

IDOA, Illinois Bicentennial to host inaugural Prairie Heritage Ride

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Agriculture has teamed up with Bicycle Illinois and the Springfield Bicycle Club to host a unique bicycle ride that will make nearly a dozen stops on a “spoke-to-farm” tour that highlights central Illinois agritourism. The inaugural Prairie Heritage Ride will take place September 10 – 14, making stops in Springfield, Lincoln, Bloomington, Champaign, and Decatur.

“This inaugural ride will help showcase our prairie heritage and agricultural roots while celebrating the Illinois Bicentennial and all that is Born, Built and Grown in Illinois,” said Ag Director Raymond Poe. “From vineyards and breweries to historic farms and popular agritourism sites, riders will experience Illinois agriculture like never before.”

Stops along the way include, Hand of Fate Brewing Company, Historic Marlboro Farmstead, the Rail Splitter Covered Wagon, Seaney Farms, Mackinaw Valley Vineyard, Rader Family Farms, Prairie Fruits and Creamery, Lake of the Woods, the Illinois State Fairgrounds and much more.

"As a seasoned farmer, I realize how much people enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to experience Rader Family Farms and the country life," said Lynn Rader, owner of Rader Family Farms. "Today, more than ever, it's extremely important to expose a greater percentage of the population to the practices and products that we provide. Agritourism is a way to do that while also creating fun memories and a unique opportunity to see how farmers provide."

Whether you are a novice rider or a seasoned cyclist, this picturesque ride has something for everyone. The more than 300-mile bike ride will take place over five days and will include overnight accommodations for riders. Representatives from seven county farm bureaus are also participating to showcase Illinois agriculture along the ride. The 2018 route is as follows:

September 10th Springfield to Lincoln (~78 miles)

September 11th Lincoln to Bloomington (~60 miles)

September 12th Bloomington to Champaign (~82 miles)

September 13th Champaign to Decatur (~61 miles)

September 14th Decatur to Springfield (~54 miles)

Registration for the Prairie Heritage Ride is now open. Early registration ends on Friday, August 24. More information can be found online at www.prairieheritageride.com.

The Prairie Heritage Ride is proud to join the long-standing Springfield tradition, the Capital City Century (CCC). The Capital City Century is one of the oldest and most popular cycling events in Illinois. This year, organizers have planned a weekend of fun activities for the entire family to enjoy. The CCC Weekend will include multiple bike rides of various lengths, a family friend Packet Pickup Party on the Illinois State Fairgrounds, and a Post Pedalin' Party at the conclusion of the group's signature event, the 46th Annual Capital City Century Ride. The CCC Weekend kicks off September 7th, and serves as the perfect preview to the inaugural Prairie Heritage Ride. To learn more about the CCC Weekend, visit www.spfldcycling.org/ccc

