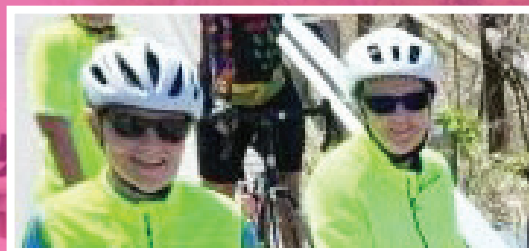




# 2025

# Redbud Ride



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*Welcome to the 2024 Redbud Ride!*

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**REDBUD RIDE WELCOME**

# Redbud Ride returns for 2025 cycling season

BY MADISON NANTZ

Staff Writer

As spring makes its return, redbud trees begin to bloom again – indicating that the time for cyclists to prepare for the Redbud Ride has arrived.

The Redbud Ride is held in London – the Cycling Capital of Kentucky – each year. This will mark the annual event's 19th year, as it was established as early as 2006.

This year, the recreational event will begin at the London-Laurel Farmers Market, located at 100 West Dixie Street in London, around 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 26.

Registration, early check-in, and festivities will be available Friday, April 25. Registration and packet pick up will be held at the London Community Center from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., with a Downtown Block Party kicking off around 6 p.m. The block party entails entertainment at participating downtown eateries.

At 6:30 a.m. on April 26, cyclists will have a final opportunity to register at the London-Laurel County Farmers Market. A Jr. Redbud Ride at Town Center Park will follow, starting at 10 a.m. Once participants

SEE REDBUD, PAGE 4



# REDBUD RIDE WELCOME



PHOTO SUBMITTED

**For additional information about the Redbud Ride, follow the Facebook event page "2025 Redbud Ride." To register, visit [www.RedBudride.com](http://www.RedBudride.com).**

## REDBUD CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

cross the finish line, they will be greeted by an afterparty at the the farmers market – featuring live entertainment, food trucks, and local vendors.

Over the years, the Redbud Ride has become a staple within the London community. Each year, the ride attracts about 800 to 900 cyclists ranging in skill level. Riders can choose from four well-marked routes, each supported by knowledgeable SAG (Support and Gear) drivers and a network of rest stops. With a family-friendly 23-mile loop and a more rigorous 100-mile century ride, the event has something for everyone.

Routes include the Yellow Route, Orange Route, Green Route, and Red Route. Yellow is 24 miles long, Orange is 34, Green is 72, and Red is 100. Each one will kick off at 7:30 a.m.

on April 26.

Funds raised through the ride will go back to London Downtown, the host of the event, for the enhancement of downtown businesses and restaurants.

Both the London and Laurel tourism commissions work alongside London Downtown to make the event possible. With London Downtown's Executive Director Kristen Strawser just entering the role in November last year, this will mark her first RedBud Ride as director.

"There's something special about seeing the streets filled with riders, families, and visitors all enjoying our town," Strawser said of the event. "It's a perfect example of how events can boost visibility and community pride."

For additional information about the Redbud Ride, follow the Facebook event page "2025 Redbud Ride." To register, visit [www.RedBudride.com](http://www.RedBudride.com).



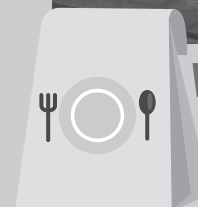
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## IN MEMORY

# 'She was looking forward to it'

## *2025 Redbud Ride dedicated to memory of Cammie Creech*

BY MADISON NANTZ

*Staff Writer*

Cammie Creech was 54 years old when she passed away unexpectedly while participating in last year's Redbud Ride.

It was Creech's first time taking part in an event such as this one, for which she had excitedly trained for with her husband, Jack. The pair regularly cycled on back roads in preparation for the ride. When the day came, they chose to do the Yellow Route – a 24-mile route that she purchased a bike in anticipation of.

"She was looking forward to it," said her sister-in-law, Kathy Creech. "She had it marked on her calendar: Redbud Ride."

