

# Armstrong: Annual bike benefit has great financial impact

The DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau will welcome back the 31st annual Bike MS: Tour de Farms to DeKalb County.

Approximately 2,000 bike riders will roll into DeKalb County from June 22 to 24 to raise money for the Multiple Sclerosis Society at the annual fundraising event. The funds raised by participants support research and provide programs to individuals with MS and their families. All riders are required to raise a minimum of \$300 to ride.

This weekend event generates approximately \$320,000 in economic activity for the DeKalb County area.

Not only do these good people ride for a cause but they also stay in local hotels and spend money on dining, gas and groceries.

At least six restaurants in the area have agreed to give a minimum of 10 percent of what the riders and volunteers spend in their restaurants June 22 to the MS Society in Chicago.

The DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau has been working with the main event coordination team from the Greater Illinois Chapter since July to ensure another successful event. We block hotel rooms, book restaurants, work with local partners to provide them with coupons, and seek volunteers and sponsors from DeKalb County to assist with the ride.

The start and finish of the race is always at the Northern Illinois University Convocation Center. We thank the great staff at the Convo for its splendid coordination of this annual event, the city of DeKalb, area hotels, coupon and restaurant participants, and the volunteers who help along the bike routes and at the main tent at the Convo.

The kickoff is between 6 and 8 p.m. June 22. During that time, riders and teams check in and have a certified safety check conducted on their bicycles. Many of the teams decorate their tent at the tent village, and they meet some of the top fundraisers and the MS staff.

All riders start at 7 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. Registration opens at 5 a.m.

Riders have six route options that include anywhere from a 15-mile to a 124-mile route. They are fully supported with rest stops every 10-15 miles and Support and Gear (SAG) vehicles stocked with bottled water.

For the first time, riders this year have been cleared to go through downtown DeKalb at approximately 7 a.m. June 23. Community members are encouraged to line the downtown area to cheer on the riders.

Children as young as 12 can participate as long as they ride with a legal guardian and meet a list of other requirements set forth for their safety. For more details on how to sign up to bike and/or volunteer, visit [www.nationalmssociety.org](http://www.nationalmssociety.org).

The Bike MS: Tour de Farms event coordinators want to thank the DeKalb County community for its support by inviting the public to see Mike and Joe perform live for free at the Convo on June 23. There will be a 4:30 p.m. show and one at 6:30 p.m. A parking fee may be required.

We hope to see many of our community members out biking, volunteering and welcoming our Tour de Farms visitors back to DeKalb County.

Remember to "Like Us" on Facebook and check our updated Calendar of Events at [www.dekalbcountycvb.com](http://www.dekalbcountycvb.com).

• Debbie Armstrong is executive director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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