Adventure Cycling’s newest route was always going to be memorable — the 1,374-mile Parks, Peaks, and Prairies Bicycle Route (PPP) brings the total cycling route network to 50,000 miles — but 2020 has tacked on another, unexpected layer.

Guiding cyclists from Yellowstone National Park, through Wyoming’s plains and Devils Tower National Monument, past Mount Rushmore and the Badlands and Black Hills of South Dakota, on to the continent’s biggest rivers and some of the 10,000 lakes of Minnesota before finishing in bike-friendly Minneapolis, the PPP traverses iconic terrain, even in uncertain times.

“Obviously we never imagined Yellowstone might be closed when the route launched,” said Director of Routes & Mapping Carla Majernik, who rode across the country in 1976 with Bikecentennial and has helmed Adventure Cycling’s Routes & Mapping Department for decades. “So while 2020 might not be the right time to ride Parks, Peaks, and Prairies, it’s a great time to plan for riding in 2021 and beyond.”

The three-map PPP also offers a connecting option between the TransAmerica Trail and the Northern Tier bicycle routes, as well as crossing over the Lewis & Clark Trail near the new route’s midpoint.

Like all Adventure Cycling routes, the new Parks, Peaks, and Prairies Route was extensively researched by volunteers and the organization’s cartography staff before being distilled into cyclist-specific maps in print and digital form. PPP is available in print and GPX data format at adventurecycling.org/store, and via the Bicycle Route Navigator app on Apple and Google Play stores.
On October 11, 2019, Brendan Walsh arrived at Key West, Florida, the southernmost point of the continental U.S., having pedaled along the Atlantic Coast from the Canadian border at Madawaska, Maine. He completed his ride in just 11 days, 9 hours, and 33 minutes—a new Guinness World Record for the fastest north-to-south crossing of the U.S. by bicycle. And he raised over $6,000 for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in doing so.

It wasn’t an easy journey. While on a training ride in May last year, a driver hit Walsh in a high-speed collision, sending him flying to the ground and into the emergency room. Somehow, he walked away (well, limped) with a concussion and damage to his knee and ankle. His bike, of course, was destroyed. But he scrounged up a new bike and got back on the saddle, and the rest is Guinness World Record history.

NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of all those affected by mental illness. If you’d like to donate to NAMI and help Walsh reach his goal of $10,000 to help those with mental illness, go to donate.nami.org/fundraiser/1993907.

Starting in 2021, seven universities in Germany will offer master’s degree programs in a new subject: bicycle traffic. Yes, that’s right — until now, traffic engineering for bicycles was not a course of professional study in Germany, a country where it seems everything else is engineered to within a centimeter of its life.

If all traffic engineers ever learn is how to design for the flow of motorized vehicles, then it’s no wonder that the resulting infrastructure doesn’t suit bicycles. But, given the need for a change in how we move about the world to account for climate change, to reduce traffic, and to improve health, it’s increasingly important that roads are designed to allow for the most efficient vehicles: bicycles.

Looking to study bicycle traffic, but don’t plan on being in Germany next year? You can take “Unraveling the Cycling City” through the University of Amsterdam online at coursera.org/learn/unraveling-the-cycling-city.

DHL Express, the German shipping company, is partnering with REEF Technology, a Florida-based parking and logistics company, for a new pilot project: delivering packages in Miami using electric cargo trikes. DHL is deploying four electric-assist cargo trikes, each of which can pull up to 400 pounds and take the place of one conventional delivery van. The pilot project is part of DHL’s GoGreen initiative to implement clean pickup and delivery solutions for 70 percent of its operations by 2025. DHL has been delivering by cargo bike in the Netherlands and Germany since 2015, but this is its first venture in the U.S.