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Pedals for Progress to hit milestone

A ceremony to mark the milestone is planned from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Sunset Inn, 1831 Route 31.

Like the 99,999 bikes before it, the 100,000th bike will be shipped overseas, where those in need can use bicycles to improve their lives.

According to the organization's Web site, www.p4p.org, Pedals for Progress operates on the principle that "people need a hand up not a hand out."

Instead of giving the bicycles collected in the United States to people in underdeveloped countries, Pedals for Progress works with partners in developing countries who prepare the bikes for sale to the working poor. The income from those sales creates jobs for people repairing the bicycles and provides money to pay for the next shipment of bicycles from Pedal for Progress. Each shipping container of bicycles gives more than 400 people access to affordable transportation and provides at least 10 full-time jobs, according to the Web site.

"The goal is to make our partners self-sufficient, create meaningful jobs while providing the people of these less developed countries with an affordable and reliable means of transportation which unleashes their entrepreneurial spirit," said David Schweidenback, founder of Pedals for Progress.

Partners from around the world, including Ricardo Ramos of CESTA in San Salvador, El Salvador, and Karla Santana from EcoBicicleta in Rivas, Nicaragua, will be at the celebration, as well as local and state leaders.

Schweidenback started Pedals for Progress in 1991, from his home in High Bridge, sending a shipment of 200 bicycles to Rivas, Nicaragua. Fifteen years later, Pedals for Progress collects more than 9,000 bicycles each year and ships them to 28 developing countries in Latin America, Africa, the Pacific Islands and Eastern Europe. So far this year, 3,615 bikes have been collected for shipment.

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STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY JOHNSON
Dave Schweidenback of Pedals for Progress sits in a trailer of donated bikes at the organization's Glen Gardner facility. The nonprofit organization expects to receive its 100,000th bike donation this weekend.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY JOHNSON
Dave Schweidenback of Pedals for Progress moves donated bikes to a trailer Thursday at the nonprofit group's Glen Gardner facility. The group expects to receive its 100,000th bike donation this weekend.

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