

49 LAPS

Back in 2006, the Iron Butt Association rolled out a new twist on long-distance riding: in-state rides—and even tougher, in-city rides. The catch? You had to stay completely inside the designated boundaries. One wrong turn outside the city limits and the ride was over—or at least downgraded.

So when my phone rang in the summer of 2025 and Iron Butt friend Russell Dickerson asked, “Hey Mark, would you want to do an Iron Butt ride entirely within the city limits of Hernando?” my first thought was that he’d finally lost it.

I said, “What? All within the city limits of Hernando? Are you crazy?”

Well, if you know Russ, then you know the answer to that question—yes, he is crazy. Russ had already completed Iron Butt rides within the boundaries of all 50 states. Some of those rides were completed entirely within city limits, to include Anchorage, Alaska.

During that phone call, Russ offered me the opportunity to ride with him. Since Hernando, Mississippi is our hometown, that was an unexpected—but appreciated—courtesy on his part. And honestly, we couldn’t let Russ ride into our neighborhood and complete this ride without us joining him. That’s not how Team Campbell operates. So, I agreed.

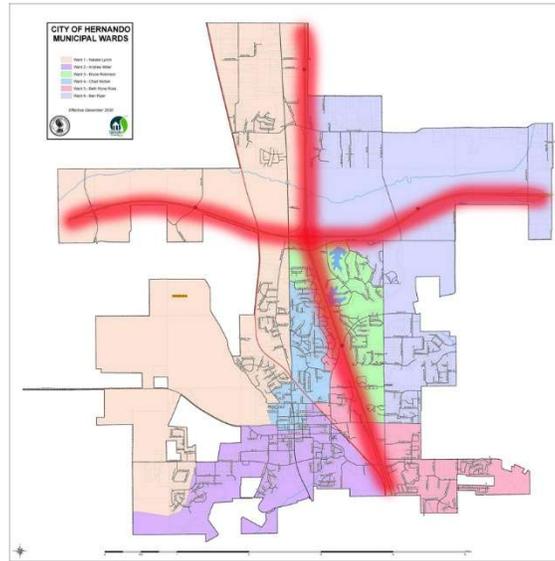
When I told Karen about this craziness, she didn’t hesitate. She wanted to do it too.



Russ Dickerson with Team Campbell (Photo Credit: Russ)

Russ had already researched the Hernando city limits and discovered something unusual: two interstates intersected within them. At the junction of I-55 and I-269, each of the four legs—north, south, east, and west—was approximately 2.5 miles long. One complete lap within the city limits measured 21.5 miles. To qualify for an Iron Butt In-City Insanity ride, we would need to complete 49 laps within 24 hours. The posted speed limit was 70 mph the entire way.

Excellent.



Our Route within the City Limits

We agreed on Saturday, August 23, as our target date. We would ride independently of Russ so as not to get in each other's way—though we knew we'd be crossing paths plenty throughout the day.

Karen took on her usual Team Campbell roles without question. First, she would manually ping the SWTracker app at every turnaround point. Since the app was programmed to ping automatically every five minutes, it could miss our farthest points and shorten the recorded route. Karen made sure that didn't happen.

Her second task was to record each lap using a mechanical press-button counter we had purchased for the ride. Simple, reliable, and effective—just like the way we approach long rides together.

Karen and I were up and ready in the wee hours that morning. The Circle K gas station on Commerce Street would be our go-to fuel stop since it was near the I-55 on-ramp. The start DBR read 2:03 a.m. We rode our BMW Adventure bike—the R1250 GSA.

And so Team Campbell went to work.

We jumped on I-55 heading north.

There were several ways to ride the route, but once we settled into our rhythm, the pattern made sense. North on I-55 to the farthest point at the Nesbit exit, then south to the I-269 exit west to Tulane Road. From there, east to Getwell Road, back to I-55 south, and finally to the Hernando exit to complete one 21.5-mile lap.

Each leg was a blur of acceleration and deceleration. Just as you ran through all six gears, it was time to downshift again for the next turnaround. Karen took the full brunt of it—slammed back against the metal box during acceleration, then forward into me while braking.

It wasn't comfortable, but it was familiar. We'd been here before—different rides, different places, same trust. She held on, hit her pings, clicked the counter, and never missed a beat. That's Team Campbell.

As the laps added up, we started noticing Hernando police officers monitoring the interstates. At first, we wondered if we were seeing the same one or two repeatedly. Then one lap, we spotted all four together. Mystery solved. It was reassuring to know they were watching out for things—and another reminder of why we enjoy living in a small town like Hernando.

Before long, we started seeing a white Honda Gold Wing along the route. We passed it on the north-south leg, then again on the east-west leg. By sunrise, we all pulled into the Circle K at the same time. It was Russ.

We shared a few laughs, compared notes, and headed back out—riding a lap or two together before each settling back into our own pace.

Hernando has a beautiful courthouse, and Karen and I wanted to include a loop around it during the ride. Saturdays bring a busy Farmer's Market, so timing mattered. After one fuel stop, we rode down Commerce Street, circled the square, and headed back to I-55. It was 5:00 a.m. The square was empty. Quiet. Ours.

Finally, after completing 49 laps, we rolled into the Circle K one last time for our ending DBR. The official finish time was 8:12 p.m. We had completed 1,054 miles—every single one of them within the city limits of Hernando. We rode more than 1,000 miles without ever getting farther than six miles from home.



Lap Counter at 49

That called for a celebration next door at Whataburger. Milkshakes were mandatory.

Thanks to our good friend Russ Dickerson for creating this ride and inviting us to be part of it. Most in-city rides are completed in massive cities with sprawling boundaries. Completing one in our hometown made it personal.

Later, we learned that Karen and I were the first two-up couple to complete an in-city Iron Butt ride according to the IBA.

Just another day of trusting each other, doing the work, and proving—once again—that when Team Campbell commits to a ride, we finish it together.

