



## **RMCC 2011: MORE IS BETTER**

*by Mark Michel*

*“More is better! More coffee is better, more stages are better, more wins are better, more money is better. There you go. More is better!” – Jens Voigt*

The RMCC bills itself as the club “For People who Love to Ride.” As such, we've worked over the years to put together a very diverse schedule—with climbing rides, flat rides, ultra-endurance events, and shorter weeknight rides. If you add it all up, we have about 180 different rides during the course of a year.

Still, as we sat down to work on next year's schedule, we wanted to do more and do it better. The schedule that is online and in the printed program calendar that will soon hit your mailbox is the result of many hours of work that were put in this fall by the schedule committee.

The first thing we wanted to do was to do some needed route maintenance on weekend rides. Every year, new roads are paved while others become too highly trafficked. Some routes can just get a bit stale after many years. And sometimes we look at a road on the map and wonder why we've never used it even though it's been there for a long time.

The biggest area that needed work was routes up north—we ended up making numerous route revisions and developed three completely new rides up that way. Down south toward Castle Rock and Larkspur, we've also created a couple of new routes. Out of Aurora, the main change was to continue the process of reducing our use of Highway 79. In the foothills west of Denver, the changes were more technical in nature. However, between various rides we did add three new climbs into the schedule: Sunshine Canyon west of Boulder, Pole Hill near Carter Lake, and Jarre Canyon near Sedalia.

Once we had the routes worked on, we laid out the schedule itself. We worked in the new routes primarily by running some rides a fewer number of times as opposed to deleting routes altogether. And we shuffled some rides around—the goals here were to have a good mileage progression in the spring, not to run out of the same location on consecutive weekends, to do our best to put routes at weather-appropriate times of the year, and to take maximum advantage of the fall colors.

We also discussed the ride start times. Here, we ultimately made no changes. The fact that we start rather late in Feb./March (10:45) and much earlier in April/May (8:45 and 7:45, respectively) does sometimes generate some strange looks. Here is the reasoning behind this: In the winter/early spring, overnight lows are generally below freezing and the sun is low in the sky. As such, we like to start later to give any icy spots more time to melt off—going down on some black ice is not a good way to start out the year! By April, it's not as cold and the rides get longer. As such, we can start earlier, which allows people to get the ride in and get home before it gets too late. The times are never going to be perfect for everyone, but they seem to strike a good balance and have worked well for us for the past ten years.

On the brevet front, perhaps the most notable difference is the addition of four events out of the Colorado Springs area. Besides providing more opportunities to get qualifying rides in for those doing Paris-Brest-Paris, these also provide new opportunities for long distance riding. These look to be attractive rides that will generate quite a bit of interest! And, for those into really long miles, we have the inaugural High Country 1200K this

year. For more details on this event, just click on the link for it on the RMCC homepage.

While this article makes it sound like we made major changes, it's interesting that in the end that the ride schedule is quintessentially very much the same as in past years. We still have a huge variety of rides—most of which we've run for many years. If you have a favorite ride, I promise you—it's still there!

And, there will be great old friends and new friends at all of the rides. For me, it's not just the routes that make the RMCC fun, it's the fact that many of my best friends are people I've met through the club. It's ultimately that that keeps me coming back to do the rides.

As a final note, after all of the work we did this year, I have to give a real tip of the hat to the club's founders who put the original schedule together from scratch. That was a real undertaking and it is testament to their efforts that “major changes” only build upon what they did—99 times out of 100, people would fail at putting together a ride schedule as good as what they did.

As you can probably tell I am really looking forward to 2011. For me this year, more rides are better; more miles are better; more fun is better; more friends are better. More is better! See you on the road.