



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Athletic Women Excel Tulsa Donates \$15,000 to Saint Francis Tulsa Tough,
Develops Pro Women's Cycling Travel Stipend**

TULSA, OKLA. (March 24, 2015) – Athletic Women Excel (AWE) Tulsa's \$15,000 donation to Saint Francis Tulsa Tough will be used to develop a Pro Women's cycling team travel stipend. Professional women cyclists have fewer races on the USA Cycling National Criterium Calendar (NCC) than their male counterparts. And, the financial rewards for female cyclists are typically smaller than for men.

AWE Tulsa's donation to Saint Francis Tulsa Tough will create a Pro Women's cycling travel stipend that will help offset some of the traveling costs for Pro Women's cycling teams who participate in Saint Francis Tulsa Tough racing competitions.

AWE Tulsa's mission is to empower women and girls through sports and fitness in the Tulsa area. AWE Tulsa, an initiative of the Tulsa Sports Commission, focuses on retaining, recruiting, developing and enhancing local women's athletic events, programs and organizations for their economic and personal health benefits.

"AWE Tulsa in partnership with Saint Francis Tulsa Tough is excited to welcome female cyclists to Tulsa through the Pro Women's Travel Stipend Program," said Paula Marshall, AWE Tulsa's committee chair and CEO of Bama Companies. "This is a great opportunity to support women athletes at the highest level of competition as they travel to our beautiful city."

Saint Francis Tulsa Tough is an industry leader in helping create awareness for women's cycling events. In 2013, to encourage and support women's cycling, Saint Francis Tulsa Tough developed the Diva program. The Divas are a group of more than 150 women who love cycling and promote the sport for women of all ages, experience levels and abilities.

"Saint Francis Tulsa Tough is focused on more than just encouraging active lifestyles through cycling. It's important that we actively promote cycling opportunities for females," said Malcolm McCollam, Saint Francis Tulsa Tough Executive Director.

“There are fewer opportunities in cycling for women than men and financial rewards are also smaller. Saint Francis Tulsa Tough provides women the opportunity to compete for one of the largest prize purses in North America. Partnering with AWE Tulsa is a natural fit to bring more equity to the sport and to the female athletes who are such positive role models for future cyclists of any gender,” said McCollam.

"Saint Francis Tulsa Tough keeps getting better and better each year. It truly has become one of the premier bike racing weekends in the United States. The focus on women's cycling with equal prize purse and the team assistance program proves Saint Francis Tulsa Tough is committed to advancing Women's Cycling at the professional and grass roots level," said Robin Farina, Women's Cycling Association CEO.

“The Women's Cycling Association is grateful that races like Saint Francis Tulsa Tough and communities like Tulsa are leading by example in the quest for equality in sport and life,” said Farina.

To be eligible for the stipend, up to 15 qualifying teams must bring a minimum of four racers and participate in all three days of Saint Francis Tulsa Tough. Application forms may be found at www.tulsatough.com or by emailing info@tulsatough.com.

The 10th Annual Saint Francis Tulsa Tough will be held June 14-16, 2015 in downtown Tulsa. For more information visit www.tulsatough.com.

ABOUT SAINT FRANCIS TULSA TOUGH

Saint Francis Tulsa Tough is a full cycling experience for racers, riders, and spectators. This three-day cycling festival includes criterium races for amateurs and pros that are sanctioned by USA Cycling. The event also includes non-competitive Gran Fondo rides and the Townie Ride. The 2015 festival will be held June 12-14 in beautiful downtown and midtown Tulsa. For more information about Saint Francis Tulsa Tough, visit www.tulsatough.com.

ABOUT TULSA SPORTS COMMISSION

The Tulsa Sports Commission, a founding member of the National Association of Sports Commissions, is a division of the Tulsa Regional Chamber and supports the Chamber's mission to improve the quality of community life through the development of economic prosperity by attracting and developing sporting events and competitions in the region. In 2015 the Tulsa Sports Commission will host the Phillips 66 Big 12 Baseball Championships, USA Wrestling Junior National Duels, USGA Junior Girls Championships, US Youth Soccer National Championships, and USA BMX Grand Nationals. For more information about Tulsa Sports Commission, visit the website www.tulasports.org.

ABOUT WOMEN'S CYCLING ASSOCIATION (WCA)

The WCA is a coalition of cyclists, across the globe, which supports the advancement and success of Women's Cycling on both sporting and business levels. The WCA continues to work with cycling industry companies and other organizations, worldwide, as well as media to grow the sport of cycling and ensure sustainability in women's cycling for the future. For more information and to join the WCA, log onto womenscyclingassociation.com, follow the WCA on twitter [@wca_tweet](https://twitter.com/wca_tweet), or “like” the organization on Facebook at - Women's Cycling Association.

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