

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



World-Renowned International GFNY Cycling Marathon Coming to Winnebago County

Gran Fondo New York (GFNY) Makes Rockford Debut with a 60 & 100-mile Race

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 2, 2023

ROCKFORD, IL – The internationally-known Gran Fondo New York (GFNY) cycling marathon will make its Rockford debut on **Sunday, August 6, 2023**. **GFNY Rockford**, sponsored by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, is expected to draw over **200 cyclists and 300 fans from 17 states and 20 countries**. Represented countries include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Switzerland and Venezuela.

GFNY's large-scale cycling races are a personal endurance challenge where participants compete against others, the clock and themselves. Racers participating in **GFNY Rockford** can choose between two distances: long route of 93.6 miles long with 3,583 feet of climbing and medium route of 63 miles with 2,326 feet of climbing. The medium route is non-competitive and although the participant's individual total time is provided there are no rankings. The long route riders are taking part in a competitive race. All finishers are ranked overall and in their age group. **Competitors range in age from 18 – 80 years old.**

The GFNY Rockford route incorporates points throughout beautiful northern Winnebago County.

The race starts and ends in Rockford near the Venetian Club on Elmwood Rd. and passes by Carl and Myrna Nygren Wetland Preserve, Williams Tree Farm, The Pavilion at Orchard Ridge Farms, Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve, Calvin and Sophia Ferguson Forest Preserve and crosses over or runs along the Pecatonica, Sugar and Rock Rivers as well as near Rockton, South Beloit, Durand, Shirland, and Lake Summerset.

Spectators can purchase food and beverage at the Venetian and enjoy a live band playing throughout the afternoon. To **see an interactive map** of the route visit:

https://ridewithgps.com/routes/37864771?privacy_code=z2iqwTydYCwXIXgx.

GFNY Rockford is excited to welcome a notable participant, Nelson Vails. Vails represented the USA at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California, winning a silver medal in the sprint. This win made him the first African American and first person of African descent to medal in cycling. Vails was inducted to the US Bicycle Hall of Fame in 2009. Vails was also seen as a New York bicycle messenger in the film Quicksilver.

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Schedule of Events: Sunday, August 6, 2023, The Venetian Club: 2180 Elmwood Rd, Rockford, IL

7:30 a.m. 60 & 100-Mile Race Begins at Venetian Club
12:30 p.m. End of Race Medal ceremony for 100-mile race
1:45 p.m. Second Award Ceremony
2 - 4 p.m. Band "Gary Band"
2:30 p.m. Course Closes
3 p.m. End of Festivities

Parking: *spectator and media parking is available at The Venetian Club which can be accessed off of Elmwood Rd. via N. Main Street/Rt. 2. Note, Elmwood Rd. will be closed to the west of The Venetian Club.*

"We are excited to welcome this premier cycling event to the Rockford Region for the first time," said Lindsay Arellano RACVB vice president of sales & service. "It's thrilling to know that racers will be coming from not only all over the U.S. but from South America and Europe as well. This event could not have happened without the help of Winnebago County Highway Department, Winnebago County Sheriff's Department and the location host of the event, The Venetian Club. This event has been a true collaboration of our partners throughout the county."

Gran Fondo rides (loosely translated from Italian as Big Ride) are generally at least 75 miles in length. GFNY is considered the premier, global cycling marathon series and consists of 25 races in 17 countries. The Rockford region is one of five destinations to host this event in the United States in 2023; including Sebring, FL, York, PA, and Cambridge, MD, and New York, NY.

GFNY started in 2010 with the first race held in 2011 in New York and holds World Races in major top-tier visitor destinations such as Italy, Mexico, Portugal and Argentina, New York, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Costa Rica, Jerusalem, Florida, Bali, Cannes islands. **Winners of GFNY Rockford will qualify for the world championships held in New York City on May 19, 2024.** GFNY is scheduled to return to Rockford for a second year in 2024.

About: *GFNY NYC serves as the GFNY World Championship for the GFNY World Series of races. GFNY World events provide that same challenge in locations around the world. Additionally, participants get the chance to qualify for a front corral start at the GFNY World Championship in NYC. To learn more about GFNY visit <https://gfny.com/new-to-gfny-cycling/>.*

About: *RACVB is responsible for promoting the Rockford region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, RACVB strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in our communities. gorockford.com*

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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