



State Capitol  
Room 224  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**PETER KINDER**  
Lieutenant Governor

Contact: Gary McElyea  
573-751-1088  
Gary.McElyea@ltgov.mo.gov

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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **2008 Tour of Missouri Courses Announced**

*Additional day, more climbs, three new courses highlight September World-Class Race*

**ST. LOUIS** – A ‘deceivingly tougher’ Tour of Missouri will challenge the field of 120 world-class cyclists from 15 elite professional teams when they line up for the September 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Tour of Missouri, race organizers announced today in the overall race finish city St. Louis.

Each of the seven courses for the week-long event were announced by Lt. Governor Peter Kinder, race director Jim Birrell and two-time stage winner Ivan Dominguez of the U.S.’s top domestic squad Toyota-United Pro Cycling Team.

“Again, the great state of Missouri will play host to these world-class athletes from more than 20 countries this September,” said Lt. Governor Kinder. “This year, we’ve worked to make the course more challenging and with a few new twists, including new terrain, new cities, homage to our Armed Forces on September 11<sup>th</sup> and another grand finale in St. Louis.”

After several pre-events in the Kansas City metro area, **Stage 1**, Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, will start in new host city St. Joseph, and pose a bigger challenge for cyclists through rolling terrain along the Missouri River before a circuit finish in Kansas City’s Country Club Plaza district for the second straight year.

**Stage 2**, Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, will be the most flat but longest stage, routing from Clinton to Springfield. It is a re-make of last year’s course, which proved to be the decisive stage of the race after a long breakaway put race champion George Hincapie into the race lead for good.

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**Stage 3**, Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, remakes last year's time trial course in Branson, and has been cited as perhaps the most pivotal stage of the race, starting at The Landing and finishing at Shepherd of the Hills.

**Stage 4**, Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, is a new course that will take cyclists from Lebanon to new host city Rolla in south central Missouri. Cyclists will be challenged by six sizeable hills, in perhaps the toughest stage, to the finish on a college campus at the University of Missouri-Rolla. The race also will feature a sprint through Fort Leonard Wood Military Reservation to commemorate U.S. Armed Forces.

**Stage 5**, Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, a new course, features a start in the quaint town of St. James, a new host city, and routes north to an early-evening finish in front of the Capitol Building in Jefferson City. Cyclists will race up a tough 300-meter climb to the finish line.

Added Birrell: "In response to surveying a lot of the cyclists from last year's race, we've made it a bit more challenging with some more hills," said Birrell. "While Missouri doesn't have any major mountains, it is a very hilly state. We have incorporated some of the big rollers within the state and come up with some very good courses. One of our course advisors was Kevin Livingston, originally from Missouri, who rode at a world-class level in Europe for almost a decade and was a great climber. He pointed us in the right direction."

**Stage 6**, Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, will use part of last year's penultimate stage, starting in Hermann and routing along the twisting highways near the Missouri River and feature the two longest climbs of the tour on Schluersburg and Old Colony Roads before passing through the city of O'Fallon and finishing near the same location in St. Charles along the Mississippi River.

**Stage 7**, Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, will feature the circuit used from last year's final stage in St. Louis, but will have several new features. The race will be moved from Union Station to a start and finish in front of City Hall on Tucker and Market Streets. The circuit will be stretched to 14 miles and include a large section through Forest Park and feature the Grand Basin and the Art Museum hill.

Last year's inaugural race suited Dominguez, who won the opening stage in Kansas City and the closing stage in St. Louis, and has become a big fan of the Tour of Missouri despite the tougher terrain.

“As a sprinter, I like the flat terrain, so more hills are not necessarily so good for me,” said Dominguez, who won more races last year on the North American circuit than any racer. “But, there are three good stages for me in Kansas City, Springfield and St. Louis, so, I am excited. And, it is always a challenge to go up against some of the top sprinters from the European pro teams. Last year’s race was very good for my Toyota-United teammates. There were a lot of spectators, especially for a new race. And, it’s always good to win. Of course, Kansas City and St. Louis are now my new favorite towns.”

The Tour of Missouri is supported principally by Missouri Department of Tourism, Edward Jones, Drury Hotels, Missouri Farm Bureau, Emerson, Anheuser-Bush, and the Missouri Wine and Grape Board. It is a free, public, international event that began in 2007 and attracted an estimated 370,000 spectators over six days. The event is managed and marketed by Medalist Sports, Inc., of Atlanta, Ga., and KOM Sports of Colorado Springs, Colo., the leaders in cycling management and marketing in North America.

The Tour of Missouri, Inc., is set-up as a non-profit organization for the sole purpose of staging a world-class cycling event for the purposes of promoting tourism, community affairs, and its sponsors.

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Editors’ Note: For Complete Stage by Stage Information, including street level maps, go to; [www.tourofmissouri.com](http://www.tourofmissouri.com)