On the route, Cammie passed due to a sudden widowmaker heart attack. According to Kathy, although heart disease does run in Cammie's family, she had not experienced the typical warning signs. Kathy recalled that doctors had treated her sister-in-law for acid reflux just two months earlier, never suspecting it was related to more serious complications.

To Kathy, Cammie was more than a



PHOTO SUBMITTED

**Cammie Creech, pictured on the left with husband Jack, bought a bike in anticipation of the event and trained regularly.**

**SEE CREECH, PAGE 6**



**“She had more energy, I swear, than a teenager. The woman never sat down. She was like spitfire.”**



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

**Pictured left to right are Cammie Creech and her two children, Brandon and Shae.**



**Cammie Creech holds her dog, Molly.**

## **CREECH**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

sister-in-law. “She’s more of a sister to me, but legally, she’s my sister-in-law,” she said.

She also shared that Cammie had two children, Brandon and Shae.

In addition to loving her family, Cammie had a deep love for animals and plants. She volunteered with local rescues such as Kentucky Mutts, and had a talent for taking care of plants, as well as flowers.

“She could make a plant come back from the dead,” Kathy said.

When asked how Cammie would want to be remembered, Kathy stated, “She’d want to be remembered for the way she loved people, God, and animals.”

Kathy described Cammie as the kind of person who always noticed when others were struggling and needed help. One example she provided was when a coworker was upset



about putting her dog to rest and Cammie did not hesitate to provide emotional support. "Just wait right there – I'll go with you," she told her.

Kathy also shared that Cammie was most known by her loved ones for her selflessness and humor.

"She had more energy, I swear, than a teenager. The woman never sat down. She was like spitfire," Kathy stated. "She was a prankster. She loved to crack a joke and pull a prank better than anybody."

That same energy extended into much of what Cammie did – including how she approached the Redbud Ride.

"I think she really enjoyed it," Kathy said. "I think she would have continued on had she lived."

This year, a bicycle will be on display at the London-Laurel County Farmers Market – where the Redbud Ride will kick off – in Cammie Creech's memory. Tumblers and t-shirts with her photo on them will also be available.



**Cammie Creech gleefully holds her grandchild.**

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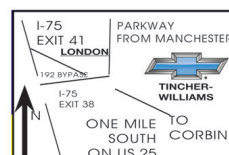


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# ENTERTAINMENT

## Choose your own adventure with Friday's Block Party

BY JANIE SLAVEN  
Editor

As riders roll into town for the weekend, they'll have plenty of choices when it comes to dining and entertainment.

While the Redbud Ride has traditionally kicked off with a Friday night block party centered around the London-Laurel Farmers Market, last year, London Downtown Inc. switched the kickoff's format to more of a pub crawl-style event that celebrates all the dining and live music options available.

Redbud Riders will be given "Ride and Dine" cards in their registration packet that will offer discounts at each location.

Giving participating restaurants the chance to shine during the Block Party is a win not only for them but for London Downtown, with its mission to support that area of the city.

This year's participants include:

### POUR BOYZ

This sports lounge is located at 121 N. Main St. and is open Friday from 11 a.m. until 12 midnight.

In addition to their open menu offering pub favorites like pizza, wings,

and burgers; owner Larry Lee said the entertainment for Redbud Eve is open mic.

"We have such talented singers in this area," Lee said. "We're giving them a chance to display their talents."

### MOODY COWS

Moody Cows offers catering from their cafe at 318 N. Main Street and the best ice cream in town! On Friday, the shop will be open from 4 to 10 p.m. with Ariel from The Little Mermaid on hand to teach princess ribbon dances.

Among the special items available will be fresh cotton candy, flavored lemonades and popcorn.

### LOCAL HONEY

Get ready to pedal & party! Local Honey is kicking off Redbud Ride weekend at Town Center Park from 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. for live music by central Kentucky cover band Sorry ATARI, good vibes, and delicious eats from the LoHo Mobile Kitchen.

### SAUCED

Sauced is a fast-casual restaurant featuring fresh ingredients and sauces house made daily. Go through



FILE PHOTO

**Sauced is a fast-casual restaurant featuring fresh ingredients and sauces house made daily. Go through the line and craft your own dish as the staff prepares it in front of you.**

the line and craft your own dish as the staff prepares it in front of you.

