

NATIONAL LAUNCH OF WILD ATLANTIC WAY



■ Auriel Robinson, Seatrails; Tom Hickey, Perfect Day Surf School; Elisha Hickey, Perfect Day Surf School and Letitia Wade, Fáilte Ireland, at the recent Fáilte Ireland meeting in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Sligo about the Wild Atlantic Way.

'An opportunity for Sligo to grasp'

HARRY KEANEY

THE LAUNCH of the Wild Atlantic Way tourist route has been described as an "opportunity for Sligo to grasp".

The 2,500km route, from Donegal to Cork, was launched by Tourism Minister Michael Ring last week.

In Sligo, it takes in the route from Mullaghmore to Sligo, continuing along the western seaboard scenic trip toward Enniscrone.

Sligo Chamber CEO Paul Keyes welcomed the new initiative.

He said: "We think it's an excellent idea.

"It's a great opportunity to attract more international visitors to the western region and the north-west in particular.

"The bulk of international visitors tend to go to Dublin and the South West.

"We see the Wild Atlantic Way as an opportunity to be grasped for Sligo and for the North West

Wild Atlantic Way In Numbers

€20million: The amount of money being invested in developing the route this year.

2,500: The length of the route in kilometres from Donegal to Cork.

3,850: The number of signs that will be erected along the route by next month.

159: The number of 'Discovery Points' on the route.

15: The number of 'iconic sites' along the route.

region.

"However, we also say there is a duty on all of us in Sligo in particular to seize this opportunity and not to rely exclusively on the marketing of the Wild Atlantic Way.

"We should support it, particu-

larly on the European routes that fly into Knock.

"And there's also the establishing of a unique proposition around Sligo as the Yeats County."

Minister Ring said: "The Wild Atlantic Way is the world's longest touring route through some of Ireland's most beautiful places.

"It has massive potential to bring more visitors and more jobs to rural communities right along the western seaboard.

"That's why we will soon be promoting it even further afield in places like Spain, Italy and the Netherlands."

The route is already a key element of Tourism Ireland's overseas marketing campaigns for 2014.

In Germany, France and the US, there were dedicated cinema campaigns over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Fáilte Ireland is currently developing a specially designed Wild Atlantic Way app which will be available for visitors at the end of June.