

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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4TH ANNUAL 'RIDE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE'
TO RAISE FUNDS TO FIGHT PANCREATIC CANCER

The 4th Annual "Get Ready to Rumble -- Refuse to Lose the Fight Against Pancreatic Cancer" Motorcycle Ride to benefit the Joseph C. Monastra Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 15, starting in Suwanee. Registration for the ride at \$20 per motorcycle will begin at 11 a.m. at BackDrafts, located at 300 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. in Suwanee with the ride getting underway at 1 p.m. There will be auction items, raffle prizes, and live entertainment from Mark Elliot and his Full Throttle Band.

The ride itself is a police-escorted ride with Forsyth and Hall County Sheriff's Department motorcycle officers escorting the group through the North Georgia mountains along country roads which are expected to be in the prime of the fall leaf-changing season. In the event of inclement weather, the event will be held the following day.

Sponsors of the event include Full Throttle Magazine, Results Realty Services, Mall of Georgia Ford, Sharp Residential, Northstar Builders & Developers, and BackDrafts. More information about the event can be obtained by calling Pamela Swanson at 404-391-2169.

The foundation benefiting from the annual ride was created in the name of Joseph C. Monastra by his family. Monastra passed away on April 4, 2002, only four weeks after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Swanson, his daughter, said her family was shocked by the disease's ability to render a perfectly healthy person into a bedridden state. "Before we could understand or accept that he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he was gone," she said. "It was devastating to the entire family."

Swanson revealed that the family took its grief and disbelief of what had happened to their loved one and turned their energies into raising money for research to fight the disease, which is the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in the nation and the deadliest of all cancers with a 99 percent fatality rate. There are no early warning signs and no early detection tests, and with limited government funding, private fund raising and donations are essential to ongoing research efforts.

The first fund-raiser took place only seven months after her father's death. In the past four years, the Joseph C. Monastra Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research has raised enough money to help fund the opening of a new pancreatic cancer research laboratory at Johns Hopkins Medical Institute. Swanson, a member of the foundation board of directors, said Dr. Christine Iacobuzio-Donahue's research lab is currently conducting several research projects in the field. Studies include one to determine the molecular genetics of pancreatic cancer and another to predict which patients will have the worst prognosis so they can be treated more aggressively. The lab is also designing a drug to use against the growth of the disease which will form the basis for clinical trials in patients fighting the disease.