Owner Gina Wilson said the restaurant will be hosting a "Sit and Spin" featuring a DJ and his vinyl collection. Customers are encouraged to choose their favorite tunes and even bring their own vinyl to be played as they enjoy various drink specials on Friday's menu.

Sauced, located at 202 S. Broad

Street, is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

### THE ABBEY

With a cozy, laid-back atmosphere and the best wings in town, The Abbey proudly supports London's Main Street events – including the Redbud Ride.

Located at 132 N. Main Street, The Abbey is open Friday from 11 a.m. to 12 midnight.

## Redbud Riders to celebrate accomplishments with afterparty

BY JANIE SLAVEN  
Editor

What's a signature event like the Redbud Ride without an afterparty.

Riders can celebrate their accomplishment by rolling into the London-Laurel County Farmers Market between 12 noon and 6 p.m. for a warm welcome back

from the road.

The public is free to join in on the festivities, food trucks, and browse through vendors merchandise.

Larry Lee, owner of Pour Boyz Sports Lounge and London Downtown board member, has put together a dynamite lineup of musi-

cians to entertain as well.

– Damion Owens kicks things off at 12 noon with his acoustic guitar.

– Kevin Crook's set starts at 1:45 p.m. The London singer/songwriter prefers a mix of musical genres.

"Mostly songs I think the crowd would like," he said, including the Goo Goo Dolls, AC/DC,

Creedence Clearwater Revival and Charlie Daniels among his influences. "My style is probably mostly country, southern and classic rock."

– Travis Napier and the Wild Ones will take the stage at 3:15 p.m. to close out the party. The rising artist, singer, and songwriter hails from Hyden.



## JUNIOR REDBUD RIDE

# 4th annual Junior Redbud Ride set for Saturday

BY JANIE SLAVEN

*Editor*

Who said adults get to have all the fun this weekend?

Bring your little budlet out to Town Center Park for the fourth annual Junior Redbud Ride this Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This free, family-friendly event is for riders between the ages of 6 and 12. Activities will include a bike course, obstacle course, safety training and raffle prizes.

"The London Downtown Board is excited to bring an event to the kids!" board member Jessie Eldridge said. "We want to make it a fun-filled day for kids of all ages."

Helmets are required. Bringing your own bicycle is recommended, but a few bikes will be available for anyone who can't bring their own. A guardian must be present at all times, and a waiver must be signed upon arrival before participation in activities.

"Whether they are a pro at riding bikes or just starting, even if they just want to get their face painted and play yard games," Eldridge continued, "bringing fun and excitement is what we're all about."

All participants will be treated to a free lunch from Hibbard's Concessions, Confections & Catering. The company is also sponsoring a free lunch for the school with the most participants, so be sure to get your child's classmates involved!

Pre-register at <https://runsignup.com/Race/LondonRedBudRide/Page-16>. For more information, call 606-260-7628.



PHOTO BY NITA JOHNSON

**These children and parents showed up for the Junior Redbud Ride at Farmers Market on Saturday of last year's event.**



## REDBUD RIDE ROUTES

# Redbud Ride offers a route for everyone

BY MADISON NANTZ

*Staff Writer*

Cyclists at different skill-levels require different routes – that's why the Redbud Ride offers four.

These include the yellow, orange, green, and red routes. While riders can decide for themselves which route best fits their comfort and experience, the most commonly recommended option for beginners is the yellow route, a smooth, 24-mile loop that travels from downtown London to McWhorter Church and back.

Second in difficulty is the 34-mile orange route. It is a modest route, great for first-timers seeking a challenge or experienced riders interested in keeping a more casual pace.

