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### **Blind Rider Terry Martin Goes the Distance in 40-Mile Charity Bike Ride**

(Rochester, NY, June 12, 2005) - Assisted by little more than determination to succeed, a PAC Mate™ accessible Pocket PC, and Freedom Scientific's StreetTalk™ GPS solution, Terry A. Martin has become the first solo blind rider to cross the finish line in a 40-mile Rochester, NY bike ride to raise funds for diabetes research.

Martin, 46, said his blindness since birth was not a deterrent to volunteering for the [Tour de Cure](#), an American Diabetes Association event that takes place in more than 80 cities nationwide. Not completing the marathon was never an option, either, he said, despite the setbacks of a downpour and a flat tire.

"Not finishing would have been a crushing blow to me," said the certified teacher and provider of training and consulting services for people with disabilities through his private business, Voila Technology, Inc. Martin was spurred on by his desire to bring awareness to the need for greater diabetes research funding. He said he dedicated the ride to a friend who has undergone several organ transplants, lost his legs as a result of diabetes, and is learning to walk again for the fourth time.

"I thought, if he can do that, I can do this," said Martin.

Rochester's 13th annual Tour de Cure began at Mendon Ponds, a local park, and took Terry through both countryside and suburban settings. Unaccompanied by a sighted guide or companion rider, he relied solely on his mobility training and his [PAC Mate](#) with the StreetTalk GPS solution to stay oriented along the marked course of rolling hills, lakes, two-lane roads turns, and intersections, many without stop signs or signals.

StreetTalk is a software GPS solution for Freedom Scientific's PAC Mate, an accessible Pocket PC for the blind. StreetTalk is not a mobility tool and cannot tell users to avoid obstacles. Used with a GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver, it can tell users, through the PAC Mate's speech synthesizer or braille display, how fast they are going, can orient them to their surroundings, and can provide other important information to assist in guidance.

With StreetTalk, users can add selected locations as “favorites.” StreetTalk also will announce points of interest like businesses, restaurants, and stores, and announce the distance to those points as the user approaches them. To keep his bearings, Terry listened through an earphone for StreetTalk to verbally announce the distance to his favorites and approaching points of interest.

The route included “lots of twists and turns and intersections, and I also had to use my mobility training to get me through safely,” he said. “I had to cross intersections with parallel traffic, listening for (vehicles making) turns on the right. I relied on sound, listening for the grinding of engines to let me know when parallel traffic was getting ready for lights to change.”

Two weeks before the ride, Martin completed a 40-mile practice ride on a two-wheel bike, accompanied by his PAC Mate and StreetTalk.

“StreetTalk did exactly what I wanted it to do,” he said. It announced points of interests and favorites I had set as I approached them, so I could remember them and use them as route markers.”

For the diabetes fundraising event, Martin rode the quadracycle that he uses for recreational family rides. His wife Susan insisted that he ride the four-wheel bike so that motorists would more easily see him, he said. He completed the ride in just under eight hours, two of which were spent waiting out a thunderstorm and a flat tire repair. He plans to enter the event again next year - this time on a two-wheel bike.

### **About Freedom Scientific**

Freedom Scientific is the world's leading manufacturer of assistive technology products for those who are blind and vision impaired and products for the special education and learning disability markets.

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