

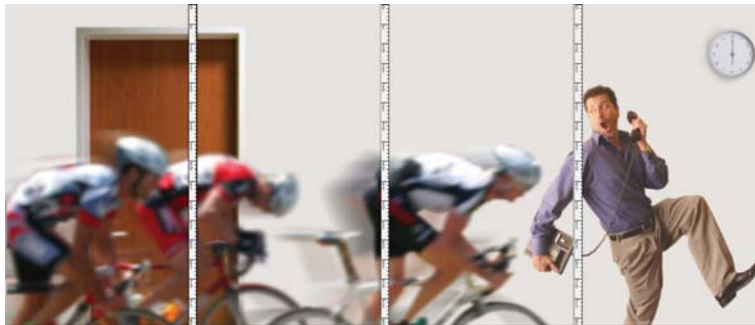


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For Immediate Release

Spartanburg Ad Agency Uses Optical Illusion to Promote the ‘Fastest Friday Night in the South’ and USA CRITS *Speed Week*

Atlanta, Ga. (April 24, 2008) – If you have ever watched professional sprint cyclists, you know that they ride at blazing speeds on just two wheels. In fact, they can create such a draft that you might get blown aside as they rush by. The reality of that occurring was so compelling that Spartanburg advertising agency The Creative Edge decided to make that idea key component of their ad campaign for the Steadman Hawkins Cycling Classic and USA CRITS *Speed Week*.



Chris Brantly, co-owner of The Creative Edge, says “We decided to use office windows in downtown Spartanburg as billboards for the May 2 events, because the windows are located in high-traffic areas where prospective race fans are most likely to see them.”

Brantly said that the idea to use office windows first surfaced just before last year’s *Speed Week* activities, but he and his team needed more time to develop it. “We stayed up very late awake on more than a few night and went through more cups of coffee than I’d like to mention,” Brantly added. “Everyone says they like the result, and that’s exactly what creative people like us want to hear,” he said.

The Creative Edge used 12 windows for their displays, which are 8 feet high and 50 feet across in total. “We design on this scale frequently, so there were no great challenges,” says Brantly.

The challenge will be confined to the streets of Spartanburg, however, when the Steadman Hawkins Cycling Classic gets underway as part of USA CRITS *Speed Week*. More than \$100,000 in

prize money is on the line, as professional cyclists go head to head in 7 races, in 7 cities in 7 days of racing.

Event organizer Jean Crow, of Partners for Active Living, is proud of the race slogan. “There are so many people who don’t realize what an incredible spectator sport criterium racing can be, so we’ve called this the ‘Fastest Friday Night in the South’ to give them a sense of the adrenaline that will take over our streets that night.” Those who participate in entertainment cycling will likely agree.

Last year’s defending *Speed Week* champion Mark Hekman, of TOSHIBA-Santo Pro Cycling presented by Herbalife, is on a mission to repeat his winning ways, but that is not going to be easy. As well as competing against formidable competitors on his own team, such as 2007 USA CRITS Overall Champion Frank Travieso and U.S. Under 23 National Champion Keith Norris, Hekman must watch out for riders of the caliber of Jeff Hopkins of Team Inferno Racing. Hopkins is a former world junior champion, and he will be leading a strong team of sprinters that includes, Marco Aledia and Remi McManus.

Headed to Spartanburg in the professional women’s lineup is Tina Pic of Colavita Sutter Home. She has just put a competitive European tour behind her and has set her sights on winning not just USA CRITS *Speed Week*, but a trip to the Beijing as well. The Steadman Hawkins Cycling Classic is a part of her overall preparation for Olympic qualification.

Cheerwine’s Laura Van Gilder, the 2007 USA CRITS Overall Champion has her own winning ambitions, and she and teammates like Kelly Benjamin are going to keep the competition at fever pitch. Not to be outdone is U.S. Under 23 National Criterium Champion Erica Allar and her Aaron’s Corporate Furnishings teammate Rebecca Larson.

The Pros are not the only racers vying for prize money. Spartanburg gives amateurs a sporting chance too in several categories, and even children can get in on the action.

Race Category	Start Time
Women – Levels 3 & 4	4:30 p.m.
Masters - 35+ & 45+	5:00 p.m.
Men – 3 & 4	5:45 p.m.
Women Pro	6:30 p.m.
Kid’s Fun Race	7:30 p.m.
Kid’s Big Wheel Race	7:45 p.m.
Elite Men Pro	8:00 p.m.
www.biketownspartanburg.org	

The Steadman Hawkins Cycling Classic is a Bike Town initiative, which is a collaborative campaign spearheaded by Partners for Active Living. The initiative earned Spartanburg the national designation as a Bicycle-Friendly Community in 2007. Gene Dixon of USA CRITS says, “We’re thrilled that *Speed Week* is playing a vital role in helping Spartanburg achieve its community goals. The races energize everyone around the event, especially the pros, who enjoy the heated competition immensely.”

Speed Week began on April 26 at the famed Twilight Criterium in Athens, Ga., and the series final is scheduled for May 4, in Sandy Springs, a suburb of Atlanta. This is the inaugural year for the Global BMW Sandy Springs Challenge featuring world-class riders in both the men's and women's races.

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About USA CRITS

USA CRITS National Criterium Series has been developed to feature a brand of cycling unique to the United States, the criterium. Criteriums are historically run on short laps through city streets. They offer spectators the opportunity to watch Olympians, world and national champions up-close as they ride at top speed. This has made the criterium format the most spectator-friendly form of cycling entertainment. Events on the USA CRITS series have the ideals that have made criterium racing an American legacy: Challenging courses that showcase arts and entertainment districts; a large and energized base of spectators; broad community support; and strong marketing opportunities for sponsors. For more information visit www.usacrits.com