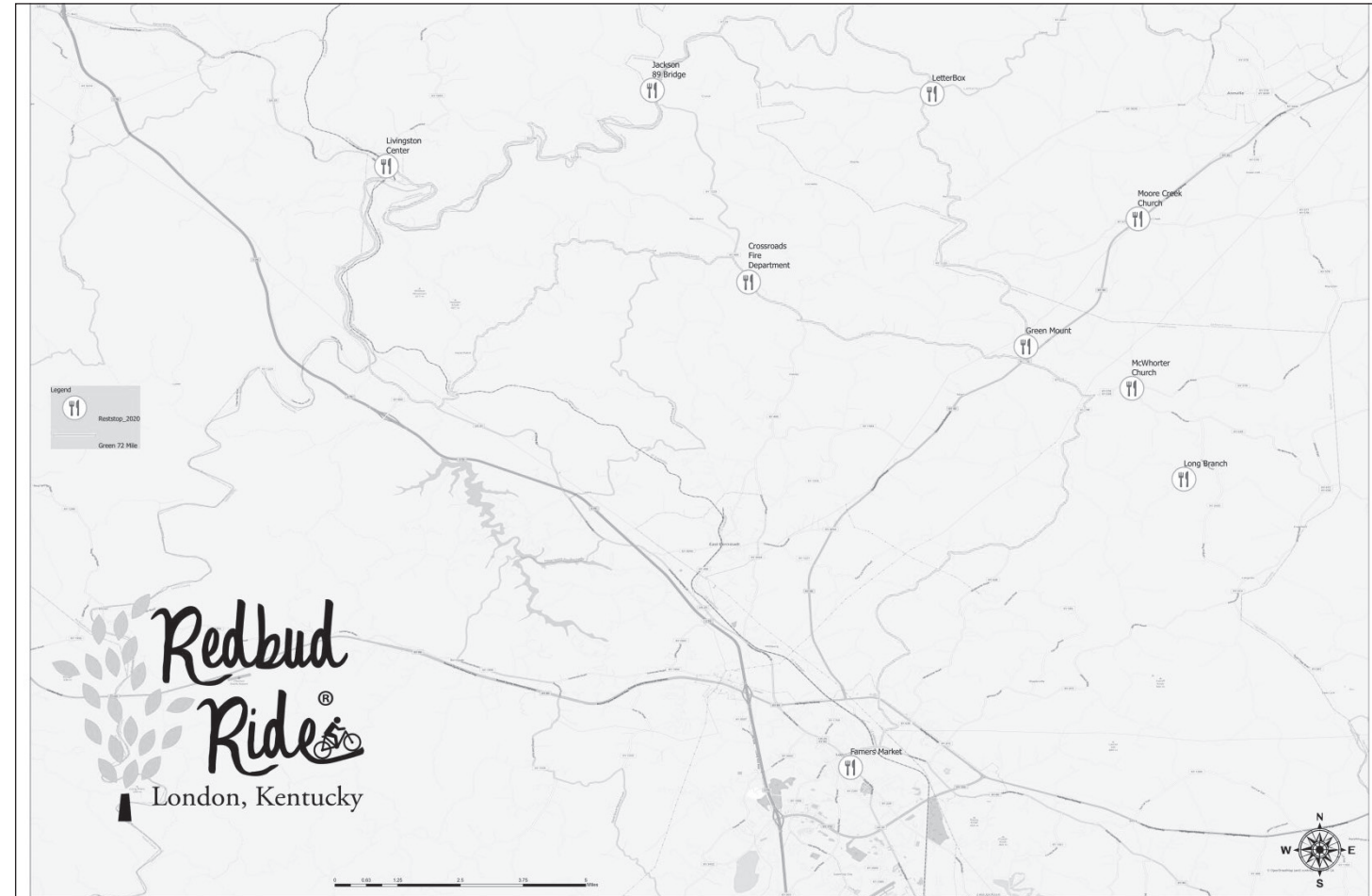
The green, intermediate route entails 72 miles. The route will have several short hills, as well as some flats.

The route is known for being scenic and will once again be part of the Kentucky Cycling Challenge, which contains five rides including the Redbud Ride. In the case that an individual participates in all five rides on the list, they will receive custom gear for the year.

The red – and pinnacle of the Redbud Ride – is the most advanced route. It has been chosen by cyclists across the nation as the "Best Century Ride in America."

