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#151201-TOUGHMUD

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## ***Tough Mudder Returns to Gulf Coast*** **-Tough Mudder Returns to Ates Ranch in Santa Rosa County for Second Year-**

Today, Tough Mudder, the premier 10-12 obstacle course challenge designed to test physical & mental strength, stamina and teamwork, announces its second return to Ates Ranch in Milton April 9 & 10, 2016. Featuring rocky terrain and red clay trails on the hills of Santa Rosa County, Tough Mudder Gulf Coast delivers a 10+ mile course to thousands of new and returning participants.

Ates Ranch will once again play host to Tough Mudder Gulf Coast; Tough Mudder works closely with Santa Rosa County to deliver a great event to the county, as well as to new and returning Mudders. Last year's event brought over 10,000 participants, spectators, volunteers and people of the community to Milton, providing a positive economic impact of more than \$6 million on the region. Tough Mudder is working closely with stakeholders in Santa Rosa County to ensure another significant economic benefit to the community.

"Events like this create an opportunity to proudly showcase our hotels, restaurants and natural beauty to first-time visitors," said Julie Morgan, Santa Rosa TDO Director. "We are excited at the prospect of many of those first-time visitors returning for the 2016 Tough Mudder event. Sixty percent indicated that they planned to spend time with us in the future based on the TM experience. Our community was welcoming and supportive to the event hosts and participants. We look forward providing that welcoming atmosphere again for the 2016 Tough Mudder event in hopes that even more people will see all the great things Santa Rosa County has to offer."

Morgan continues, "This two day event will also greatly impact our bed tax collections in a positive way. We have strived to fill weekends in April with events due to the large gap between spring break and Easter in order to maintain the positive relationship tourism has with the economic impact. These events bring visitors that will be spending money at our gas stations, stores, restaurants and more, which will make a significant impact on Santa Rosa County."

Economic Development Director Shannon Ogletree says "The 2015 Tough Mudder event was one of the largest single day events in Santa Rosa County history. It provided a huge boost to our economy with an estimated \$6 million economic impact, but that was not the only benefit of hosting such a large event. Various aspects of our community benefited, from those participating in the event to local businesses seeing additional business. Events like Tough Mudder help showcase Santa Rosa County to individuals who may not have previously considered our county as a vacation destination. Thirty-seven percent of participants had never visited the Santa Rosa County area. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to further market Santa Rosa County to outside visitors so they may return for future vacations."

### **Tough Mudder Gulf Coast 2015 Recap:**

- Over 92 percent of participants came to the Santa Rosa County area in March primarily for the Tough Mudder event.
- Over 37 percent of participants had never visited the Santa Rosa County area.
- Over 58 percent of participants stayed overnight for the event, and 34 percent of those stayed in local hotels with a total of 4,180 hotel room nights.
- A total of 221 locals volunteered 2,043 hours.
- For a recap of 2015 highlights, check out this video: [Tough Mudder Gulf Coast 2015](#)

“We are thrilled to return to Ates Ranch in 2016 and bring the Tough Mudder experience to thousands of new and returning Mudders,” said Kate Fitzpatrick, Tough Mudder’s Director of Community Development & Venues. “Our partnership with Santa Rosa County was key to the decision to return to Milton in 2016, and we look forward to building on the first event’s success, and providing a positive economic impact on the community as participants travel near and far for the event to discover Florida’s Playground.”

“The Ates Family has worked with Tough Mudder to address their needs ahead of the 2016 return to Milton, including details of logistics, access, security and parking. We are happy to accommodate the Tough Mudder event, especially considering the direct impact this event will have economically on our friends working in tourism and on the community,” said Kyle S. Holley, Ates Ranch Liaison of the Santa Rosa Tourist Development Council. “We know one in three local families struggle financially and events like Tough Mudder will lift up our residents’ spirits while also highlighting our community as great place to invest time and money.”

Each Tough Mudder course includes signature Tough Mudder obstacles, including King of the Swingers, Everest 2.0 and more. Obstacles are designed to reinforce teamwork and camaraderie, as well as fun, personal accomplishment and challenge. Tough Mudder events have wide appeal—participants, or “Mudders”, range from veterans to business executives, mothers & daughters, pageant queens to 81-year-old grandfathers. More than 95 percent of Mudders sign up as part of a team. And for many, Tough Mudder is more than just a weekend event—it’s a lifestyle.

Registrations are now open for [Tough Mudder Gulf Coast](#); spectator tickets are also available. For those looking for a discounted registration price, [volunteer opportunities](#) are also available. To view the current schedule of events visit [toughmudder.com/events](http://toughmudder.com/events). For more information about Tough Mudder, contact Carol Gottshall, Communications Manager, at [carol.gottshall@toughmudder.com](mailto:carol.gottshall@toughmudder.com).

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*Founded in 2010 with the launch of the Tough Mudder event series of 10-12 mile military-style obstacle courses, Tough Mudder Inc. has since grown to include Tough Mudder Half, an obstacle challenge bringing the thrills of Tough Mudder to a 5-mile course; Mudderella, an obstacle course series created by women for women; Fruit Shoot Mini Mudder, a custom event for children ages 7-12; Tough Mudder Half, a 5-mile obstacle course challenge, featuring all the thrills of a full Tough Mudder event & signature Tough Mudder obstacles in half the distance; and World’s Toughest Mudder, a grueling 24-hour endurance competition. The Tough Mudder family of brands is united by a commitment to promoting courage, personal accomplishment and teamwork through unconventional, life-changing experiences. With more than 2 million participants to date, Tough Mudder Inc. will put on more than 60 events worldwide in 2016. To learn more about Tough Mudder, visit [toughmudder.com](http://toughmudder.com).*