

# enjoying the scenery



While the city's main arteries might not be suitable for cycling, that does not stop those interested in getting around on two wheels from enjoying Loganville and the surrounding communities.

In fact, while there are more than 45,000 cars on Highway 78 and almost 20,000 cars on Highway 20 daily, there is still plenty of roadways in and around Loganville that provide a great bicycle riding experience. So much so that there are riding groups in both Loganville and Grayson that get together and take over the roadways.

"I started riding about four years ago around the Loganville area," said Chris Banks, co-founder of the Grayson Cycling Club. "One of the first routes I used is still one of my favorites and includes the road behind the strawberry fields. It's a unique experience to be able to ride your bike down that road in the summer because for a few weeks you can smell all of the fresh

strawberries in the breeze."

The Loganville Cycling Group offers weekly organized group rides as well as high speed group rides and Saturday cycling tours. Many of the groups are led by experience riders and head on scenic journeys to Jersey or Good Hope and throughout Walton County. There is the River Cove route that encompasses 50 miles or the 30-mile Tuesday Backwards route. The Loganville Cycle Club also offers a Breakfast Club and Witness Through Fitness that bring a variety of different riders together.

The Grayson Cycling Group takes advantage of a lot of the scenic roadways between Grayson and Loganville as well as all the areas in between. Rides vary between 26 and 62 miles and, much like any other cycling club, routes will vary based on the time of year. With the goal of fun, fitness and camaraderie, the club focuses on taking local and neighborhood routes to limit time spent on the area's

busy roadways. Grayson Cycling Club is a 501c nonprofit sponsored by many local businesses in Grayson and Loganville. The group has provided more than 70 brand new bicycles, helmets, free maintenance and pizza parties for area children in need.

"It's exhilarating to ride fast downhill on a big, sweeping curve," said Rob Lee, who has been riding for more than 30 years and does most of his group rides in Walton County. "Cycling is fun, fitness and friends!"

There are many benefits to joining a riding club — first and foremost being safety. Riding with a club or group increases visibility and drivers tend to be more cautious when passing a group of cyclists. There is also the added safety of having someone else there in the event of an emergency. But almost just as beneficial are the friends that are made. The cycling community tends to be friendly and tight-knit.

"Regardless of your skill, cycling level, if you're training for a race, have a specific goal in mind, seeking safety in numbers or just out to enjoy the area, you're bound to make a new friend," Banks said. "Everyone I met when I first started cycling had great advice that they were ready, willing and able to give me. People were offering to lend me equipment or gear or offering to take me on their usual routes. It really was their kindness that led me and a friend to create the Grayson Cycling Club."

As anyone who rides a bicycle will attest, one of the biggest challenges is sharing the road with inexperienced or impatient drivers. Most bicyclists are polite and get as far to the right on a given roadway as possible, since even if there are sidewalks it is illegal to ride a bicycle on them. While bicyclists also have to obey the same traffic laws as

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