

# Bike tours appeal to autumn enthusiasts

BY MELANIE BOLTHOUSE  
Autumn Guide editor

Those who love autumn and find themselves searching for a different way to experience the season may look only as far as the bikes in their garages.

From Mackinaw City to Leelanau County, three fall recreational bike tours will take participants through ideal, color-viewing land-

scapes.

As the foliage begins to peak, the Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce will hold the "Big Mac" Shoreline Scenic Bike Tour Sept. 17-19. In its eighth year, the Big Mac draws around 500 riders who can choose routes of 25, 50, 75 or 100 miles.

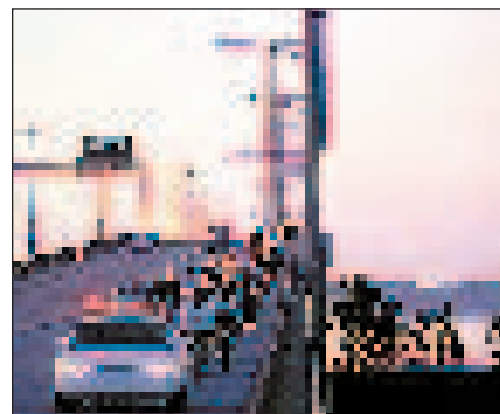
The tour begins at Mackinaw City High School and travels down toward

Bliss, Cross Village and Harbor Springs, depending on the mileage a rider wants to cover.

"What's neat about this tour is it's open to everyone from a novice bike rider to a tenured (biker)," said Dawn Edwards, executive director at the chamber. "We'll have whole families go out."

For participants looking for a low-impact ride,

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Mackinaw City Chamber  
**Bikers travel over the Mackinac Bridge as part of the "Big Mac" Shoreline Scenic Bike Tour.**

## Color tours

**FROM PAGE 25**

road becomes Cayuga. Continue straight through the blinker and follow the curve out of town onto Derenzy.

Turn right on the unmarked road at the Alba sign. Right at the stop sign onto M-66. Left onto 620/Alba Highway. Left onto U.S. 131 at the blinker.

A geographical landmark lies ahead, the 45th parallel, designating the halfway point between the equator and North Pole. Drive about 3.5 more miles in Santa's direction, watching for the brown sign for Deadman's Hill Overlook, a left turn down a dirt road. The unassuming, even bleak entrance belies the spectacular, 180-degree view of the Jordan River Valley in store. Return on U.S. 131 south to Kalkaska, then M-72 west to Traverse City.

### Starting from Elk Rapids:

Travel north on U.S. 31 to Eastport. Turn east on M-88 toward Central Lake. Go north on County Road 65, east on Mohrmann Bridge Road, south on Rushtown (becomes Intermediate Lake Road). Go south on Derenzy to County Road

620 through Bellaire. Turn south on East Torch Lake (County Road 593) through Alden (becomes Crystal Beach Road) and north to Kewadin (becomes Cherry Avenue) then south again (becomes Cairn Highway) back to Elk Rapids.

### Starting from Manistee:

Take U.S. 31 north to M-110/Lakeshore Road to Portage Lake. Turn east on Crescent Beach Road, then north on M-22 through Onekama. Turn west on Potter through Pierport, west on 13 Mile Road to Lake Michigan. Backtrack 200 feet east. Head north on Lakeview, east on Shaef, north on M-22 through Arcadia (Scenic Highway) and east on Grace. Turn south on M-31, south on M-115 past Thompsonville. Head south on Yates, west on Nine Mile, south on Highbridge. Turn west on M-55 and south on U.S. 31 back to Manistee.

### Starting from Petoskey (including Cheboygan):

Take U.S. 31 north to M-119. Go north through Harbor Springs to Cross Village. Turn left on Lake Shore to Lakeview (which becomes Gill at Sturgeon Bay). Turn left on Cecil Bay, right on Wilderness

Park Drive north to Mackinaw City. Pass under I-75 at the base of the Mackinac Bridge. Head south on U.S. 23 through Cheboygan. South on M-27 through Indian River. Turn east on M-68 to U.S. 31 south to Petoskey.

This route includes the Tunnel of Trees between Harbor Springs and Cross Village on M-119. The scenic shoreline drive was originally a footpath carved over centuries by Native Americans.

### Starting from Gaylord:

Take M-32 west to East Jordan. Turn west on Ellsworth Road/County Road 626 to Ellsworth. Go west on Atwood Road/County Road 48 to Atwood. Take U.S. 31 north through Charlevoix, Bay Harbor and Petoskey on to Alanson. Turn east on M-68 to Indian River. South on I-75 back to Gaylord.

Note: The Pigeon River Country elk herd is the largest free-roaming herd east of the Mississippi River. The best time for a sighting is actually during September's mating season. For a chance at a close-up view, stop at the elk-viewing area in Gaylord, just east across South Otsego Avenue from Wisconsin Street.

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