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 SALISBURY, MD---One of the largest bicycling events in the U.S. is going virtual this year, as Salisbury University’s 32nd Sea Gull Century (SGC) temporarily changes its format due to COVID-19.

 The announcement followed restrictions outlined by the State of Maryland and University System of Maryland (USM) for public events, large gatherings and reopening protocols for USM campuses this fall.

 “For the safety of our cyclists and volunteers, this is the right thing to do. It’s disappointing, yes, but we are moving forward in planning a positive result,” said Amy Waters, Century supervisor. “Cycling is an activity that promotes health and wellbeing, and those ideals are at the forefront of this decision.”

 Instead of converging at SU on October 10, the date originally scheduled for the event, and touring portions of the Lower Eastern Shore, the thousands of cyclists traditionally attending the Century will have the opportunity to create routes in their own local areas, with the option of sharing photos with fellow cyclists via social media.

 With over 5,000 participants from across the U.S., “It’s a great way to showcase the beautiful scenery in their own backyards that many cyclists otherwise would not get to see,” said Waters.

 Participants are encouraged to complete their rides from October 3-10. Riders may choose between a 100-mile (traditional century) or 100-kilometer (63-mile metric century) route. Because of the virtual format, cyclists may choose to break up their rides into sections and, if desired, post about their daily progress.

 “The virtual format opens the door for some opportunities to think out of the box and get creative with planning a Century,” Waters said. “Cyclists have a lot more flexibility when the ride doesn’t have to be completed in a single day.”

 As in previous years, proceeds from the event directly benefit SU students, providing scholarship funding that many need now more than ever due to the financial burden of COVID-19, Waters said. The SGC scholarship endowment, established in 2007, has awarded over $62,000 in scholarships.

Proceeds also benefit community organizations including the American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life of Wicomico County, the American Red Cross Delmarva Chapter, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Eastern Shore, and local fire and EMS companies.

 Registration for the virtual ride opens Monday, June 15. Cost is $35 per cyclist (reduced from the normal fee of $75 to $100) and includes a 2020 Sea Gull Century T-shirt and exclusive gift package.

 “We plan to return to the traditional in-person format next year,” Waters said. “In the meantime, this is a way for cyclists to have fun, enjoy the outdoors, continue their fitness training, support a good cause and, for some, keep their Sea Gull Century streaks alive. Many return year after year, and we look forward to seeing them again in 2021.”

 To register, or for more information, visit the Sea Gull Century website at [www.seagullcentury.org](http://www.seagullcentury.org).

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