

Bicycling event rolls into Beloit

By Hillary Gavan hgavan@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Monday, June 9, 2014 4:00 pm

Visit Beloit is inviting the community to come out to the 2014 Tour of America's Dairyland bike race and accompanying street fair in downtown Beloit. The new day-long event will be held on Monday, June 23, according to Visit Beloit Executive Director Monica Krysztopa.

More than 600 riders of all skill levels are expected to participate in a collection of eight races that will take place from 11 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. in Beloit's downtown. The Olympic-level cyclists come from 13 countries and 43 states.

"We are really excited about this. This particular racing group has longevity and success in the other communities its been hosted in. We are happy Beloit was selected," Krysztopa said.

The racers will start and finish the race on a closed loop starting on East Grand Avenue near First National Bank before heading east, turning right onto Pleasant Street, right on Broad Street, behind Chester Square and back to East Grand Avenue. The trek will include a view of the Rock River, downtown and a ride over two bridges.

Street closures will start at 6:45 a.m. to make way for the racers.

Beloit is one of 11 locations set to host the 2014 Tour of America's Dairyland, a statewide series of cycling competitions. This is the sixth year the races will be taking place in Wisconsin.

To add to the excitement of the all-day racing, there will be a kid's bike race, a kid's zone with games, face painting and other activities, and a street fair hosted by local businesses and farmers market vendors.

The free Kids Roll event will take place at 5:20 p.m. People are encouraged to arrive early for registration and check-in. The roll is for kids ages 5-14 who will have the opportunity to ride their bikes on a section of the professional course.

"They can see what it feels like to have cheering fans on the sidelines," Krysztopa said.

All kids participants must have a bike, helmet and waiver signed by a legal guardian. Waivers can be found at visitbeloit.com and will be available the day of the race.

Krysztopa said the event is being called a "roll" because it's more about having a good time than a competition. All the kids will get little prizes.

Matt Bosen with Visit Beloit said anyone who is interested in volunteering to help out at the event can call him at 608-313-1366 or e-mail him at matt@visitbeloit.com.

The Tour of America's Dairyland, sponsored by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, is the largest competitive cycling event in the United States, bringing thousands of riders from across the country and around the world to Wisconsin. For each of the 11 days cyclists race in a different city. For more information people can visit www.tourofamericasdairyland.com.

Although the race will be the draw needed to get people downtown, Bosen said there will be an accompanying street fair Visit Beloit is hoping to fill with local vendors. He encourages anyone interested to contact Visit Beloit, 500 Public Ave., at 608-365-4838 for more information. The fair will be held on State Street between Grand Avenue and Broad Street.