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For Immediate Release

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CROSS-COUNTRY HIKERS

WIN LOFTY PRAISE

AT CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

A tribute by a representative of the U.S. Department of the Interior and a barbeque feast hosted by the makers of Postum instant grain beverage await more than 50 history-making hikers this Saturday in Silverton.

The hikers are participants in HikaNation, a coast-to-coast trek conducted by the American Hiking Society to call attention to the nation's system of hiking trails. They will hear themselves praised by David F. Hales, deputy assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

The occasion marks the hikers' arrival at the Continental Divide and the completion of one-third of their 4,500-mile walk from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. They started in early April and expect to reach the Washington Monument by next spring. Sponsorship of the event is being provided by the makers of Postum and the Department of the Interior's Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

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This effort represents the first time that a group this size has undertaken a cross-country hike since the days of the pioneers -- and they were traveling in the opposite direction.

HikaNation will have passed through or near the following communities by the time the group reaches the Kansas border in early October: Rico, Silverton, Del Norte, Mosca, Red Wing, Walsenburg, Delhi, Timpas, La Junta, Las Animas and Lamar.

The hike route within Colorado was laid out under the direction of Gudrun Gaskill of Golden.

The other states along the HikaNation route include California, Nevada, Utah, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, West Virginia and Virginia.

Among the members of the HikaNation group are John Stout, a 68-year-old retired aircraft machinist, and Jiamie Pyles, a 10-month-old girl being wheeled across America in a specially designed "contraption" pushed by her parents. Others on the hike include nurses, a longshoreman, an engineer and a librarian who have taken leaves from their jobs to discover America on foot.

The hikers are eager to be joined by local hiking enthusiasts for segments of the trek and anyone wishing to hike with them can determine the precise whereabouts of the HikaNation group by calling (305) 251-0484. A regularly updated recorded message will provide all relevant information on a 24-hour-a-day basis.