

Lakeshore Harvest Ride to roll through Sept. 14

The eighth annual Lakeshore Harvest Ride Saturday, Sept. 14, will raise funds for the 501c3 nonprofit Friends of the Blue Star Trail towards building a 20-mile non-motorized trail from South Haven through Saugatuck.

The event offers 15-, 25-, 40- and 60-mile routes from two starting locations: Schultz Park in Douglas and the Kal-Haven Trail Head in South Haven.

Included are 15 stops at local farm stands, wineries and galleries along the routes. There, riders can stop, have snacks, buy local products and enjoy local wine or cider.

A concierge service will circulate through the routes, pick up riders' purchases and deliver them to the riders' starting point so the goods are near their vehicles post-ride.

Nine years ago founding Friends board members Jeanne VanZoeren and then Casco Township Clerk Julie Cowie approached the Lakeshore Harvest Country Group with the idea of a bike ride with the farm stops.

That first LHR attracted 127 riders. Events have continued to grow with both stops and riders.

Last year the Lakeshore Harvest Ride

drew a record 413 riders through the countryside between Saugatuck-Douglas and South Haven, up 51 percent from the previous year.

Nearly 80 percent of the riders are from areas other than South Haven, Saugatuck-Douglas and Holland. They come from places as far away as Chicago, St Louis, Indianapolis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Dayton and Columbus as well as Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Lansing and other cities in Michigan.

This Ride requires help from nearly 70 volunteers to assist at registration, stops on the routes, concierge service, SAG service, food preparation, set up and tear down.

This year's event is being supported by nearly 40 sponsors from the local communities. Every dollar the Friends raise will allow them to build \$4 of trail. For more information, visit fotbst.org and lhride.com.

Riders who pre-register by Sept. 8 can save money. Go to bikereg.com and enter Lakeshore Harvest Ride 2019.

Want to help as a volunteer and/or sponsor? Contact chair Jack Eisinger at jce6935@gmail.com.

