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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

I made the front page news! Henderson Daily Dispatch article

'1,000 Miles for Haiti': Cyclist brings attention to plight of victims of 2010 earthquake
by DAVID IRVINE
09.13.11 - 09:44 pm





Eric Meldrum is bicycling 1,000 miles for Haiti, hoping the trip will draw attention and financial support to work that is going on to help rebuild the country.

He started at Fredericksburg, Va., three days ago with the goal to reach Miami by October. He said the distance is really closer to 1,200 miles but “1,000 Miles for Haiti” makes a better slogan.

He pedaled through the Henderson area Tuesday.

Meldrum, a native of Colorado, graduated from Brigham Young University in Utah last year. Since then, he has worked as a contractor for nonprofit organizations in Arlington, Va.

He recently spent two and one-half weeks in Leogane, Haiti, helping potential small-business owners develop business plans. His visit was sponsored by Sustain Haiti, an organization formed by a group of social entrepreneurs and development specialists in response to the January 2010 earthquake that struck the country.

When Sustain Haiti asked community leaders in Haiti what they needed, one answer they heard over and over: The people want to work to support themselves, either to find a job or start a business.

Responding to that need, Sustain Haiti started projects to provide agricultural assistance, teach English as a second language, provide clean water and — Meldrum’s specialty — promote the development of small businesses in Haiti. The projects are designed to help Haitians develop self-reliance and create sustainable development that will continue long

after humanitarian assistance tapers off.

The earthquake, which killed more than 200,000 people and left 1.3 million homeless, also left the country's already weak economy in dismal straits. The creation of small businesses is a necessary part of an overall economic recovery.

To address this need, Sustain Haiti sponsored a business plan competition. Meldrum advised several dozen potential business owners as they developed their plans. Altogether, more than 100 would-be entrepreneurs submitted plans. Meldrum said some of these were simple but common-sense ideas, things like opening a restaurant, developing a peanut distribution system or supporting family gardening. Cash prizes were awarded for the best plans to provide start-up capital.

To raise funds for the next round of competitions, supporters of Sustain Haiti are using a variety of strategies, such things as a 5-kilometer run or methods of persuading corporate donors to make an investment.

Meldrum has his own strategy. He hopes his "1,000 Miles for Haiti" bicycle trip will attract support for the project.

So, between now and early October, he will pedal 60 to 65 miles a day to help jump start the economy of Haiti.

His website is: www.1000milesforhaiti.blogspot.com. For information about the sponsoring organization, go to: www.sustain-haiti.org.

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Posted by Eric Meldrum at [8:39 AM](#)