

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



World-Renowned International GFNY Cycling Marathon Coming to Winnebago County

RACVB signs three-year agreement with Gran Fondo New York (GFNY) to host global event in 2022, 2023, 2024; will generate visitor spending of \$3.9 million over three years

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 10, 2022

ROCKFORD, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) and community partners from throughout Winnebago County are thrilled to announce the **internationally-known Gran Fondo New York (GFNY)** cycling marathon will take place in our community on **Sunday, August 7, 2022**, with planned run rides on Friday and Saturday before the race.

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 2022.

GFNY Rockford is expected to draw at least **750 cyclist and additional spectators** to the region. While in destination, these visitors will fill more than **1,000 hotel room nights** and spend more than \$1.3 million. Over the course of the initial three-year agreement, 2022-2024, visitors are expected to spend **nearly \$4 million at local businesses**.

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 and a medium route of 63 miles. The medium course is a non-competitive, recreational ride. The participant's individual total time is provided, but 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.

RACVB has worked with GFNY since early 2021 to bring the endurance ride to the area. "Hosting the GFNY cycling event in Rockford and Winnebago County is a huge win and reason to celebrate for so many reasons. It certainly positions our community among an elite competitive set as an international visitor destination in sports tourism," **said Lindsay Arellano, RACVB vice president of sales & service**. "An event of this caliber is an economic driver that will directly impact many of our local businesses along the various routes in such a positive way. It's also a fun event that gives participants the opportunity to get outside and experience first-hand all that our destination has to offer."

The GFNY Rockford route incorporate 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

-MORE-

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



GFNY ROCKFORD/ PAGE 2 of 2

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. To see an interactive map of the route visit:

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

"Hosting this large-scale international cycling event in Winnebago County will have a positive economic impact on the entire region," said **County Board Chairman Joe Chiarelli**. "Not only will this bring a unique event to our community, but it will mean even more dollars spent at our local businesses, restaurants and put the County on a national and international map."

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.

"I'm thrilled another international event will take place in Rockford this summer," said **Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara**, "It takes a coordinated effort by partners across the community to attract these events and ensure they are successful, and I'm thankful to all involved who have helped make Rockford a sports tourism destination. I look forward to welcoming more than 750 cyclists to our community in August!"

All fitness levels and any athlete over age of 18 is eligible to participate in this cycling event. Participants do not have to qualify or be a licensed racer with a federation to take part in GFNY. Registration information can be found at www.gfny.com.

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*

###

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Martasha Brown, RACVB Director of Marketing & Communications: 815.489.1655 or mbrown@gorockford.com