

## Carpet Network Goes On A 'Great Bike Ride'

DES MOINES, IOWA—Travelling the more than 500 miles from the Missouri River to the Mississippi River by bicycle may not be for everyone, but for seven Carpet Network members the annual RAGBRAI event is a way to raise funds to assist both the buying group's owners and their children.

The annual Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) is sponsored by the *Des Moines Register* newspaper and is more an event than a race. "You ride from town to town with



Carpet Network members proudly dip their front tires in the Mississippi River to officially end their 500+ mile journey for fun and charity as part of the annual RAGBRAI event.

each place opening itself up in a fun atmosphere," said Lenny Rankin, president and CEO of the van franchisor.

The seven Carpet Network representatives—five riders and two pit crew—joined more than 10,000 cyclists in the annual trek which covered 529 miles.

While the dealers enjoyed the fun and camaraderie, Rankin said they also raised money toward the Carpet Network Family Fund, which is a two-pronged initiative.

"Because everyone at Carpet Network is like a family, we set up this fund in order for family members to help family members," Rankin noted. First, if a Carpet Network owner is unable to work for a period of time due to illness, injury, etc, the Fund is available to assist. Secondly, it is available to assist via a scholarship to owners whose children are going to college.

At RAGBRAI '04, Carpet Network raised more than \$8,000 for the Fam-

ily fund.

The bike event was part of what Rankin called a "busy and successful year for us. "Our business is up and we have initiated a variety of new programs, including the unveiling of a new vehicle which has received terrific response from both the owners and consumers. Another initiative launched recently is, "Live Answering," in which a customer is not greeted by an answering machine but, rather, by a real person."

Finally, the buying group continues to invest in technology to help its members not only be better business people but improve the overall shopping experience for customers.

Carpet Network is getting ready to kick off its In-Home Technology program. Rankin said this will give members the ability to bring their laptop computers into the client's home and do



Road warriors. The Carpet Network team consisted of five riders and two pit crew. From left, member Russ Osley of Chester Springs, Pa.; Chris Rankin, director of training and support; Lenny Rankin, president and CEO; members Daryl and Malinda Foelske of Cedar Falls, Iowa, and members Beth and John DeFayette of Schuyler Falls, N.Y.

everything necessary to complete the sale. "We'll be able to do everything, from measuring to costing to printing warranties, invoices and so on.

"All of this," he concluded, "is part of our effort to be consistent with the Carpet Network Vision statement, which is to be the most convenient, knowledgeable, professional and informative resource for the consumer."

For more information, call 856/273-9393.