

Part 23 Across Missouri

I had my last sleep break in Kansas just before entering Missouri. I woke up to a cool morning that was damp from the evening dew. I needed to wear a jacket at sunrise but I knew the mid summer heat would be waiting again in a few hours. Rolling through the border town of Nevada, Missouri the terrain became noticeably hillier. The grades on Rt. 54 were much steeper than in Kansas. I had ridden this same road two weeks earlier and hadn't been bothered by how steep the grades were. Now I was getting more tired and using 2 or 3 lower hill climbing gears than the last time I was here.

At the small cross roads town of Mack's Creek there is a little gas station and a roadside picnic area. It was early afternoon and getting hot. I was feeling very sleepy and just wanted to close my eyes for half an hour. The motorhome was waiting in the picnic area. Instead of going into the RV the crew rolled out the foam mat I had last used during my long night heading to Albuquerque in New Mexico. I laid down on the mat in the shade and fell asleep right away. After 30 minutes the crew shook me awake and I was back on the bike.

The upcoming section of Rt. 54 crossed the Lake of the Ozark's region. This is one of my favorite areas because of the activities along the roadside. The billboards still promoted "Walnut Bowls and Factory Seconds". The Elvis Chapel was offering weddings in thirty minutes. Stores advertised Bait, Beer and Ammo. The area is like a mini Las Vegas organized by hillbillies. The best

part for me were the distractions and interesting things to see. The miles past quickly and soon I was heading toward the state capitol in Jefferson City.

It was getting near sundown and my crew was starting to think about where we would spend the night. I still felt I could get in another 60 miles in the next four hours. The hills were getting more shallow and the winds were favorable out of the southwest. Now was a good time to stay on the bike as long as possible. As I crossed interstate 70 the route becomes very flat. I received a great surprise when my friends from St. Louise were waiting for me. The road was quiet and we were able to ride and talk the next 20 miles into Mexico, Missouri. Just to be able to talk to somebody was a real treat on a warm, humid, quite night. By midnight I reached the far side of town. The motorhome was waiting. I bid goodbye to my friends who were going to drive back to St. Louis tonight. This had been my longest riding day of the record attempt so far. I covered 293 miles in about 18 hours. Not a bad day considering the Ozark hills. Tomorrow would be much flatter heading into Illinois.