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**For Immediate Release**

## **Downtown Walterboro Criterium Attracts Champion Racers for USA CRITS *Speed Week***

Atlanta, Ga. (April 29, 2008) – Walterboro’s quiet streets are about to be transformed into a speedway, as USA CRITS *Speed Week* 2008 comes to town for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Downtown Walterboro Criterium on April 30. 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 Walterboro 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 Downtown Walterboro Criterium 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.

During USA CRITS *Speed Week*, more than \$100,000 in prize money is up for grabs as professional cyclists go head to head in 7 races, in 7 cities in 7 days of racing.

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

<b>Race Category</b>	<b>Start Time</b>
Master - Ages 35+/45+	4:00 p.m.
Elite Men – Levels 4 & 5	4:50 p.m.
Elite Men – Levels 2 & 3	5:30 p.m.
Elite Women Pro Levels 1, 2 & 3	6:30 p.m.
Kid’s	7:20 p.m.
Elite Man Pro – Level 1 & Invitation 2	7:30 p.m.
<a href="http://www.bikereq.com">www.bikereq.com</a>	

*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](http://www.usacrits.com)