



Jim Jackson
Director,
West Memphis Office of Tourism
Phone 870-732-7598
jackson@westmemphis.com
www.visitwestmemphis.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 08/21/15

West Memphis cycling event expands to include two rides and festival atmosphere Second Annual Arkansas Delta Flatlander set for Saturday, Oct. 10

As work continues on the boardwalk across the Mississippi on the Harahan Bridge, organizers of a year-old cycling event are tweaking it to add to the growing enthusiasm of cyclists who can't wait for the chance to ride from Memphis to West Memphis and beyond.

The **Second Annual Arkansas Delta Flatlander** is set for Saturday, Oct. 10 in West Memphis and this year will expand to two rides and include food trucks and music.

"The first Flatlander was a way for us to introduce riders to the Arkansas side of the Mississippi," said **Jim Jackson**, director of the West Memphis Office of Tourism. "We had more than 120 riders the first year and now we want to make sure that everyone—not just hard core cyclists—knows about the cycling and other recreation opportunities they will have access to once the Harahan is open."

The day will include a second ride this year—the **St. Francis Levee Gravel Grinder**, a 21-mile ride north on the St. Francis Levee through the proposed Crittenden County Eco-Park and past the Arkansas landing of the Harahan Bridge project. The rough terrain of the ride, which will take place in the afternoon, is meant to appeal to riders of "fat tire" bicycles.

The signature event, The Flatlander, is a metric century ride (100 kilometers or 62 miles) that will start in the morning at the corner of E. Broadway and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, the trailhead for the Arkansas side of the approach to the Harahan. It will follow the path of the Mississippi River south, circling Horseshoe Lake before heading back north to the start. 20 and 40-mile routes will be available, as well.

Adding food trucks and live music is meant to enhance the experience for cyclists and to attract those simply looking to enjoy the early fall weather while eating, drinking and listening to music, Jackson said. Performing will be **The Incredible Infinity Band, Marcella and Her Lovers** and **The Bouffants**.

A portion of the Flatlander route overlaps the Mississippi River Trail (MRT), 3,000 miles of on-road bikeways and pedestrian and bicycle pathways stretching from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Jackson and other West Memphis leaders are counting on access to the MRT to be attractive to serious distance cyclists.

For less ambitious cyclists and walkers, the proposed Crittenden County Eco-Park will be a reason to stay once they've crossed the river. The park will stretch from the foot of the Harahan to the Levee and will include a network of trails, an education center, outdoor education spaces, exhibits and interpretive panels and space for food trucks and festivals.

"This move toward connecting communities within a city and across a river or state line is becoming more and more commonplace," Jackson said. "West Memphis is going to be an outdoor recreation destination and we think the Flatlander is a blueprint of what it might look like." For up to date information visit www.ArkansasDeltaFlatlander.com