

# Planning has already begun for USA Pro Cycling Challenge

*Woodland Park will be the starting point for Stage 5*

**By Danny Summers**

Dsummers@

coloradocommunitymedia.com

Local organizers of the USA Pro Cycling Challenge are hoping that come August the city of Woodland Park and all of Teller County are overrun with bicycle enthusiasts and race fans who want a glimpse at some of the world's top riders.

Locally, a committee headed by promotions guru Mike Perini is laying the groundwork for the Woodland Park stage that will begin the morning of Aug. 22. The stage ends in Breckenridge.

"We have some great men and women who have stepped up to be involved with this world-class event," Perini said. "We have this up to mirror the USA Pro Chal-

lenge statewide."

Woodland Park will be the starting point of Stage 5 of the seven-stage event that takes place Aug. 18-24. The Woodland Park stage is expected to begin around 11 a.m.

"It's a journey to Aug. 22," Perini said with a smile.

The race will cover 600 miles feature 128 elite riders.

Woodland Park had the race pass through the town in 2011 and 2012 and went to great lengths to make sure the event went off without a hitch while in Teller County.

Woodland Park City Manager David Buttery estimates there were as many as 5,500 people lined up along Highway 24 when the race came through town in 2012.

"We really need an array of volunteers to help us as we get closer, and of course, the day of the event," Perini said.

"The days leading up to the race and the day of the race will be a festival atmosphere."

According to Perini, the USA Pro Chal-

lenge is on a similar level as the Super Bowl, U.S Open and Daytona 500 in terms of the scale of the event. More than one million people are expected to attend the race.

"The world is coming to Woodland Park," Perini said. "The world is looking at us to see how we do.

"One hundred plus countries will have the event on television so we have to do this right."

The unique thing about a bike race is that the riders are usually very accessible to the fans and media the day of the race.

The City of Woodland Park is looking to enhance that experience by creating a course through town in which the riders make one to two loops before heading off to Breckenridge.

The fourth stage takes place in Colorado Springs. Most, if not all riders, according to Perini, will spend that night in Colorado Springs and head up to Woodland Park the day of the race.

"I expect the town to double in size,"

Perini said.

By Stage 5 there will likely be some separation between the elite riders and the pack.

"The good thing about Stage 5 is that it's a good point in the race," Perini said. "It's a great position for us. You really see who the leaders are and you can rally around them."

Perini and his staff are reaching out to the head USA Pro Challenge organizers and asking if it is a possibility to have advanced appearances of team members. More should be known in the coming months.

Perini has already set up a Facebook page for the race. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/usaprochallengewoodlandpark>. You can also get more information by going to the City of Woodland Park web site at <http://www.city-woodlandpark.org/home/> and clicking on "Stage 5 Start" on the left side of the page.

The Woodland Park School District has already announced that its schools will be closed the day of the race.