

## **Ferry Stats: 25% More Cyclists on Manitoulin**

More than 5200 bicycles made the Tobermory to Manitoulin ferry crossing in the 2014 season. The Operator of the Chi Cheemaun Ferry (Owen Sound Transportation Co.) reports an increase of more than 25% over 2013. Officials have been counting both ridden and racked bicycles for the past two years.

Manitoulin accommodation providers also report a significant increase in bicycle tourism last summer, in some cases representing between 5-10% of their overall business. This increase in numbers has spread into the shoulder seasons adding yet another positive economic statistic to this growing tourism sector.

The annual Manitoulin Passage Ride helps this trend along as riders experience quiet roads in the off season. Manitoulin's small businesses are welcoming this opportunity to book overnight guests in early June. This opportunity has attracted more advertisers to the MICA website to capture new business from the growing number of cyclists coming to the Island.

Cyclists have purchased over 6000 Manitoulin Island Cycling Routes and Road Maps in the past three years and have indicated in a MICA survey done in 2013 that they would like to see cycling infrastructure improvements, cycling racks, way-finding signage and water fountains.

More Manitoulin Islanders themselves are taking up recreational cycling and will join this year's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Manitoulin Passage Ride June 6 & 7. This year's routes highlight the Georgian Bay Cycling Route Core A and Core B on Manitoulin.

There is no charge for children 12 and under. The ride fee is only \$40.00 for one day or \$ 75.00 for two days. The full two day fee includes Free Ferry ride for walk-on cyclists both ways. Cyclists can arrive Friday and leave no later than Monday within that offer. It includes full ride support, ride snacks both days, one supper, a pig roast courtesy of Max Burt with live music held this year at Batman's in Sheguiandah and one lunch on the second day at Kicking Mule Ranch Hwy 6.

What a fun way to start the riding season of 2015. Register now.

Happy holidays! Will there be a shiny, new bicycle under the Christmas tree for you this year?