

Chichimec Route joint to Ciclo America

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RESUME

The Chichimec Route (ChR) is a Project to give visibility to a 7thundred years-old and more than 3000 Km length network of roads with the objective to recover and build in them the National Network of Bike and Pedestrian paths, to be linked with the continental network that several Latin American and Spanish groups are promoting called Ciclo America. The ChR mainly follows the route of the prairies and the one of the commerce of the Turquoise created by the native indigenous towns that developed the Mesoamerican Civilization.

The first ChR was organized in the year 2002 as fruit of the voluntary work, without aims of profit, of more than twenty local groups from fourteen states, without support of the government nor of the private initiative. The main promoters of the ChR are bicycle advocacy groups created by independent cyclists trough out Mexico, organized in electronic groups in internet.

The ChR visits part of the Chihuahuas desert, third in world-wide biodiversity, important archaeological zones and colonial cities some of them protected as Heritage of the Humanity by UNESCO, visiting historical ways, mountain ranges, protected natural areas, mines, ex- haciendas, and historical baths.

In Mexico the bicycle infrastructure is just beginning with less than 1000 Km of bike paths in all the country: the authorities privilege and subside the car use, there are no bicycle friendly cities in Mexico. The objective of the ChR project is to promote the idea of a sustainable transportation infrastructure build for the regular use of bicycles as a means of transportation as well as a place that can ignite the rural and sustainable development of the communities that could be visited by international tourism all year around.

We believe that the National network of Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths as well as Mexican Bicycle friendly cities will be possible if we can catch the interest of the citizens, mass media and authorities. For it we needed the support of the organizations of promotion and advocacy of the bicycle in other countries.

MEXICO AND CHICHIMECS

Mexico has about of 106 million inhabitants, a territory area near two million Km², all the ecosystems of the planet, is an important petroleum exporter, an average economy with the income superior to \$9.000 U.S. annual dollars per capita, nevertheless most of the population is poor due to an unjust distribution of the wealth, derived that 300 families take part in about of 80% of the economy of the country, Mexico produced 1,063,476 bicycles in 1998. The Chichimec Culture was developed in the north of Mexico from a little but under the Tropic of Cancer and until half-full the North border of the Mexico of Century XIX territory occupied by the United States now. Still now some native's towns of the Chichimec culture remain.

THE ROUTE

It crosses existing ways of preference with little traffic: dirt ways, stones ways, state and federal pavements. The heights that will be crossed go from the sea level to more than 3000 meters height.

The ChR has been crossed by local relief of eleven states during summers of 2003 and 2004x More than 150 cyclists of all ages have participated every year, with all kinds of bicycles urban, cycle tourist, mountain bike, Eco tourist companies and Schools have participated.

The ChR 2006 is dedicated as a tribute to Cuauhtemoc last leader of the Mexicas-Chichimec so we will visit Ixcateopan, Guerrero, the place where their rests lies.

The route initiates in Paquime, Casas Grandes Chihuahua and goes to Mexico City, to end at Guerrero at the south of the country. Efforts are being made to try to connect reliefs to continue to Central America and to being able to arrive to Bogota in Colombia here the Conference Towards Cars Free Cities will be held in September 2006.

A route filled with history, nature and culture

The ChR visits the archeological sites of Paquime, Chalchihuites and Chepinque-Zacatecas, Cerro de Silva -San Luis Potosí, Cerro de la Cruz- Querétaro, Tula- Hidalgo, Teotihuacan – State of Mexico, Templo Mayor- Mexico City, Cholula- Puebla, in Oaxaca State Monte Alban and Zaachila. The cities of Paquime, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Queretaro, Mexico City and Oaxaca are protected by UNESCO as cities heritage of the Humanity for its beauty and legacy.

The ChR ride will cross the roads that tell the History of Mexico:

- The Turquoise Route that was used to sell this precious stone from the mines in Arizona USA to the Maya Zone.
- The Pilgrimage of the Mexicas- Chichimec's from Aztlan to Mexico- Tenochtitlan, that is the route that ancient Mexicans traveled to fundate Mexico City.
- The Silver Route, used to commerce this important metal during the Spanish rule in Mexico.
- Camino Real de Tierra Adentro y - Camino Real a Charcas, both main colonial roads.
- Independence Route of Father of the Nation Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the route used to battle the independence from Spain. And several roads crossed by National Mexican heroes as Benito Juarez - Indian Jerome,
- Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata.

