400 Bicyclists to Converge in Skowhegan for BikeMaine

SKOWHEGAN—BikeMaine 2017 will begin in Skowhegan on Saturday, Sept. 9, as 400 riders converge at the Skowhegan Fairgrounds for a trek that will cover 335 miles over seven days.

This year’s ride—Pathway to the Peaks—will both start and end in Skowhegan, with additional stops in Pittsfield, Kingfield, Rangeley, Hartford, and Farmington.

“We are thrilled to be bringing BikeMaine to Skowhegan,” said Zach Schmesser, event director for the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. “Main Street Skowhegan [the coordinating organization for Skowhegan] has done a wonderful job of pulling together volunteers, resources, and the community to highlight how special and unique the town is. Skowhegan really embodies BikeMaine, a celebration of people, places, culture, and food.”

When riders arrive on Sept. 9, they will have free time to explore what the town has to offer. Main Street Skowhegan is providing a bus to take interested riders downtown for shopping and exploration, on a tour of Maine Grains, to Cayford Orchards, and to the Skowhegan History House’s Gathering by the River’s Edge event featuring live music, garden viewing, and a guest speaker. Volunteers will serve riders dinner at the Skowhegan Fairgrounds, and entertainment will be provided.

The ride will officially start on Sunday, Sept. 10, when riders depart the fairgrounds early after enjoying a hearty breakfast. After 335 miles—and 16,432 feet of elevation—the riders will return to Skowhegan on Saturday, Sept. 16, when they’ll have more time to check out Skowhegan.

“As a community, we’ll have the opportunity to showcase our strengths, share our story, and welcome these visitors—many of whom hail from out of state,” noted Kristina Cannon, executive director of Main Street Skowhegan and BikeMaine town coordinator. “BikeMaine cyclists are excited about exploring communities, enjoying cultural experiences, and eating locally sourced food—and they’ll have ample opportunity to do all of this here in Skowhegan.”

In 2016 BikeMaine brought 400 riders to the Bold Coast of Downeast Maine. Of those riders, 133 were from 37 other states and three countries. Total economic impact of the event was an estimated $1.7 million, with $626,000 directly impacting host towns.

Cannon expects to see direct economic impact in Skowhegan as a result of this year’s event. “Cyclists will have the opportunity to stay in our motels, shop in our stores, eat in our restaurants, and experience the local flavor of Skowhegan. We hope they’ll love our town so much they’ll want to come back again and again.”