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Michigan Cares for Tourism here to help

The Michigan tourism industry is once again coming together to support and breathe life into Michigan's historic sites through a volunteer clean-up effort, Michigan Cares for Tourism.

An anticipated 200 industry members will join forces Sept. 18-19 to learn about the area and tackle a number of projects at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center (RAM) and Civilian Conservation Corps Museum in Roscommon.

"Each year the Michigan Cares for Tourism clean-up events are met with eagerness and enthusiasm by Michigan's tourism industry. Industry members are excited for the opportunity to learn about different areas of our great state, network and give back," Michigan Cares for Tourism Volunteer Event Director Patty Janes said in a press release. "We're excited to share with the industry what we've started to learn about the Roscommon area, and to make a difference restoring these pieces of Michigan's history."

Tourism industry members will arrive in the Roscommon area Sept. 18, and have the opportunity to explore the area on one of four different familiarization tours before coming together at the Michigan Fireman's Memorial Big Red Barn for an opening reception. On Tuesday, Sept. 19, the group will roll up their sleeves and take on several types of projects from sanding and painting to building accessible paths, assembling picnic tables, bike racks, garbage cans and more.

Higgins Lake-Roscommon Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cathy Boyle said that several area businesses have been "very generous" in helping to ensure that the volunteers coming to the area are able to see what makes "Roscommon wonderful." Lear Corporation and Fred's of Roscommon, as well as Bob's Butcher Shop, AuSable Baking Company & Creamery, B.C. Pizza, Cross Country Ski Headquarters, Good Life Cupcakes, Kirtland Community College, Roscommon Family Fare and Three Fires Market, have all been involved and donated in some capacity to the effort.

Boyle added that normally businesses in the Village of Roscommon are closed Mondays, however, the shops will be open from approximately 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sept. 18. The Roscommon Historic Model Train Club, AuSable River Center and Roscommon Area Historical Society will also be open.

"Some of the visitors will tour Wellington Farm, some will kayak on the AuSable River with Paddle Brave, some will tour Camp Grayling, and some will take part in a camping 101 day at the RAM Center. They will all be soaking up all that Roscommon has to offer, before their day of volunteering, so they can help spread the word," Boyle said.

Established in 1941, the RAM Center began as the Conservation Training School built by the Civilian Conservation Corps Today, the conference center continues its 75-year legacy of conservation education and offers one of the most distinctive meeting experiences in Michigan's northern woods. The Civilian Conservation Corps Museum tells the story of the CCC in Michigan, and its role in providing work to young men during the Great Depression.

Over the past four years, and five volunteer clean-up locations, Michigan's tourism industry has come out in strong support of the effort with more than 1,100 tourism professionals volunteering their time and talents to renew and refresh the Felt Estate near Saugatuck, Fayette Historic Townsite, Sturgeon Point Lighthouse, Detroit's Belle Isle Park and the Waterloo Recreation Area's Historic Mill Lake Outdoor Center in Chelsea. Contributing more than \$400,000 in supplies and labor savings to these locations, Michigan Cares for Tourism has raised monies from over 300 organizations in addition to a utility trailer full of tools and supplies, donated by The General Agency Insurance Company and McCann Erickson Detroit, that volunteers now use.

Chartered by Grand Valley State University's Hospitality and Tourism Management Department, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Travel Michigan, Tourism Cares, DRIVEN and Indian Trails, Michigan Cares for Tourism coordinates vital cleanup events at treasured Michigan tourism locations each year in need of revitalization. Michigan Cares for Tourism is a 100% volunteer program with all proceeds solely designed to contribute to the clean-up of Michigan's historic attractions.

For information about Michigan Cares for Tourism visit www.MichiganCaresforTourism.com or icare@michigancaresfortourism.com.

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