash and made sure everything was stored away before going home, but some die hard race fans stayed out to support riders that were still coming in at 2:00 a.m.

[Two more cool points- First, you can check out more information on biking in the Flint Hills by checking out Adventure Monkey \(Click HERE\). This site, blog and magazine was developed by Emporia's own Eric Bengamin.](#) Eric finished the Dirty Kanza at 1:45 a.m. Sunday morning after fighting through leg cramps most of the day. THE SECOND cool thing is: according to Kristi Mohn, race organizers were so impressed with our community that next year almost all race products will come from Emporia! T-Shirts, trophies, promotional materials and more... We are hoping that these relationships will lead to more business associated with other races. Extra effort leads to extra rewards...

Between the Live Music by the bands the "Clifton Street Bluegrass Band" and "The Co-Dependants", an inflatable from Water's True Value Hardware for the kids, the Granada beer garden, vendor booths and awards ceremonies, a lot went on for the community. Kristi Mohn got small cow bells from Plum Bazaar for members of the crowd that rang out every time a rider crossed the finish line, and the community was VERY supportive of the riders.

By midnight, the street was cleared, the beer garden was broken



The Finish Line.



The Dirty Kanza 200 epitomizes one point of the Main Street Approach- Promotion. Through the efforts of several community members, we were able to promote Emporia, our businesses, our entertainment and the local culture. Rider's, their families and local race organizers were impressed, and it is clear that the Dirty Kanza 200 is due for rapid growth. Thanks to Kristi Mohn, The Granada Theatre, the City of Emporia, countless volunteers and members, our city was able to expand an event for the benefit of all in the local community. ,your efforts are making Emporia and our Kansas communities a better place to work, shop and play. Keep up the good work, and continue helping Main Street improve our city!

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For past editions of the Emporia Main Street E-News, check out our E-News archives by clicking [HERE](#).

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