

New bike shop rolls into Suamico

BY JANELLE FISHER
STAFF WRITER

A dream that has been several years in the making has finally become a reality for Laura Grovogel and Matt Fisher, owners of Suamico Bike Company, as the new bike shop officially opened for business Sept. 10.

Grovogel said it was a shared interest in biking that first brought her and Fisher together back in 2019.

"Matt and I met in 2019 and one of the ways that we connected was through cycling," she said. "As far as my background goes, I had been a cyclist, but not to the extent of after I had met Matt."

Although she became more involved in cycling after they met, Grovogel said Fisher has been heavily involved in the cycling community for nearly two decades.

"Matt has been in the cycling industry for close to 20 years now, he started in high school working at a bike shop in the Green Bay area," she said. "As he progressed through his teen years and into college years and into adulthood, he always had a job at a bike shop or some sort of other sporting goods store."

Grovogel, who has a background in sports medicine, said she and Fisher decided to start the process of opening their own bike shop in 2020 after COVID caused her healthcare position to be eliminated.



Suamico Bike Company opened Sept. 10 at 1790 Riverside Dr. in Suamico's Vickery Village. **Josh Staloch Photo**

"That gave me a lot of time to think and try to determine what direction I wanted to go in my life and in my career," she said. "Knowing Matt's expertise and his work in the cycling industry and how much he is capable of doing, Matt and I kind of came to a mutual conclusion between us that maybe we should try doing the bike shop thing on our own."

Finding a location

Grovogel said she and Fisher put a lot of thought into finding the perfect location for their bike shop.

"When we started to think about the idea of a bike shop becoming reality, we obviously started make it a big goal of ours to make sure it was in the right spot," she said. "And we know that Green Bay is relatively saturated for bike shops — there's plenty of choices in the area."

After researching different options, Grovogel said Suamico stuck out as an ideal location.

"We wanted to take the location seriously," she said. "We did some digging into demographics of the area and Suamico was just super high on that list as a location that's growing. There's a lot more growth to the north of Green Bay. There is a need for a bike shop in that area, a full service bike shop with premium-level bicycles as well. And so when we identified that clearly, it was a goal of ours to hit the tunnel area."

While finding a general location for their bike shop seemed like an easy choice, Grovogel said locating the right property for the bike shop proved to be more difficult.

"It was not exactly easy in the beginning stages," she said. "We looked at Vickery Village in Suamico a num-

ber of times. There's more than one property in that area that we looked at and considered but ultimately, we either didn't get or we passed on them for certain reasons."

Grovogel said that, as their search continued, she and Fisher were approached about the former Suamico Garage property at 1790 Riverside Dr. that turned out to be the perfect spot for Suamico Bike Company to open.

"As things evolved, one of my former colleagues at Aurora BayCare reached out to me and said that he had purchased a property in Suamico that he was hoping we would start our bike shop at," she said. "And ultimately that's the decision we went with. So that location is where we're at now — the old car garage in Suamico is now renovated to our shop."

Part of the renovations included the creation of an in-

teractive mural on the side of the shop, which Grovogel said has already brought attention to the business from cyclists and curious community members alike.

"If you're coming towards the shop, it's eye-catching," she said. "It's colorful, it's interactive, it's got that bike part of the mural you can stand on. It was a super fun process to develop the mural. It gives a good way for us to interact with people who are customers as well as people who just happen to be in the area that are interested by it and want to take a photo and post on social media."

Open for business

With the shop's doors officially opening to customers Sept. 10, Grovogel said the community has already shown great support for the new business.

"We've been really pleased with all the Suamico residents and Vickery Village residents that have come by just to simply check things out and say that they were watching our progress with the building renovations and that they were really excited and they're happy to have us in the neighborhood," she said.

Grovogel said the community's support has extended beyond just stopping by to check things out, though, as the business has already made several bike sales and had to reorder some of their branded merchandise.

"We've had people com-

ing in saying that they're super excited to come buy a bike," she said. "We had a couple come in right when we opened the doors saying that they wanted to be the first people to buy a bike and they were super excited to be the first ones to buy a bike. Even since then, being just three weeks into it, we've had a couple really great sales as far as bikes go and a whole lot of accessories, too, to the point where we're already reordering our shirts, our hats, our water bottles, that kind of thing. So that's awesome as well to feel that support right away."

Fisher said he has big plans for Suamico Bike Company's future, centered around increasing involvement and supporting the community that has supported them.

"I hate to sound cliché, but the sky is the limit," he said. "We want to be fully involved in pretty much any angle we can. We want to be involved a lot with the community as far as making group rides for all ages. But we want to also help bring some value to Suamico. Vickery Village is hosting a Fall Bash coming up that obviously we're excited to be a part of and we want to try to team up for some rides that can start or end at the festival. But also, maybe help in the future to bring things like races to Suamico or maybe some bikes swaps or stuff like that."

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Welcome to Titledown

Brown County Executive Troy Streckenbach along with members of the Brown County Board of Supervisors presented Experience Green Bay with a \$650,000 grant in support of the visitor center that will be located on Lombardi Access Road across from Cabela's. Construction has begun on the site near the Lombardi exit of Hwy. 41. In 2021, tourism to Brown County had an estimated total economic impact of more than \$1 billion from the more than 6 million visitors to the region. The Discover Green Bay Visitor Center is expected to be completed in late summer of 2023. Pictured left to right are Brown County Executive Troy Streckenbach, Sup. Ron Antonneau, Discover Green Bay President and CEO Brad Toll and Brown County Board Chair Patrick Buckley. **Submitted Photo**

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