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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Over 20,000 attend Saturday's bike race and festivities at West Chester's Iron Hill Twilight Criterium

WHO: Iron Hill Twilight Criterium
WHAT: Professional and amateur cyclists competition
WHERE: Downtown West Chester, PA
WHEN: Saturday, July 5, 2008

West Chester, PA – July 7, 2008 - Professional cycling returned to the streets of downtown West Chester on Saturday, July 5, 2008, for the fourth annual Iron Hill Twilight Criterium.

Despite threatening skies, an estimated crowd of over 20,000 spectators filled the streets of West Chester to watch professional cyclists fight for supremacy around the .8-mile circuit course starting and finishing in front of title sponsor Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant. The Iron Hill Twilight Criterium marked the halfway point in the USA CRITS series.

The Amateur Men's Criterium started off the races, followed by the Kids' Race where over 200 children 12 and younger began to explore the fun of racing. Shortly before 7 PM, the Elite Women's Criterium found advanced-level, Olympic athletes and national champions battling it out for top position.

“For weeks leading up to the Criterium, you could feel the excitement all over town,” said Katie Walker, president of the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce, the event’s host. “We’ve already had lots of positive feedback about this year’s events, from spectators, sponsor *and* participants. Each year the Criterium just gets better and better.”

At 7:45, the featured Pro Men’s race began, making the event a true Twilight Criterium. TOSHIBA-Santo strongman Mark Hekman won the Fourth Annual Iron Hill Criterium. Hekman, who held the lead in last year’s USA CRITS Series until a crash ended his pursuit of the title, lapped this year’s Iron Hill field with 20 laps remaining in the race. Coming in second was TIME Pro Cycling’s David Guttenplan. He finished just ahead of last year’s USA CRITS overall champion (and Hekman’s teammate), Frank Travieso who had to make do with third place win.

In the 40-lap Elite Women’s Criterium, Juice Plus/NC Racing’s Laura McCaughey beat out all challengers for the top slot, with Kelly Benjamin of Cheerwine grabbing second and Erica Allar of Aaron’s Corporate Furnishings coming in third.

In addition to the races, the crowd estimated at over 20,000 found much to enjoy. Many spent some time at the Main Line Today Community Festival, which took place on In the center of the racing route, on High Street between Gay and Market Streets and in the Wachovia Parking lot on Gay Street between High and Walnut Streets. There they enjoyed a kid’s zone, food and many other fun activities. The Second Annual Market Street Block Party was a gathering point with more great food and fun that is the magic of West Chester itself! As last Saturday’s Criterium reluctantly began to retreat into history, the members of the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce and local sponsors were already making plans for next year’s event!