

US Firm Supports Youghal Bike Race

By Eoin English

A Team of Irish amateur cyclists is set to blaze a fundraising trail across the US thanks to a massive corporate donation.

American electronics company, Flextronics, which has a base in Cork, has signed a €20,000 sponsorship deal with Team Youghal, to allow it compete in the world's longest endurance bike race – the gruelling 4,835km Race Across America. The race is a third longer than the Tour de France and there are no rest days.

The team is taking part to raise money and awareness for the Emer Casey Foundation. Emer, who was from Youghal, in Co. Cork, was diagnosed with ovarian/uterine cancer in February 2006. She was just 27 years of age. She died on June 10 2006, four days after her 28th birthday.

Her parents Juliette and Brendan and sisters Julie, Annelee, Susan and Ruth, set up the foundation in her honour. The Emer Casey Foundation has raised more than €500,000 for the foundation's research into ovarian and uterine cancer. It began with a road race and walk in Youghal, but it now organises such races in London, Melbourne and New York. But now, thanks to Flextronics, it is set for its biggest fundraising mission – racing across America.

The 8-man cycling team, which will travel with a 10-man back-up crew, will depart from Oceanside, California on June 18, and race 24 hours a day across the continent, finishing in Annapolis, Maryland, about eight days later.

Team Youghal leader Ger Flanagan, who will be racing himself, thanked Flextronics for its very generous donation. “Without this support we could not contemplate entering such an event,” he said, “With the support of Firedog, we hope to raise significant funds for the Emer Casey Foundation.” It will host fundraising events before and after the race, including a function at Fitzpatrick's Hotel, Manhattan on June 28th, a 5km run in Central Park, as well as events in Los Angeles, San Diego, Washington and Boston.

Team Youghal is being backed in its fundraising efforts by some influential US groups, including the Irish US Council, Enterprise Ireland's US division, The Irish Consulate General in New York, The American Chamber of Commerce, The Trinity Foundation, The Discovery Consortium Matheson, Ormsby, Prentice Solicitors, Emer's former employers, and The Cork Association in New York.

www.emercaseyfoundation.com
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