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Party, training runs kick off marathon preparations

Races already have about 1,600 entries

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It may not look like prime running weather, but preparation for the 2009 Cellcom Green Bay Marathon is under way with a kickoff party and training runs starting this week.

Already, about 1,600 people have signed up for the marathon, half-marathon and 5K races on May 17, which marks the 10th anniversary of the event. That's about 50 percent more than the number who had registered last year by this time.

Early bird registration opened Dec. 1 and finished Dec. 31. Those attending the kickoff party Wednesday also will be given the same early bird rates: \$65 for the marathon, \$50 for the half-marathon, \$15 for the 5K for those age 18 and older and \$7 for the kids run on May 16. Registration for the 5K race for those age 17 and younger will be free through April 30.

The Wednesday kickoff party at the SC Grand will feature speaker Bart Yasso, a runner who has completed marathons on all seven continents, and runners will be given an overview of the 2009 course.

The marathon, which was named one of the most enjoyable races by Runners World magazine, starts and ends at Lambeau Field. Last year about 7,300 runners participated in the weekend of events.

The marathon also partners with local charities and has raised about \$250,000 since the race's inception. Last year the race generated \$50,000 in proceeds for its three charitable partners: the Lakeland Chapter of the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army of Brown County and the Boys & Girls Club of Green Bay.

Additional Facts

Kickoff party details

- Where: SC Grand Banquet and Convention Center, 1250 Mid Valley Drive, Lawrence
 - When: 5:30 p.m. Wednesday
 - What: Early bird registration, 2009 course overview, food and door prizes
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