

## ASHLAND RACES INTO SUMMER WITH HELP FROM TOURISM GRANT

Grant funds promote first annual “Dynamic Duo” duathlon

ASHLAND, Wis. (May 16, 2016) – The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for a new duathlon event with help from a Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grant from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. The Dynamic Duo Duathlon, taking place Sunday, June 26, will feature the running and biking portion of a traditional triathlon, increasing accessibility for all ages and skill levels. The \$8,500 grant will go towards print and digital advertising materials and public relations efforts to raise awareness for the event and bring new visitors to the Ashland area.

“Ashland continues to capitalize on its success as a destination for sports with events like Book Across the Bay, Chick-uamegon 5K/10K and the CenturyLink Whistlestop Marathon,” said Tourism Secretary Stephanie Klett. “They’ve leveraged their scenic beauty and ideal location on Lake Superior’s south shore to create four seasons of sporting events that draw travelers to the area.”

In fiscal 2015, the Department funded 59 Joint Effort Marketing projects, awarding a total of more than \$1.1 million. Visitor expenditures driven by the marketing from these projects will exceed \$31 million. In 2015, the tourism economy in Wisconsin totaled \$19.3 billion, a more than four percent increase from 2014. Business sales in Ashland County totaled \$52.2 million in 2015, supporting 577 jobs and \$4.5million in state and local taxes. In Bayfield County, business sales totaled \$60.7 million in 2015, supporting 598 jobs and \$5.8 million in state and local taxes.

The Dynamic Duo Duathlon will feature structured running and biking routes, beginning with a two-mile run, followed by a fifteen-mile bike ride through downtown Ashland and the surrounding countryside, and ending with an additional 3-mile run back through town. The event is inclusive and family-friendly, with a shorter route available for the children’s racing group of 11 year-olds and under. The Ashland Chamber of Commerce aims to increase overnight stays in the area and draw an estimated 575 visitors for an economic impact of \$52,100.

“We are so excited about this new event scheduled for a weekend with more room availability and perfect weather conditions for running and biking,” said Mary McPhetridge, Executive Director of the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce. “Visitors will also be able to enjoy cardboard boat races and an amateur dock dog event, as well as music and sidewalk sales on Ashland’s Historic Main Street.”

JEM grant funds are available to non-profit organizations for the promotion of Wisconsin tourism events and destinations. The state can fund up to 75 percent of a project's first-year advertising and marketing costs, and provide support for second- and third-year projects with decreasing amounts for funding until projects become self-sustaining. For information on the JEM Program and application materials, visit <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com>.

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism is to market the State as the Midwest’s premier travel destination for fun by executing industry-leading marketing programs and establishing strategic partnerships. The Department plays a significant role in generating greater economic impact and jobs for Wisconsin. The portal for traveler information can be found at: [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com).

[PHOTO CREDIT: The Wisconsin Department of Tourism presents a JEM Grant for the inaugural Dynamic Duo Duathlon. Pictured: Senator Janet Bewley, District 25; Representative Beth Meyers, District 74; Nathan Gordon, Vice Chairman Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; Mary McPhetridge, Ashland Chamber of Commerce; JoAnn Erickson, Ashland Chamber of Commerce; Kysa Granger, Ashland Chamber of Commerce; Candace Ferguson, Ashland Chamber of Commerce; Wisconsin Department of Tourism Regional Tourism Specialist Drew Nussbaum; Wendy Young, Legendary Waters Resort and Casino; Jim Rider, Legendary Waters Resort and Casino; Max Paap, Madeline Island Chamber of Commerce; David Eades, Bayfield Chamber of Commerce.]