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Clare, Nova Scotia to Host second annual Gran Fondo Cycling Event

Hot off the heels of a successful inaugural event in September 2015, registration is now open for the 2016 **Gran Fondo Baie Sainte-Marie** on **September 25, 2016**. In 2015, over 400 cyclists participated in Nova Scotia's first Gran Fondo. In 2016, hundreds of cyclists will gather and ride along Nova Scotia's French Acadian Shore for an unforgettable cycling and cultural experience.

In Italian Gran Fondo means "Grand Tour", a mass-start cycling ride which brings together road cyclists of all abilities. The Gran Fondo Baie Sainte-Marie will appeal to those looking to ride for fun, for good health and to take on a personal challenge, all while enjoying the beautiful scenery in a safe environment. Although a timed event, this is more of a self-paced fun group event, rather than a race. There will also be opportunities to sample Acadian fare at nutrition breaks.

Gran Fondo Baie Sainte-Marie is offering three rides in 2016: experienced cyclists will be challenged by a 117 km Gran loop while novice cyclists may prefer the shorter 35 km Piccolo Fondo. Riders will navigate rolling inland roads and pass by towering wooden churches along the panoramic coastal route that hugs beautiful Baie Sainte-Marie. New for 2016 will be a 67 km Medio Fondo, a medium distance that will take participants along the scenic Bas-de-la-Rivière loop with vistas of Baie Sainte-Marie and Digby Neck.

The event will start at 8:30 am Sunday morning at the Vélo Baie Sainte-Marie bike shop located at 9976 Highway 1 in Saulnierville. A lunch and awards ceremony will follow. On the Saturday during pre-registration, riders will get a taste of local Acadian culture at the Saulnierville Legion. Participants registered by August 1 will receive an event Louis Garneau jersey. Early-bird registration (\$85) is open until August 1, however registration will be available up until the morning of the event (\$125).

In 2015, the first Gran Fondo Baie Sainte-Marie event generated an estimated \$268,000 in economic impact activity for Nova Scotia, of which \$177,000 occurred in the Clare region, according to an assessment by the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance.

Gran Fondo Baie Sainte-Marie offers a new experience for both community residents and visiting outdoor enthusiasts—an experience that highlights our region's Acadian culture and natural beauty. "We'll be attending two cycling trade shows this winter in Montreal and Toronto, so we're hoping to see more participants from the rest of Canada this year," stated Larry Peach, Marketing Coordinator for the event.

"The 2015 Gran Fondo was a great success. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In 2016, we hope to build on this success, grow this event and welcome even more cyclists," remarked Ronnie LeBlanc, Warden for the Municipality of Clare. "I look forward to participating once again!"

Watch our brand new narrated promo video, including many great participant testimonials from 2015: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWEg6wj7Dzg&index=1&list=PLtEDvzxq1TRa9TR_gaAZaIE_nW1iLYz6

For more information and to register online, visit www.granfondobaiesaintemarie.ca

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