The CHR visits also place of natural importance as

The Peña de Bernal, the third greatest monolith of the world, the Naica Mines, that has the biggest crystals of the planet, Paso de Cortes between the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl.

The Reference

The Mexican Bicycle teams that promote the ChR are inspired by International organizations as Sustrans in the United Kingdom, Trans-Can in Canada, the pedestrian route that cross the Australian continent, The European Green Ways, the Sendero de Chile in Chile and the East Coast Green Way in the USA as well as the Vías verdes in Spain. We know that Mexico could offer a unique places to bicycle and we need the help

of international teams to capture the Mexican authorities' imagination, to make this dream network of historical roads to come true!

The Challenge

We believe the bicycle is "the intelligent" option of transport, a real alternative for the social, economic and tourist development of the country. It is already present in the daily life of millions of Mexicans that use it to move in the urban and rural zones of Mexico, despite the fact that it has become dangerous to ride a bicycle in the great cities of the country thanks to the exponential growth of the numbers of cars, which has derived in the creation of bike advocacy groups in the capitals and some cities in 20 states.

This advocacy groups have managed to create some infrastructure for the Bicycle in Mexico: a 1000 km of cycle tracks have been built in the last 15 years in México City, San Luis Potosí, San Juan del Río, Querétaro, Oaxaca. We have managed to convince local municipal authorities to work for bicycle friendly measures in León, Guanajuato, Monterrey, San Felipe, Acapulco, Cancun, Mazatlán, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, and Chapala-Ajijic. The biggest Metro in México City allows the entrance of bicycles on Sundays and Holidays.

This step goes in the right direction but the challenge is still great: for example the city of San Luis Potosí has the greater number of cyclists of the country and produces more than half of the bikes produced in Mexico but unfortunately it has the greater index of fatal accidents for cyclists in the country-.

In Mexico the authorities of the three levels of government privilege the use of the automobile, most of the railroads of passengers disappeared at the end of 90's, there is Metro only in the three main cities of the country and the Metro bus only exist in two cities.

Almost the totality of the authorities of the three levels of government (Municipal, State and Federal) from the three main political parties PAN, PRI, PRD have destined only the 0,01% of their budgets to road infrastructure for bicycles. Most of the tax payers resources goes for infrastructure for cars.

In Mexico City the construction of road infrastructure for cars as the Second Floor have strengthened the false premise that the car is the best and only mean of transport in the city. This second floor projects are imitated unfortunately by many Governments of the States and Cities.

With the ChR we look forward to create a positive synergy that allows all local groups to achieve goals to make each city more friendly to bicycles.

We need

- Better laws are required to protect better the cyclists,
- Better budgets must be allocated to build cycling infrastructure.
- Municipal, State and Federal plans to promote a safe use of roads, the promotion of walking and cycling for transport.

The Vision

The creation of the ChR and spaces for the use of the bicycle in Mexico, will bring enormous benefits for the population as well as to contribute to maintain the quality of life and the environment for the next generations.

The National Network of Bike and Pedestrian Paths and Mexican Bicycle friendly cities will be possible if projects as the ChR manage to wake up the interest of the citizens and mass media. We ask for the international support to make this come true! GOALS

- To fortify the local groups that integrated the network
- To dignify the use of the bicycle
- To make a survey of the facilities to the cyclists in the states and municipalities
- To include the ChR in the National Plan of Development 2006-2012 and in the state ones
- To propose the ChR in the projects sustainable that the Senate of the Republic analyzes for go to propose in the next national political agenda

INVITATION

We sincerely invited them to unite bows of friendship, justice and comradeship and to roll with us some of but of 3000 km of adventure, beauty, history and tradition in Third Chichimec Route joint to Ciclo America, of the 7 of Julio to the 20 of August of the 2006

Thank you!

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