

Ride of passage takes man through Santa Claus

By KATE BRASER
Herald Staff Writer

SANTA CLAUS — During his 5,000-mile cross-country trek on his trusty and weary Appaloosa horse, Matt Parker, 25, of Ann Arbor, Mich., continues to be inspired by the charity of others — charity he found Tuesday in Santa Claus.

The Santa Claus farm of Kevin and Julie Laswell is where Parker hung his floppy leather cowboy hat for a rare night of rest for him and Cincinnati, his butterscotch-colored, 8-year-old horse named for the city where Parker's grandfather died just before Parker began his adventure.

Wearing a white Northface shirt, blue jeans, floppy leather hat and boots, Parker looks every part the modern-day cowboy, his Apple iPod tucked into a leather pouch beside his cellphone, earphones visible from beneath his hat.

The 2003 graduate of Hope College, in Holland, Mich., says there are many reasons he started his journey from Sacramento, Calif., to Delaware three summers ago.

If he finishes the trek, Parker could be the first to complete the American Discovery Trail on horseback. The trail is the only coast-to-coast nonmotorized recreational trail in the country.

"I had always dreamed of doing this, but it was about more than the dream for me," he said



DAVID PIERINI/THE HERALD

Matt Parker's quest to complete a 5,000-mile cross-country trip on horseback took him through Santa Claus Tuesday. Parker, 25, of Ann Arbor, Mich., has spent three summers trying to complete the American Discovery Trail.

See **RIDE**
on the back page

Wednesday

One Section
One Supplement
Volume 110, Number 258

■ PUBLISHED IN JASPER, INDIANA
■ PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Weather

TONIGHT



Mostly cloudy with a thunderstorm.

Low: 70°

THURSDAY



Hot with clouds and sunshine.

High: 94°

Inside

Advice	13-15
Classifieds	22-27
Comics	30
Entertainment	28-29
Local and state	3-6
Nation and world	17-21
People	8-12
Sports	31-35

Headlines

U.S. 231

U.S. 231 has made it into INDOT's 10-year highway production plan. **Page 3.**

Sharing lives

Health and Rehabilitation Center in Jasper, where they live. They have been engaged since July 2003. **Page 13.**

Bombers win

A three-run sixth inning keyed the Dubois County Bomber's 4-2 victory and sent them back to