The route will be a part of the Kentucky Century Challenge again this year. The challenge requires cyclists to complete at least 250 miles to earn rewards.

All adult routes are on public roads and highways. Kelvin Hibbard, London Downtown President,



**The Redbud Ride offers four routes. These include the yellow, orange, green, and red routes.**

bard, London Downtown President, shared that riders are expected to follow all state traffic and bicycle safety rules, as the Redbud Ride prioritizes safety, with six safety and gear (SAG) drivers patrolling the routes in clearly marked vehicles and four medically trained Red Cross riders biking alongside participants to assist if needed.

Each of the four routes will be marked with signs, colored arrows, and street signage. Volunteers drive the routes in advance to highlight any potholes or road hazards. Curves and turns are painted with

colored arrows on the pavement – red route riders follow red arrows, blue route riders follow blue, etc.

In addition to physical markers, cyclists can download free GPS maps of the routes through this link: <https://visitlondonky.com/attractions/cycling-capital-of-kentucky-2/>. Hibbard stated the the GPS system offers detailed, turn-by-turn navigation, including parking instructions, elevation changes, and rest stop alerts. It is available at no cost and can be programmed directly into a participant's phone.

All routes include multiple rest

stops – about nine total– spaced approximately 15 to 20 miles apart. These stops offer cyclists the chance to rest, eat or hydrate, and use the restroom before heading out again.

Although most participants finish by mid-afternoon – around 2 to 3 p.m. –organizers remain on-site until the final rider returns to ensure each cyclist completes their route safely.

Hibbard shared the event will take place rain or shine. For more information about the four RedBud Ride routes, visit <https://www.bikesignup.com/Race/LondonRedBudRide/Page-5>.



## REDBUD RIDE SPOTLIGHT

# Executive Director Kristen Strawser talks London Downtown, Redbud Ride



BY MADISON NANTZ

Staff Writer

Kristen Strawser, 34, was named executive director of London Downtown in November 2024.

After 10 years with the organization, former director Julie Rea stepped down from the position late last year. Strawser, already having served on the London Downtown board for nearly a year, promptly took on the role – bringing a fresh yet experienced perspective.

"I've always been passionate about small towns and the way vibrant downtowns can serve as the heartbeat of a community," Strawser said of her decision to accept the position. "Before stepping into this role, I was already involved with local events and small business, so when the opportunity presented itself, I was excited and honored to be considered."

In the short time Strawser has served in her role as director, she has already begun planning exciting new ideas for the upcoming year.

"This year, my focus is on increasing community engagement and fostering relationships to enhance the events we already have in place. We're also working on strengthening our event lineup to bring even more people downtown consistently," Strawser stated. "Think outdoor activities, themed nights, and events that highlight local art and food. We'll be sharing more soon."

Strawser shared that the London Downtown board has started refreshing the "look and feel" of certain events, creating new partnerships, and exploring ways to make downtown more kid-friendly and family-focused. When it comes to existing events, Strawser said the Redbud Ride stands out to her.

"It's one of those events that showcase the beauty of our area and brings in new visitors," Strawser stated. "I love the energy it brings downtown."

With time, Strawser hopes to see downtown London develop into a space where "families make memories, small businesses thrive, and visitors leave wanting to come back."

"I want it to feel alive—not just during events, but all the time," Strawser stated. "I'm incredibly excited about what's ahead. I'm grateful for the support so far and can't wait to keep building something special for our little town."

Strawser, born and raised in London, attended South Laurel High School. In addition to her recent role, Strawser is a business owner. Strawser's business, Moody Cows, is a local ice cream shop located at 318 North Main Street in London.

Strawser encourages anyone interested in volunteering at London Downtown events, beautification projects, and creative initiatives to contact the organization through the website at <https://www.londonkydowntown.com/> or social media.

To contact Strawser directly, text or call (606) 260-7628. For additional information regarding London Downtown, contact [londonkydowntown@gmail.com](mailto:londonkydowntown@gmail.com).

*"I've always been passionate about small towns and the way vibrant downtowns can serve as the heartbeat of a community"*

KRISTEN STRAWSER

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