



MARATHON NEWS

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Registrations for 2008 Races Soar; New Kickoff 5K Sold Out

Marathon, Half Marathon Hit 54% of Cap

HOUSTON, Aug. 29, 2007 – Three months after registration opened – and 4-1/2 months before race day – the Chevron Houston Marathon and Aramco Houston Half Marathon have filled more than half of the 17,000 slots available for the January 13, 2008 races.

As of Wednesday, August 29, marathon and half marathon registration was 236 percent ahead of last year's pace. A total of 9,163 runners have registered for the two races, compared to 2,728 registered by this date in 2006.

"We expected registrations to be ahead of schedule over last year at this time," said Race Director Brant Kotch, "but never expected it to take off like this. We take it as a sign that runners love our race – the flat, fast course, the great running weather, our volunteers and our tremendous crowd support."

The course last year yielded a marathon course record for female winner Dire Tune, 2:26:52, and an American record in the half marathon for Ryan Hall, who clocked a 59:43.

This year's annual Kickoff Party, set for September 20, will feature the inaugural Kickoff 5K Fun Run, giving runners a chance to flex their racing muscles at a less daunting distance. The race was capped at 900 runners to ensure runner safety and course manageability.

"We thought it was time to add some new energy to the annual Kickoff Party," said Steven Karpas, director of marketing and race development for the Chevron Houston Marathon, "and what better way than with a race? Runners can use it to kick off their marathon training or to test their fitness in short distance competition."

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The addition of the Kickoff 5K is one of several changes to the Kickoff Party. The event, traditionally on a Monday evening, is changing to Thursday, and the location is moving downtown to Sam Houston Park. The start gun for the race goes off at 7:30 p.m., but activities begin at 5 p.m. and continue with a post-race party until 9 p.m. A live band will provide music throughout the evening and official charity groups will encourage runners to participate in the Run for a Reason program. Runners in 2007 raised more than \$850,000 for 33 charities through the program, which has been expanded to more than 40 charities this year with a fundraising goal of \$1 million.

The Chevron Houston Marathon, Aramco Houston Half Marathon and EP5K are scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008. The race limit for 2008 was increased to 17,000 for the full and half marathon after the races reached their 15,000 cap six weeks prior to race day in 2007.

The Chevron Houston Marathon, a Running USA founding member, is the nation's premier winter marathon, annually attracting participants from all 50 U.S. states and more than 30 countries. The marathon offers the only closed marathon course in Texas and is ranked among the top five in the nation by the *Ultimate Guide to Marathons* for fastest course, organization and crowd support. More than 5,000 volunteers organize the race, which is Houston's largest single-day sporting event. Information is available online at www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com or 713-957-3453.

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