

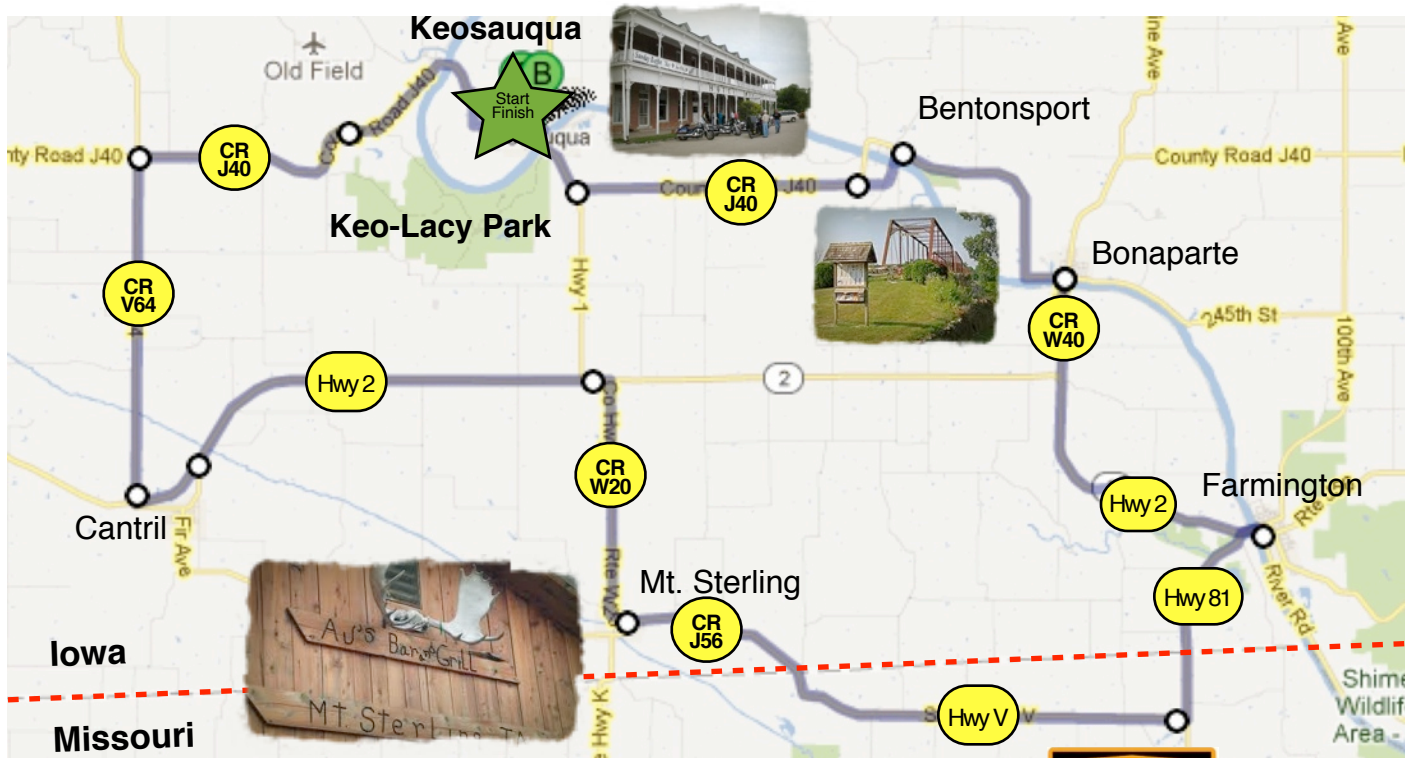
Escape from Missouri Ride - 58 miles

Keosauqua, Cantril, Mt. Sterling, Farmington, Bonaparte, Bentonsport, Keosauqua
With a death defying visit to the State of Missouri.

This is a great ride in southern Iowa. For years we have ridden this route on the Bike Van Buren Ride. From downtown Keosauqua, follow Hwy 1 N, to County Road J40 and turn left. Follow this for about 8 miles until you hit County Road V64, headed to Cantril. Turn south and in about 6 miles cross over Hwy 2 and into Cantril for a rest stop.

When leaving Cantril, get onto Hwy 2 heading east. Follow this for about 6 miles until you come to County Rd. W20 heading south to Mt. Sterling. There will be some rollers into Mt. Sterling, but it is only 4 miles.

While in Mt. Sterling, stop at AJ's (see insert). They have huge, delicious tenderloins that rival most. Bet you can eat only one! Be sure to ask AJ why he built the building in which he now does a bar and restaurant business. It is very interesting story. While sitting on AJ's South porch and you can almost spit into Missouri.



Leave Mt Sterling headed east on County Road J56. In three miles, this will turn into Missouri Hwy V. We think the V stands for Victims. The road out of Mt. Sterling is quite decent; however, when you cross into Missouri, two things will happen to the road. It will get 4 feet narrower and considerably rougher.



You will also notice changes in the housing, farm animals and number of junk cars. Some rider have commented on hearing banjo music playing in the background. This stretch lasts for 6.5 miles until you hit Hwy 81 to head north back to Iowa. Don't stop for a powerbar break on this stretch of road.

Follow 81 north for about 4 miles, then cross the Des Moines River into Farmington. Best stop is the American Legion.

Leaving Farmington, cross the same river bridge and shortly after head north on Hwy 2. Five miles after the bridge, Hwy 2 will turn to head due west. **DO NOT GO THAT WAY!** Keep headed north on County Rd W40. This will take you to another bridge across the Des Moines River into the town of Bonaparte.

In Bonaparte, get on the main drag heading west known as County Rd. J40. It will turn north after you get out of Bonaparte. Stay on it until you reach Bentonsport, about 4 miles. Bentonsport is a community that thrives on antiques and other stuff. If your like that kind of stuff, take your credit card and pull a trailer cause you will need it.

You have two options leaving Bentonsport. Stay on J40 and cross the river on a modern bridge or cross over the footbridge starting at the center of Bentonsport (see insert). You can ride across it providing you do not have vertigo. On the other side, it is a steep climb to get back onto J40. But, MelonHeads can do it...so can you!

Stay on J40 until it joins Hwy 1. Take a right and head back into Keosauqua, crossing the Des Moines River, again.

If you plan to camp, the Keo-Lacey State Park is a great spot with outstanding shower facilities. The entrance is on the south side of the river bridge. Another option is the [Hotel Manning](#) (see photo).