The 26th annual five-day Tour de Nebraska bicycle ride will head to central Nebraska on its 306-mile round trip journey, June 19-23.

Approximately 300 cyclists will leave Doniphan on Wednesday, June 19, and camp overnight in Loup City, Callaway, Holdrege and Blue Hill.

“We are very excited about the route this year—because we will be riding on some quiet roads that wind through some of the most beautiful areas in the state,” according to Susan Larson Rodenburg, who organizes the tour with her husband, Rich.

The noncompetitive circle tour will start and end this year in Doniphan, just south of Grand Island and 85 miles west of Lincoln. It will then proceed to overnight host communities of Loup City, Callaway, Holdrege and Blue Hill, before returning to Doniphan on Sunday, June 23.

The Tour de Nebraska bicycle adventure is a mental and physical challenge for cyclists of all ages. Participants come from across Nebraska and other states, including California, Minnesota, Idaho, New Mexico, Illinois, Michigan, Nevada, Virginia, Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota, Colorado, Iowa and Arizona.

“Our cyclists like the size of Tour de Nebraska because it’s big enough to meet some new people, but small enough not to overwhelm the communities we visit,” Susan Rodenburg said. “We have families, school teachers, busy executives and others who all share a passion for cycling and want to get off the beaten path. They can ride all day at their own speed so they can take full advantage of sightseeing and food in the small communities along the way. By the time the tour ends, we are all bonded in one way or another.”

The Rodenburgs created Tour de Nebraska 26 years ago after many of their friends expressed interest in doing a statewide tour. Since then, it’s grown from 11 cyclists to nearly 300 cyclists.

Tour de Nebraska arranges meals, rest stops, daily maps, itineraries, luggage/gear transfers, emergency sag support on the highway, daily fruit and water. Riders camp at city parks or sleep inside at high school gymnasiums. The Rodenburgs help local communities along the route prepare for rest stops and overnight stays.

“We encourage the communities to show what they have to offer and to highlight their community spirit, history and friendliness—all unique to Nebraska,” she said. “We work closely with the local organizers to assist them in providing everything we need. Most find that hosting Tour de Nebraska is not only fun but a great way to bring new revenue to the area.

The favorite rest stop and overnight host towns chosen by the riders receive cash awards.

“It’s a small token of thanks for their efforts,” Rodenburg said.

Organizers also present daily spirit awards (The Sophie Trophy) to build camaraderie among riders. The coveted Tour de Nebraska Team Spirit Award is presented during Saturday night’s Tour de Nebraska Banquet to a deserving individual who has shown a great amount of spirit, humor and joy while facing the challenges of the tour.

Tour de Nebraska is five days instead of seven like many other tours, making it perfect for first-time tourists or those with limited vacation schedules. There are many repeat riders. “It’s like a family reunion on wheels,” Rodenburg said.

The $285 registration fee includes: TDN t-shirt, daily maps and itineraries, TDN handbook, meal and camping arrangements, fruit, kick-off breakfast, sag service, luggage transport and Saturday night’s Tour de Nebraska awards dinner.

Registration information is available online at: www.TourdeNebraska.com or by request to: Susan@TourdeNebraska.com, 402-440-3227.