

St. Charles will be stop in half marathon series

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By SARA POYNOR
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St. Charles is set to be part of the United States Running Association Half Marathon Running Series.

The announcement was made Thursday by Dean Reinke of Reinke Sports Group in Winter Park, Fla.

The event, which was created in partnership with the Charles County Department of Economic Development and Tourism, will take place April 17 and 18 starting with a fun run for kids on the Indian Head Rail Trail at 9 a.m. Saturday. Also on Saturday, the packet pickup and runners' expo will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Regency Furniture Stadium in Waldorf.

On Sunday, the half-marathon, a 13.1 mile run, will start at 8 a.m. and a 5K run will begin at 8:15 a.m.

"Our goal is to have about 800 to 1,000 participants for the first year," Reinke said.

"... The idea is that people will come in for the weekend, have a great experience and the event will grow. It will become an annual major event."

The 2010 USRA series includes 18 cities in middle size to small markets, with the first stop in Columbia, S.C.

American Community Properties Trust is the title sponsor for the Charles County event, and Lennar Homes is the presenting sponsor.

"We think it has great potential to bring a lot of people to our area," ACPT spokesman Craig Renner said. "The other aspect is part of green initiative for St. Charles. We want to promote healthy lifestyles..."

ACPT is "going to get behind this event in every way and make sure it's a successful endeavor," Renner continued, adding that a couple members of the company plan to participate in the event and some are already training.

Each runner will receive a goodie bag and a T-shirt. Anyone who finishes the half marathon will receive a finisher's medal.

Craig Barrett, president of the Hughesville Running Club and race director, thinks "this event will provide a great opportunity for local runners to come out and challenge themselves with a nice long distance race through the local neighborhoods and countryside," he wrote in an e-mail.

At the finish line, "there will be a post-race party ... with live music and refreshments," Reinke said. "It's sort of a festive atmosphere."

For more information, go to www.stcharleshalfmarathon.com.

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