

Giant F-500 Police Bike

by Lt. Todd Clingenpeel, *PCI #086*

Roanoke Police Department (VA)

In October 1993, the Roanoke Police Department decided to implement a Police Cyclist program within our 250 person department in order to increase our visibility in the community, conduct patrol in congested areas and over varying terrain, and increase apprehension of offenders in city parks and other open air spaces.

Roanoke, located in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, has a population of 94,911, a vibrant downtown area, and numerous neighborhoods and apartment communities.

One of the first contacts we made was with a group of local cyclists in the community known as the Blue Ridge Bicycle Club (BRBC). The BRBC helped us to contact IPMBA, thus beginning a relationship that is still strong today. In addition, members of the Blue Ridge Bicycle Club suggested we contact Scott Leweke, owner of Cardinal Bicycles, a shop that has now assisted us for more than 15 years. After we tried numerous "Police Package" bicycles, Scott and his staff recommended the Raleigh F-500 Police Bike, which we successfully deployed for over ten years until Raleigh stopped producing it. When it was time to purchase new bicycles for our fleet, we were faced with the question, "Uh oh, what are we gonna do now?"

Once again, we turned to Scott and his staff at Cardinal Bicycles. After having worked with us for so long, they knew the needs of our organization. Our bike unit has been staffed with as many as 98 officers, and we utilize the bike patrol extensively within the community on a daily basis, as well as for special events. As we considered options and sought to learn more about available products and equipment, Scott and his staff introduced us to the Giant Police Bike.

The Giant Police Bike was loaned to us by Cardinal on a trial basis for evaluation. The Giant was assigned to Officer Jim Donaldson, who is an experienced cyclist and racer who also rides on duty for 8 to 12 hours a day. Donaldson was so pleased with the bike that we quickly purchased it and made plans to purchase others. He was particularly fond of the excellent geometry, sturdy frame, and the attractive and durable finish. However, his favorite feature of the bike was the lock-out front suspension. Jim has ridden the bike for more than a year now and the wheels are still as true as they were the day they left the shop and he has yet to experience a flat. The bicycle shifts smoothly and the gearing ratio is excellent for the varied terrain in which we utilize the bikes. The saddle is comfortable and the stem position reduces wear on the arms and wrists, as well as reduces the risk of numbness in those areas. We prefer the standard seat post to the suspension seat post. Finally the price of the bike suits our budget; at \$750 per bicycle, the Giant Police Bike is an excellent value.

Although the model tested was an earlier model, Giant's Russ Okawa provided the specifications for 2006 Giant Police Bike. It features an extra-light ALUXX butted aluminum frame with integrated headset, forged headtube, press-formed gussets, and response, race-proven XtC Geometry. It also comes equipped with a tubular alloy rear rack.

Fork	RockShox J2w / Turnkey Lock out
Bar	Alloy 50mm rise, 620mm width
Stem	Alloy forged, 15 degree
Seat Post	Alloy 30.9 diameter
Saddle	Giant Groove Plus
Pedals	Dual sided Platform Cage type, SPD compatible
Shifters	Shimano Deore Rapid Fire (SL-M511)
Front Derailleur	Shimano Deore (FD-M510)
Rear Derailleur	Shimano LX (RD-M571)
Brakes	Alloy Direct Pull
Brake Lever	Alloy 2 finger style
Cassette	Stam 9-Speed PG950 11 / 34
Chain	Shimano HG53
Crank	Giant Forged Alloy, 22/52/44
BB	TruVativ Giga Pipe SL (ISIS)
Rims	Alex DM24 36h Alloy dbl wall
Hubs	Shimano Deore Ft / FH-T400 Silent Rear Cassette
Spokes	14g Stainless steel
Tires	Continental Town & Country 26x2.1
Sizes	14, 17, 19, 21, 23
Stickers	Police, Sheriff

Todd has been an IPMBA Instructor since 1994 and has taught extensively throughout Southwestern Virginia. Once of his classes was the subject of an Emmy Award-winning news broadcast entitled Bicycle Boot Camp. He can be reached at cling65@aol.com. This review appeared in the Winter 2006 issue of IPMBA News.