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## **RAAM Fun Facts**

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Measuring 3052 miles, the 2005 Race Across America is 150% the combined distance covered by all the finishers of the 2004 Olympic men's marathon. And the combined distance that will be covered by all the finishers of this year's RAAM is 150,000 miles, equivalent to circling the Earth six times at the equator.

RAAM riders climb nearly 110,000 feet, which is roughly the thickness of Earth's atmosphere, or put another way, the distance from the ground to the edge of space. This sum is also three times the altitude flown by commercial jetliners; or nearly four times the altitude of Mt Everest.

The elevation of the course ranges from 70 feet below sea level—at 15 miles north of El Centro, California, to 10,867 feet above sea level—at Wolf Creek Pass in central Colorado. This distance exceeds 2 miles.

The course passes through 14 states. This is the first time the route passes through Delaware, and the 20<sup>th</sup> time through California.

The halfway point of the race is 13 miles to the east of Time Station 27, at Mount Vernon. Despite what one would think with all the big climbs of California, Arizona and Colorado, the riders have only completed half their total 109,880 feet of climbing by the half-distance point of the race. The Ozark foothills and the Appalachians stand between the riders and Atlantic City, and what these climbs lack in size, they make up in number. The race's hilliest Time Station - Time Station leg is from San Diego to Pine Valley, with an introductory 5,780 feet of climbing. The second hilliest Time Station leg comes with only 180 miles remaining, between Hanover and Georgetown, PA, with an excruciating 5,060 feet of uphill.

The race passes through approximately 300 communities, 57 of which have designated RAAM Time Stations. By 'community' we mean a gas station and a store. If a hotel is required as an additional criterion, then it would be approximately 200 communities. The largest community it passes through is Indianapolis, IN; the smallest is Glamis, CA.

The straightest, flattest, most unchanging section of course is 22 miles, in western Arizona. In the London Marathon, after completing 22 miles runners can see the Westminster clock tower housing the



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famous bell Big Ben. On this stretch of road in Arizona, between Wenden and Aguila, many riders have reported seeing Big Ben but still couldn't tell the time.

RAAM crosses the five longest rivers that are entirely in the USA: the Mississippi; Missouri; Rio Grande; Arkansas; and the Ohio.

The course passes just outside Dayton, OH, hometown of bicycle shop mechanics and aerospace pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright.

The finish line is on the historic Boardwalk in Atlantic City, NJ, in front of the Atlantic City Convention Hall, used among other purposes for the Miss America pageant. On its outside wall, facing the finishing podium, is a plaque displaying a quote attributed to President McKinley: "You have triumphed over obstacles which would have overcome men less brave and determined." President McKinley, although known to make many apposite statements, is not thought to have been an avid cyclist. And by today's standards, he was not very PC, either!

In 1993 Outside magazine, the biggest and most popular magazine on outdoor sports, commissioned a panel of experts to rank the world's toughest events. Using such criteria as the "Mule Factor"—the distances involved; the "Forum"—how tough the course is; the "Anguish Index"—how hard the competitors "have to work to convince themselves that what they're doing is only mildly insane and self-destructive;" and the "O Factor"—a combination of the cost to do the event and the drop out rate. Given these criteria, as judged by a number of multi-sport athletes and observers, the ranking came out as follows:

1. **Race Across America - 676.2 points**
2. Vendee Globe Around-the-World Sailing Race - 675.0 points
3. Iditarod Sled Dog Race - 417.5 points
4. U.S. Army's Best Ranger Competition - 402.5 points
5. Raid Gauloises Wilderness Competition - 399.0 points
6. La Traversee Internationale (25-mile swim) - 301.4 points
7. Badwater 146-Mile Cross Country Run - 113.4 points
8. Hawaii Ironman Triathlon - 67.2 points